

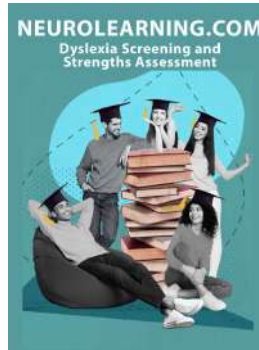
APRIL 2025 ISSUE 112

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER



- STORMS AHEAD: PUBLIC SCHOOL
- LIFE LESSONS FROM PLAYING BASEBALL
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



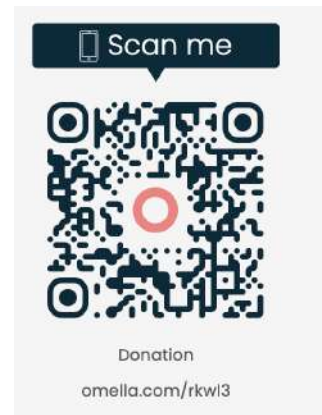
Dr. Fernette Eide
Editor-in-Chief



Thanks to comedian Phil Haney for our book giveaway: *Spellbound, my life as a dyslexic wordsmith*. Learn more [here](#). Phil is a keen observer and storyteller.

The link for this issue is: <https://joom.ag/dZjd>

This issue will only be on Joomag for about 6 months. Afterwards, look for this issue in our **Newsletter Archives at DyslexicAdvantage.org**. Keep our programs running by **donating** or becoming a **Premium subscriber**. We need your help.



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



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 Williams, Cheryl Kahn, and Jack Martin. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for Design and layout, and Andi 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.

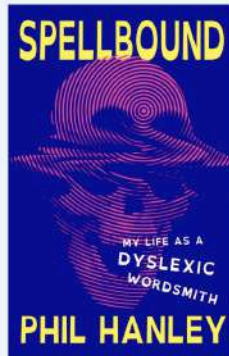


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Register for a free Book Giveaway

Comedian Phil Hanley's Dyslexia Journey (memoir); for grownups, not kids



Spellbound

By Phil Hanley

Review by Linda M. Castellitto

Phil Hanley's frank, vulnerable, funny memoir recounts his journey from struggling student to successful comedian who wears his dyslexia "like a badge of honor."

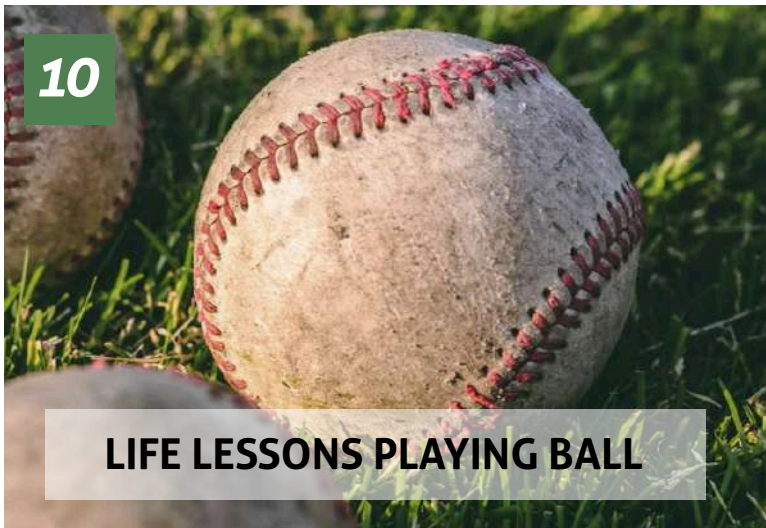
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NEWS



STORMS AHEAD: WHAT TO KNOW FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS



The end of the school year is finally in sight. If it was a good year, looking back is easy - to be thankful for your student's hard work and supportive teachers. If it wasn't a good year, then there's hope for a better one next year. Common issues to both are how to keep students moving forward with a positive outlook and understanding, with growing awareness of their strengths and talents and the benefits of being able to self-advocate.

