NOVEMBER 2023 ISSUE 94

Dyslexic Advantage NEWSLETTER

EMOTIONS: NAME THEM TO TAME THEM

- MY CHILD WON'T GO TO SCHOOL
- VISITING THE SEATTLE ART MUSEUM
- FREE TEACHER RESOURCES
- DAILY THINKER CALENDAR ❤ FUNDRAISER
- COLLEGE COACH KARA TEEN DYSLEXIA AWARENESS

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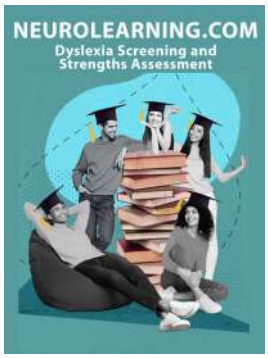

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Dyslexic Advantage Friends,

We're excited to announce our **FREE FOR SCHOOLS Premium** promotion for the 2023-24 school year. In order to expand our impact for students and the wide dyslexia community. If you are able to support us in this effort, please do **HERE**. We have added costs to upgrade our platform for the increases in traffic and there's never been a more important time for students to recognize their strengths and to be guided by teachers who are aware of strength-based teaching.

Check out our innovative AI-powered audio search **dyslexia guides** for dyslexia and college, math, gifted, and executive function and attention.

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The link for this issue is: **https://joom.ag/l8gd**

The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is $79.99 and available for children and adults 7-70 years old. iPad, iPhone, Android, and Kindle Fire.

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The app may qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books. Bulk discounts available for higher ed.

Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Wiliams, Cheryl Kahn, and Jack Martin. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for design and layout and Andi and Freshea for their social media and admin help!

PREMIUM

Editor's Note: to make our publications easier to read, we will avoid use of italics and certain types of fonts.

Newsletters can be read online **HERE**. This issue will be available on the Joomag site for 3 months and can also be downloaded as a pdf file.

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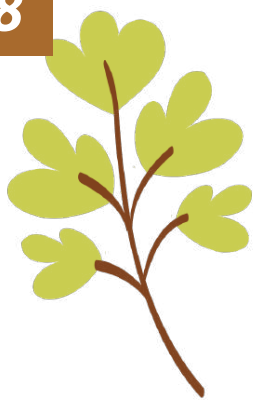

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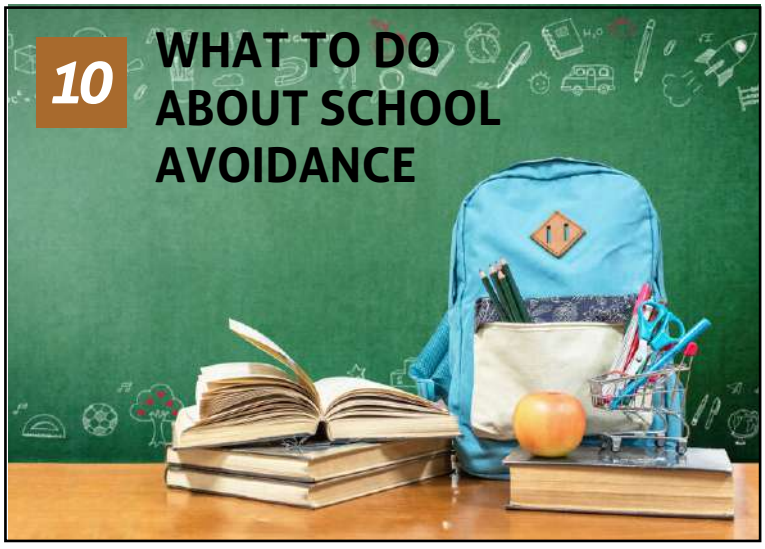

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EMOTIONS: NAME THEM TO TAME THEM

One of the most neglected issues in the field of dyslexia is the topic of social and emotional health.

We now know that as a group, dyslexic people are more emotionally sensitive than non-dyslexic people and because emotion memories may be so strong in dyslexic people, negative and painful experiences can have long lasting effects on children and adults.

I was recently talking to a woman who remembered the moment when a substitute singled her out for a simpler, alternate assignment. She said it was the moment she decided that she would close the door on her dyslexia and do everything in her power to act like she didn't have it. It would take years for that feeling to change.

