

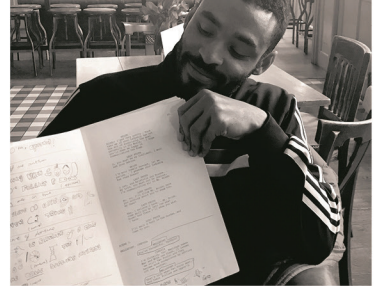


THE BIGGER PICTURE BOOK OF AMAZING DYSLEXICS

AND THE JOBS THEY DO

KATHY IWANCZAK FORSYTH + KATE POWER

FOREWORD BY PAUL SMITH



Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this book is correct, but it should not in any way be substituted for professional advice. Dyslexia should always be assessed by a qualified practitioner. Neither the authors nor the publisher takes responsibility for any consequences of any decision made as a result of the information contained in this book. All the views in the book are the participants own.

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Jessica Kingsley Publishers
London and Philadelphia

A BOOK IN TWO PARTS

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The Last Word

PAUL SMITH CBE RDI

FASHION DESIGNER

Keep Pedalling!

The lessons I have learnt about teamwork and playing to your strengths have helped me a lot throughout my career. When people ask me what is the secret of my success I'm always at a bit of a loss as to what to say, because I've never planned any of the successes that I've been lucky enough to have. I think keeping my feet on the ground and enjoying what I do every day is very important.

Although I can work very long days and wear many hats it's been a gentle journey, it doesn't feel like work when you do something you love! This is key for any dyslexic. In this homogenised world where so much is the same, it's good to think to the left and the right of the ordinary and do something different. Don't follow the crowd, ride your own route!

'The Bigger Picture Book of Amazing Dyslexics and the Jobs They Do' is a great read for people wanting to understand dyslexia better.

I hope you enjoy it,





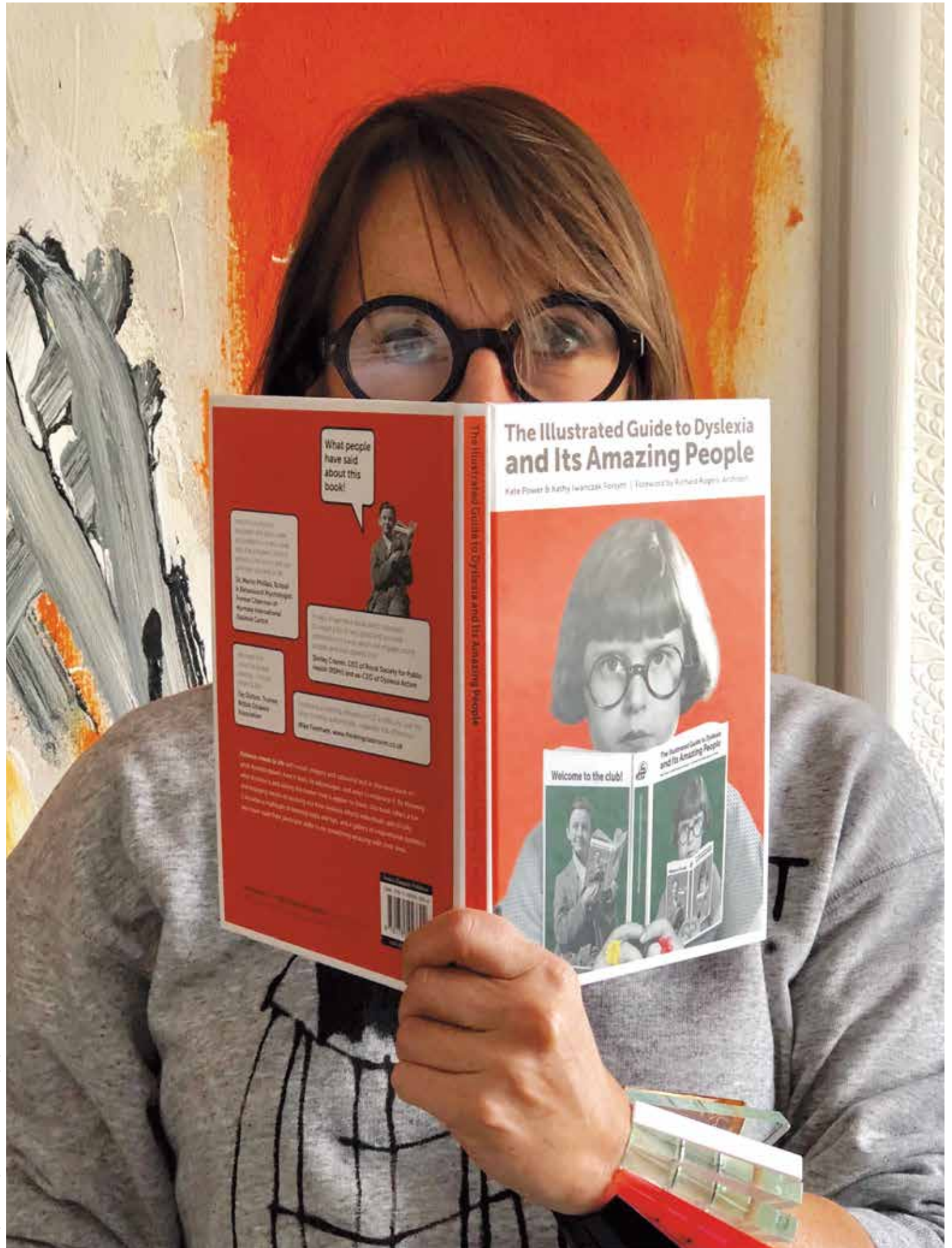
OUR NEXT CHAPTER

NOW THAT OUR COVER GIRL HAS GROWN UP.

Our first book, 'The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People', explained the ups and downs of dyslexia to our own dyslexic children; to simplify this scary word 'dyslexia' and celebrate its potential.

Now our kids have grown up, we've written this follow-up book to inspire them – and you – with our interviews uncovering the amazing things dyslexics do in the world of work.

So you're almost ready to head out into the world? Just like our cover girl! Read on to find out top tips and inspiration about the wonderful array of jobs amazing dyslexics can do...and do brilliantly.



The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People

Kate Power & Kathy Iwaniczak-Torzym | Foreword by Richard Rogers, Architect

What people have said about this book!

Dr. Martin Phillips, School of Behavioural Psychology, former Chairman of Dyslexia International, National Centre

Sueley Cooper, CEO of Basic Society for Public Health (BSPH) and ex-CEO of Dyslexia Action

Dr. Clifton, former British Columbia Ambassador

Visit www.theillustratedguide.co.uk for more information, advertising, reviews, a free trial and more.

Discover how to get your own copy and why you will be inspired to read it. The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People is a comprehensive and easy-to-read guide to dyslexia. It is written by two leading experts in the field and is packed with practical advice and inspiration. The book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in dyslexia, whether you are a student, a professional, or a parent. It is a book that will help you to understand dyslexia and its amazing people, and it will help you to get the most out of your life.



PHOTO: RYAN PARRY. MODEL: FLORA

THE BRIGHT SIDE

HELLO.

Welcome to the colourful world of dyslexia!

This book introduces you to lots of happy and successful amazing dyslexics working in a wide range of jobs that they love. Read their personal stories, which include their high and low points, their individual strengths and challenges, and the people who have inspired them. They've got some wise words and great advice to share with you.

Maybe you'll relate to some of the embarrassing moments they describe – and recognise things you're good at too.

If you like, you can use the opposite page to doodle or make notes for future inspiration as you read.

PART ONE

COLOURFUL CHARACTERS.

Here you'll find our conversations with amazing dyslexics about their dyslexia and the jobs they do. We also invite you to answer some simple questions at the end.

DESIGN GUIDE

HOW TO USE PART ONE.

You can read this part of the book from beginning to end or dip in and out of it. The paragraphs are kept short, and the type is in different colours and sizes for emphasis. The opposite page shows how each page is laid out.

**Favourite
Colour**

Number

NAME

SOMETHING INSPIRING THEY SAID

JOB DESCRIPTION

The conversation unfolds...

THE BIG QUESTION

WHAT MAKES AN AMAZING DYSLEXIC?

Equipped with a smile, camera, voice recorder and clipboard of questions, off we went to meet and photograph some amazing dyslexics at work. They kindly answered our questions so candidly and arranged access all areas; we visited places we never imagined we would go! From backstage at the Royal Opera House to coffee at the House of Commons.

Amazing Dyslexic Questionnaire

What's your biggest challenge as a dyslexic?
What gets you in a pickle?

A memory that makes your toes curl?

What makes you burst with pride?

Who has inspired, encouraged and made a difference to your learning and confidence?

What are you good at? Please show off here!

What are the benefits of 'dyslexic thinking' in your job?

What are your coping strategies?
What is your top tip?

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Would you have done anything differently?

What is your favourite colour?



PART ONE

AMAZING DYSLEXICS

COLOURFUL CHARACTERS.

The colour grid shows the amazing dyslexics in first name alphabetical order with a number for quick reference. Job titles are listed below.

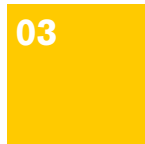
01. Actor, Writer, Director
02. Designer, Creative Director
03. Clinical Psychologist
04. Judge
05. Designer
06. Detective Sergeant
07. Choreographer
08. Psychotherapist
09. Furniture Designer
10. Actor, Comedian, Writer
11. Milliner, Eyewear Designer
12. Lifestyle Blogger
13. Creative Director
14. Coder
15. Farmer
16. Academic, Researcher
17. Entrepreneur
18. Consultant Surgeon, Senior Lecturer
19. Chef, Restaurateur
20. Artist
21. Personal Trainer, Master Coach
22. Architect
23. Actor, Writer, Sustainability Advocate
24. Creative Producer, Artistic Director
25. Actor
26. Music Industry Executive
27. Social Worker
28. Journalist, Policy Editor
29. Advertising Creative
30. Fashion Designer
31. Life Coach, Author, Motivational Speaker
32. Tech Entrepreneur
33. Actor, Stunt Performer, Coordinator
34. Exhibition Designer, Project Manager
35. Actor, Playwright, Drama Teacher
36. Documentary Maker
37. Children's Writer, Illustrator
38. Jewellery Designer
39. Industrial Designer, Tutor, Art Director
40. Product Designer, Inventor
41. Branding Guru
42. Professional Footballer
43. Marketing Leader
44. Inventor
45. Writer, Director, Composer
46. You



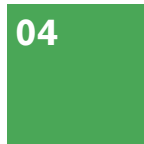
AARON WOLF



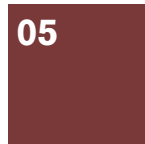
AB ROGERS



ADLIN MURPHY



ANUJA DHIR



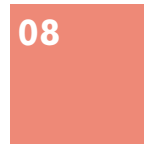
BILL AMBERG



CHAD CHOUDHURY



CHARLOTTE EDMONDS



CLAUDIA SMITH



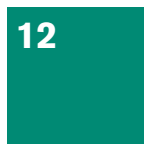
DOM WILDER



EDDIE IZZARD



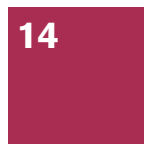
FLORA MCLEAN



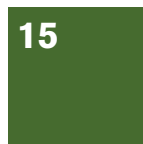
FRITHA QUINN



GILL GERSHONI



GOSIA PALYS-DUDEK



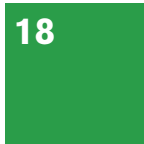
GUY SINGH-WATSON



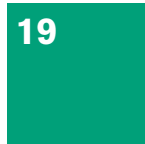
HELEN TAYLOR



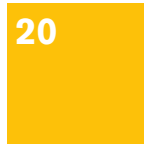
HOLLY TUCKER



JAMES KINROSS



JAMIE OLIVER



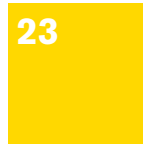
JAYSON LILLEY



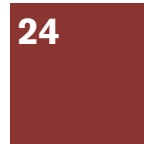
JOE OGBONNAYA



JULIAN OGIWARA



LAUREN MCCROSTIE



LENNIE & KAZ



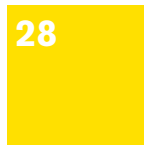
LLOYD EVERITT



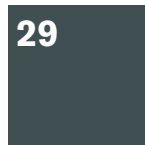
MARK GROTEFELD



OBI OHAKA DANIEL



OLIVER WRIGHT



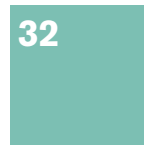
PAUL BRAZIER



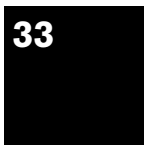
PAUL SMITH



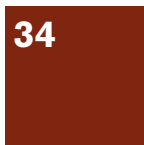
PETE COHEN



PIP JAMIESON



RASHID PHOENIX



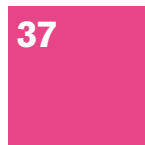
RICHARD GREENWOOD



RICHARD KIDD



RICHARD MACER



SALLY GARDNER



SARI RÄTHEL



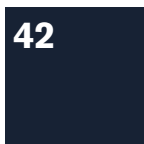
SEBASTIAN BERGNE



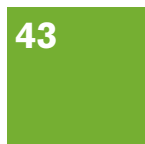
SEBASTIAN CONRAN



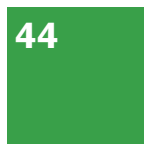
STEVE EDGE



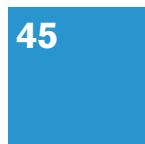
STEVEN NAISMITH



STEVEN WOODGATE



TOM PELLEREAU



TRIX WORRELL



YOU

AARON WOLF

OWN IT. LOVE IT. BE IT. LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND BE PROUD!