There are considerable stormy seas ahead for public school students: finances may be drastically cut, affecting teacher training, classroom size, dyslexia screening or testing, and technology accommodations. Also, the [Nation's Report Card](#) numbers:

"Thirty-three percent of fourth-graders at or above NAEP Proficient in reading, lower compared to 2019"

If 2/3 of all students aren't proficient in reading (and does this include a majority of dyslexic students who might contribute to 20% of this number?), it's not surprising that most schools are in crisis mode in regard to reading instruction. With uncertain funding and federal grants cancelled or at-risk of being cancelled, dyslexic students are particularly at risk for being overlooked and not supported in education.

High poverty schools are especially at risk for across-the-board reading and math failures.

2023 ISBE results: Not a single student tested was proficient in reading in 32 Illinois schools

Illinois State Board of Education: Students scoring proficient in reading on the IAR/SAT/DLM-AA, 2023

School Name	District	Grades served	Operational spend per student	Student Enrollment	Graduation rate	Students proficient in reading
Lovejoy Elementary School	Brooklyn UD 188	PK - 5	\$16,974	101		0
Lovejoy Middle School	Brooklyn UD 188	6 - 8	\$20,182	20		0
Austin College and Career Academy HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$26,598	170	55%	0
Bowen High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$31,697	192	59%	0
CICS - Ralph Ellison Campus	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$22,905	203	69%	0
Collins Academy High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$27,163	219	79%	0
Fenger Academy High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$24,314	234	57%	0
Hirsch Metropolitan High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$32,805	102	49%	0
IJLA Charter High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$23,515	94	42%	0
Noble St Chtr-Rowe-Clark MS Acad	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$24,011	387	88%	0
North Lawndale Prep Chtr-Collins	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$18,615	413	95%	0
Richards Career Academy HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$24,301	275	69%	0
Spry Community Links High School	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$49,380	73	76%	0
Urban Prep Chtr Acad Englewood HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$18,443	155	80%	0
YCCS Chtr - Chatham	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$22,151	124	44%	0
YCCS- McKinley-Lakeside Acad	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$43,484	85	39%	0
YCCS West	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$39,410	76	64%	0
YCCS-Albizu Campos Puerto Rican HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$23,963	112	41%	0
YCCS-Association House	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$23,791	75	44%	0
YCCS-CCA Academy HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$26,957	105	62%	0
YCCS-Community Youth Dev Inst HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$27,934	81	32%	0
YCCS-Innovations of Arts Integr HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$13,494	474	49%	0
YCCS-Latino Youth Alternative HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$24,674	139	33%	0
YCCS-Olive Harvey Mid College HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$19,217	93	32%	0
YCCS-Progressive Leadership Acad	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$30,691	130	60%	0
YCCS-Scholastic Achievement HS	City of Chicago SD 299	9 - 12	\$29,572	107	37%	0
School District 428 IYC-HRB	IDJ Sch Dist 428	7 - 12	\$54,341	39	81%	0
Taft Primary School	Kankakee SD 111	K - 3	\$15,693	355		0
YBMC Charter Sch	McLean County USD 5	11 - 12	\$10,794	28	21%	0
Meredosia-Chambersburg Elem Sch	Meredosia-Chambersburg 11	PK - 5	\$20,382	107		0
Meredosia-Chambersburg High Sch	Meredosia-Chambersburg 11	9 - 12	\$23,549	47	75%	0
Urban Prep Charter Acad for Young Men	Urban Prep Charter Acad	9 - 12	\$27,574	52	--	0

Source: Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Report Card 2023 Note: The state board measures students' reading and math proficiencies based on the test results of the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (grades 3-8), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (grade 11) and the Dynamic Learning Maps assessment (students with cognitive disabilities)

WIREPOINTS

Wirepoints, a non-profit focusing on educational accountability in Illinois asks:

"How can 84% of Chicago Public Schools graduate when only 26% of 11th graders are proficient in reading?"