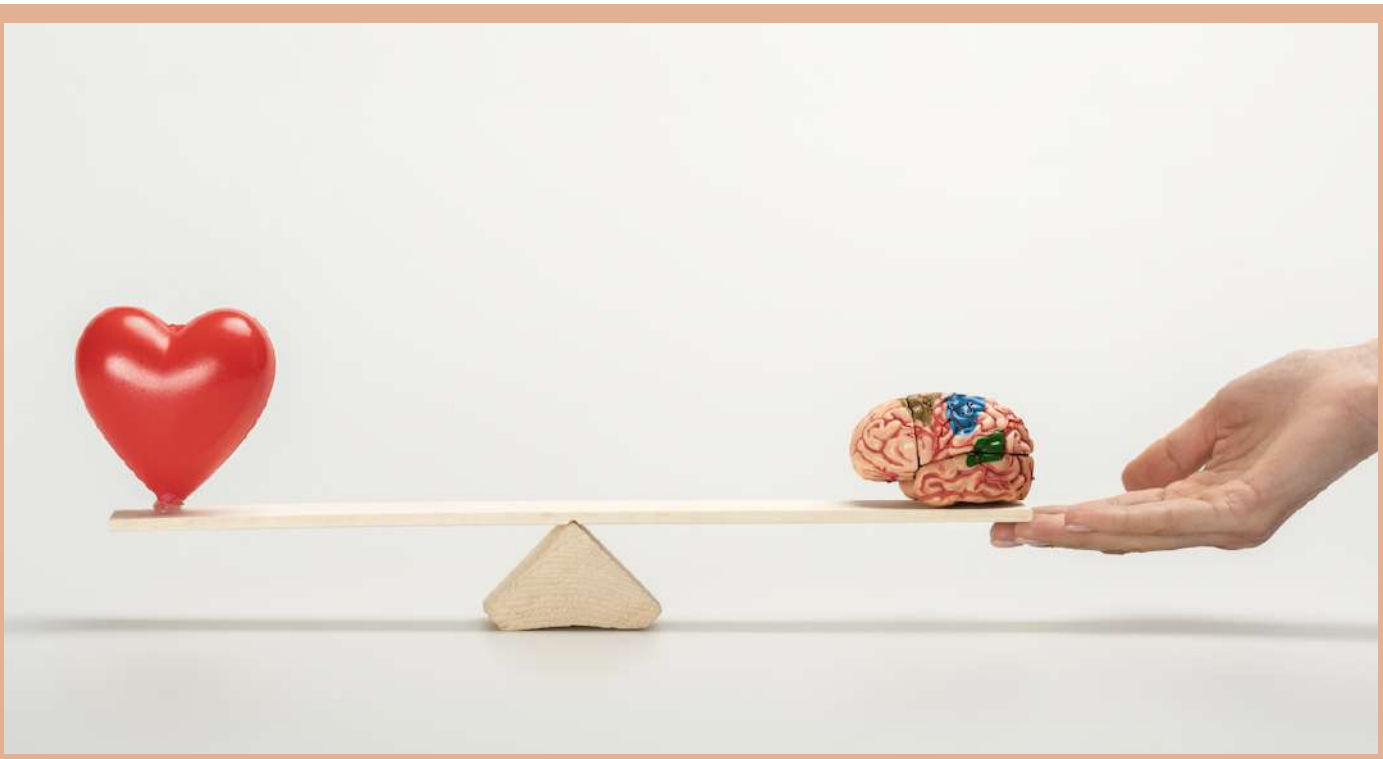
She never told anyone - and many people wouldn't have known about the burden she was carrying.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMING THE FEELINGS

We now know that putting a name to the feeling or experience can relieve some of the emotional distress of negative experiences.

In the studies comparing dyslexic and non-dyslexic children, dyslexic children showed signs of greater emotional reactivity - as measured by physiological measures like respiratory rate or skin conductance or sweating. But something that psychologists refer to as affective labeling or "putting feelings into words" can defuse the strength of emotions - even physiological ones.

In 2007, Matthew Lieberman and his colleagues at UCLA found that putting feelings into words disrupted activity of "fight-or-flight" reactions in the brain.



Naming the feeling (frustration, shame, sadness) can often put a child or adult onto a healthier path toward reinterpreting the event (sometimes referred to as "reappraisal") and developing a more constructive path forward.

NAMING FEELINGS TO HELP SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-COMPASSION

Parents, spouses, and friends can help empathize by finding words that may capture the feelings.

Once the intensity of emotional responses are defused, it can become easier to become more self-aware about what is causing the response. In the case of students, it may be the need for changes at school or more support.

Strong emotions can swamp words and people who process events in more nonverbal terms may have difficulty coming up with what they want to say in real time when a stressful, demeaning, or unfair situation arises.

Although you can't always control a situation, you can control your response.

HEALTHY MIND

Recognize the potential burdens that come with being dyslexic and be pro-active about prioritizing your students' emotional health.

Create a refuge in your home if school is difficult for your student. Try not to worry, compare, or over-emphasize school performance. Talk to your student about dyslexia, the positive side of their differences, and advantages.

Learn about principles and practices of **positive psychology**. Martin Seligman described a model of well-being based on cultivating PERMA:

Positive Emotions: peace, gratitude, inspiration, hope, curiosity, awe

Engagement: finding activities that deeply engage our interest (flow)

Positive relationships: friends, family

Meaning: living for things that are larger than ourselves

Accomplishments: doing things that have value, developing skills, achieving goals.

There are lots of wonderful resources available on the web and in book or audiobook formats that can help you learn more about positive psychology, mindfulness, and resilience.

Some favorite books on this topic include Martin Seligman's **Authentic Happiness** and Robert Brook's **Raising Resilient Children**.

