

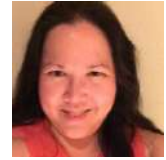
# Dyslexic Advantage

## NEWSLETTER



### **GREAT STORYTELLERS**

- COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE
- MUSICAL INSPIRATION
- ON WRITING
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



Fernette Eide MD, Editor

Dear Friends,

Happy Holidays from all of us at Dyslexic Advantage. Thank you for what you give to the world!

- Fernette Eide

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The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is \$49.99 and available for children and adults 7-70 years old. iPad, iPhone, Android, and Kindle Fire.



The app may be used to identify and qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books.

Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Williams, 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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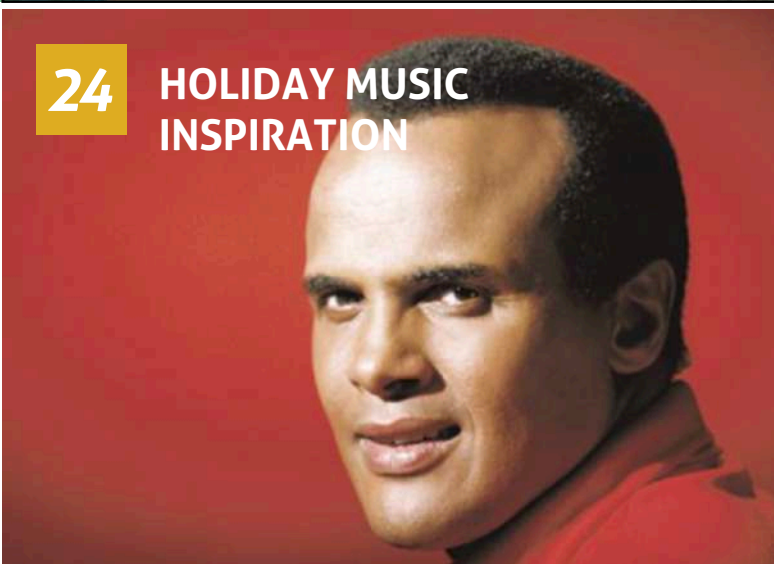
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## DYSLEXIA NEWS



# GREAT STORYTELLERS

Dyslexic storytellers are among the greatest storytellers who ever lived. They weave their stories in family get-togethers, business meetings, novels, screenplays, and poems, films, illustrations, cartoons, and paintings.

When we first began learning more about dyslexia from the families we came to know that the gifts that some in the field were familiar with were visual - but when we got to know more members of this community better, storytelling clearly emerged as a strength.

The cover of this issue is a watercolor painting by **Jerry Pinkney**, a brilliant children's book artist whose original artwork is now sold through the [Michelson gallery](#).



**"I truly believe dyslexia made me the achiever I am in my art, and it made me who I am as a person..." – Jerry Pinkney**

What makes a great story?

A feeling or mood? A meaning beyond a picture or page? Jerry captured all of that in the over 100 picture books, nonfiction books, and novels he illustrated.

It might be that storytelling is a core strength of dyslexic people - because they have rich personal memories and imagery to draw from, sprinkled in with natural gifts of distilling ideas, experiences, and images to their essence.

The challenges are that mechanical issues (writing things down, spelling words right) can stand in the way or worse, lead people to doubt themselves. All the more reason to find ways people of any age to share their stories.

Sally Gardner is an award-winning novelist and children's book writer who was told she was unteachable and ended up in a school for "maladjusted children",

**"At the age of fourteen, when everyone had given up hope, I learned to read. The first book I read was "Wuthering Heights" and after that no one could stop me. My mother, bless her cotton socks, said that if I got five O-levels I could go to art school, and much to my teachers' chagrin, I did just that. At art school I shot from the bottom to the top like a little rocket."**

Today, Sally's sold over 2 million books, and that's just in the UK. Sally again:

**"I strongly believe that dyslexia is like a Rubik's Cube: it takes time to work out how to deal with it but once you do, it can be the most wonderful gift."**