As a kid I felt weird when people would just look at me when I couldn't do something that for them was so easy. I didn't fit in their box; it was a frustrating feeling. Even when I went to New York University, studying at the top film school, sometimes I just couldn't grasp spelling or a supposedly 'simple concept', yet I was making award-winning films. Teachers at times didn't seem to 'get it'.

I wish I knew then what I know now about dyslexia, I'd have explained it to the lecturers. I did eventually learn how to do all that stuff with 'work arounds'.

I hope to empower others to accept their dyslexia a lot earlier. Sometimes my friends still make fun of me for simple spelling or other basic tasks. But now I think 'who cares, look at what I've achieved with Howling Wolf Productions, awards, and an Oscar shortlist and getting to work with my heroes!' I try not to let all those naysayers get me down, because they have in the past; it's the emotional struggle which can stop you from moving forward. One person's weakness is another's strength.

I've never felt so proud of being dyslexic as I do now.

I talk to lots of kids about dyslexia. I think about all the ten-year-old 'me's' out there who are struggling, or the 50-year-olds who are still embarrassed by it. I'm saying come out with who you are; have a coming out party! At school I was constantly worried about people judging me, for so long I hid my struggles or 'disabilities'. Now I embrace it LOUD! I show films and I talk about dyslexia and being proud of it. Being different makes us even cooler. It's not about overcoming it, it's about embracing the things that you are good at and focusing on those.

My parents have always been supportive and helped me to figure out solutions. Without family support, who knows where I'd be. I want everyone to have the opportunity to succeed.

My dad built me a blue and yellow tree house when I was a five-year-old kid. It was a place where I could be creative and let my imagination run wild. I was already making movies in that tree house, my head was in other places and spaces!

A few teachers along the way have really believed in me, that was very special. Whenever I was down they would build me up and guide me to my strengths. These are the people who help you jump over obstacles. In the film industry you have to put emotion aside and just believe in yourself and not let anyone deter you. Every 'no' leads to a bigger and better 'yes'!



PHOTO: HOWLING WOLF PRODUCTIONS

Spellcheck helps a lot.

AARON WOLF

OWN IT. LOVE IT. BE IT. LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND BE PROUD!

I love making movies, I've always had a knack for it.

When I read I visualise the words, I'm not actually reading them but seeing them as pictures. It can be a giant benefit when making a movie. If something doesn't play well, I'll close my eyes and replay the scenes in my head with some changes, and then I know it will work. I actually visualise entire films before we start shooting, I can see it all in my head.

In the film industry collaboration is your best asset. I'm only as good as the people around me, who are great at the things I'm not strong with. I surround myself with a great team, allowing me to focus on the things I do well.

I wish I could rewrite the whole education system introducing subjects like the 'collaboration class' where you're learning to collaborate with everyone's strengths to achieve the goal, not just memorising a bunch of facts because that's what they tell you makes you smart. It doesn't make you smart, it's just how to get an A or a B on your exam and then it's immediately forgotten.

This is why I started a non-profit called 'Education 4 All'; we are making a series of films including 'We Are All Dis(abled)' to spur a movement and rewrite the book on how we educate and learn, so EVERYONE gets a chance. I'm proud to be able to use my film-making to make a difference.

In elementary school you are told to 'be the same, fit in, be exactly like everyone else' and the moment you graduate the world tells you to 'be different, stand out, be better!'

Personally I wouldn't have done anything differently because it's led me to where I am. My journey is mine and I own the things I've done and the mistakes I've made, and continue to learn from them. I'm going to keep moving forward and using what I've learnt to do things better in the future. I can look back with hindsight and say I nailed that one, I overcame that obstacle and, man, am I proud of what I accomplished! I hope we all can share in that pride someday as we rewrite the book and empower everyone to be their best self, and in our case, be their best dyslexic gem.

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FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION

Miracle Beach
International
Film Festival

Official Selection
Virginia
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Austin Jewish
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Boston Jewish
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Berkshire
International
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Charlotte
Jewish
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Santa Cruz
Jewish
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Denver Jewish
Film Festival
2018

RESTORING TOMORROW

Official Selection
Santa Barbara
International
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Miami Jewish
Film Festival
2018

WINNER
Audience Award for
Best Documentary
Los Angeles Jewish
Film Festival
2018

Official Selection
Atlanta Jewish
Film Festival
2018



"HEARTFELT & HISTORIC"

Los Angeles Times

"ABOUT THE POWER OF PLACE"

Los Angeles MAGAZINE

"AN ENGAGING TAKE ON URBAN RENEWAL...
BOLD...MOVING...FUNNY...EMOTIONAL"

Los Angeles Times

"A GENUINELY INSPIRING FILM ... I FOUND IT VERY MOVING"

LEONARD MALTIN

"RESTORING TOMORROW REMINDS US...IT'S ULTIMATELY ABOUT THE PEOPLE

FILM
THREAT

HOWLING WOLF PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS AN AARON WOLF PICTURE "RESTORING TOMORROW"

WRITTEN BY CONOR JONES DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY NUTTALL PRODUCED BY SIMON CARMODY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HOWARD BERNSTEIN JANET DREISEN-RAPPOPORT BRUCE KARATZ

PHOTO: HOWLING WOLF PRODUCTIONS

AB ROGERS

THE IMPERFECT PERFECTIONIST

My art teacher called me an imperfect perfectionist because I had a passion for perfection; I would visualise an idea in my head but I couldn't get it onto paper. I also misused words quite a lot and my friend Caroline Roux, who is a senior journalist, used to say I 'threw words at the wall and watched what stuck'. What I can do, that perhaps others can't, is visualise with great clarity in my mind. It's immersive and 360 degrees. If I can see a project I know we can deliver it successfully. If I can't, it's a disaster and we look for another solution.

I find all the senses really interesting. I have very sensitive hearing; I always eavesdrop and can hear and follow three conversations going on at the same time. And when I'm cooking, which I love doing, I can assemble the dish in my mind. I can smell it all coming together. If it curdles in my mind, it will curdle in reality.

I can't bear it when tech doesn't work, too many passwords and codes. I like things to be simple. Sometimes I work too fast and send the wrong thing to the wrong person, embarrassing!

When I was young we used to have to write cheques to pay for things. I found it really stressful writing in front of people. I worried they thought I had weird handwriting and would call the police because I was faking my signature.

The scarring of our confidence is always there, I'm surprised I can do things sometimes.

I always tried but was never understood. Consequently I went through quite a lot of schools, but I did have an amazing drama teacher called Keith, who also taught in prisons. On my first day he pulled out the register and called my name, and I screamed 'yer!', and he screamed back at me thirty times louder. From that moment I always had respect for him, he knew exactly how to deal with my ill discipline and over energy.

My mum always gave me access to a confidence, a belief it was going to be OK.

I went to private schools and I probably have the two most expensive O-levels, History and Politics, which I needed to take twice to pass. The whole exam structure is designed in such a linear way, the opposite to the way dyslexics think. I even failed pottery twice and I'm actually quite a good potter now!

As a kid I was well marinated in design, it's in my blood.

Making loads of mistakes and reassembling is really important. I love the cabinet maker expression 'measure twice and cut once'.



AB ROGERS

THE IMPERFECT PERFECTIONIST

For me the best thing about doing an MA at the Royal College of Art was my peer group and meeting people working in different mediums, from glass to textiles. It was an education beyond belief. It was in the student bar where the osmosis and the coming together of the group breathed the same idea, and argued over red or yellow, straight or curly. That is really where the boiling point started. That's why I love teaching because you get back into that.

I find it amazing that people can know how to spell; it makes no sense to me!

After graduating, I taught 3D design at Leeds Metropolitan. On my first day I wrote a note on the blackboard and a helpful student commented 'I think you're missing a d in your Wednesday', so I went with my pen and put in another d, but in the wrong place! That was an embarrassing moment, I felt like they were thinking 'you're gonna teach us and you can't even spell Wednesday'. But I lasted four years and the students have done very well. I think I'm a good teacher because I teach in a non-linear way. I have had lots of dyslexic students who think more like me, it's more engaging.

It's interesting to look at the percentage of dyslexics in postgraduate education and the percentage of dyslexics in jail. Statistically they're not that far off each other. I think it shows what can happen if your dyslexia is caught early and you're redirected.

Many years later, when I was Head of Programme for Interior Design at the Royal College of Art, I loved the idea of being a professor with two O-levels but my education was not quite linear enough for them to upgrade me to professor.

I am proud of the Ab Rogers Design studio and all we have achieved. We are an office full of very creative designers working on amazing projects with an impressive client list. We persuade our clients to do radical things. One of my early projects was for Michel Guillon, a high-end optician on the Kings Road. He came to us wanting a beige shop, but we delivered a radical optical blue shop with a sense of playfulness and interactivity. Unprompted pneumatic pistons made the display compartments slide out through the skin of the wall displaying the glasses. The original idea was to add a moment of humour and surprise to the shopping experience but it also lured in passers-by for a closer look.

My business partner is amazing because he has exactly the opposite mind to me. I explain my crazy ideas to him and when we come together we create something special.



PHOTO: DAN STEVENS

ADLIN MURPHY

DANCE TO YOUR OWN TUNE

As a clinical psychologist I see lots of parents of children who are struggling academically. My advice to them is to accept your child for who they are, what they can do, and their amazing way of seeing the world.

With you on their side they'll start to believe in themselves and shine.

Personally, growing up with dyslexia was difficult; I was different, slow and frustrated. It took me a long, long time to be happy with who I am, to finally feel self-assured, as capable as other people and worthy of success. Once I accepted that, I was able to open up my mind to get over my 'mental block'. I started to learn new skills, found the right support, assistive technology and started to dream big!

I love technology, and use my phone to snap a picture of a page in a book, or a note that I've written on a serviette in a restaurant during that 'Aha' moment!

I only started reading as a hobby six years ago, and I love the Kobo app and reader because I can change the font style and size when I'm on the go.

I find from personal experience, and as a practitioner working with many dyslexics, that we need to learn a 'concept' in depth. This takes time and requires a lot more effort, but leads to mastery, greater understanding and better application. When dyslexics master a concept they hang on to it and never forget.

It's key to understand how YOU learn as everybody learns differently. Don't force yourself to learn techniques that don't work for you. If the shoe doesn't fit...the journey is going to be a painful, uncomfortable one and you won't be able to walk very far!

Dyslexics have an ability to think outside the box and not follow the masses. If you allow your mind to wonder, you'll be amazed with what you'll be able to see, create and solve. Never stop wondering, there's nothing wrong with dreaming and visualising. When wondering is re-labelled as visualising, it starts to sound like something productive.

I find encouraging children to change the label makes them feel more positive.

iPhoto combined with Evernote.
ClockedIn app.
Dyslexie font.
Trello.



ANUJA DHIR QC

KEEP GOING; IF YOU GIVE UP ON YOURSELF SO WILL OTHERS

I don't think dyslexia is a gift. But it does not have to be a barrier to success.

I wouldn't choose to be dyslexic but knowing that I am dyslexic has been liberating. I now understand why spelling is so difficult for me and why I tend to use words and phrases that I am comfortable with. I would like to be more adventurous with language than I am. There are some everyday words I can have difficulty spelling. Despite being dyslexic, I did well enough in my school exams to go to university to study law, and then to sit the bar exams. I was called to the bar at the age of 21 and spent 23 years as a barrister before being appointed a judge in 2012.

In the courtroom I prefer to stick to plain and simple language where possible.

In Court I prefer to use simple words and phrases. Being dyslexic has helped me to understand that some people have difficulty with language or can need more time to process questions and some may also need regular breaks. Judges do try to ensure that adjustments are made when required, to ensure everyone who comes into our courts can understand what is said and done.

I went to a state school and no one picked up on my dyslexia. For most of the time I was near the bottom of the class. My older sister, who is not dyslexic, was always at the top. My parents' approach was remarkable: they didn't compare us and so I was not made to feel as if I was an underachiever. That support and encouragement made all the difference.

The change came when I was able to pick subjects and so was concentrating on subjects that interested me. That is when my grades started to get better and I started to enjoy learning.

Whether you do well at school depends on what you are being tested on. In an ideal world school would provide tailored teaching in subjects you enjoy and are good at.

Unfortunately, people with learning difficulties tend to concentrate on what they can't do rather than on what they can do. Successful people tend to succeed by focusing on what they can do. Give things a go! I have been very lucky, I have an occupation which is rewarding and interesting and I am surrounded by people I admire and respect.