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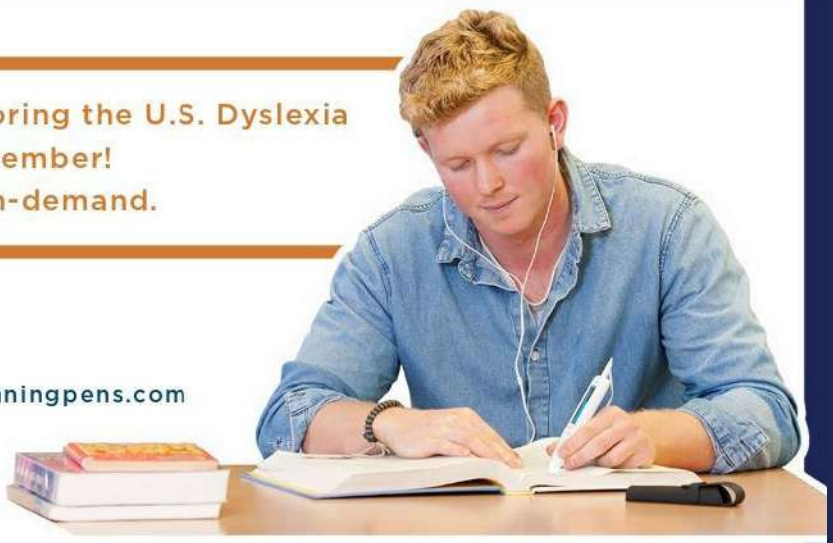

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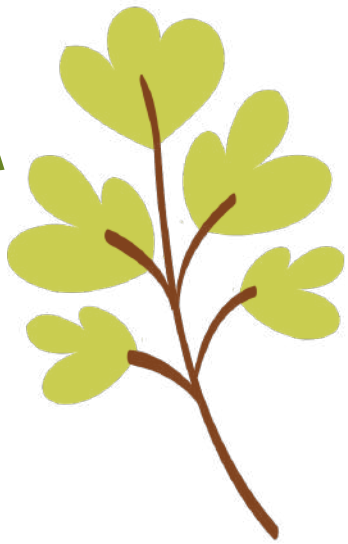
CHAT WITH COLLEGE COACH KARA MATEJKA



"It is incredibly common for students to get to college and just question everything. That's when all the wheels fall off...What am I even doing here? "

- Kara Matejka, College Coach

When all the excitement of arriving at college for the first time, getting to know roommates and starting your courses begins to die down. some students may suddenly discover they are over their heads with college classes.

Away from the familiar supports of home and high school, they need to find new supports and self-advocate.... (almost continuously) for themselves.

Good thing there are student success tutors like Kara Matejka. Kara most recently has worked as a Student Coach or Advisor at Stanford University's Office of Accessible Education.

Kara shared some of her experiences working with bright university students with dyslexia and ADHD.

One of the interesting things that Kara brought up was the need to understand some of the broader challenges that students may be facing as they navigate living far from home and grappling with new academic demands. It is not enough to give a list of things to do - issues like time management, working memory overload, and organization all take their toll on what students think of themselves and how they respond to school as well as other life challenges.

In one example, Kara spoke about a client who felt rushed and overloaded about everything and these feelings extended beyond the classroom, impacting how she saw herself and her competence.

Kara encouraged her to find her own ways of doing things and to give herself more time if that was what she needed. Instead of internalizing voices that say "Why are you so slow or this is taking forever," she put her headphones on and gave herself more time to walk the rows and see what she needed as well as where things are.

"We're told we have to do it fast, go fast, go fast. So if we can't do that, then all of a sudden It becomes a competence thing...(then) I'm not going to be good at this. So I would just rather not do it." - Kara Matejka

Kara has an eclectic background with training as an educational therapist, high school counselor, and travel to 30 countries with teaching as an English as a Second Language teacher.

MY CHILD WON'T GO TO SCHOOL:
WHAT TO DO ABOUT SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

By Dr. Dan Peters of Summit Center

"Things were fine last year and now he wakes up with a stomachache and says he doesn't want to go to school. It takes me forever to get him out the door. We are often late. He ends up screaming at me and telling me I am the worst parent ever! I end up yelling at him and almost have to pull him out of the car. He leaves upset and I feel upset, worried, and angry. Why is this happening!?"

If it sounds like I was in your car this morning, that is because this situation is very common with children — both with those I work and those I parent. On the outside, a child's life can seem so simple — they go to school, play, and have most things done for them. However, on the inside, a child's life can be very complex. This complexity can result in a range of thoughts and feelings that go from "School is hard"... "I don't want to go to school"..."I hate school"..."I am not going to school", to "I wish I was never born" and "I wish I was dead." The latter statements are more alarming to parents for sure, yet all suggest something is going on.