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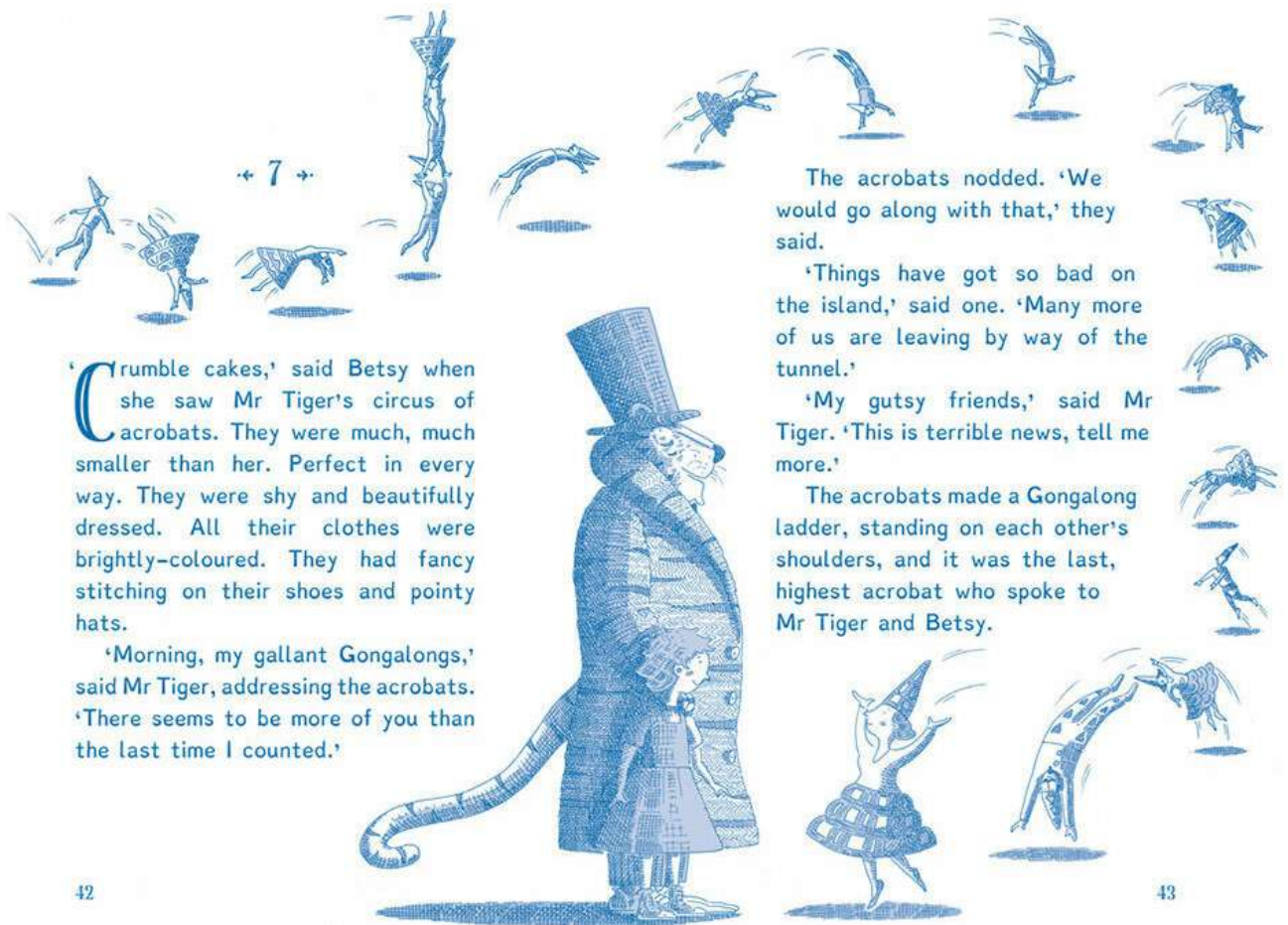
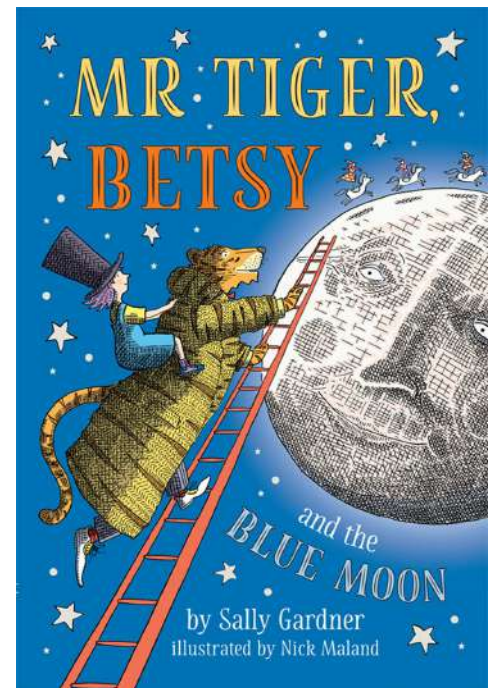
## INSPIRATION

