

The Gift of Dyslexia

“Are you listening?” my teacher said. “Pay attention!” “Why don’t you like to read?” they would question. Seems like I heard this over and over when I was growing up. Looking at words and not grasping what they meant. Spending hours standing up in front of my mother and brother, just to repeat over and over the 20 words I had to spell on the test the next day. This part of me felt so lacking and behind the other kids at school. Kids were expected to be proficient enough by the third grade to read something more than Dr. Seuss. Not me. No, not me. I was the exception. By the third grade my reading was terrible, my spelling was worse, and my vocabulary suffered to say the least. Needless to say, I was placed in summer reading classes.

It’s seems a little funny now but it definitely was not then. It was like teetering on a rock between ignorance and intelligence, only I was unable to find a balance. My reading troubles made me feel stupid, while in other areas I excelled without trying. I didn’t know the cause; I just knew this “problem” was causing me a great deal of stress in school. I learned to read and write, but throughout grade school and into college, I lacked the ability to take notes and listen at the same time. There was a hitch somewhere between hearing something and getting it down on paper that I just couldn’t get past. In contrast, I found I had a great ability to observe how things worked in the world and find patterns. It wasn’t easy, but I had sense enough to take those strengths, identify habits that worked for me, and apply those to my studies. I managed to keep my grades mostly above average, and graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration.

My experiences led me to examine my strengths and weaknesses more closely, which led me to discover the world of Dyslexia. It was then that I learned about the gift I possessed. Yes, the gift...not the “condition” as most people refer to it.

Believe it or not, the strengths that come with Dyslexia far outweigh the weaknesses. It is this gift that has contributed more than anything else to my entrepreneurial experience.

Many people refer to Dyslexia as a learning disability; to the contrary, Dyslexia is a gift that simply provides people a different perception of how they take in the world. Dyslexics process information in a pictorial, multidimensional way, whereas most people process information on a linear level. For a child in school, learning is slowed down by the standard process of teaching by reading...lineally. We process and retain much more information, much faster, when we can imagine how it appears. The weakness lies in taking those words we read and imagining what they look like, since not all words can be represented in picture form.

Think of it this way. The non dyslexic mind is like reading a Harry Potter book; you can imagine what's happening, but you're limited. The dyslexic mind is like seeing the movie on the big screen in 3-D. The difference in these is nearly indescribable. The dyslexic mind has a keen ability to think strategically...to be creative and see not only the big picture, but all the details that it encompasses. As we receive information, we are constantly building a picture in our mind that just keeps getting bigger and bigger. It is these abilities that, study after study show, are so common in successful entrepreneurs, such as [Richard Branson](#). (click to see his interview)

Even though I didn't really know all that much about Dyslexia, or why I struggled in the reading, vocabulary and spelling areas, I still felt an inner confidence about my strengths to go after the success I desired in life. I recently I read the book by [Ronald Davis](#) titled [The Gift of Dyslexia](#). I really feel like this book does so much more than just teach people about Dyslexia. For me, it just confirmed that I have something really special and possess a gift that can allow me to do something that not everyone is capable of.

To give you a better understanding of the traits of a dyslexic person, here is a list from Davis' book:

1. They can utilize the brains ability to alter and create perceptions
2. They are highly aware of the environment
3. They are more curious than average
4. They think mainly in pictures instead of words
5. They are highly intuitive and insightful
6. They think and perceive multi -dimensionally
7. They can experience thought as reality
8. They have vivid imaginations

From a scientific perspective, thinking in pictures instead of words can allow someone to process information thousands of times faster. It opens up the mind for a more comprehensive, deeper and thorough imagination.

The point is this: Dyslexia is not a "condition" when you look at the strengths and utilize them. I did this, I saw opportunities, and I capitalized on them. I hope that others with Dyslexia can understand that what they have is a gift they can use to their advantage, and not have to wait 40 years to learn that like I did. If you know someone who may be Dyslexic, please share this with them.

Check out this video on [The Power of Dyslexia](#).