Good manners and charm is a good place to start.



I learnt for the exam and not for the wider subject.
I like a time line, post it notes, highlighters
and to write everything out.



BILL AMBERG

FIND YOUR NICHE

I am passionate about leather in all its forms; it's my special interest subject. I know it's a ridiculous thing but leather is such a great material to work with, so malleable and kind; it only gets better with age!

From an early age I was in the workshop making things, working at the bench is very important to me.

I've been influenced by Soetsu Yanagi, who wrote a book called 'The Unknown Craftsman'. It's about designing through making things and the idea that if you repeatedly make something it gets better and better. It's why the workshop is at the centre of the studio; the process of making is at the core.

I am proud to have made a career out of my mad hobby, it's a super niche little business.

I did appallingly in my exams but my parents never criticised me and were amazing considering the era. Typically of the 1970s, my dyslexia was only referenced as I was leaving school. My English master said to me 'You'll be fine, you're probably dyslexic!' I had a brilliant History teacher called Gilbert, he was really eccentric, nice and funny. He didn't get bogged down; he taught me that learning things was interesting.

I still really enjoy learning. I love a useless fact, the more curious the better!

After school I worked on an oil rig for a year, it was good fun and well paid. Then I went travelling to New Zealand, Australia and South East Asia, working my way and learning leather skills in saddlers, case and boot makers. In Australia I met the amazing teacher who taught me the strict rules of leather techniques and how to use them freely. Years later I bought her tools, the ones I learnt on.

I moved back to a little studio in London in the mid-1980s, and set up on my own, making leather bags and accessories, and developed the idea of using leather within architectural interiors. I have worked on incredible projects in amazing places like the Royal Academy lecture theatre, Westminster Abbey and the Harrods watch department.

I'm practical and pragmatic; I don't get overdramatic.

I can talk comfortably and give presentations but putting pen to paper makes me anxious, I write rather brusque short emails! These days I get other people to do the stuff I can't, I've got a great copywriting guy and a very good financial director. I cover off my shortcomings and surround myself with people that can do the things I can't do.

The upside to dyslexia is that it makes you think around problems, always look for alternatives and approach things from a different point of view.



Take it slow.
Don't get bullied or forced into rushing.
Tell the truth and be honest at all costs,
that way everything is clear.

CHAD CHOUDHURY

THE PROBING MIND

I wanted to join the police when I left school but I was too short. Thankfully that rule changed so at the age of 40 I began my career in the police service. I was married with a young family and it was very demanding going back to studying. I was always good at communicating but I found it difficult to put thoughts into words and onto paper. At the time I didn't know I was dyslexic and relied on the methods I'd used over the years, like reading out loud and highlighter pens. I got through the training at Hendon Police College and I'm proud to say I passed and excelled in the practical situations.

I never read for pleasure, only for self improvement.

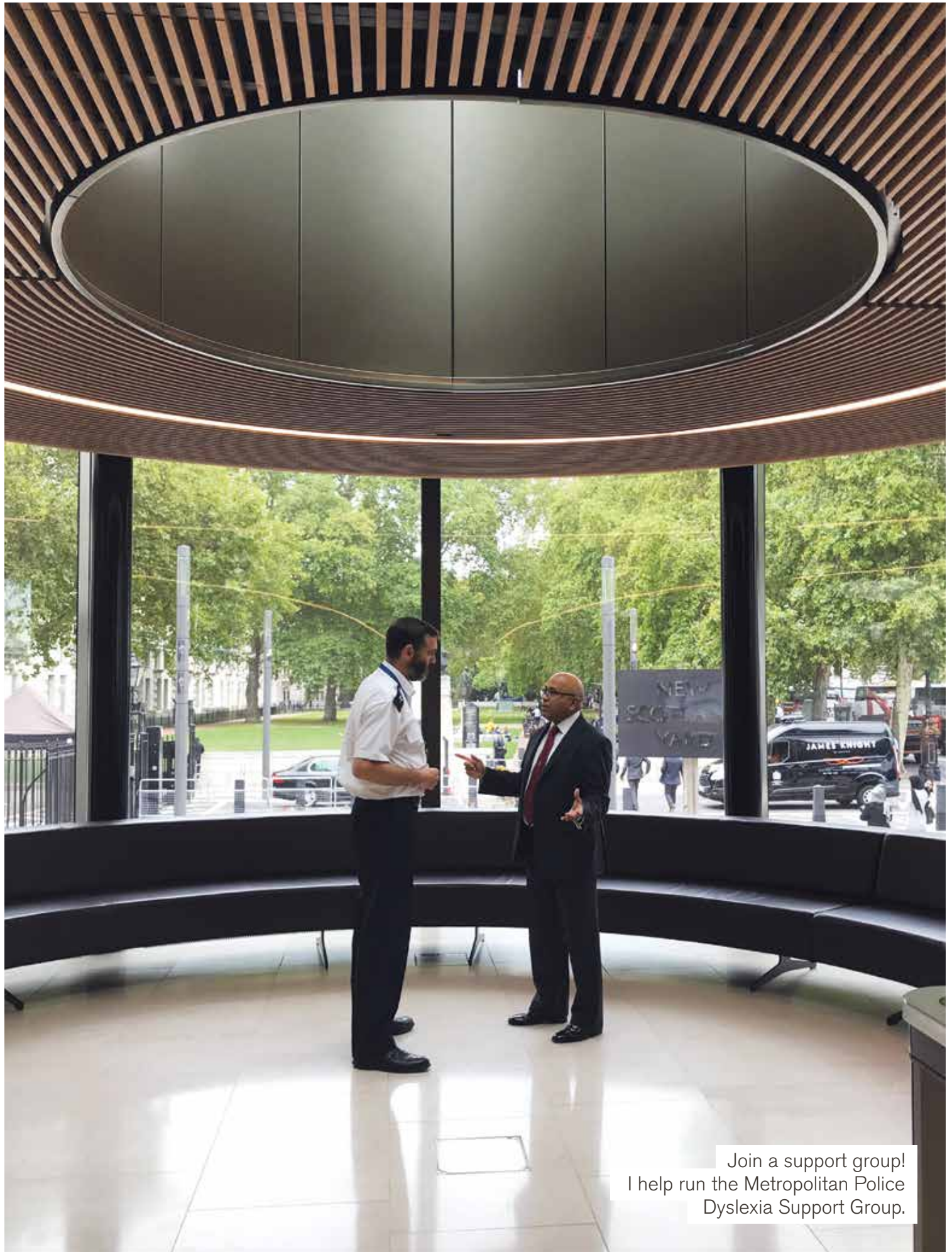
After graduating from Hendon Police College as a new uniformed officer I completed my two-year probationary period. During this time I was continually tested. One particular week my exam was printed on yellow paper and for the first time I finished on time and achieved 96%! I asked the instructor why the test was on yellow paper. He explained that someone in the class was dyslexic and in order for that person not to stand out, everyone had the same. I thought 'Bingo!' I was assessed at 46 years old. Having felt I had flunked school, a great weight was lifted off my shoulders.

Dyslexics make great police officers because we are good communicators, we have empathy and intuitively know where to look for evidence. We go to the nth degree trying to link things together.

We need to be great picture thinkers to convey the crime scene accurately.

My biggest challenge is time, I feel I'm always running out of it! It's definitely down to my dyslexia. When I'm working I always double check for mistakes and corrections but writing reports has become less of an obstacle with assisted technology like Dragon software, text to speech, smarter working and body worn cameras that record and capture evidence.

I wish I had discovered I was dyslexic earlier but it's made me the person I am today and I'm quite happy with that!



Join a support group!
I help run the Metropolitan Police
Dyslexia Support Group.

CHARLOTTE EDMONDS

DANCE IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE THAT EVERYONE CAN UNDERSTAND

Getting into The Royal Ballet School was life changing.

At 11, I was accepted into The Royal Ballet Lower School. This was a pivotal moment for me as I had the privilege of transitioning from the daily struggle of being in bottom set to smaller, more tailored classes that allowed me to embrace education.

As education became something I no longer had to constantly worry about, a new set of challenges came to light as the dance exercises became mentally challenging and physically exhausting. These were consequences I was happy to accept as I was finally given the platform to excel at something I thoroughly enjoyed.

Despite doing what I loved day in, day out, I struggled to retain the movement sequences and my memory lapses would affect how I was perceived. Everyday life can be difficult as a dyslexic, even in the creative arts, having to learn to work within a linear society in which true understanding of dyslexia is limited.

Choreography is my creative outlet; I pour all my energy and passion into it. It's all encompassing!

As a headmistress, my mum understood the need to be transparent about my dyslexia, to embrace it, to find coping strategies and a school that nurtured and understood its complexity. I needed encouragement and I received it from those who believed in my choreographic skills. The high expectations of teachers really helped me become resilient, although to see mistakes as opportunities to learn was not an easy journey for me. Learning how to approach challenges is key to developing the confidence to succeed.

I am passionate about storytelling. I draw from my own struggles and experiences and I am increasingly drawn towards the 'bigger picture' when approaching my work. I have been told my interpretation of events and working practices are different and this gives me an innovative approach to new tasks. Finding my strength in the creative arts and physical education helped develop my confidence. The movement I create helps me to remember information, which has led to my fascination in choreographic cognition.

I write up my notes in a language that only I can understand.

As spelling has never been my strong point, I developed my own language to record my thoughts and choreography, which helped remove any judgement from onlookers. Collaborating with other creatives across a breadth of specialisms helped me develop this further as I had more experiences and skill sets to draw from. Ultimately, this gave me fresh ways to approach and overcome complex challenges, both personally and professionally.

There is no limit to achievement, as a dyslexic you just need to find your own way to get there.

Dance helped me understand that you can learn in a holistic way and mentally it had a positive impact on my outlook on education.



CLAUDIA SMITH

STOP AND BREATHE; DON'T TIE YOURSELF IN KNOTS

I don't label myself as dyslexic. I am just a person who functions in a different way from the next person. I don't like to witness people feeling that they are broken and need fixing. Dyslexia can cause that feeling.

I went to an academic girls school where I struggled to pay attention. I was frustrated and bored and always in trouble for being noisy and disruptive. Then aged 12 the headmistress at my school suggested I leave because I didn't seem to fit in and struggled with the academic side of things. This was actually a very helpful suggestion and I went instead to a performing arts school where I could develop my art and performance skills.

I was much happier because I had a constant creative outlet and there were teachers who were more understanding and tolerant of my energetic and inquisitive character. My parents were always really encouraging and supportive. This meant that, although I couldn't always trust my mind, I was able to trust my intuition and be open to change which has helped me to know what is best for me.

One of my driving forces is to understand what it means to be human.

I got curious about mental health while doing a degree in Fine Art. I explored the idea of 'madness' and how things can appear one way on the outside but be very different on the inside. One of my coping strategies was to be very organised but at times this verged on being obsessive. I had a strong desire to understand everything and not seem different. I was desperate to not be different. At 19 I started having panic attacks and suffering with anxiety. I didn't see a doctor but started practising yoga and meditation. It was a long process but it really helped, suddenly I could breathe properly again.

Now I use what I learned practicing yoga in my psychotherapy practice, encouraging clients to drop out of their head and into their body.

When we are in a state of panic or heightened anxiety it is hard to fulfil our potential. It is so important to calm the nervous system in order to focus. This often means processing painful memories in order to live more fully in the present. This is especially important when it comes to things you find challenging like maths or writing. I found that once I could do this I really enjoyed writing essays. I wish I'd known that at school.

There was some concern about what I might do for a living. It may have taken me a bit longer but finding my own way felt very important. People feel a lot of pressure to know what they want to do. I've been intuitive, I've followed my heart and found something I really love and it feels right. It's good to try different things and see what fits. Trust your intuition and the rest will unfold.

Ask for help, I felt like I had to do everything by myself.
Take your time and don't try to work at the pace of others.
I have to put everything in my diary and plan it out.



DOM WILDER

SEEING THE FINISHED OBJECT STILL GIVES ME GOOSE BUMPS

I'm an entrepreneur and creativity is at the core of everything I do. I like designing because I want to make things. I love the whole process of making.

I'm in it for the journey rather than the destination!

From 12 to 14 years old I went to a specialist dyslexia school called Brickwall House (now Renfrew House) and it really did help. Suddenly I was in a school where dyslexia was no longer a problem, it was celebrated. They had fantastic workshops; it was where I fell in love with CDT (Craft Design Technology). I remember telling Mr Fen that I wanted to be a woodwork teacher one day and in some respects I am. At this school they constantly tested our reading ages and openly talked about the results, having a reading age of eight when I was 12 was not a shameful situation. Unfortunately circumstances changed and it was decided our family would move. I left my specialist school in Sussex and was dropped into a rural state school in Scotland, it was horrific. I wasn't going to pass my exams and my Geography teacher suggested I should think of something else to do like being a forklift driver.

Academic expression really contorted me as a child.