One wonderful series of children's books from Sally are the Mr Tiger series. Sally has a pretty remarkable imagination - this could be a fun read aloud with children. The pictures by Nick Maland are just wonderful!

Here's a description of Mr Tiger, Betsy, and the Blue Moon:

"An enchanting fairy tale about Mr Tiger, his troupe of acrobats, and Betsy K. Glory, the daughter of a mermaid and an ice cream maker. "

Click on the picture below to see a larger view of the illustration!



## INSPIRATION

We hope some of you will encourage your students to enter our Karina Eide Young Writers Awards. It's open to students age 7-18 who are dyslexic. Entries can be dictated and awards will be granted on the basis of creativity, storytelling, and ideas rather than technical aspects like spelling. We also allow students to dictate work to a family member, if preferred.

To see winning entries from last year, click on the picture of last year's March issue below.



The Karina awards are always the highlight of every year for us. Non-monetary (ribbons, certificates) and small cash awards are given.

To learn more and enter visit here: [Karina Eide Young Writers Page.](#)

Entries can be as few as 17 words (haiku) or as many as 700. For longer form writers, an excerpt or chapter can be submitted. We also accept fan fiction. We'll be giving away more than \$1000 in cash awards. The deadline is February 14th, Valentine's Day. Enter!

# COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE EARLY YEARS

**"The more you know yourself, the more patience you have for what you see in others." - Erik Erikson**



In the late 1950's and early 60's, Erik Erikson, Harvard professor of Psychology, proposed 6 stages of psychosocial development that supplanted other theories of personality development - like those of Sigmund Freud's.

His model of life stages had 8 parts and described the whole life span beginning at birth (trust vs mistrust) and ending at death (integrity vs. despair). Today his work is seen as having contributed tremendously to early childhood education as well as an understanding of psychology throughout the lifespan.

Despite the intense social and emotional pressures that dyslexic children face in their early school years, there are surprisingly few routine practices in place to ensure that their emotional health and confidence is safeguarded.

## **STAGE 4 of ERIKSON'S LIFE STAGES**

Stage of 4 Erikson's Life Stages occurs from ages 5 to 12 years and it coincides with the first years of formal schooling.

The developmental goal of this stage is to learn to accomplish complex skills and develop feelings of competence. Ideally, elementary school provides opportunities for students to discover their interests and develop areas of expertise. Even small successes, whether classroom or extracurricular, can lead children to being recognized for what they can do - whether school work, or sports, drawing pictures, music, helping the school, or something else.

## WELL-BEING

The idea is that if children experience positive social feedback about their accomplishments, they show traits of "industry" by persevering at tasks and putting work before immediate pleasures.

But what if children don't have the opportunity to develop these positive experiences of industry? Children start to believe they cannot meet the expectations of parents or teachers and they begin to develop feelings of inferiority about their abilities. They may begin resisting new experiences and activities, developed fixed mindsets about what they can or cannot do, and ultimately suffer from low self-esteem and motivation.

