

3 Simple Secrets Moms (and Dads) of Children with Dyslexia, AD(H)D or Autism Know that Keep Them From Worrying About Their Child's Future

Introduction

First of all, as parents, we will never completely stop worrying about our children...that is what we do. But, we can release unnecessary worry and concern so that can focus on the things that are really important.

This short eBook is meant to give you some peace-of-mind and help you reframe YOUR way of thinking which will help to alleviate some of the concerns you may have surrounding your child's future.

These 3 Simple Secrets are what have helped me to "chill out" and return to the role of helping to empower my children as opposed to trying to fix them...they are not broken!

Simple Secret #3

Don't Allow Society to Define Your Child

"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place." -Margaret Mead

Many of us (me included) have fallen into the trap of allowing society to dictate to us what potential and success look like in our children. We have allowed arbitrary societal agreements to determine the limits or nature of our children's potential. Some examples of these arbitrary societal agreements are: boys play with cars and girls play with dolls; boys like blue and girls like pink; success means nice cars and big homes; everyone should go to college; certain physical characteristics are more beautiful than others; intelligent people speak and read well; and if you are a poor reader then you must not be that smart.

When a child has difficulty reading or paying attention despite having an obvious average to above average level of intelligence, he may be made to feel that he is 'just not trying hard enough'.

At the age of seven, Thomas Edison's teacher called him "addled", which means confused or mixed-up. The teacher considered him dull and complained that he asked too many questions. When Thomas' mother spoke with the teacher, she was told that Thomas could not learn. Angered with the teacher, she took him home and proceeded to home-school him, allowing him to learn by studying what he loved. Thankfully, Thomas' mother did not buy into societal agreements.

If we allow society to determine who and what are children are supposed to be, we risk never finding out what their full personal potential is meant to be.

Albert Einstein was described by one of his teachers as "forever adrift in his dreams". He was able to have a breakthrough regarding his Theory of Relativity because he had the ability to disorient (become adrift within a dream) and

experience that disorientation as a reality. The story goes that he was sitting on a streetcar, leaving the square. He imagined what would happen if the streetcar began to travel at the speed of light. He was able to experience what would happen with all his senses. He felt the bus moving at the speed of light...then he looked back at the clock in the square and the clock did not move but the time on his watch had changed. Albert didn't buy into societal agreement and continued to use his ability to alter his perception in what he called "thought experiments". All I have to say is thank goodness for daydreaming!

It is still believed in certain areas of the world that it is dangerous for young girls to be educated. Remember Malala Yousafza, the young girl in Afghanistan that was shot by the Taliban because she was advocating for the rights of females to be educated. Her father stood by her and supported her in her fight and because of her, the conversation is changing. Her father didn't buy into the societal agreements of some in their country.

These out-of-the-box thinkers...and our out-of-the-box thinkers... are the innovators of the future. We need them for the advancement of mankind. Where would we be without Steve Jobs, Thomas Edison, Leonardo De Vinci, Albert Einstein, Walt Disney...and the list goes on.

These innovators were not brilliant DESPITE their thinking style but BECAUSE of it!

Your son or daughter could be the next (fill in the blank)! Who knows? Don't let someone else (including yourself) determine that for them. They are on their own path.

I believe that it is our job, as parents, to empower our children with the tools necessary to love themselves, participate fully in life and find success by their own definition.

So, how do we do this?

1. Gain an understanding of how your child processes information. Many of these children are visual/conceptual/spatial thinkers. Understanding the thinking style of your child will help you to understand why they do what they do. My

youngest child has moderate to severe dyslexia and my oldest has mild dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia and synesthesia. I didn't know or understand any of this until I read the book, *The Gift of Dyslexia*, by Ronald Davis. Once I understood that my son's inability to read was a 'side effect' of his brilliant visual mind, I immediately found myself more patient and tolerant of his struggles and behavior. With that understanding, I was able to find a program that worked for him and it changed his life and mine. The books I would recommend are:

For reading and writing challenges (dyslexia): [The Gift of Dyslexia](#), by Ronald Davis

For attention and behavioral challenges (ADD, ADHD): [The Gift of Learning](#), by Ronald Davis

For individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder: [Autism and the Seeds of Change](#), by Abigail Marshall and Ronald Davis

You can also find information on the following websites:

DrAngiesPlace.com

Dyslexia.com

RDautismfoundation.org

2. Be your child's advocate. Be on their side. Talk to your child's teacher and convey your new understanding of your child's thinking style. Ask the teacher how he incorporates teaching to the various learning styles within his classroom. Make the teacher aware of any 'negative' coping mechanisms your child may have developed such as: putting their head down and "checking out", disrupting the class, falling asleep, crying, asking to leave the classroom etc. Ask the teacher to ask your child, privately, if they heard the instructions, or better yet, ask do they "see" what is being asked of them. Also, over stimulating classrooms can be very distracting to these kiddos, causing them to disorient into their "happy place" (daydream) thereby decreasing their ability to focus. This is a short list, but a good place to start. Lastly, your child should **not be required to read aloud** in front of classmates unless they have been given the information prior and been

allowed to practice. Reading aloud can be a major source of embarrassment for these children.

3. Converse with your child in their language – PICTURES. When you give them multiple step instructions, give them step one and ask “Can you see it?” Then give step two and ask, “Can you see it?” Then ask them to repeat back what you asked them to do by ‘playing back the movie of pictures they just created’. Also, when you are going to talk to them **DON’T REQUIRE THAT THEY MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT WITH YOU!** Instead, say their name, wait for them to glance at you and then let them look away if they need too. The human face, comprised of movement, sound and expressions, can easily overwhelm the visual thinker causing them to shut down or ‘tune you out’.

4. Educate every adult in their lives whenever you get the chance. Knowledge gives us the power to make informed choices as to how we will behave. The more people that understand that your child is not broken; not an imperfection that needs to be fixed, the better life will be for your child. Spread the word.

5. Ensure child that you know they ARE NOT their GRADES or current ACADEMIC ability. This is so important. Empower your child to not define themselves by any one aspect of who they are. My child is not dyslexic...he has dyslexia...it is a small part of who he is. Tell them, daily, what you love about them. Find where they excel (drawing, dancing, Lego building...) and encourage more time in that area.

6. Find tools and a program that can help them adapt to “in-the-box” thinking when necessary. This may sound contrary to what I have been saying but the truth is that we cannot change the system overnight. So, if our out-of-the-box thinker can get “in-the-box” during school hours, that may help them to feel more successful. If they can do that by incorporating tools that allow them to increase focus, improve reading comprehension and fluency, as well as improving their social interactions, they will feel more empowered. Achieving this without medication will allow them to move quickly between in-the-box thinking (focus) and out-of-the-box thinking (innovative thinking).

7. Parental check-in. What societal agreements have YOU followed? How do you perceive your child? How do you feel when it is homework time? Do you see your child's potential or only their failings? Are you embarrassed by how your child is performing in school? Are you encouraging your child to be who they want to be or who you want them to be? Changing your own perception is simple if you know how. Choose to see the brilliance in your child and love your child, UNCONDITIONALLY.

Simple Secret #2

Focus on the Gifts and Talents

"We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light." -Mary Dunbar

As parents we often find ourselves focusing on what is urgent as opposed to what is important. When we are getting notes home from school regarding our child's behavior, listening to our child struggle to read a book two grade levels below their current grade, or navigating the mall quickly before our child has a tantrum, we can sometimes find ourselves focusing all our time on putting out the fires – focusing on the urgent. We lose sight of what is important.

We need to take the time to focus our attention on those things our children are inherently good at and what they do well – something specific to them.

Every person in this world arrives on this planet with inherent gifts and then has the opportunity to develop these gifts that are specific to them. Everyone! Your child is no exception.

My youngest son was born with the gift of an inventive mind. When he was three years old he said, "Mommy, I think there should be a special truck where a man sits on the outside of and it goes down the street while he paints the line down the street with yellow or white paint." When he was five years old he said, "Mommy, I think it would be great to have a thing that sticks on the mirror in the bathroom that holds the toothpaste. Then you could press a button and the toothpaste would come out neatly on the toothbrush." He had many ideas between three and five years of age but that last one was exciting because it wasn't already on the market...until I saw the first infomercial for it the following week.

He is also an amazing artist. He is incredibly visual in his thinking and has been able to draw ever since he could hold a pencil. When he was eight years old he decided he wanted to redecorate his bathroom. We were sitting downstairs and I

asked him if we could go upstairs to look at the bathroom to come up with some ideas. He said, “Mom, I can just draw it for you.” He then proceeded to draw his entire bathroom...with perspective...perfectly. Many artists study for years to learn the art of perspective and my son seemed to understand this instinctively!