At the same time that schools are touting their record-breaking numbers of students graduating, it's clear that graduating is not connected to objective standards of achievement. There are pros and cons on either side about "social promotion" and data that suggests holding back students who don't meet academic standards can also have negative effects.

Despite these discouraging statistics, the amount of money spent on students has been rising to an average of over \$17,000 per student per year.

SCHOOLS

And if a parent is having trouble obtaining appropriate supports for their student at school, the potential recourse of appealing to the Department of Education seems unlikely given its downsizing and possible elimination ([read more here](#)).

The section of the Department of Education that deals with learning disabilities is to be moved to the Department of Health and Human Services, but that department has also been grappling with significant budget cuts of its own.

But as a non-profit leader in this field of dyslexia, I would also add that many families with dyslexic students have received precious little support from the Department of Education over the years despite the billions of dollars (\$260 billion in 2024) allocated to help students.

The protections of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and [504](#) have not changed, so students should continue to have IEP and 504 accommodations and modifications, but enforcement may be weaker (but admittedly was already weak).

WHAT TO DO?

As most public schools avoid grade retention, the biggest challenge for students is keeping up and not falling farther behind.

KEEP SKILLS ALIVE OVER SUMMER

Sometimes known as "summer slide", keep reading, math, and even science going over the summer.

Reading ideas: Reading books of high interest together is a great way to keep reading skills alive and also expand a student's vocabulary. Students may have an easier time reading dialogue than descriptive passages, so if you're a parent reading with a child, you can read aloud all the parts except the dialogue that your student reads for a particular character.

Other low stress reading ideas may include reading comics or graphic novels, video game manuals, or reading along with an audiobook.

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Some students may start typing little notes or even jokes. Older students may be encouraged to write short movie or video game reviews. Students with rich imaginations may discover their love of writing once the burdens of physically writing by hand are minimized.

Some teens can get hooked on reading and writing fan fiction (there are large communities for these types of writing) or hobby interests like sports.

When coming up with ideas for reading, writing, and math over the summer, find ways to channel interests and passions - many little sparks may grow into roaring blazes later.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR WHAT MY STUDENT NEEDS IN THE COMING YEAR?

The most helpful advocacy of a dyslexic student in school is based on a solid understanding of a student's specific strengths and weaknesses.

The gold standard in our opinion is comprehensive dyslexia testing - ability testing, usually in the form of some measure of IQ that includes assessment of verbal and nonverbal intelligence, working memory, and processing speed, in addition to achievement tests which would include tests of phonological awareness, single word reading, sentence reading spelling, prompt writing, various aspects of math.

But comprehensive testing is expensive (thousands of dollars) and often not covered by public schools (if a child continually experiences failure and a child's parents disagree with school assessments, they may be able to apply for coverage of private testing through a program called an [IEE](#) or Independent Educational Evaluation).

Resources like the online [Neurolearning Dyslexia Screening and Strengths Assessment](#) (\$79.95) or online testing with remote online psychologists or literacy specialist are other options that may help present information to support needs in 504 or IEP situations, but public schools still typically have the committees based at their schools determine what educational plans or accommodations a student will receive. In the past we had recommended [Marker Learning](#), but they seem to be undergoing some restructuring and some recent negative evaluations may suggest that circumstances have changed.

Neurolearning is a social purpose company co-founded by the co-founders of Dyslexic Advantage, the non-profit organization producing this newsletter. In addition Nils Lahr is the CTO of Neurolearning - a serial entrepreneur whose own dyslexia made him determined to make dyslexia screening more affordable, accessible, and informative to children and adults.