**"Children love and want to be loved and they very much prefer the joy of accomplishment to the triumph of hateful failure."**

**- Erik Erikson**

Competency is an important component of confidence - and it is an important contributor to the development of a person's identity.

A recent paper looking at [self-concept in dyslexic university students](#) had the following helpful summary of the challenges facing younger dyslexic students:

"The concept of self is learned and regarded by many as multidimensional so individuals can appraise themselves as being talented in one domain whilst holding a lower self-view in another. Within this formation of identity lie self-esteem and self-efficacy. The former reflects a feeling of "worthiness" ("I am happy being the way I am") and may reflect one's perception of the self in specific areas such as the academic, physical or social self. The latter is an appraisal of one's ability to influence events ("If I am in a difficult situation I can usually think of a way out")...

These components underpin emotional well-being, and both have been identified as being vulnerable in many readers with dyslexia, particularly those for whom their dyslexia was missed or poorly supported at school leading to repeated academic failure. Several studies report that children with dyslexia who attend mainstream schools have lower self-esteem than children who attend specialist dyslexia schools and often make negative statements regarding their academic ability in comparison to their peers."

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## BUILDING COMPETENCY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

The journey to self-confidence is paved with many challenging experiences, successes, setbacks, and failures. Are there opportunities for your student to shine both inside and outside the classroom?

Kids may be labeling themselves all the time - but if they are in a poorly-fitting classroom and having difficulty finding out what they might be good at, then give them appropriate positive feedback when you notice what they are doing well.

Are they kind? Are they good with younger siblings? Are they bright? Do they have great ideas? Are there activities they are well-suited to where they can have an opportunity to shine?

If a young student is behind in classroom basics like reading, writing, spelling, and math, it may seem counter-intuitive at the time, focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, but building up strengths lifts everything up, including mood and self-confidence that make it possible to overcome the embarrassment of difficulties and persist at hard-to-learn tasks.

As we ease into the holidays, look for opportunities to make your student aware of their strengths and give them time to experiment and get better at things. Find potential mentors in interests your student may have and see where interests take them.

When our son was young and he became interested in the art on campus at the University of Chicago, we visited a local sculptor's studio who was responsible for some of the magnificent gargoyles on the university buildings. He was very kind in letting us visit and he spent time to show [Krister](#) around his workshop. He remembers that visit with [Walter Arnold](#) to this day.

Doing something as a family to support a child's interest can be validating of that interest. It was like an interview I remember having with [Mary Clifford](#).

When one of her sons expressed an interest in history, the family made a trip to Saskatchewan to see where her grandparents had grown up and died. She recalled how interested he was in hearing and then imagining what life must have been like then and how it grew his interest in history and remains with him to this day (he's a history professor in Saskatchewan and he is severely dyslexic).



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National Center for Learning Disabilities, the International Dyslexia Association have evaluated the Sondag System(r) and deemed that the program contained the required elements for teaching reading identified by the Nation Reading Panel.

## WELL-BEING

Dyslexic children tend to have rich personal memories. Thinking of firsthand experiences that allow them to meet people who are doing things that they are interested in - can encourage them to learn more and recognize how their interests and abilities are different from others.

When our daughter was young, she was interested in listening to and writing fragments of stories. Sometimes she would dictate stories to me and draw pictures that would go along. Even though she struggled with spelling and handwriting, she became a prolific creative writer and wrote fan fiction under a [fake name](#). When her stories became more popular, she had a host of others volunteer to be early readers and proofread her work!

When she was 15, she got head-hunted by a small startup company to write game scenarios for a facebook game company and got a kick out of seeing story plots turn up in a playable game (being paid for it was nice, too).



Many children develop serial passions, so it does not matter if they fall out of love with an activity or subject...anything that takes them off the regular track affirms to them some aspect of who they are - and slowly but surely these experiences lead to greater feelings of confidence as they progress into young adulthood.