It is easier to take the daily getting to school struggles (and frustration) in stride when your child's behavior consists of avoidance, rather then pure refusal and/or panic. However, it is very difficult to reason with a child who is in refusal mode and even more difficult to reason with a child who is in panic mode. If your child is refusing to go to school or having anxiety or panic attacks in the morning, something is definitely going on. But what can it be?

School avoidance, refusal, and anxiety can be due to several factors. These include:

• Social issues – no friends; being teased; being bullied

• Learning or processing issues – hard to pay attention; hard to read or write; can't finish work on time; can't keep up with the work; hard to hear or see

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• Worry and anxiety – worry about being looked or laughed at; worrying about doing poorly on a test; worried about getting bad grades; worried about being called on in class

While any of the above alone can result with school avoidance, refusal, or anxiety, often a child experiences several of these issues at once.

So what can a parent do?

The first thing to do is consider that your child's behavior is communicating that something is wrong. They usually are not just trying to be difficult and ruin your morning, as they are clearly not having a good morning either. The next thing to do is to try to figure out what is going on. Try talking with them to see if they will give you any information. Next, talk to your child's teacher. Are they seeing anything unusual? Is your child engaged in learning and other kids, or checked out and wanders around alone?

While exploring the above, it is also important to look at our own parenting behavior. Not that you are causing the problems, but our behavior can certainly make things better or worse. For example, a child who is avoidant in the morning may do less well when a parent talks about them being okay, asks what is wrong, and gives too much attention to the trepidation. They may do better with firm, short communication that states they need to brush their teeth because we are leaving in 15 minutes. They then may need ushering to the car. This does not fix the underlying problem (which you are still trying to figure out) but may make the morning routine and drama shortened.

It is important to remember that we all (all of us of all ages) avoid what we are afraid of or worried about. Thus, your child is successfully avoiding a fear by avoiding going to school. It is frustrating, but normal if they are worried or scared. It is also important to remember that overcoming worry and fear involves dealing with it. Avoiding it makes the fear stronger. The key is to get your child to school while ALSO figuring out what is going on that is upsetting to them.

Action can reduce stress.

Things to do:

• Ask you child what is happening at school
• Check in with your child's teacher to see what they are observing
• Ask for a school meeting
• Try different strategies in the morning to improve the avoidance routine
• Be nurturing but firm about the steps needed to get to school
• Seek counseling if the above doesn't help
• Consider a more formal comprehensive evaluation of your child's thinking, learning, emotions, and behavior to better understand why your child is struggling.

It is important that we remember that children want to succeed and feel good. When they are avoiding or refusing to go to school (their job), it means something isn't right for them and it is our job as parents and educators to figure it out.

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Philip Schultz is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who is also dyslexic. The school that he founded with Monica Banks has guided students who have won the most prestigious prizes in creative writing!

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VISITING THE SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

Recently I had such a nice visit to the Seattle Art Museum. It reminded me of how well dyslexic strengths can be cultivated in the multisensory experiences that are museums.

This past summer we had had a visit by Yuko Tsuji, a dyslexia advocate in Japan who spearheaded an effort to get Dyslexic Advantage translated into Japanese. The photo includes our son Krister who is an artist and author-illustrator of graphic novels.

I had seen that there was a **visiting exhibit** featuring Hokusai's wood block prints at the museum.

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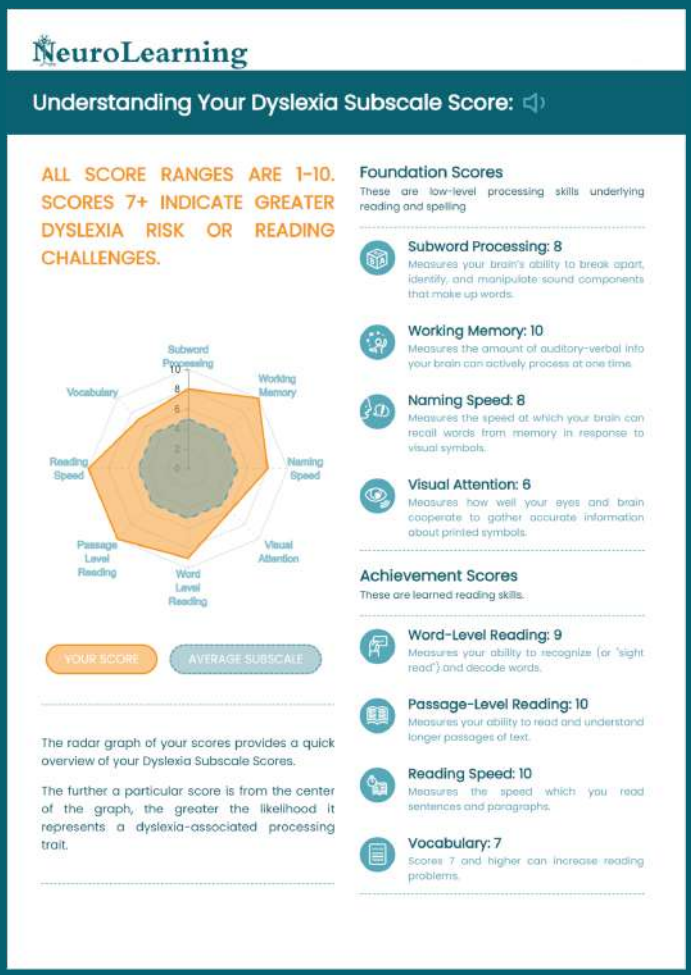
HIGHER ED

For use by higher ed organizations such as colleges, universities, and voc/tech schools with their students.