Neurolearning is distinctive as a dyslexia screening tool because it looks at cognitive, literacy, and auditory and visual processing difficulties that can be associated with dyslexia in addition to strengths in order to inform classroom recommendations. Each report is personally reviewed by Dr. Brock Eide. Positive dyslexia identification on the Neurolearning screener helps qualify students for the free ebook resources from [Bookshare](#) and discounted audiobooks from [Learning Ally](#). Neurolearning will soon be launching a subscription platform with extensive video library that connects resources with test results. There's also extensive social-emotional training, career finder, and courses to help people learn about their strengths.

Check with your schools to see if there are summer tutoring funds available or reading or writing clubs that can help keep these skills developing through the summer months Encourage technology - summer is a great time to start.

LIFE LESSONS PLAYING BALL



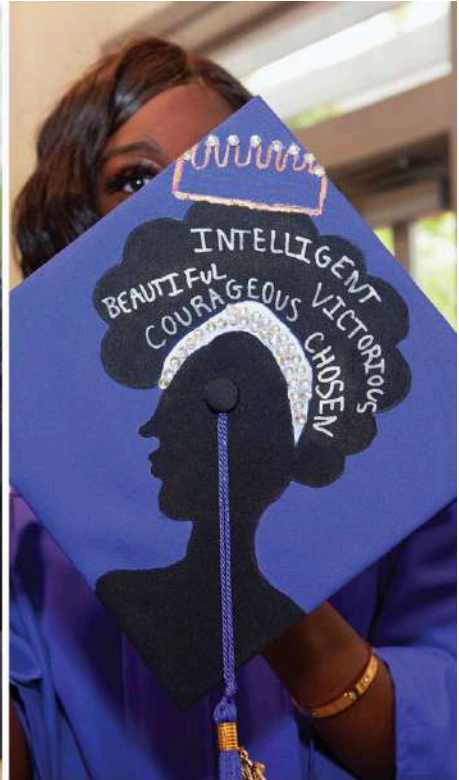
"When I had dyslexia, they didn't diagnose it as that. It was frustrating and embarrassing. I could tell you a lot of horror stories about what you feel like on the inside..."

One of the beautiful things about baseball is that every once in a while you come into a situation where you want to, and where you have to, reach down and prove something." - Nolan Ryan

This isn't just a story about Nolan Ryan, one of the greatest pitchers of all time. Nolan was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility and he holds a record number of career strike outs (5714) which is 839 more than runner up Randy Johnson...but a bigger one about how sports can provide lifetime benefits even if extremes of sports achievements aren't reached.

The story in this article focuses on one man's success in baseball that included playing two years at the professional level. And he shared what life looked like along the way and how doing sports as a young person had a profound impact on his life. For the full report, visit [here](#). Brandon is a pseudonym used in the paper, I think some of his insights will be valuable for kids and parents active in school sports.

Brandon said that even as a young child, he shared a passion for baseball with his grandfather. He would watch the Red Sox play whenever he stayed over at his house as a child. Although he wasn't athletic and even had balance issues like falling over if he tried to bounce a ball off the wall, this lack of precocious sports ability didn't discourage him or his parents from signing up for sports camps.



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SPORTS



"...my mom put me in camps every year. And I would struggle and struggle, but it made me outgrow those things like my balance ... I got repetition of my practice. And then it made me ... every time I would fail at a young age and maybe like in my head I'm like: 'I want to keep going, I want to prove people wrong.' Because I mean I can't say how many times people would tell me I couldn't do something"

As Brandon saw his baseball skills improve, Physical Education became more important for him during his school day. It was something that made him look forward to school.

"...that was my outlet...I can get my energy out and be more relaxed in class instead of stressing about how I am gonna do this test or whatnot."

Later on he would say, "I knew in my mind, with my dyslexia and how I think and how I process really fast and being on the mound...I could pitch a game...it was finally a sport and a position that was at my speed...If I didn't have dyslexia, I would not have been as successful as a pitcher as I was to play two years in pro."

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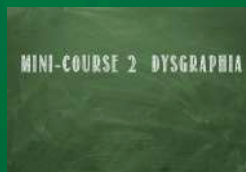
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SPORTS

It's interesting that looking back on his school days, Brandon remembered that part of his frustration was not being able to write as fast as the ideas that appeared in his head.

