

# A New Perspective On Dyslexia

By

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In the 1990s, I wrote, self-published, and marketed a book, entitled *The Dyslexic's Guide To Academic Achievement*, which sold over six thousand copies and was placed on the recommended reading lists of several dyslexia organizations. In contrast to most material which was available at the time, my book portrayed dyslexia as a blessing rather than a curse, provided proven strategies for academic success, and explained practical steps which could be taken to combat hostile school bureaucracies. It was based primarily upon my personal experiences and discoveries as a dyslexic student who fought the American education system to receive all necessary accommodations, thus allowing me to graduate from The University of Texas at Austin in 1989 with a grade-point-average of 3.23 and a bachelors degree in Organizational Communication.

The marketing of my book came to an end twenty years ago because I believed that the academic obstacles I faced during my youth had been removed by legislation passed to prevent discrimination against dyslexics. I have recently realized that many barriers sadly remain, so I have made my book available for free public distribution with the hope that solutions which I found to academic challenges will benefit dyslexics who face similar problems today.

I have spent the past two months reading dyslexia posts on Facebook and am impressed by the increased understanding of this condition, along with resources which are now available to help dyslexic students achieve academic success. Nevertheless, I am disappointed to see that many posts still approach dyslexia as though it is a learning disability and focus on narrow aspects of the condition. As a dyslexic who has also been diagnosed as having dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia, I am especially aware of how limiting such an approach can be.

My perusal of Facebook posts has made me realize that I possess an understanding of dyslexia which often conflicts with accepted beliefs. I am not surprised by this difference because my knowledge of the subject is based largely upon personal experiences and an individual quest for truth that did not rely on academic or scientific research which has been devoted to the understanding of dyslexia. My childhood experiences, though challenging and often traumatic, allowed me to develop an independent and nonconformist world view that answered questions regarding the meaning of life and my place in the universe. I was therefore able to develop the special abilities which dyslexia bestows and identify those

of other dyslexics whom I met.

In order to contribute to the understanding of dyslexia - or at least to provide food for thought - I have written this article which offers an alternative explanation for the condition which is called dyslexia, dispels commonly held myths about dyslexia, and provides insight into the reasons why governments choose to categorize dyslexia as a learning disability.

Contemporary education systems believe that the human brain basically works like a filing cabinet into which information may be inserted, stored, and later retrieved. This view holds that the brain is closed, reliant entirely upon conscious input of information from the individual. Teaching methods, therefore, rely upon rote memorization, repetition, and a strict adherence to rules. The educational environment chosen to promote learning is highly-structured, rewards conformity, and stifles creativity. The goal of such an educational system is not to inspire students, or set students onto paths of discovery, but rather to prepare students to play various roles in society while discouraging free thought which could challenge the stability of existing organizations, or call into question the validity of these organizations themselves.

The dyslexic brain works like a radio which receives and broadcasts signals from an external source. It is open and free from the limitations of the conscious mind on which the non-dyslexic brain must rely. Whether one chooses to call this source extra-sensory perception, past life memories, collective human consciousness, or divine inspiration, the fact remains that dyslexics have an ability to access knowledge and information from an unknown source while their conscious minds are unaware that this process is taking place. This phenomenon, aptly named Subconscious Learning, is key to the dyslexic's personal growth and survival.

As with fingerprints, no two cases of dyslexia are exactly alike. Teaching methods which produce favorable results for one dyslexic may be of no benefit to another. As a result, traditional methods of teaching often fail and dyslexia manifests itself as an imbalance of abilities. To further complicate matters, the dyslexic's ability to provide information which was never consciously learned may result in accusations of cheating, as in the case of solving mathematical problems, when the dyslexic is able to provide the correct answer to a problem yet unable to demonstrate the conscious steps taken to arrive at the solution. Dyslexia poses a serious challenge to contemporary educational systems because it refutes beliefs on which they are founded and requires the implementation of individualized methods of teaching.

The World Federation of Neurology provided a formal definition of dyslexia in 1968 which gave the U.S. Department of Education justification to designate dyslexia as a learning disability. This decision had two tragic consequences for dyslexic Americans:

First, it shifted the responsibility for educating dyslexic children away from the state and placed it on the shoulders of parents. Unfortunately, dyslexia was virtually unknown at this time, and poorly understood, so the chances for parents to provide quality education for their dyslexic children were slim. Many were placed in schools for children who suffered from mental illnesses, exposed to improper methods of teaching, and denied access to institutions of higher learning.

Second, by designating dyslexic children as being learning disabled, the Department of Education created a psychological block to their future academic success, destroyed self-esteem, and caused dyslexics to believe that they were inadequate, substandard, and inferior. Dyslexics were therefore unable to benefit from subconscious learning because they were no longer receptive to their external source of knowledge and could not comprehend teaching methods which were designed to educate non-dyslexic children. As a result, many exhibited hyperactivity, attention deficit, and depression, thus providing physical evidence which supported the notion that they were learning disabled. No one realized that these conditions were actually physical manifestations of the human spirit protesting the denial of access to its external source of knowledge and inspiration.