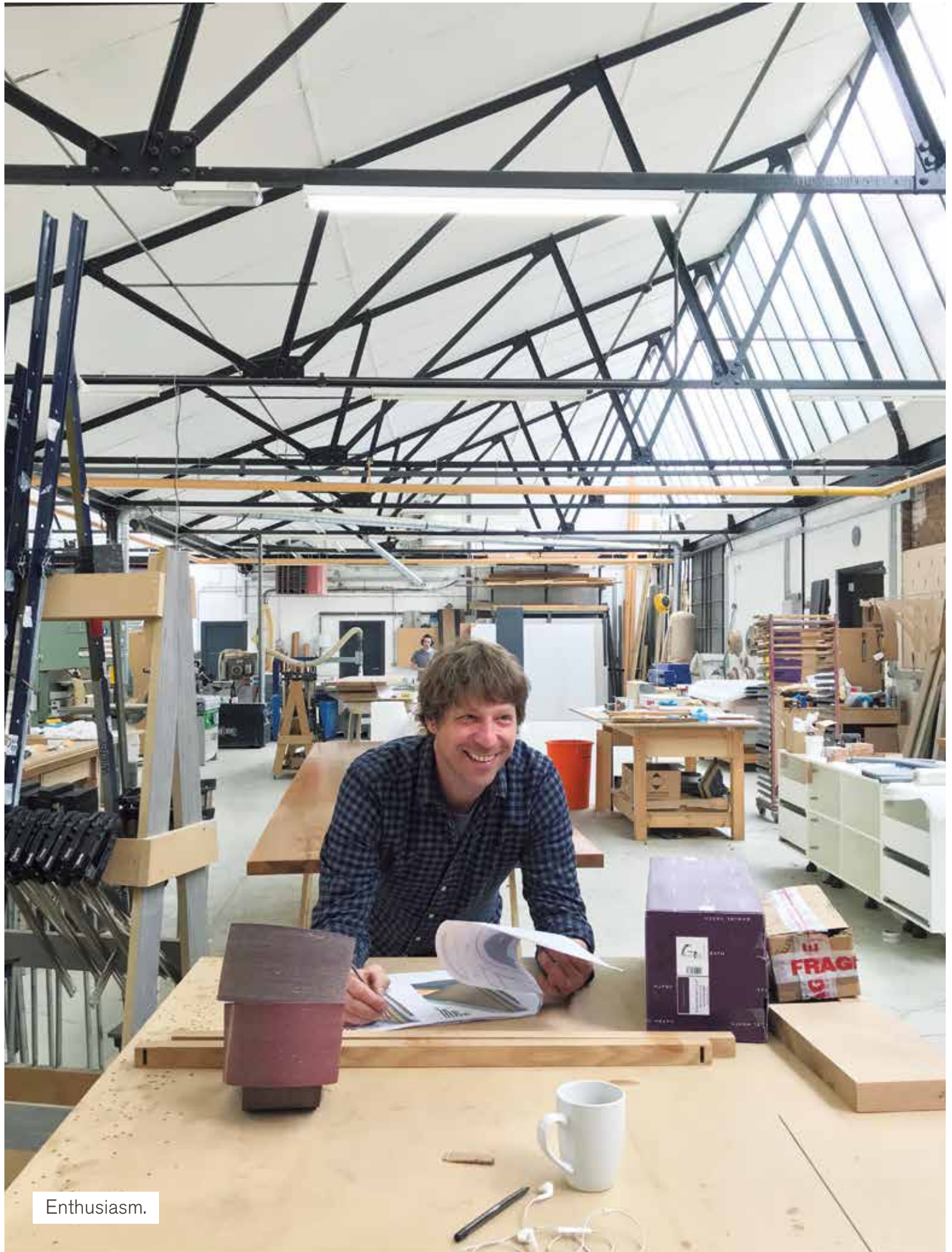
The academic world is horrible for a dyslexic person, especially the exam process, which I wrote about in my dissertation. Essentially reading is a format for getting information in and writing is a format for getting information out.

If you're not good at these things, it doesn't mean that you don't understand. It just means you can't express yourself in those two ways. That's why I dived into making because that's how I could express myself.

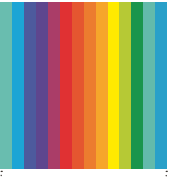
Richard Branson really inspired me to become an entrepreneur. I thought that if he could get that far and be dyslexic so could I. It's all about ideas and knowing where you want to get to, using the right tools to get there, the tools often being other people. We all need other people. I love seeing my carpenters bringing my ideas to life, however it is easy to get too involved and they hate that. I'm excited to see the finished object. I want to study every detail of it and have at times been known to break finished work; they call it 'the Dom touch'! I still get embarrassed when writing notes in front of clients. I deliberately make my handwriting unreadable because I don't want them to know I can't spell. I'm happy to celebrate being dyslexic but at the same time there are still those moments when I think 'Aghhh too many words!'

Really I am running a business so I can have a forklift and machinery. It's my Lego box!

The confidence in me is definitely shining through especially after moving into our new 35,000 square feet studio workshop. When I initially suggested it my business partner said 'stop being absurd' but it didn't stop me! If I'm driven I really will make something happen. It goes back to the dyslexia days when you're told you can't do stuff. There is a rhythm to a business: if it doesn't make a profit, it doesn't survive. The business has matured but I am still so excited by it...I've even got a forklift truck!



Enthusiasm.



10

ACTOR, COMEDIAN, WRITER & POLITICAL ACTIVIST

EDDIE IZZARD

I LEARNT TO BORROW CONFIDENCE FROM MY FUTURE SELF

The word dyslexic was invented to p* off kids who are dyslexic. It should be called something easier to spell like 'bink'.**

I think the phonetic spelling that we often do as dyslexics is better. It's more logical to spell cat with a 'K'. The English language has more letters than we need. We don't need the letter 'C' because it keeps pretending to be an 'S' or a 'K'.

'I spy' is such a brilliant game for me as a dyslexic. If you spell the word 'ceiling' with an 'S', the game goes on for hours!

I'm a very slow reader and I find it difficult to read large, complicated words. I just say them in my head very slowly. When I write things down it goes all scrappy. I write the letters sometimes bigger, sometimes smaller. They go off the horizontal line. I wish I had better writing. My mother, my father and my brother all have beautiful handwriting.

When creating my stand up, I verbally sculpt the material show by show, rather than writing words down and then performing them. I work very hard to sculpt each show. I build the material up and up and then pare it back. It is very intense on stage.

Coming out as transgender was a great gift to myself as it was so hard to do it. It was different to dealing with being dyslexic. I have learned to be entrepreneurial with my confidence. Some people make money in one area then put it into another. I do that with my confidence. I built it up by coming out and then put it into performing in other languages. I think dyslexic people are more creative. Some of the confidence I've got I developed by pushing against being dyslexic and by saying 'I am going to do whatever I want on stage, make up words and have poetic licence!' I am proud of my ability to put weird juxtapositions and ideas together. It seems I have a large mental memory map. I can move about in my mind and come up with interesting verbal collisions.

I think dyslexics think sideways as well as vertically.

Like a snowboarder, I try and go off-piste into areas that no one has thought of before. Like doing three shows in three languages in three hours in Caen, Normandy to commemorate D-Day. When I was very young I was determined with the things I wanted to do. If I wanted to do something I'd push and push and push. I realised I might be dyslexic after a fan said 'You talk about things in a dyslexic way.' I would have liked to have known earlier but I have managed to cope by coming up with different ways of doing things and building upon them.

I do think being dyslexic makes me more creative. I live by the Nelson Mandela quote 'Don't judge me by success, judge me by the number of times I failed and got back up again.'

I use my iPad instead of handwriting.
It looks stronger and I can print it out easily.



PHOTO: HAMISH BROWN

FLORA MCLEAN

THE QUEEN OF COLLABORATION

I blurt things out in meetings, which didn't go down well, the result was I kept getting into clashes with my boss and we wanted to get to the root of the problem...diagnosis dyslexial

I express myself better on paper. Verbally I can't find the words and so don't sound as intelligent.

However, when there is a big problem I can see the whole picture and can solve it, I have special skills in that department! But I really struggle with verbalising these complex ideas. At other moments words just flow out of me in the most brilliant way, and I think 'WOW I wish I had recorded them'.

My brain just fizzes with ideas.

I was a high achiever at school. Teachers said 'Flora knows what she's doing!' I enjoyed the lessons and liked the structure. I learnt how to write a history essay, there's a formula to follow. The teacher was confident I'd be fine in my exams, 'We've got you down for a B grade, you're hanging out with all the right people, and it's rubbing off on you. You've got the system down!' I get into my A-level exam and I can't remember a f***ing thing! I remember looking around and thinking 'What are they writing about?!' It was shut down! All that work, exams were harsh. Reading out loud at school my whole body would be covered in hives! I would stutter the hell out of it. I would get the fear. I'd muddle up the words and they'd come out in the wrong order. The Maths teacher used to go purple because I'd lose interest and talk or look out the window; I didn't know what the hell was going on!

But when Maths became practical I could do it.

I design and make hats, statement jewellery and eyewear for my fashion label, House of Flora. I'm inspired by all sorts of materials; PVC, perspex, felt, leather, wood veneer and nylon. I have collaborated with amazing fashion houses Givenchy Couture, Bill Blass and Diane Von Furstenberg, creating hats and accessories for their catwalk shows and ready to wear collections. Fashion icons Rihanna, Erykah Badu and Dita Von Teese have been snapped wearing my hats.

The milliner Stephen Jones was really encouraging and put me in the V&A show, The Anthology of Hats. He said he wished he'd designed my beret. Nice!

Fashion magazines feature my work, if they want something fast they know I can make it. I love it when stylists call me up in a panic! I was once asked to make a leopard skin bikini for Beyoncé for a photo shoot the next day!



My notebooks are fun; I draw diagrams and use my own code.
Dr Seuss books changed my world, that's how I learnt to read.
I've learnt Portuguese through lyrics of songs.

FRITHA QUINN

LABELS DON'T DEFINE YOU

I have a career writing for a living! I was told I would never be able to do that so each time I log into my blog 'tigerlillyquinn' and hit publish I feel a sense of satisfaction.

I have both dyslexia and dyspraxia to varying levels. At school I had a reading age five years higher than normal and a writing age five years lower. I've always LOVED reading, and I didn't watch much TV as a child. I was a loner and spent most of my free time reading or drawing. I would write my own stories, encouraged by my parents, but they were littered with bad spelling and grammar.

At school I was taught pretty quickly that I wasn't 'good' at writing, and was told the more I read the easier it would be to learn to spell, but it just didn't work that way for me. Throughout school I was bright but struggled massively with poor confidence and stressed about my spelling. My vocabulary was quite wide but I struggled to communicate that when writing, opting to choose words I knew I wouldn't get wrong. Even now I can't tell you how time consuming it is googling how to spell a word that spellcheck doesn't recognise!

Honestly a bit of bad spelling doesn't actually matter!

I remember the moment I actually realised how 'embarrassed' was spelt, not 'inbarrsed' as I'd thought until I was 20, haha! In my teens I struggled to find the words I knew when speaking. I put it down to anxiety about speaking to anyone. The thought of my mind going blank or 'umming' when trying to reach the right word made it worse so I preferred to speak as little as possible. It felt like the word was always there but just hiding in some part of my brain I couldn't reach, so again I would simplify my language to substitute.

I was diagnosed with dyslexia at 13 and found out at 18 that I was also dyspraxic. The bruises I constantly found (and still do) on my hips and side of my legs were because my brain just couldn't work out where I was to not bump into things. It sounds quite comical, and is to be honest, but if you see me walking through a door I'll more often than not bump myself on the frame as I pass. Clinically clumsy is the way I like to explain that part!

Going to art college really helped because half the students were dyslexic. It was the first time I felt proud about it because I was told it made me more creative.

Why did they make the word 'dyslexia' so hard to spell when that's the definition of the problem? Feels like such a cruel joke.

At school I learnt rhymes to teach me how to spell words like 'because'.



GIL GERSHONI

DANCE WITH YOUR DYSLEXIA

We should look at dyslexia not as a disability but as a specialised ability: A hyper-ability.

I didn't feel this way overnight; it took a lot of soul searching, successes and failures. At school, I spent most of my time and energy trying to hide my unrecognised dyslexia. I timed my bathroom breaks to coincide with my turn in the reading line, knowing exactly how long it would take for the teacher to move safely past my spot. As an adult I think 'WOW' what amazing skills I'd developed, like how to read the room and timing, but for a seven-year-old it was very stressful. Moments like this have shaped and made me stronger.

For most of my childhood, I was aware I thought differently.

At ten years old I was on my bike, cruising the streets in the suburbs of Tel Aviv, with my pet pigeon. While my friends went to summer camp, I got my first job as a magician. I'm sure only to be polite the camp director booked me for one show; 'I'll give you a better price if you let me do all the shows!' I told him. Intrigued, he signed me for the whole summer.

Through magic, I discovered that my non-linear mind could be an asset.