Supporting and encouraging what your child is good at does not mean making up something that is untrue. I guarantee you that if you always tell your child, “Honey, you are such a good reader”, and everyone in the room knows that he is struggling, then trust is compromised. If they cannot trust you to tell them the truth, who can they trust?

It is of paramount importance that you get this!!! Approximately 10- 15% of the general population has dyslexia.¹ But, in one survey, 35% of entrepreneurs considered themselves dyslexic.² Unfortunately, the percentage of inmates considered dyslexic is 48%.³ What is the difference? What leads some with dyslexia to build their own business while others end up in prison? Individuals with dyslexia that consider themselves successful have one thing in common; there was someone that saw something in them and encouraged them or they consistently saw greatness within themselves.

Our children spend six to eight hours of their day in this structure we call school. In the traditional school setting, verbal/linear thinkers have the ability to excel. Consequently, our visual/conceptual /spatial thinkers are at higher risk for failing, not because they are dumb, stupid or lazy, but because they don't learn in the style in which they are being taught.

My youngest son was told by his third grade teacher that he “just needed to try harder.” This was despite the fact that we had paid for an outside assessment by an Educational Therapist which concluded that he had issues with visual processing, memory and sequencing. How do you think he was feeling by the

¹ “Dyslexia Research Institute.” *Dyslexia Research Institute*. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 June 2014.

² *Bloomberg Business Week*. Bloomberg, n.d. Web. 14 June 2014.

³ “Education Update – Dyslexia in the Prison Population.” *Education Update – Dyslexia in the Prison Population*. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 June 2014

time he was half way through third grade? Stupid, dumb and uneducable. He would say, "What is wrong with me?", "I am so stupid.", "I will never learn to read." Of course, this broke my heart. I knew that he was smart! But, I too didn't understand why he couldn't read. All I could do was constantly remind him that there were other intelligent people out there that struggled with reading too. But also, I encouraged him to draw. He became well known for his art at school. He would draw pictures for his family and classmates. He was praised for his artistic abilities and that made him feel good.

Then there is little Michael, a client of mine that came to me feeling as if he was a 'good kid' but not a 'smart kid'. He still felt good about himself because his parents always praised and acknowledged his strengths while trying to find someone to help him overcome his challenges. I facilitated him through a program to correct his dyslexia. At the beginning of the week, he would say what he thought I wanted to hear because he was a kid who had learned the value in pleasing adults by giving the "correct" answer. Once he had an understanding of why he struggled with reading (and how to correct it) and why his style of thinking was actually brilliant, his confidence increased and he was able to stand up for himself believing that he was indeed smart. The following week, he made a video that talked about the thinking style of dyslexics and the gifts that come along with it. Do you think that Michael has a higher chance of seeing himself as successful in life? Could this easily have gone the other way? Michael's parents were the catalyst. They saw his gifts while still realizing that he needed help to overcome his obstacles.

So, how do we empower our children to feel good about themselves despite the struggles they may be having outside the home?

1. What does your child do well? Is there something they have been able to do well for as long as you can remember? Can they draw? Sing? Remember the littlest of things? Hold a conversation like someone three times their age? Build anything out of Legos? Make up songs? Put together amazing outfits? Do complicated math in their head? Excel at a sport? Cook? Are they the kid that every other kid comes to talk to? Are they super compassionate? Do they seem to

love everyone and everyone loves them? Are they amazing with animals? If you are not sure, expose them to different things and find what they enjoy.

Write down three things that your child does amazingly well.

2. Catch them being good at something or doing something good. As a rule, have five positive interactions or comments for every negative one. So, if you need to correct a behavior, follow it up with praise for a good behavior. As parents we can tend to be liberal with our criticism and stingy with our compliments. Turn that around. Praise them on things they do well inside and outside of school.

3. Let them choose things, outside of school, that they are interested in. Don't TELL them what they are going to do. ASK them what they would like to do. I remember, at the age of five, our oldest son said, "Mom and dad sit down. I am not like the other kids. I don't want to do anything that has to do with running or where there is a ball." This was after we had put him in tee-ball and soccer. We asked him if he wanted to try the violin. It was the only instrument taught at the school. He tried it and loved it. He didn't continue on violin but he did find his love of music. Today he is self taught on guitar and piano, can jam on the drums, built his own didgeridoo, has a beautiful singing voice, is a thespian, and has written his own song.