If students and parents are unaware of what their strengths may be, then looking at strengths inventory may be a good place to start.

Here's a listing of the 24 VIA Character Strengths.

## VIA Classification of Character Strengths



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**Michelle Lucas, M.Ed., AT**



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## WELL-BEING

If you or your child want to take the survey, you can sign up [here](#) (it's free).

It's a long test because it's for research purposes, but it can be enlightening.

### ANY ACTIVITY CAN BE A CONFIDENCE OR STRENGTH-BUILDING SKILL

So many parents and counselors have told us that when they ask their students what their strengths may be, they can't suggest any. What that's told me is that people need to hear specific and positive feedback more. Any activity can build confidence and personal strengths. That includes what some people refer to as character strengths - like being patient or being a good listener, or being a good friend.

Development tends to be late-blooming in dyslexic children, so early on, it may be hard to see particular strengths except for occasional glimmers. Be content to wait. Some studies show creative strengths in adults with dyslexia, but not children - but this must be seen within the context of late blooming development. Good things are coming. Be patient, affirm, and encourage.

When our son was young his fine motor coordination due to dyspraxia was a bigger issue than learning to read. He gave up on art when he realized at the time what his finger could do had no hope of matching what he wanted to create in his mind. He still loved leafing through art books and going to art fairs and museums. It was only much later (high school) when his development clicked in and he began to imagine that it was possible to study art as a profession. At the end of our first edition of *The Dyslexic Advantage* (our **update** is coming on Valentine's Day 2023!), we shared this poem from JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*:

**"All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king."**

What we added to this in our book was this:

"If you are an individual with dyslexia, this prophecy is also for you. Although you may not "glitter" in the classroom, if the promise of your future can sustain you through the challenges you face, your intellect will be forged as keen as any blade."

## WHAT TO DO

At school, the strengths of every dyslexic student should be recognized and opportunities to build on those strengths be an integral part of every school day. Students should be given achievable challenges and when possible, accommodations and technology to maximize learning and expression.

Outside of school, students need to de-stress and find places of solitude, time to think, imagine, explore, and find role models and heroes.

Finally, dyslexic students need time. With every ambitious building project, there needs to be time allotted to get all the foundations in place.

But do not wait to rescue children who are trapped in bad situations, take them out if necessary, and advocate for what they need.

Strengths should not be thought of as an optional part of a student's educational plan or something that gets added after formal education is done; developmental stages need to be successfully resolved in order to move on. If a person can't get beyond the industry vs. inferiority stage of development, then they can't move on to identity formation, and they can remain blocked for a long time.

Make sure your children have all the information to understand themselves and to discover more about themselves and their strengths so that they can blossom and grow.



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# ON WRITING: A GUEST POST

Recently, a bilingual teacher in my Dyslexia for Teachers class shared his experiences being a dyslexic writing in both English and Chinese. With his permission, I am sharing some of his reflections:



**"Under an educational system that attaches great importance to writing abilities, I have been subjected to countless criticisms and reproaches. I should have given up or avoided writing early on, but for a community college teacher who encouraged me, saying that my articles were imaginative and beautiful. That's why I was determined to continue to study and write." - Jason**

Jason's post:

"I love writing a lot, but it is always tricky for me. I used to have too many ideas and didn't know how to start.

Retrieving words and spelling are always in trouble when I try to write, and there are often a lot of spelling mistakes and wrong choices of words. Grammar also often deviates, words often do not convey the meaning, and even the entire text or sentence is unreasonable or cannot express what I want.

My native language is hieroglyphs, and I use the wrong homonyms often when writing. What annoys me the most, and I don't know how to solve it, is that even though I have reviewed it several times, I can't speak out about these mistakes.

Dysgraphia and finger confusion are the biggest obstacle to me. It's not just that the calligraphy is ugly. When I was a child, I often turned left, right, or upside down. For example, 'b' be come 'p' or 'd', spell first into 'frist'. Even now, I often feel that my hands and fingers are out of control, and even though there are images of words in my head, I can't always write them out clearly or completely.