I knew intuitively how to structure each illusion for maximum impact and when to adjust it based on the audience's reaction. Magic let me tell a story in a unique way; authentic and connected yet extraordinary. That's what I still do every day at Gershoni Creative, the branding agency I founded more than two decades ago.

Reading was, and is, the most noticeable challenge. When you see the word 'dog,' unless you're dyslexic, you don't really read it. Your subconscious recognises the word and the image of the canine pops into your head. This is how the non-dyslexic brain computes 'dog'. When I look at the word 'dog', I first have to negotiate the individual symbols: D O G. It's difficult for me to read linearly: my mind jumps from the D to the G, spins around the G, looks back at the D, then stops at the O to stare at the space inside the curves. In order for me to read the word, I have to override how my brain works by holding each letter D, O and G, sounding it out in my mind, and developing a relationship with those three letters so I associate them with the concept of 'dog'.

To call dyslexia a disability is to say a boat is broken because it cannot fly.

It's easy to label someone struggling to read a three-letter word as 'slow', but I was only slow in that context. The flip side is that I think very, very fast. To work with others I have learnt to regulate my spinning mind, to know when to slow myself down, and when I can double down on my dyslexic gift. I may struggle to read words but I have a gift in reading objects, I perceive them from all angles: I see through, around, above, below, within and all at the same time. I do it in the blink of an eye.



Emails and messages from my phone say:
'Dictated not read due to dyslexia.'
Video chatting because it's good to talk!
Regulate and slow down.

GIL GERSHONI

DANCE WITH YOUR DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia strengthens communication, collaboration and performance; skills I use every day to help others. Once I learned to embrace my dyslexia, a whole new world opened up.

I developed a relationship with my dyslexia and saw the benefits of my supposed impairment, like seeing incredible detail with almost no effort or being aware of slight discrepancies in visible and invisible order. Qualities such as people's body language, state of mind or how they relate to their identity and environment are instantly apparent to me. Where others see a dead end, I can see a universe of possibilities.

The concept of a creative block is foreign to me. How does a person run out of ideas?

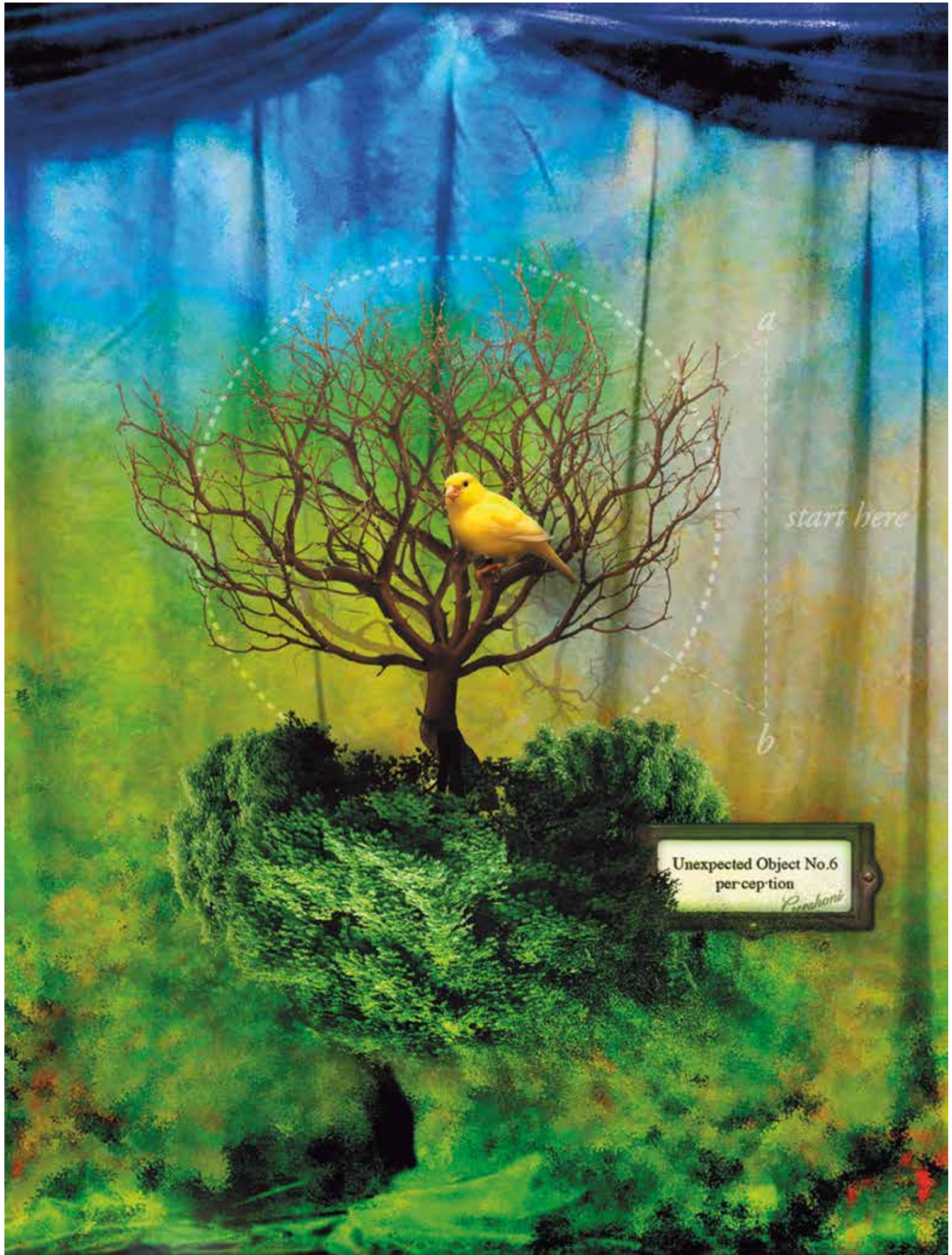
There's never a moment of boredom in my dyslexic mind; I'm constantly feeding the machine. I've come to realise that if I direct all of that energy outward it can be overwhelming for the person on the receiving end. I understand how my mind 'spins', I choose when to fire in real time and when to pause and bring others along, I can untether my imagination and make my non-linear connections accessible to the linear world. Gershoni Creative Agency is an amazing team whose aligned talents and collective synergy is greater than the sum of its parts. We compensate for each other's strengths and weaknesses. One person's hyper-able skill complements something missing in the other person and vice versa.

My attitude toward my dyslexia has shifted over time. I've moved from shame to acceptance, from acceptance to ambition, from ambition to empowerment. I've learned to dance with my dyslexia.

It was painful growing up feeling like I was too different for my own good. A lot of time and energy was spent learning the meaning of hard work and how to grow a thicker skin, both are good, but it could have been easier. A good first step was to understand how my mind operated and identify my strengths; I could then put them into action sooner.

It can be easy to project disappointment out into the world and even easier for society to mirror shame right back, but to rename is to redefine. Adopting a new term for something as complex and misunderstood as a learning disability helps break that cycle. In this sense, I am reminded of my interest in magic. Magic is not about trickery, it's about dissolving our preconceptions long enough to glimpse a different reality. Perhaps if we stop the limiting connotations of a learning disability, we can recognise the liberating truth:

Each dyslexic mind has potential; a hyper-ability just waiting to be discovered.



Unexpected Object No.6
perception

Gereshoni

GOSIA PALYS-DUDEK

CREATIVITY NEEDS SPACE AND ITS OWN PACE

I grew up part of a dream team, three amazing dyslexics, my identical twin sister Kasia and our best friend Magda. We lived in post-communist Poland where there was little knowledge about dyslexia. We spent our childhood playing, breaking, fixing and rebuilding; it was kindergarten time, free from rules. We felt we could do whatever we wanted to and we didn't see any limitations in our thinking or actions, everything looked possible. I feel the same today.

I struggled with everything at school and had panic attacks when asked to read out loud. My parents were amazing and supported us as much as they could, but they didn't know what to do. I was ashamed of my dyslexia. We worked so hard to be at the same level as other children, we got up at five every morning to repeat what we had learned the day before and spent all evening doing homework.

Sometimes I would play act being somebody else, somebody better, more accurate and clever. Now I do everything at my own pace. I don't like it when somebody is looking over my shoulder when I'm working, doing anything under stress or time pressure isn't my cup of tea!

Ever since I can remember my sister and I ran our own businesses, ideas would just jump out one after another.

At university we worked in market research conducting focus groups. It sounds crazy dyslexics working with language but we were really good! Language is a tool, a communication system with meanings and rules. Very quickly I started to automate the things we 'struggled' with.

There were a lot of these 'struggles' but that's how our first successful business 'Focusson' was born. We stopped going out and spent all our time working, designing and building software that allowed researchers to conduct online focus groups which analysed their scripts in semi-automatic ways. It was a huge achievement.

Don't ever be scared of learning and trying new things; fail and move forward. Be open-minded and curious.

At 30 I was ready for a new challenge and one piece of baggage I wanted to lose was not being able to speak English. I knew the only way to learn it was to move to London and how I love this town!

Dyslexia has taught me to be patient; nothing comes naturally to me, behind my successes are hours of hard work, tiredness and tears. Including learning to code, it's a great lesson in perseverance; it's challenging but fun. When you code you're dealing with problems all the time and you need to be able to handle failure.

There are many tutorials and courses online about coding, you will find something that works for you. If you don't like reading, watch YouTube or listen to podcasts. This gives unlimited opportunities, especially for English-speaking dyslexic rock stars!



My mum gave us 'memory hooks' that I still use to remember things.

GUY SINGH-WATSON

I SOW THE SEED AND PLANT THE IDEA

I'm a self-confessed veg nerd. I started out with a wheelbarrow delivering home grown organic veg to friends and now have a national veg box scheme delivering to around 50,000 customers a week.

I spend more time in the fields than the boardroom.

I don't think dyslexia is a curse; it's not the issue it was 50 years ago. I find word recognition difficult but it doesn't stop me reading. I read very slowly but I do take it in and I remember everything about the book. However, if it doesn't grasp my attention it will get cast aside early on. I stumble reading out loud and my children stopped asking me to read them their bedtime stories, which was quite harsh! Slow reading is not the end of the world, the awful thing is if you think it is, it can cripple a child's confidence and make them disinterested in formal learning.

My state primary school was very respectful of creativity. A couple of teachers there were very supportive of my writing and didn't care that the spelling was wrong as long as they could get the gist of it, that helped me hugely. Secondary school was crushing, I was in the bottom set because I couldn't communicate in that formal way of writing.

I worked very hard and got to study Agriculture at Oxford University. The Oxbridge entrance exam at the time was about lateral thinking, which is something I'm good at. My first essay at Oxford, written in my appalling handwriting, was handed straight back to me, I was told 'You can't hand in work like this', my reply was 'I can't do any other sort of work, it's my very best effort!' There was no understanding. Maybe it was the way I was raised but it didn't make me feel like something was wrong with me, it made me angry with them.

After college I went to work as a management consultant in New York. It was not the life for me. I have always loved farming and being outside, cooking and food. It was something that I had to do in some way so I came back home and started a vegetable farm of my own. As a child I used to help my mum in the garden but I'd never grown vegetables.

It was obvious very quickly that I had found my calling.

It was a revelation to deliver a box of fresh organic veg to customers who really cared about who grew them, how they tasted and didn't mind them misshapen and a bit muddy.

I have published four books and am most proud of the last, a compendium of essays which were included in our veg boxes each week. I think they are really bloody good and that from someone who was dismissed as not being able to write. They weren't always good, it's something I've acquired through hard work and repetition.

I can also look at a set of plans and envision buildings in a way that others can't, to me they seem really slow in the way they think I'm really slow with words. I think that ties in with dyslexic thinking, it's a lateral thought process which allows me to take leaps that most people who operate in a more methodical way don't.

Be a bit flexible about your dreams.
Don't let anyone say that you're a failure because
you are slow with words.



PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

HELEN TAYLOR BA MA PhD

THE NETWORKED MIND

I struggled profoundly with dyslexia in education and academia but I now understand it's not because of the way I think, but the way the education system and academia is structured, and its total lack of understanding around dyslexic thinking.

I'm now determined to figure out 'dyslexic thinking', to change and show how we've been misunderstood. I believe we're on the cusp of a transformation in how we view people with dyslexia.

I hope that one day all ways of thinking will be appreciated equally, and we're not labelled as 'dyslexic' but 'explorers'.

I have been developing a new theory – The Evolution of Complementary Cognition. It explains how by the origin of our species, humans had evolved to specialise in differing but complementary ways of processing information. No way is better than another; rather different ways of thinking act as complementary parts in a whole and work together as what's called a complex adaptive system – a kind of collective brain. I believe this is a crucial ingredient in what makes us human. You can think of our brains as being a little like different members of a team. By thinking in differing but complementary ways, as humans we are able to collectively process a much broader range of information, and achieve far more complex behaviours than if we all processed information in the same way. My research shows that the way of thinking we've labelled as dyslexic is actually an enhanced ability to 'explore' information, which increases our species' capacity to adapt to change. This was critical in enabling us to adapt to climate change and new environments in the past, and is vital in present-day businesses and society.