It's also interesting that the paper mentions that baseball is a sport where players have to be accustomed to failure. It is a team sport, but individuals also compete against themselves.

Other benefits that Brandon believed sports played in his life: more friends and connections (before Brandon became active in sports, he felt excluded because of classroom pullouts and embarrassing episodes reading aloud in class).

"At the mound, the pitching mound is my safe haven....I felt like I didn't have a learning disability. it didn't matter...It's nothing to the guys I am playing with and whatnot..."

Also one of his coaches opened the way to seeing himself as having leadership abilities:

"...my mentor, my coach...he saw a leader in me. I never saw myself as a leader. I was always back of the class. And he really strived and pushed me...he said I was a natural leaders and he made me captain in my freshman year...I felt I didn't deserve it, had just said, 'People listen to you.' "

There are many more potential benefits for extracurricular activities and parents and students may need to make tough decisions about how to parcel out their limited time.

We do know that many adult dyslexics will say that what they eventually did outside of school had more to do with their eventual life happiness and success than what they did in school.

So take each choice as it comes and don't assume that students will be prodigies as soon as they begin learning something that they're interested in. If the passion for a sport or other hobby is there, then a lot of good things will follow.

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

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Summit Center specializes in helping individuals with complex learning profiles and differences -- including those who may be gifted, and 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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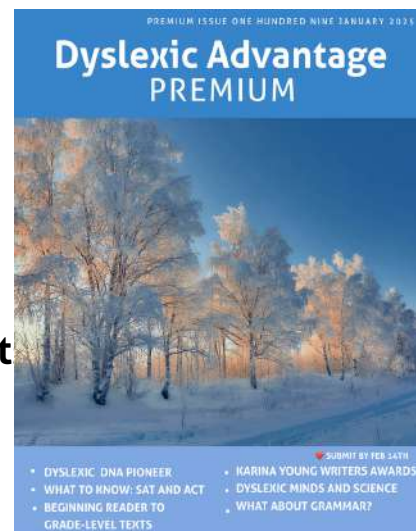
Storytelling

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Articles in our January issue:

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- Dyslexic Minds and Science
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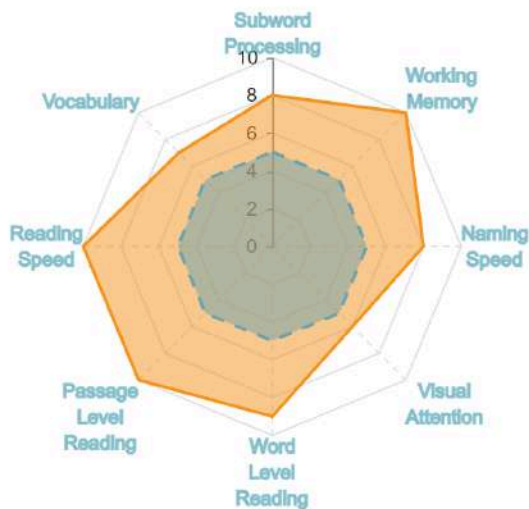
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Understanding Your Dyslexia Subscale Score:

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



YOUR SCORE

AVERAGE SUBSCALE

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.