The first generation of children diagnosed with dyslexia in the United States was decimated by a system of exclusion and discrimination. If we could now identify these children, and track the events of their lives, I am certain we would find that this group suffered an alarmingly high mortality rate due to substance abuse, crime, and suicide. Society also paid a heavy price for suppressing the creativity of this special group by being denied the contributions which these dyslexics would have made if they had been encouraged to develop their abilities rather than being ridiculed and belittled.

The obstacles and challenges currently faced by dyslexics are imposed by governments and organizations that strive to maintain control over the human race. Dyslexics pose a direct challenge to the control that these groups wield because they possess natural abilities which threaten the status quo. Any dyslexic who reaches adulthood with a high self-esteem has the potential to become an agent of change because dyslexics are the inventors, innovators, reformers, and revolutionaries whose contributions move the human race forward.

I was diagnosed as having dyslexia in 1973. At this time, only three percent of the world population was estimated to have been dyslexic. Today, twenty percent of the world population is estimated to be dyslexic. Although scientific research and improvements in testing over the past forty years has increased the likelihood of identifying dyslexics within the general population, it is nevertheless fair to say that dyslexia is becoming more prevalent in the human population with each new generation.

Why?

Rapid technological advancement over the past century has created an environment in which an individual must process increasing amounts of information in order to succeed. The resulting stress caused by this complexity has triggered a leap in human evolution which allows the individual to learn subconsciously in order to adapt to the new environment. Established power structures have deemed those who possess this ability to be learning disabled because they do not respond to traditional teaching methods and have the potential to impose change on systems which rely on a continuation of the status quo. It may therefore be said that dyslexia is a disability which was created by bureaucracy. Although dyslexia is a human condition which is confirmed to have dated back for centuries, most notably in Leonardo da Vinci and Nostradamus, it is rapidly becoming more prevalent in order to ensure the survival of our species.

Nature provides for life on this planet by maintaining balances through evolutionary processes that

counter the negative effects of stress on living organisms. We are now witnessing one of the most profound evolutionary leaps in the history of the human race which coincides with the most rapid advancement of technology. Without such evolutionary processes, the human race would eventually reach a point where the survival of an individual would require the comprehension of more data than the conscious mind can handle. The result would be a breakdown of society marked by drastic inequalities of wealth and power, fear and apathy among the general population, widespread feelings of hopelessness, and a public longing to escape the harsh realities of daily life. The human race would inevitably cease to exist as a result of global conflicts, hunger, disease, and destruction of the environment.

Many aspects of this nightmare scenario are apparent in the world today, though nature refuses to witness an end to the human race. The increasing number of dyslexics being born into the world population is evidence of a global balancing which has resulted in two important clashes between generations over the past seventy years.

The first clash occurred in the 1960s when youths around the world broke with traditional belief systems held by older generations, protested abuses, sought alternative solutions to complex problems, and collectively attempted to create a new and better world. Freed from the constraints of social norms, they faced the future with hope, emboldened by a belief that their generation would implement lasting positive change. Although many utopian dreams fell by the wayside, their efforts nevertheless succeeded to a great extent and facilitated changes to come.

We are now in the midst of the second clash. The current generation, unencumbered by obsolete modes of thinking and unified by social media, is moving forward to avert global crises which threaten future generations. Repulsed by the crass materialism and mercenary capitalism prevalent in previous generations, this new Millennial Generation values experiences over possessions and cooperation over conflict. Disinterested in traditional methods of teaching, Millennials endeavor to form a world view which is based upon personal discovery rather than information provided by the state.

The human race now stands at a crossroads. One road leads to enlightenment and the other to destruction. Driven by pathological greed, traditional power structures struggle to maintain a course in world affairs that ensures a continued flow of wealth into the hands of a small group while throwing an increasing percent of humanity into poverty. This trend now threatens the survival of the human race because our planet has a limited amount of resources which may be plundered. Millennials strive to place the human race onto a path which leads to a future in which human rights are respected, the environment is protected, and every citizen is free to develop his or her natural abilities without fear or bureaucratic interference.

We are now witnessing a global renaissance because rapid technological advancements over the past hundred years have not been matched by an elevation of human consciousness. The increasing number of dyslexics born onto the earth today is merely nature's way of balancing the human condition to ensure a bright and prosperous future. Millennials understand the changes which must occur and are now banding together to usher in an era of peace and cooperation. Historians in future generations will

scrutinize the past hundred years to provide insight into a period of human history when greed for wealth and power drove the human race to the brink of destruction.

Dyslexics play a vital role in the world today because they are endowed with the potential to create a new golden era in human history, supported by an enlightened society empowered to implement lasting change. Traditional education systems which have repressed dyslexics in the past will soon be forced to reform outdated methods of teaching for their own survival because dyslexics will eventually represent a majority of the world population. Today's dyslexic children will be tomorrow's leaders. Wonders that await are limited only by the human imagination.