Unfortunately our education system mostly rewards the ability to reproduce existing knowledge. Rather than the more global processing that dyslexics excel at, it relies on cognitive abilities relating more to detailed and automatic processing for technologies like reading and writing. These are things that dyslexics can really struggle with and consequently we have mistakenly labelled them as having a disorder.

Every single person has strengths and weaknesses. So far we have focused primarily on dyslexic weaknesses, but exploratory thinkers have the potential to be some of the most imaginative and inventive minds in our society.

I hope that soon things will change and that instead we begin to focus on and nurture their strengths.

When I'm overwhelmed with information I put it all on a big piece of paper so I don't have to remember it. Like this I can visually see how everything connects and what I need to do.



PHOTO: MARGARET TAYLOR

HOLLY TUCKER MBE

PAINTING IN WORDS

I co-founded Notonthehighstreet from my kitchen table, selling handmade products by creative small businesses online. It's grown into a multi-million pound business and the Queen awarded me an MBE! I am passionate about small independent creative companies and set up Holly & Co to help them. I'm also proud to be a UK Ambassador for Creative Small Businesses.

One of the biggest challenges for me is the stutter that dyslexia creates, I hear and see words in ways that cause me to panic when I have to say them out loud. Anyone dealing with dyslexia knows first-hand how hard it can be, very simple acts become tough and erode one's self confidence.

I think back to my first job in advertising where reviewing a TV script or rewriting some lines became a nightmare. My boss would correct my work with red scribbles! In the end she wouldn't let me write an email to anyone without it being checked. This traumatised me to the point of not 'writing' again for over ten years. Even when I set up Notonthehighstreet, I'd get my emails checked before being sent. I lost my confidence in writing and clicking send.

Nowadays my team know my difficulties and we have a good laugh at my 'Holly-isms' when I get things wrong! I'm in a safe space.

My co-founders at Holly & Co love my creative writing and have encouraged me; they see beyond the spelling mistakes and recognise the content and how it makes them feel. To improve my grammar I bought lots of children's English grammar books and would do a few exercises each day to relearn the basics. I installed Grammarly on all my devices, it's a must!

Words are like brush strokes and don't need to be perfectly formed, the importance is their colour and positioning.

Dyslexia has given me all the skills I need to become the entrepreneur I am today. Without knowing it at the time, it has been my greatest gift!

Being dyslexic meant my brain has to work twice as hard as others; it has to be quick and figure out solutions. It forces me to approach things in a different way and I believe that is why I have been able to create successful businesses. Even though the scars hurt, I wouldn't change a thing as I am at my happiest where I am today.



Check, check and check.

JAMES KINROSS

DARE TO DREAM. AND IF YOU ARE GOING TO DREAM, DREAM BIG!

Sometimes I feel that when I am doing really complicated things I can't trust my brain to get the simple things right. I am a surgeon, which means that there is no room for mistakes and everything has to be perfect. So this can be quite stressful. For example, I have to ensure that I am very careful to remember the names of all the weird and wonderful instruments that I have to use. It was also really hard to learn all of that complex anatomy!

I always felt very self-conscious when I was at school and I hated having to perform sums in front of the class. I thought everyone else knew the answers and I was the only one that didn't! Of course, this wasn't true.

When I was at school, I was told I would never get into medical school. Now I am a consultant surgeon with a PhD running an amazing research group. I have to pinch myself!

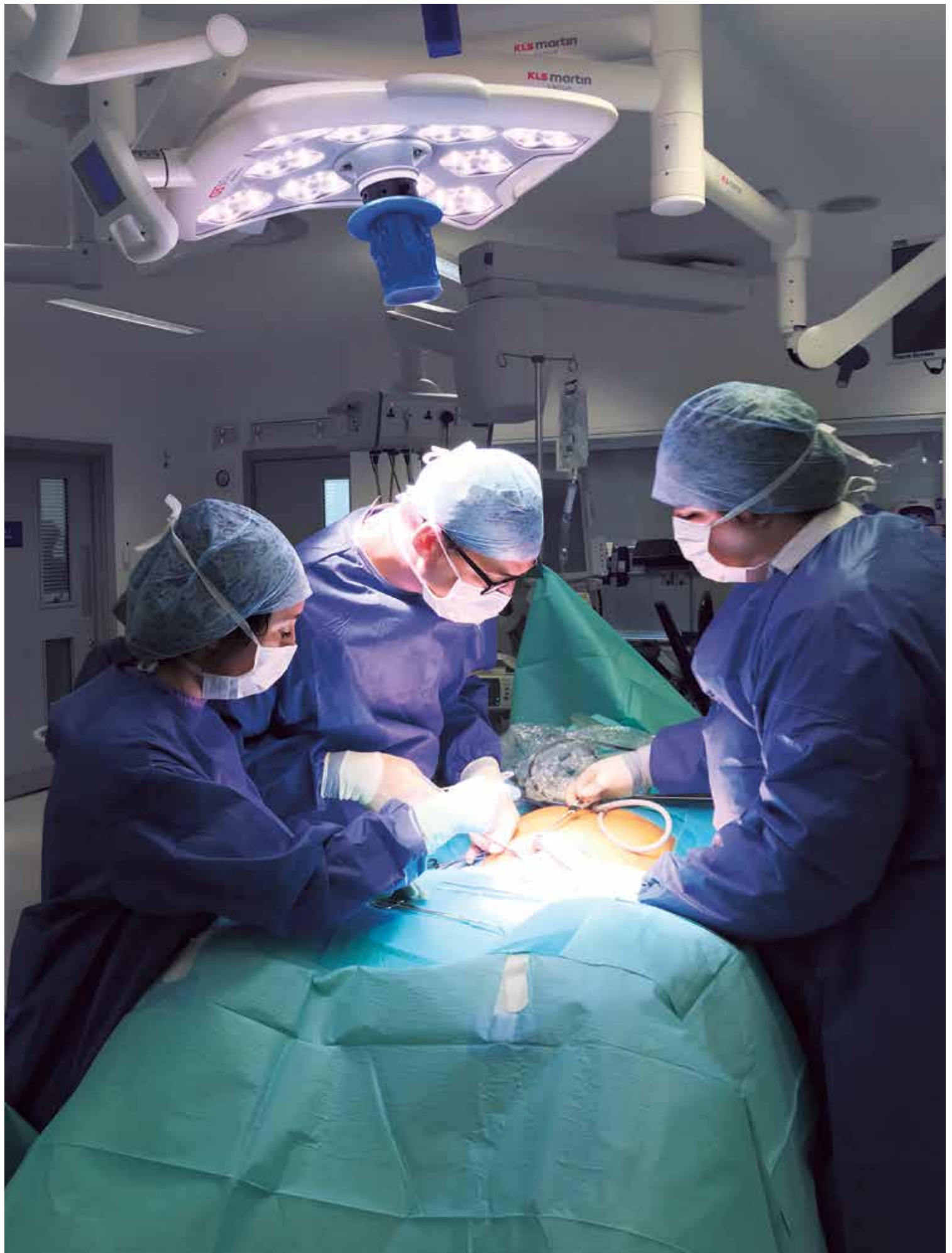
Operating on people for a living is a tremendous privilege and I feel very lucky to be able to spend my time looking after people when they are at their most vulnerable. My patients are ace and I get to meet all sorts of interesting people.

I am also really proud of the science we have done in my lab. Our team has invented and tested an intelligent knife that can sniff out cancer as it cuts through tissue. It is the only one in the world and I have had the privilege of working on this and developing it. We are now taking this device into trials and I hope that one day it will mean that surgery will be safer and that more people will be cured of their cancer.

I have had the very exciting experience of being on the cutting edge of science as new fields were born. For example, I got to study how the hundreds of trillions of bacteria in your gut help you stay healthy and we wrote some of the earliest papers that have gone on to define how the science has taken shape.

I am also really proud of the breadth and depth of the work I have been involved in. I have worked on everything from healthcare policy through to cyber security, robotics and the development of augmented reality tools for surgeons! There is never a dull day.

My mum and dad believed in me when lots of other people didn't and they had the patience to let me take my A-level Chemistry again! Without that, my life would have been very different indeed.



JAMES KINROSS

DARE TO DREAM. AND IF YOU ARE GOING TO DREAM, DREAM BIG!

When I had to do my Chemistry A-level for a second time, I was not feeling very confident and I was very worried about the future. I didn't understand how to learn and what my head needed to do to get me through a test. I was very lucky to have a very good teacher the second time around and I passed. Actually, I got an A! What I learned from that experience was a strategy for learning large amounts of information quickly that seemed to be designed just for my dyslexic brain. It turns out this experience of failure was one of the most important things that happened in my career.

Don't let failure frighten you. Use it as an opportunity to learn and to improve. My failure gave me a learning structure that got me through medical school and my entire surgical career!

I think very creatively and quite often I don't think like a scientist or a doctor. I used to worry about this as I thought that being different was not a good thing or that it made a bad scientist. Certainly, I spent a lot of time trying to learn how to think like a scientist, which is obviously very important in my job but it didn't come naturally. What I discovered, however, is that by being able to think differently I had a distinct advantage; I could think of solutions to problems or new ideas for experiments because I could imagine what was around the corner and I wasn't restricted to thinking in a linear way. I am also quite good at visualising problems and then explaining solutions to them visually. This has really helped a lot to make my work stand out. A lot of the science we do is quite abstract. The maths is very complicated and being able to visualise this is a very useful skill indeed.

I am very lucky to be surrounded at work by some of the cleverest people on the planet. My favourite part of my job is talking to them and planning how we can change the world!

What I can do well is talk lots of different languages: I speak surgeon, patient, nurse, chemist, bio-informatician, management, finance and even a little Italian!

Often my main contribution is to bring these people together so that collectively our very large team can solve really big problems in a way that hasn't been done before. I am good at talking, engaging, drawing, visualising, communicating, leading, persisting, networking, doing, imagining, dreaming. I am not good at sleeping!



The five nevers of dyslexia:

- 1.** Never be afraid to ask a silly question, it usually isn't silly at all and everyone will be grateful you asked it!
- 2.** Never be afraid to ask a teacher to explain something again if you don't understand it. Nearly all teachers will be happy to do this and if they can't it's not your fault so ask another teacher and keep going until you get an answer.
- 3.** Never worry that someone else is cleverer than you. There is always someone cleverer, it doesn't make them better! The world needs people with lots of different skills and yours are just as important.
- 4.** Never apologise for or be embarrassed by your dyslexia. It's not your fault, and people rarely really mind anyway. In my experience most are interested and want to talk about it.
- 5.** Never give up learning.

JAMES KINROSS

DARE TO DREAM. AND IF YOU ARE GOING TO DREAM, DREAM BIG!

I always have an idea and my first reaction to other people's ideas is to think 'How can we make this happen?' rather than 'This will never work!'

Innovating in any walk of life is really hard and to succeed you need to be really determined. I don't give up easily! My top tip is never ever be afraid of education or learning. It is an amazing gift and with it the world is your oyster; you really can do anything you want.

Ask a friend. Never be afraid to get someone to give you a second pair of eyes on a problem. If I have a big grant application, a problem with a patient that is sick, or an operation that is difficult, I ask a friend to help.

I use assisted technology all the time! I simply couldn't do my job without spellcheck. No shame in that at all. I have learned to love words but there are some that I have accepted that I will just never be able to spell e.g. business, jealous, bureaucracy...arghhh!!! I will forever be reliant on technology to help me get the most out of my brain.

Some people with dyslexia have a bad experience of school and they either never forget this or feel that they can't learn and should give up. Never accept that you can't learn something or let someone tell you that it's too hard. It isn't, you just need a different learning strategy or a little more time to get there.

We all learn at different speeds and there is no shame in that; I tell that to a lot of medical students.

My breakthrough came when I was really able to understand how dyslexia affected me. I didn't do this properly until quite late in my life, when I was in my late twenties. I suddenly had to do lots and lots of reading for my PhD. I had the time to think about the mechanics of how my brain took in information and to develop my own techniques for getting information out.

Dyslexia affects us all a bit differently and you will find solutions to your problems that may be different to mine. But don't worry, whatever works for you.

As a general rule my brain will tell me that some new piece of information has gone in and that it is safely stored somewhere deep in the recesses of my mind and that I can remember it whenever I like. But five minutes later it is like it was never there and I can't remember a single thing! Sometimes, I have to read the same paragraph over and over again because of this and it drives me mad.

JAMES KINROSS

DARE TO DREAM. AND IF YOU ARE GOING TO DREAM, DREAM BIG!

What has worked for me is to firstly, understand and recognise when my brain was telling me a fib. Second, I try and visualise things rather than remembering words alone, and I will often draw pictures or remember images. Third, I tell myself that I haven't learned something really important until I have explained it to someone else first. Only once I can do this, do I then trust my brain!

I have had to face a major demon in my career... MATHS!

I had really struggled with this at school and suddenly my entire career depended on it. I realised that there is a lot of creativity and beauty in data and data visualisation, and when I was able to spend enough time thinking about it, I realised that I could not only apply my unique set of talents usefully (e.g. in data visualisation) but that I actually really started to enjoy it! It has been one of the great revelations of my job.