NeuroLearning

Understanding Your Dyslexia Subscale Score:

ALL SCORE RANGES ARE 1-10. SCORES 7+ INDICATE GREATER DYSLEXIA RISK OR READING CHALLENGES.

The radar graph of your scores provides a quick overview of your Dyslexia Subscale Scores.

The further a particular score is from the center of the graph, the greater the likelihood it represents a dyslexia-associated processing trait.

Foundation Scores

These are low-level processing skills underlying reading and spelling

Subword Processing: 8
Measures your brain's ability to break apart, identify, and manipulate sound components that make up words.

Working Memory: 10
Measures the amount of auditory-verbal info your brain can actively process at one time.

Naming Speed: 8
Measures the speed at which your brain can recall words from memory in response to visual symbols.

Visual Attention: 6
Measures how well your eyes and brain cooperate to gather accurate information about printed symbols.

Achievement Scores

These are learned reading skills.

Word-Level Reading: 9
Measures your ability to recognize (or 'sight read') and decode words.

Passage-Level Reading: 10
Measures your ability to read and understand longer passages of text.

Reading Speed: 10
Measures the speed which you read sentences and paragraphs.

Vocabulary: 7
Scores 7 and higher can increase reading problems.

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Dyslexia Screening and Strengths Assessment

HOW DOES IT WORK?

MUSEUM VISITS ARE MULTISENSORY STORY EXPERIENCES

Today's modern museums are rich multisensory experiences, with pictures and 3-dimensional works of every size and shape, and stories conveyed in pencil and paint, sculpture, and film. Museums introduce different lives, different cultures, and different visions.

Before we were let into the Hokusai exhibit, my artist son and I looked into the American wing.

We saw this masterpiece, Puget on the Pacific Coast, by Albert Bierstadt.

If you're in a hurry, you may walk by this painting without traveling 'into it' and seeing all the little stories and moments that it includes.

For instances, at the left, there is a simple shelter on the hill and below, boats where things (skins?) are laid out to dry. What is it that the figures on the right are laboring to bring in from the sea?

INSPIRATION

Hokusai print

Printmaking can present challenges for dyslexic and non-dyslexic students alike because the print process takes place 'in relief'. Printer's blocks need to be carved 'in negative' (that is, the parts of the block you don't carve will show up in ink) and the entire image will be shown in reverse when it's printed.

The ability to see 'in reverse" is a strength for some dyslexic artist and printmakers, however.

In the educator tour, we first stopped in front of an animation of Hokusai's pieces while the volunteer talked about his history and process, passed out samples of paper and reproductions of prints. When stopped in front of two large screens, the group was asked to compare the events between the two scenes, make educated guesses about what was happening and who the people were. The guide asked if we knew where we were 'standing' in the picture, for instance whether on level ground or looking down from a mountain, and plenty of time was given to answer questions. The art teachers in group shared how they could use simple supplies (like etching into foam core) to make prints.

It is easy to see how visiting a museum can be more exciting for a dyslexic learner than sitting with a book. You are that much closer to the people and things that are worth exhibiting and preserving in museums, and you can make strategic decisions and use creativity in sharing these precious things with others.

Many dyslexic people can excel in various parts of the museum industry; we previously interviewed Michael Graham who makes museum exhibits, and had museum directors Bill Brown (Whitney Museum) and Alexander Goldowsky (Boston Children's Museum, MIT Museum) at past Dyslexic Advantage conferences.

In fact, one of the pioneers in children's museums, Michael Spock, was also dyslexic.

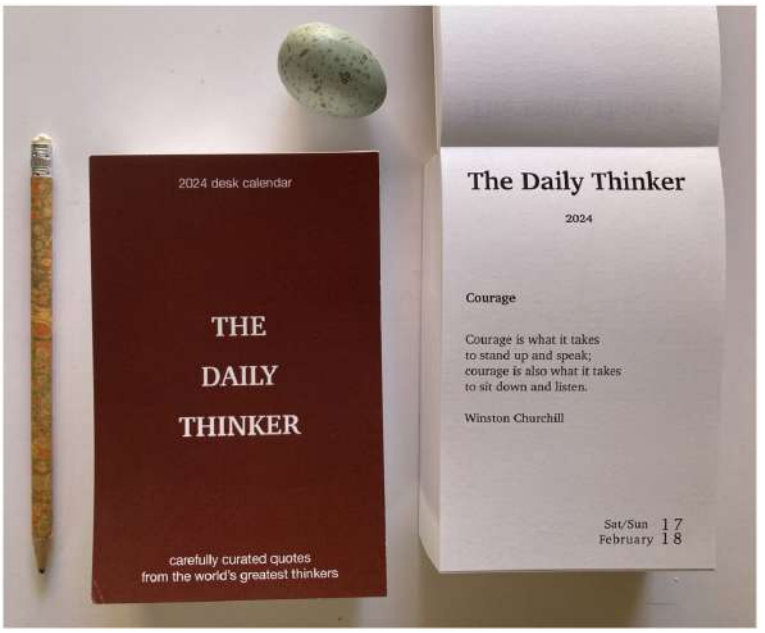
"I didn't read until the 5th grade. Even then, I couldn't read or write in any conventional way...." - Michael Spock