4. Let them know they are in good company. Show them a list of innovators and influencers that have been identified as having dyslexia, AD(H)D or autism. The icing on the cake...find people that are doing what they want to do that have the same learning challenge they have.

Simple Secret #1

Mom (or Dad) Is In Charge – How You Perceive Your Child is Completely Determined by You

“Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world.” – George Bernard Shaw

Perception is a tricky thing. It has to do with how we interpret or mentally grasp things, people or events through our senses based on our pre-existing beliefs. How we view and react to people in our lives is based completely on our own perception.

Therefore, how you view and react to your own child has everything to do with how you perceive them. It actually has nothing to do with the actions of your child!!! What? Did I just say that out loud?!

Every event that occurs, whether it is the puppy chewing on your shoe, the political story on the news, an airplane crashing...or your child failing in school...is not good or bad. It just is! You determine the label and emotion you apply to the event. Ooooo, did I hit a nerve?

Recently, I attended a three day workshop. On the second day, the presenter bravely asked people to share anything that was burning inside them, positive or not, that they felt they needed to share with the group. One individual proceeded to say how he was offended by the way the presenter had shared a certain point the previous day. You could tell that some part of him was angry and hurt. I had seen the same presenter, present the same information, in the same way but I felt entirely different. I felt it was a powerful visual demonstration of what she was trying to convey to the audience. I mean, I had a thorough understanding of what she was teaching at that moment and I remember that point to this day because of her presentation. Did he and I see the same thing? Well, we saw the same thing, but perceived it differently. Our differences had nothing to do with the presenter and everything to do with how we perceived it!!! Everything that had

happened in our individual lives, up until that moment, determined how we perceived that same situation. That is powerful.

My youngest son had a dyslexia correction program when he was nine years old. This was a pivotal point in his life. It gave him the tools and understanding to see himself differently. Before his program he would say that he was stupid. Or, he would just shut down or cry whenever it was time for homework. By the end of the first day of his five day program, he had changed. He was a different kid. Why? Because he had been told by someone, other than me and his dad, that he was smart, but he just learned differently and the school was not teaching him the way he learned! He lit up! He saw himself differently! He PERCEIVED himself differently.

He was the same kid...but he wasn't. I saw the difference. He couldn't read yet, but he was no longer identifying as a dumb kid who would never read. He was identifying as a smart kid that struggled with reading...but now had hope!

We can change our perception just like he did.

I know that it is, at times, hard being a parent. In my pediatric practice, I would tell new parents, "Being a parent is the hardest thing and the most wonderful thing that you will ever do". Parenting provides you with your most challenging and your most wonderful life moments. I know this because I have experienced it.

When I saw the change in my son, I decided to expand my knowledge and obtain my license to facilitate individuals through the Davis® Dyslexia Correction Program. To be honest, the initial reason I took the training was so I could 'make sure' my son was on the correct path. I thought he was doing something incorrectly in his post-program work. I wanted to be able to intelligently 'correct' him. I asked the instructor (now I know she was actually my mentor/coach/guru) how to help him to 'do the work better' because I didn't understand what he was getting out of the work. She respectfully came very close to me and said, in her slightly southern drawl, "So when did it become about you? What he is getting is not about you, it is for him". That was a pivotal point in my life.

From that moment I have seen him differently. A weight was lifted from my shoulders because I understood that he was on his own path. I decided to always see his gifts and allow him to be himself and I stopped labeling everything he did or didn't do as good or bad. My perception had changed.

That moment – that awareness –changed how I interact with the world. I realized that I have the power over how I feel and perceive everything in my life. I choose if I am happy or not. I began to read, study and incorporate important life principles into my daily life.

Now, I live my life in joy and balance. Does that mean I never have a bad day or never get upset and frustrated? Of course not. I am human. But I would describe my daily life as happy and well balanced.

I wish I could give you the short answer to how I do this but there isn't one. Reading this eBook is a start.

I have created an online e-course called [The Everyday Parent Fix-it Manual: Repair Yourself, Repair Your Family, Repair Your Life.](#)

Take back your right to find joy and balance in your everyday life. The only person you can change is you! You have the right to be happy regardless of what is going on in your life.

Good luck and keep it simple!