Finally, I will often do mental rehearsal before I perform an operation or complex task so that I make sure that I can remember all of the critical steps and that I can do this perfectly. Seeing and imagining what I am doing means I am less likely to forget something.

At medical school we used to make up really rude rhymes to learn the names of the nerves or the blood vessels and I still find it a very useful way to remember things.

Question everything! I would have backed myself up and stopped apologising. I know now that I can do anything I want but I didn't believe that when I was at school.

For example, I didn't learn as many languages as I would have liked. I would really like to be better at French and Spanish. I was worried that I would sound stupid! Now I don't have time to learn them!

JAMIE OLIVER MBE

EMBRACE THAT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE WORLD

Consistently my spelling is terrible and I have an inability to remember even some basic adjectives. All of my children now correct my spelling, which is quite amusing, but also quite handy to be honest. I think autocorrect makes me even worse!

In secondary school I used to go to what they would call Special Needs most days. And I'll never forget one of the ways of making us get better was to have us read eight pages of Shakespeare to a full school assembly. It was really, really hard as you're trying to read, but also trying to speak to the room, then when you look up at any one time there'll be 30 boys giving you the w***** sign or various other forms of visual abuse. I was kind of fine with it, but it was awkward, or as my daughter would say, well awks.

Having had such a bad relationship with reading, writing and spelling when I was growing up, to now have such a long-term positive relationship with words is a really amazing achievement.

I'm the bestselling non-fiction author in the UK, despite words feeling like my arch enemy in the past, because really I think it's all about communication.

If you've got people to support your weaknesses, then theoretically anything is possible, and working around the bits I'm bad at by having an incredible team around me can help me get my message across in my own way.

I've spent 20 years expressing myself through something I love...cooking.

There's never really been one person that showed me the light or a route to more self-confidence, I had to learn it myself and be practical. If I come across a problem I try to get around it by being optimistic, you've got to see the glass as half full. One of the strengths of being dyslexic is that you realise lots of the accepted structures in society, like examination systems, aren't suited to everyone, and aren't necessarily the best way to teach or inspire the masses. When you concentrate on problem solving and try to overcome little challenges and take each day as it comes, you'll find strength in your own power to evolve and get stuff done. I'm not saying there isn't a place for brilliant people that can make a difference to your life but don't forget to believe in yourself too.

Other people can help you find your way but they can't do it for you. I found my way through food.

My favourite colour is light aquamarine green, though I think I'm colour blind as well!



JAMIE OLIVER MBE

EMBRACE THAT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE WORLD

I think my USP is seeing the value in working as part of a team and without question I see issues, problems and challenges quite differently to a lot of the very clever people that I work with. Hopefully that means that as a group we can really interrogate situations and try to take action that's disruptive and important, that raises the bar and connects people. It's probably only in the last few years I've really noticed and felt clearly that I do have a different perspective on the world. I do think the older you get the easier it gets and I definitely think dyslexia should be used as a tool and considered an advantage not a disadvantage.

**You mustn't think you have to conform like everyone else.
You need to find your own way.**

All I've ever done is employ or work with people that are good at the things I'm not good at and tried to redirect and define my life to only do the things I am good at. I think that's a good idea whoever you are, regardless of dyslexia. In the old days, I used to write my books by talking into a dictaphone and paying someone to type it up.

Right now I'm not writing the words you're reading; I'm speaking them to my editor who writes them down for me. She can spell and string a sentence together and understands me very well so that really helps me to express what I'm trying to say in a clear way that everyone can understand.

When you pair up with people that can support your weaknesses and bring out your strengths, that's when the magic happens.

I would have told my younger self to embrace that different perspective on the world. And if you can express your views through another way, cooking, carpentry, art, you name it, you'll find it's easier to be understood. I imagine it's quite challenging to be a traditional academic if you're a dyslexic, so look for another language, cooking is definitely mine.

The one thing that really matters now in my world is inspiring and empowering people to have a go at cooking. Often using scientific or academic words can be divisive, so I do it in a way I understand. It's all about breaking down barriers.



PHOTO: PAUL STEWART

JAYSON LILLEY

A GOLDEN PERSPECTIVE

I am a proud dyslexic; I tell everyone so they don't think I'm being lazy with my spelling!

Instagram posts and Tweets are the most challenging; it's getting down what I want to say quickly so I don't lose the moment, that really frustrates me.

School was awful. I was called out of the classroom like there was something wrong with me. I hated it and felt different.

Every morning off I went to see Mrs Munster, the lovely special needs teacher. I thought my classmates thought I'd done something wrong. I hadn't, I just couldn't read very well. They'd all carry on with the lesson without me, I was missing out. I'd have learnt more in class than sitting in a little room reading a book. Listening to me read is not fun!

At school the only thing I was good at was art; I wanted to be an artist. The response from my form teacher was 'That's OK for a hobby but what do you want to do for a job?' If I could go back in time I'd tell little Jayson Lilley that if you are determined enough you can do whatever you want.

Being dyslexic has made me more determined.

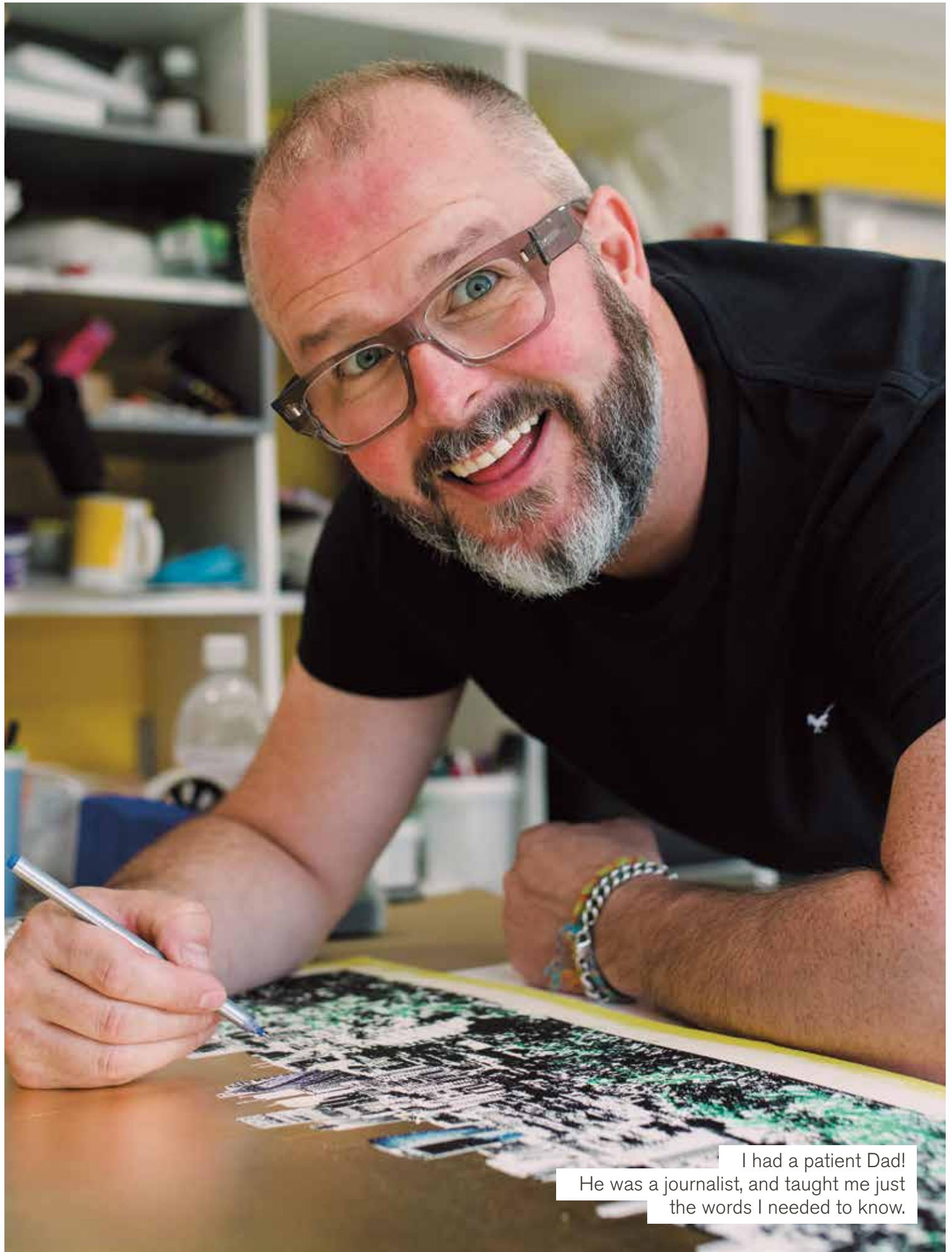
I used to be so shy with no self esteem whatsoever, I am a different person now. The turning point was when I went to university and people stopped telling me I couldn't do stuff and started saying 'That's good!' I got a little lift off that, I liked people telling me I'd done alright.

Being recognised for what I was good at meant I started becoming more of who I should be.

I sold my first piece of commercial art for £1,200, it was so much money to me. I dropped it off at the gallery on the Friday, and they rang me on the Saturday to ask for more! I've been so lucky, every single day has been fantastic. It's true to say that I've found a job I love and it doesn't feel like 'work'.

I still try really hard with everything I do and it's hard for me to let things go, I'm a perfectionist.

I can see exactly what I want to produce on paper, all finished and in the frame. The composition is all in my head. To earn a living as an artist you also have to be good at business and a people person. I seem to be quite good at it!



I had a patient Dad!
He was a journalist, and taught me just
the words I needed to know.

JOE OGBONNAYA

TREAT YOURSELF BETTER THAN A CAR! A CAR IS REPLACEABLE; YOU'RE NOT

I didn't have an easy start to life; my Mother died two weeks after she gave birth to me. Needing help to look after my sisters and me, my dad took us back to Nigeria when I was five years old. Academically I could have done better if I'd been given support, but in Nigeria dyslexia wasn't recognised. At school I was good at the practical stuff, like sport and art, but I underperformed when it came to reading and writing essays. I had very low self-esteem and as a result I didn't always make the right decisions... I have overcome bigger challenges than dyslexia, but that's another book!

My life was transformed by exercise and by learning to be a life coach.

I used to get emotional about things from the past, but I have learnt how you have to let go of the things that are unpleasant. I now control my life; I have learnt to let things be, not to blame other people, and to embrace myself as I am. It's my journey and my past has distinguished me and made me who I am today; I see it as a strength. My dyslexia challenge is reading; if you send me something to read I don't do it. It's not that I don't value it or consider it to be important, it's like 'I'll do it later.' I procrastinate!

I don't really care about being dyslexic; I can't change it, I'm fine with it.

I would never pick up a book thinking it looks interesting and read it. I get the information I need in other ways; I love watching lectures on Youtube, or listening to podcasts on my phone when I'm driving. I love learning about things that are relevant to me and help me do my job better, things that improve the mind and body. I'd much rather watch a documentary than a movie for pure entertainment's sake. If it's related to health, nutrition and wellbeing, I'm up for it anytime! I use what I've heard and seen, along with what I have tried out for myself; I know what works.

Some things in my life I start but don't finish, but everything about my job I put my heart and soul into. I have this desire to get my client to achieve their goals, I can visualise just how good they can be.

I consider exercise to be a celebration of having an able body.

I do my best not to compete with the people I train because it's not about me, it's about me encouraging them. But I am secretly competitive! If I can encourage someone to listen and respect his or her body a little bit more, I feel like I've done a great job. I get my buzz seeing people pay attention to themselves. Personal training is not just about fitness, it's about a mindset. Using active coaching, mindfulness and nutrition I start to filter a change, and get my client to focus on looking after their whole body, the six-pack is the added bonus.

Remember, slow and steady wins the race.



JULIAN OGIWARA ARB RIBA

ARCHITECTURE HAS CHOSEN ME RATHER THAN ME CHOOSING IT

I find the day is never long enough to accomplish everything I want to do. My mind tends to rush ahead of what I am physically capable of achieving in a day. Therefore, I have to set myself realistic goals, slow down and organise my thoughts in order of priority. This is a daily challenge and requires focus and discipline. I cannot remember new people's names! I can go for months working with really wonderful people who remain nameless in my mind. I once made the mistake of trying to introduce a group of people to a new colleague in a meeting. I was really embarrassed when I could not recall the name of my team member! I now have a list of names together with their photograph as a visual reminder. Since this mishap, my tip to anyone with a similar problem is to get people to introduce themselves.

I often repeat the same sentence in a conversation. I guess it is my brain trying to process a thought, but I can tell it is frustrating for people having to listen to me repeating myself. In my early elementary school years, I moved from Canada to Japan, which further contributed to many challenges. My grades, with the exception of art, were never good and I thought it was due to learning a new language and adjusting to a new curriculum.

I was really keen to learn but I was never able to recall facts as my friends did and I was much slower.

As I progressed through high school, I became dissatisfied with how most academic subjects were taught in Japan, the focus being on cramming and memorising a lot of factual knowledge. It became really difficult to remain motivated and believe I could achieve anything out of this educational system.