When Michael created the Boston Children's Museum, he was determined to make a museum for children that was more hands-on and exploratory. All museums today share to some degree in that innovation.

Although Michael struggled with reading, he also was curious and liked figuring out how things worked. As a result, all of the museums Michael worked on had lots of interactive exhibits and learning-play areas that really energized the museum industry.

Later Michael would reflect that he learned to "read the real world."

If you haven't visited a museum in awhile, check it out! Museums are great places for discovery and delight.



2024 PAGE-A-DAY DESK CALENDAR

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SUPER TEEN SOPHIA TRANSFORMS DYSLEXIA AWARENESS IN OREGON

"Just knowing the reason why you're having these issues makes a difference psychologically...that alone was kind of refreshing..." - Sophia, 16

Energized by her own recent identification of dyslexia, homeschooled teen Sophia decided to spread positive awareness of dyslexia and help others get identified, too.

Sophia's own journey began when her mother happened upon a newspaper article that mentioned stealth dyslexia, and the description fit her to a 't'.

She took the Neurolearning App online and found her identification a relief.

She then began thinking about how many others are overlooked in terms of their dyslexia, and that put her on a journey to spread awareness and positive awareness (awareness of dyslexic strengths) as well as help others get themselves tested.

HOLDING A DYSLEXIA EVENT FOR THE COMMUNITY

Sophia's first step was to research and prepare a talk about dyslexia at her local library. Because she lives in a rural area, she realized that many members in her community may not have heard much about dyslexia nor be aware of resources available to them.

She advertised her talk in a newspaper, and 60 people showed up. She remembers one person was a grandfather to dyslexic children and he answered a lot of questions. When she identified herself as being dyslexic - he seemed flabbergasted. He was surprised, she thought because he expected someone less confident or informed.

There she was, just 16, poised and able to discuss dyslexia's strengths as well as challenges.

Sophia was happy to present herself as a positive role model for dyslexia and also overturn common misconceptions of how people with dyslexia might appear.

Although formal testing for dyslexia may cost thousands of dollars, Sophia knew the Neurolearning App was less than 5% of the cost of conventional testing, and came with a detailed report for recommendations as well as qualifying for free e-book resources if dyslexia was identified.

WINNING A GRANT TO PROVIDE FREE DYSLEXIA SCREENING

She applied for a grant from the global volunteer group, **Soroptimist** and received enough funds to provide 50 people with free tests!

Bravo to Sophia for her initiative, creative thinking, and generosity in sharing what she knows as well as raising funds to help those could not afford to take the test.

If you'd like to check out my interview with Sophia, listen to the audio below. It was a wide-ranging interview and a wonderful opportunity to step into the shoes of a 16 year old who not only is self-aware of her dyslexia, but also on the journey to recognizing her strengths - and realizing not everyone can do some of the things that she can do.

She also has a great relationship with her non-dyslexic sister; they support each others differences. Sophia also talked about her interest in humanities and in particular ancient Greek literature.

I also talked with her about how in the past decade, there's been an exciting "awakening" going on within the dyslexic community. People are becoming empowered to share their gifts and talk about the positive sides to dyslexia.

FREE TEACHER RESOURCES!

Are you a teacher who needs more practical information about dyslexia and strength-based strategies to teach them?

Dyslexic Advantage is piloting a new program providing free access to all of our informational articles for one year. If you are a public or private school teacher (independent, religious), you are eligible for the program.

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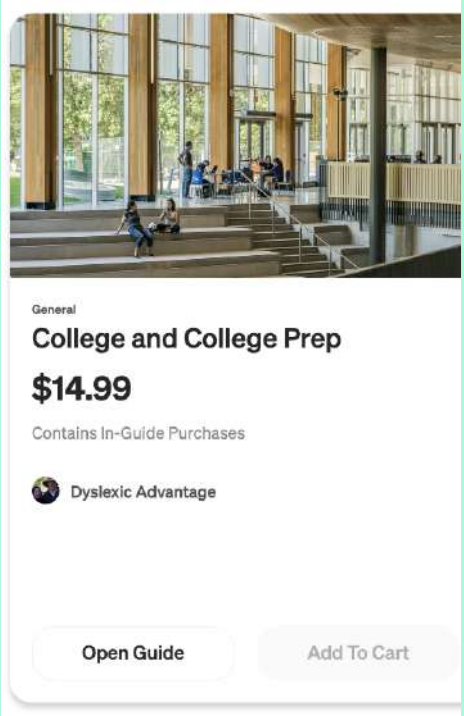