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## INSPIRATION

Also, because I didn't use the muscles of my hand properly when writing, my right hand suffered from strain, whether it was the wrist, arm, or even the head. I had a lot of pain in college because of the heavy writing requirements. It would affect my neck and back pain in severe cases simultaneously.

Of course, these problems are not difficult to solve with the help of many digital tools and technology. For example, Grammarly improves the expression of the article and helps proofread where it goes wrong. It can also help students learn and correct at the same time. Sometimes, using the keyboard may not help students with dyslexia fully. On the contrary, the recent speech-to-text technology is relatively mature and can help solve problems more effectively."

Jason also shared his visual strategy for writing that helped him in college:

"Translating my feelings into words is always a challenge for me. Somehow when I was in college, I developed a method that included a storyboard, skeleton story, and sentence combining and expansion to help me write a novel in modern history class.

Step 1:

Create a table with a timeline, characters' relationships, starting events, ideas for the ending, and the message you want to pass as a story's skeleton. In a historical novel, put characters into the timeline and match them to the historical events.

Step 2:

Write down ideas as short sentences or in bullet point form.

Step 3:

Draw simple pictures for scenes, then write short sentences to expand descriptions. Using toys as characters can help you re-create scenes dialogue between characters. By the end, combine all the sentences into paragraphs.

This method allows me to write down all my ideas quickly and dispense with excessive and incompatible details.

Having the finish one scene before writing another and following a timeline, allow the writing to expand step-by-step.

Taking on different roles is fun and helps me discover new insights. Sentence combining and expansion can also be playful and fun. Different combinations can be made with stickie notes on a board. As a group activity, many ideas can come from it and it can be fascinating."

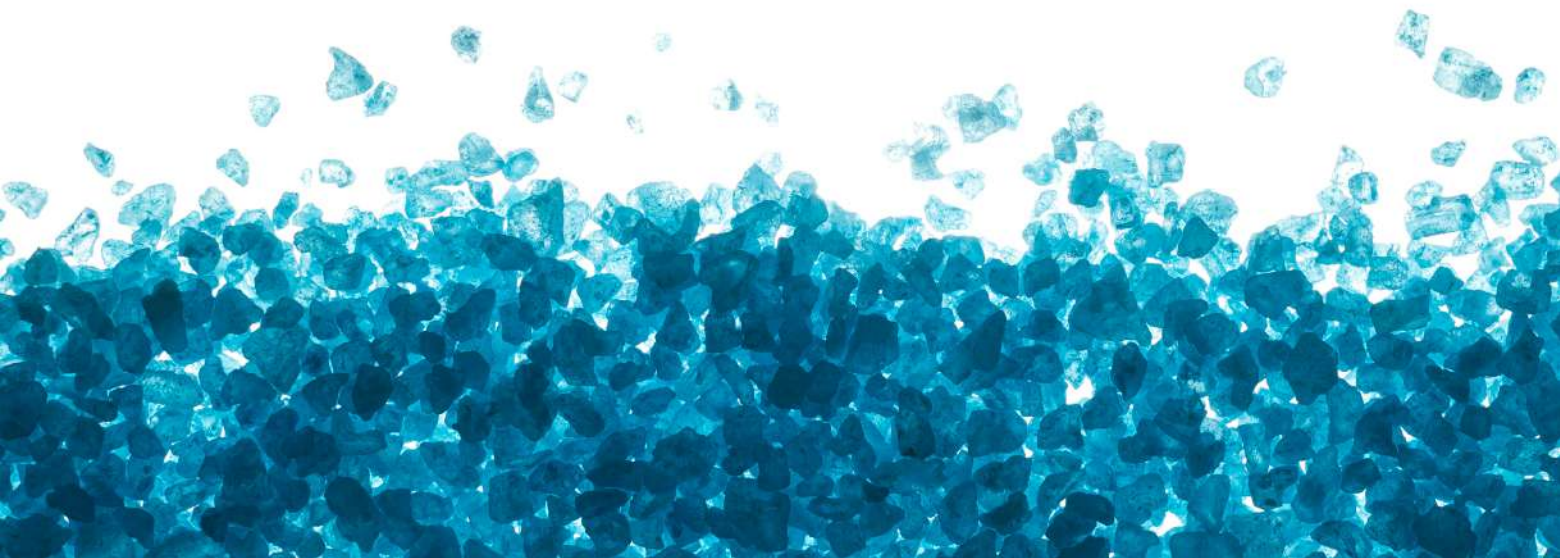
Jason also had these helpful insights on grammar:

"Today, without the help of proofreading, I still have a lot of grammatical errors, and my major errors are the tense, articles, punctuation, and sentence structure. I used to mix up 'have,' 'has, and 'had' but never knew the right time to use it. Or when I can use 'ing' instead of use 'to'. When should I use ';' and not a '!' .

It is only partly helpful to understand the grammar if pictures on the grammar worksheet illustrate the situation. One teacher once taught me to add subtitles by watching TV programs, especially news reports, and slowly absorb them through continuous listening and watching. This method is more effective for me, and most of my grammar is also learned this way.

By using [Grammarly](#), I can find out my mistake and slowly improve. However, it takes a lot of time and shows. I love to find out if there is any way I can learn grammar more fun and precise. "

Thanks Jason for sharing these wonderful reflections and suggestions!



## MUSICAL INSPIRATION

There are so many talented musicians and singer songwriters who are dyslexic to pick from - but here's some Christmas music from the past (Harry Belafonte) and present (Joss Stone).





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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."*



**Defining the Dyslexic Advantage with Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide**

**Dyslexic Design Thinking with Gil Gershoni**



**Transitioning to College with Dyslexia by Anna**

**College Reporter**



**As Awareness Increases, Dyslexia Rates Up**

**San Antonio Express**



**Ohio to Screen All 3rd Graders and Under for Dyslexia Next Year**



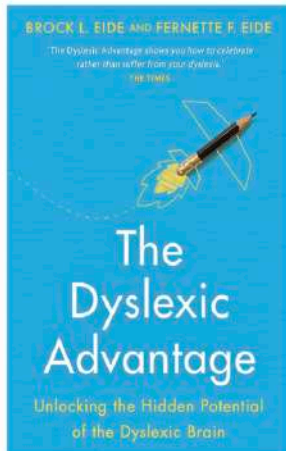
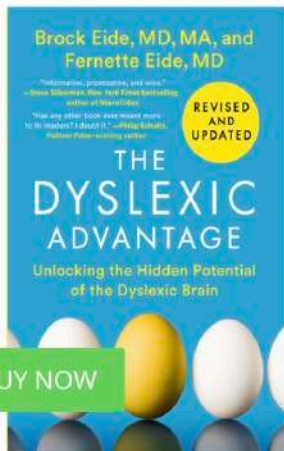
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Drs. Brock and Fernet Eide are leading experts in the fields of dyslexia and cofounders of the nonprofit Dyslexic Advantage and the social-purpose corporation Neurolearning.com. They have served as consultants to the President's Council on Bioethics and as visiting lecturers at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. The first edition of their book, The Dyslexic Advantage, was an international bestseller.

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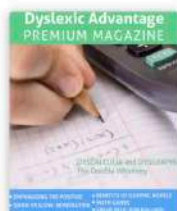
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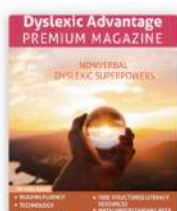
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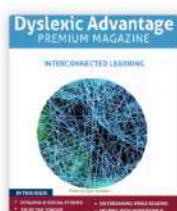
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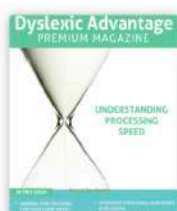
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## 2023 PAGE-A-DAY DESK CALENDAR