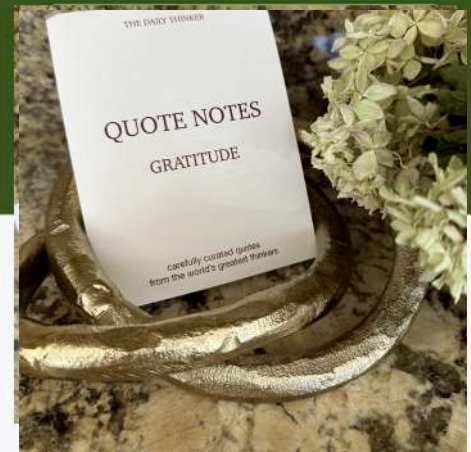
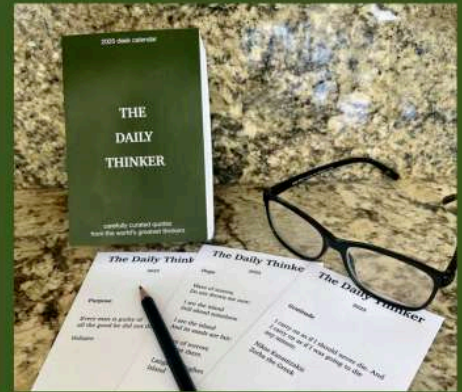
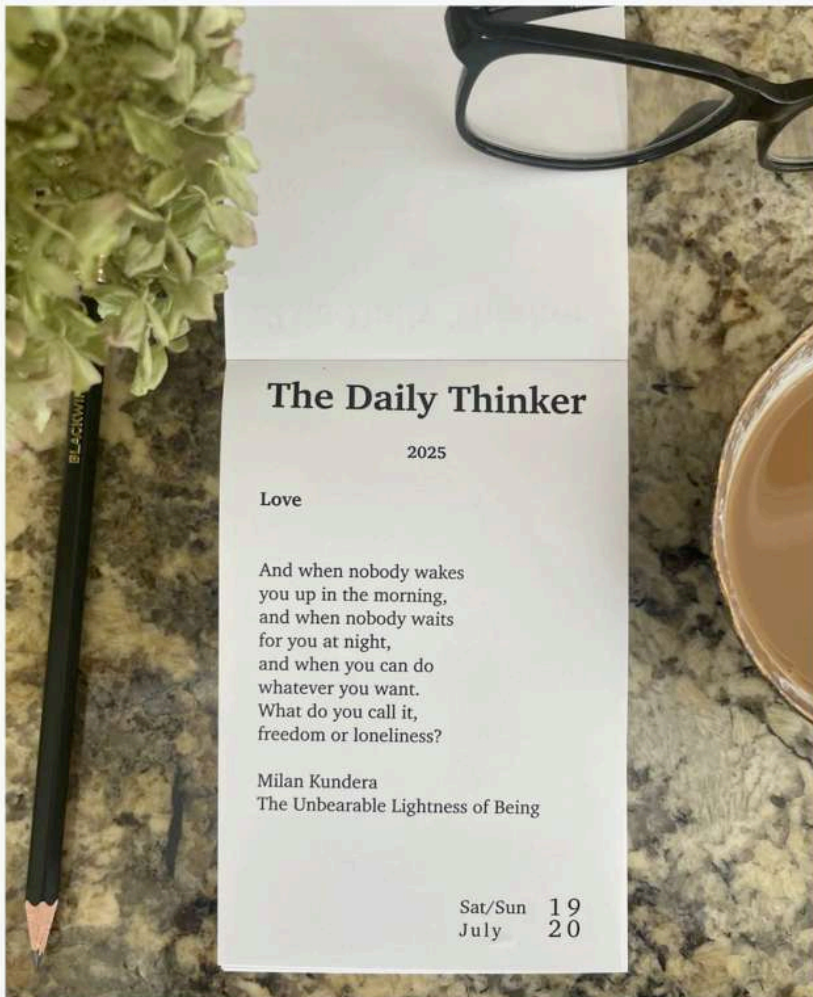


Vocabulary: 7

Scores 7 and higher can increase reading problems.

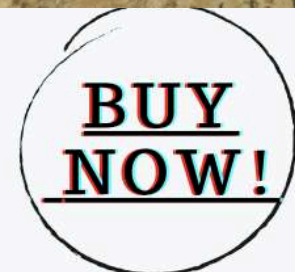
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**ADHD Drugs Linked to Heart Side Effects
Neuroscience News**



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through Art
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*"Summit Center
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- Zoe Saldana