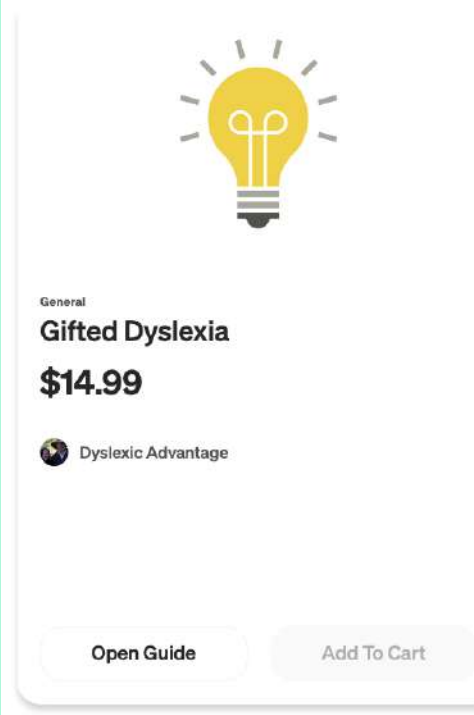

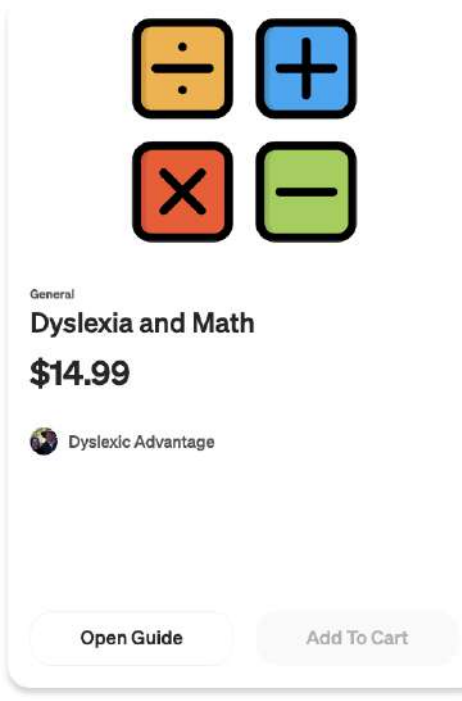

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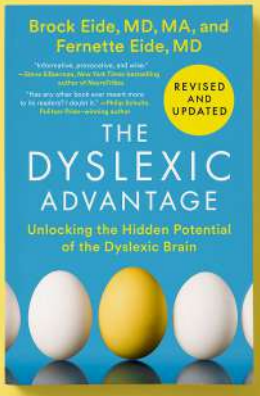
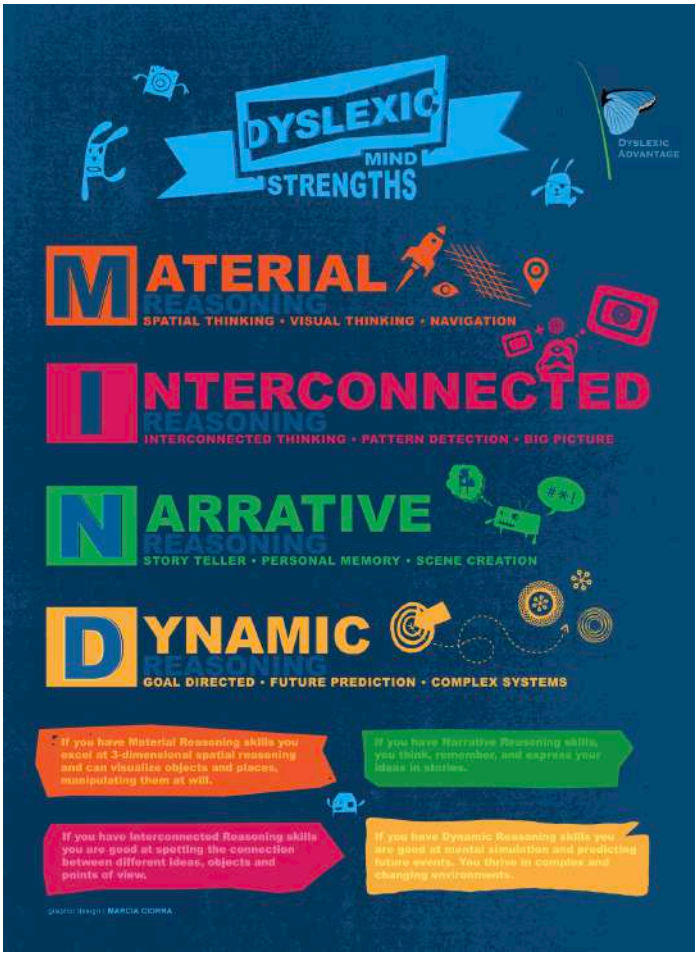
STRENGTHS OF THE DYSLEXIC MIND

Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide can also include a Q & A with parents and teachers.