## THE DAILY THINKER

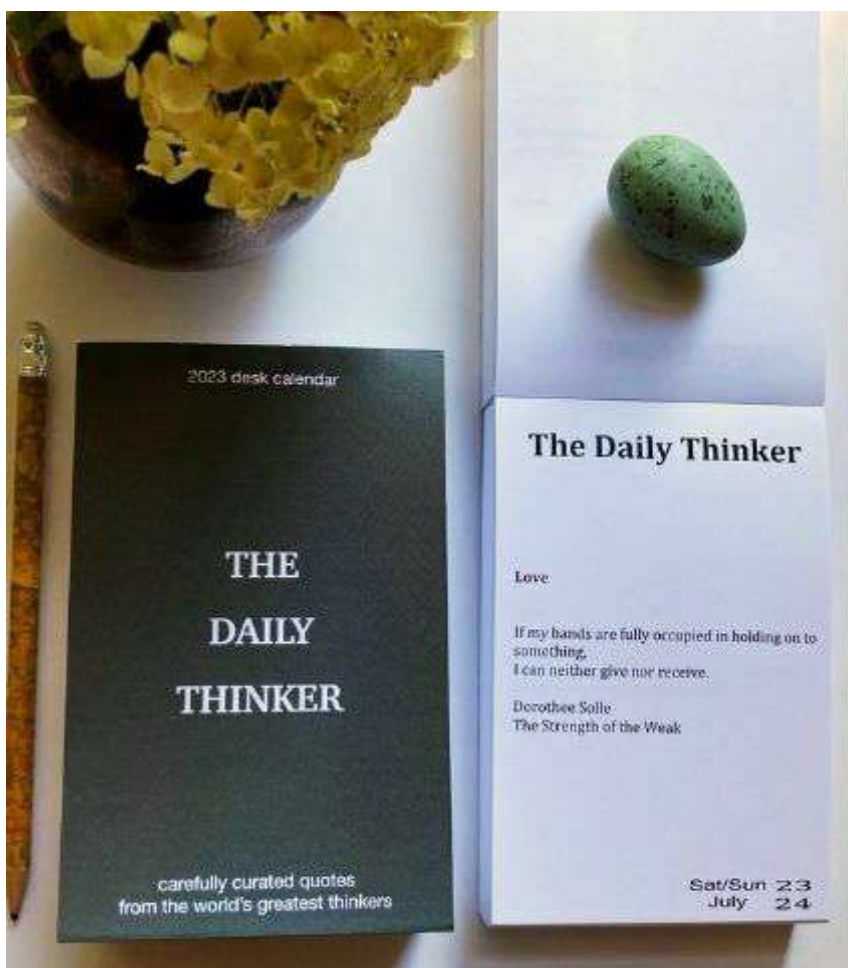
Support Dyslexic Advantage with your purchase of this thought-provoking desk calendar with daily quotes hand picked from the great thinkers of literature, poetry, philosophy, politics, art, science, psychiatry, and entertainment.

It is meant for those whom, as Socrates said, "delight in attending to (their) own improvement day by day."

**100% OF PROFITS DONATED  
TO DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE**

**GREAT GIFTS!**

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OUR  
ETSY  
STORE**



*"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.



**SUMMIT  
CENTER**

R e a c h   N e w   H e i g h t s

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# Discover Your Learning Ability

Churchill's proven methods and well-trained faculty change the lives of children who struggle with dyslexia, ADHD and language-based learning disabilities.

At Churchill, we know our success is measured not by how many students we impact, but by the impact we have on any one student!



**CHURCHILL**  
CENTER & SCHOOL  
National Leader in Learning Disabilities

[churchillstl.org](http://churchillstl.org)  
314-997-4343



**VISIT the  
DYSLEXIC  
ADVANTAGE  
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"I want kids to understand that making pictures is similar to making music; there are so many instruments and so many tunes that the possibilities for how you play are truly limitless."

- Jerry Pinkney