UNDERSTANDING DYSLEXIA AND THE GIFTED: A COURSE FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Includes:
- Identification
- Dyslexia through the
- - - Lifespan
- High IQ and Dyslexia
- Classroom placement
- Accommodations
- MIND Strengths
- Social and Emotional
- MIND Strengths



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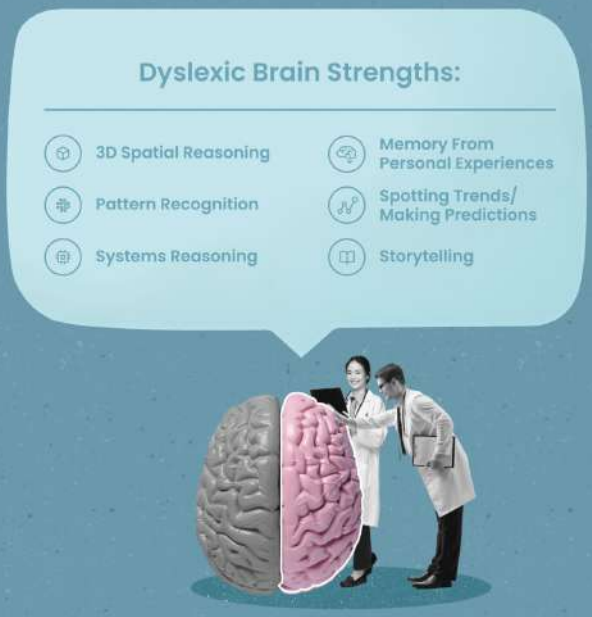
Discover your dyslexic strengths

Dyslexic minds have a **special ability to create complex mental models** of objects and ideas. These models become powerful tools for creative thinking and big picture problem solving.

Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide, renowned dyslexia experts and authors of "**The Dyslexic Advantage**," discovered specific high level strengths can predict dyslexia as accurately as difficulties in decoding and spelling.

Discover your dyslexia-associated strengths with our free MIND Strengths self-assessment survey.

Sign Up For Your MIND Strengths Assessment



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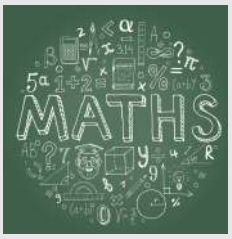
DYSLEXIA NEWS

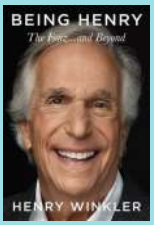
After Struggles in School,These Adults with Dyslexia Embrace Their Strengths

Channel News Asia



Disabilities in Math Affect Many Students - But Get Little Attention

Hechringer Report



Henry Winkler's 'Being Henry' Including Challenges with Dyslexia as an Actor

Variety

Dyslexia Support Proposals Back in Michigan Legislature

Detroit Chalkbeat

Inside Dell, Ubisoft, EY's New Interview Process to Attract Neurodiverse Talent Including Dyslexia

Fortune-Microsoft

Dyslexia My Super Power - Matt Bird

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"Summit Center helped me find out I am both dyslexic -- and smart. I just think differently. Now I like school, and I have the tools I need to succeed."

Helping Children, Teens, Adults, and Families Realize Their Potential

assessment | consultation | treatment

Summit Center specializes in helping students with complex learning profiles and differences -- including kids who may be gifted, and those who might be both gifted and have challenges (known as twice-exceptional or 2e). We provide formal evaluations of strengths and challenges, and offer specific strategies and recommendations to guide growth and maximize potential.

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www.summitcenter.us
info@summitcenter.us

BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

A Pictorial History

OPEN MENU

01 The Boston Children's Museum Timeline

1962

Michael Spock is hired to direct the Museum. The Museum he inherits has traditional glass-case exhibitions and declining attendance.

1964

With the opening of *What's Inside?* Boston Children's Museum launches a museum revolution, removing the 'Do not touch' signs, and pioneering hands-on, visitor-focused exhibits and programs, a model now used in museums around the world.

1964

Boston Children's Museum staff develops MATCh Box kits (Materials and Activities for Teachers and Children) that bring real materials and hands-on learning to classrooms. Titles include Grouping Birds, Animal Camouflage, Netsilik Eskimos, the House of Ancient Greece, and Paddle to the Sea.

1966

The City of Boston gives a Japanese Tea House to the Museum, which is adapted to teach about daily life in Japan.

1970

The *Grandparents House* exhibit offers role playing experiences in social history and stimulates conversations across generations.

1972

The *Recycle Shop* opens with cool materials for making creations of all sorts.

"Not only were the fascinating museums of my dyslexic childhood pivotal experiences in my informal education, but they became the seedbed of my life's professional occupation with the museum world..."

- Michael Spock, creator of modern hands-on children's museums