My parents' belief in me helped a lot but they had no awareness of me being dyslexic and probably thought my academic difficulty was due to the relocation from Canada to Japan. So I had to face these difficulties on my own.

My mother and father's support allowed me to follow my heart, which I think is one of the most amazing things a parent can do.

I eventually discovered a field I could excel in, and I feel pride in having achieved a Diploma in Architecture with distinction. This was the first time I had a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction in myself. While studying for graduation, I was tested for dyslexia but by then I had unconsciously managed to self-teach myself a lot of the techniques I have since read about for dyslexia.

Discovering that I was dyslexic answered many questions, which was a great relief and clarified many things. Thereafter, I was able to understand how to manage myself better. However, I believe, even if I had not qualified as an architect, that I would still be creating things. But it is important that I have proved I am capable of doing what I do.

Currently, I contribute to the built environment which influences people's wellbeing on a daily basis, motivating me to create interesting work.

Follow your heart and work hard to achieve what you want to do.



JULIAN OGIWARA ARB RIBA

ARCHITECTURE HAS CHOSEN ME RATHER THAN ME CHOOSING IT

Michele Roelofsma is one of the greatest tutors I came across at the University of East London. He taught me how to engage with and express my intuitive thoughts, and channel all of that energy of ideas and thinking into my work.

When I sat for the dyslexia test towards the end of my university diploma course, I was told that I was way above average in 3D spatial reasoning. Ha-ha! So it turns out that it is no coincidence I am in the field of architecture.

Many dyslexics become great architects due to their visual and spatial strengths, translating an idea from our head, and turning it into a building with all its complexities. These qualities, together with good teamwork, are needed throughout the whole design and building process.

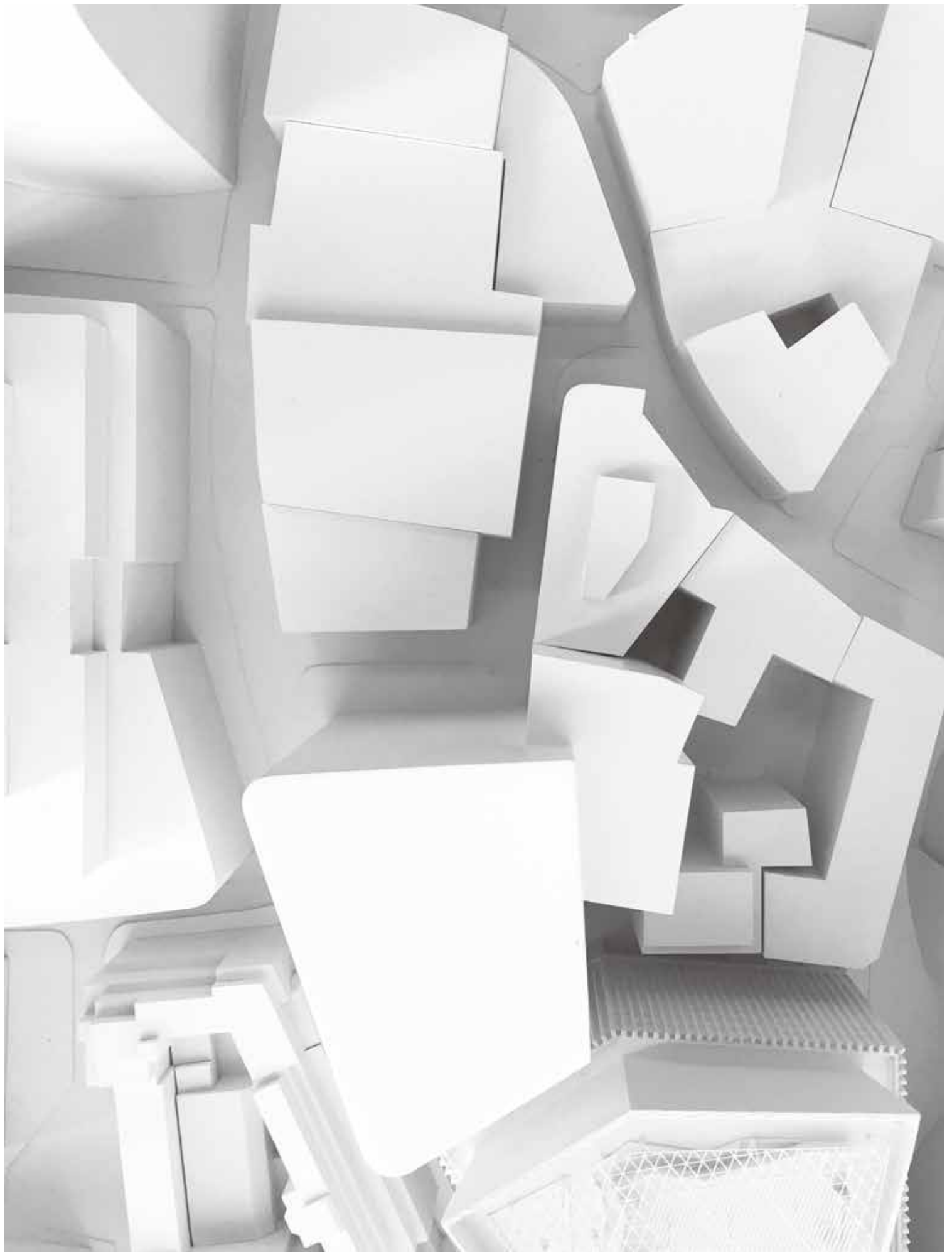
The more complex and ambitious the project is, the more interesting it becomes for me to solve this 3D puzzle.

On the contrary, tasks that may be simple for others require more concentration for me. I manage this by working harder and longer hours, which involves going over the same work several times to make sure it is correct. Since I discovered that I was dyslexic, I am better at knowing when to ask for help when I need it. It was such a relief to discover and understand my condition as I now know how to manage it.

My technique to remember something is to create a visual marker in my mind.

My visual memory is better at recalling information stored away. I definitely need a computer to write as it helps me quickly compartmentalise my thoughts. It also enables me to write without hesitation, for it takes away the worry about spelling mistakes, which keeps my ideas flowing.

Sounds a little clichéd for an architect, but I always remember at the age of six that black was my favourite colour. My journey to designing an architectural form begins with the creation of shadows. I use this as a foundation to add many natural colours of building materials, pigments and a lot of rich textures.



LAUREN MCCROSTIE

I LONGED TO BE AN ACTRESS; IT WAS MY PIPE DREAM

Imagine you had a dream: that one day you would work with the film director Tim Burton. My fairytale became reality when I had the incredible experience of working with him on 'Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children'. I played the character Olive Abroholos Elephanta.

I remember thinking when I left his house 'My life is now complete!'

Being diagnosed was a huge relief for me so I'm not embarrassed to talk about it, and when I don't understand something often say 'Sorry, I'm dyslexic'. I loved being directed by Tim, he articulated how to deliver my character's motives and intentions using images and clips from scenes to explain his ideas. I found it really digestible. He illustrated his scenes; the drawings were so beautiful, he is so multi-talented.

Gobsmacked! I find it difficult to describe things in words.

At school it was pointed out when I put my hand up to answer the teacher's question, I had used the word 'like' 17 times! I was comparing things and buying time to find the right word. I felt really stupid. I now really try to avoid saying 'like', my speech is quite slow and considered. I also explain situations by comparisons using scenes, images and feelings that I am familiar with.

I think the main hurdle when you discover you're dyslexic is that you can be made to feel you have a defect which stops you from doing what you want. It can limit you as much as you want it to. Yes, it can pose difficulties, but there are always other ways of navigating it, and everyone's different. It's a bit scary at first and there's a bit of trial and error to see what works. I think school is the biggest struggle because more often than not, the 'dyslexic learner' is not considered when creating lessons. Going to university for me would be like trying to force a square into a circle.

Line learning isn't difficult when it makes sense for the character.

Every actor has a different trick to get them 'into a role' but something that we all share is getting 'off book' first. The lines are then habitual and you can then focus on the acting, scenes play out more fluidly as you're not constantly referring back to the script.

I change the lines from words into something else in my head, like a picture, song or smell.

For me, the challenge is to make sure I'm displaying all the right information in the script through my performance. Every inch of a script's page is filled with scene details; it's all written down for a reason. In my mind I can see how I want to play the character, how she would be, and I mimic that. I used a lot of techniques to help get into the role of Olive. I chose a particular perfume and created a little book of her life I built behind her, I'd put so much work into her character. I really relish and enjoy that process of a project. It's how I think, I want to rinse out every last piece of information.



Mind maps are my favourite way of retaining information, it's the enjoyable, creative process of making them.

LENNIE VARVARIDES & KAZIMIR BIELECKI

DYSLEXICS ARE NATURAL STORYMAKERS

L: I'm the founder and creative producer of DYSPLA (dyslexic play) and Kaz is the artistic director. DYSPLA was set up to celebrate, develop and produce dyslexic and neurodiverse writers and creatives, with the support of the Arts Council of England. In 2018 we set up the International Moving Image Festival, where we exhibited nearly 30 neurodiverse film makers. I also run a talent agency; MSFT Management (Management in Stage, Film & Television) along side DYSPLA.

Kaz and I have our specific roles but we create everything together!

Kaz has a background in film; he's got a really lovely aesthetic. He's able to see something and make it look beautiful; he's got the skills, the technical ability and the great ideas. He's stronger than me on composition, aesthetic and bringing it all together. I'm stronger on narrative, the ideas, pitching them and getting things moving. That's probably my ADHD.

Lennie's ideas are sparks that fly; I catch and try to form them.

K: We are lucky to be in a duo, Lennie stops me going off on a tangent and helps me to focus and get things done. It's a key thing to be able to focus the mind.

L: I find it difficult to express my early ideas; I get stuck and can't find the right words. I have recognised that it helps if I leave the office environment and come away from distractions and move my body. I do my best thinking cycling and walking.

K: We often explore an idea through heated discussion, it's all part of the creative process. Our strategy for getting core ideas down on paper is still in development!

We're both good at business and very resourceful. Dyslexics have to be. We can make something out of nothing.

K: We're fascinated by the dyslexic aesthetic as nearly all our favourite Hollywood film makers are dyslexic. It's really interesting and I want to look at the correlation. Is it purely through chance or is it because dyslexics have an episodic memory?

We believe that dyslexics are more effective and natural storytellers. At the moment it's a gut instinct, but we think there is a dyslexic aesthetic. We just have to prove it now!

L: I have to physically write things down, if I don't I have no connection with it.

K: Be an artist and play!



LLOYD EVERITT

WHO IS THE THINKER BEHIND THE THOUGHTS?

I'm an actor and at one point I was really struggling because I didn't have a technique to learn my lines, I was mad nervous and mad fearful in auditions. But I knew I could do it. I had a really intense acting spell with lots of auditions to prepare for. One was a ten page script, and I knew I was never going to learn it in two days, it felt impossible, so I illustrated the script replacing the words with pictures. WOW! I knew the lines and I hadn't even tried! It goes in easier when you're relaxed.

I only found out I was dyslexic at drama school, which made sense because I always knew I couldn't read very well. I went to Barry Boys School in Cardiff, as a kid you don't want to stand out, you don't want to feel different, you want to be like everyone else and so I was into sport. I didn't do any school plays because I would have had to read scripts out loud. But one drama lesson I improvised a scene and the whole class believed me, I knew then that I wanted to act.

At 16 I went to improvisation classes where you didn't need a script or to learn any lines. All you needed was personality and intuition.

All the things that have challenged me in the past have now put me in a place where I am at peace and calm. I now don't feel like I struggle as a dyslexic, I did, but now I have found a way to learn my lines it's released me, that's the truth. I do still struggle with reading. If I have a read through, like in rehearsals now, I know I read s*** and I sense people are sometimes thinking 'OMG is he gonna be any good? The guy can't even string a sentence together.' I feel the inadequacy.

The biggest thing I've learnt this year is confidence comes from acceptance.

If you say 'This is how I read – I don't sound very good, but it doesn't matter, this isn't what you're going to see in a month's time on stage.' I have to prep ahead, as a dyslexic the process of learning isn't instantaneous. It still takes me time. I've got to get the script into my body, into my bones.

I was the youngest actor to play Shakespeare's Othello at the Globe Theatre.

It was a baptism of fire, very difficult, but you've got to get your wings at some point. Playing Othello gave me the confidence and it's all about that, it's what dyslexics struggle with. Having seen me on stage, the writers of the BBC drama 'Casualty' created a role for me.

When I first arrived at drama school I couldn't read very well or learn my lines, and on stage I didn't engage with the other actors, I'd be going over the lines in my head and listening for my cue to come in. This was really bad acting, I wasn't present. Martin Houghton, my drama teacher could see I was really struggling and took me under his wing.



PHOTO: CAI HOWELLS

LLOYD EVERITT

WHO IS THE THINKER BEHIND THE THOUGHTS?

For any dyslexic, Shakespeare is your worst nightmare because it can be hard enough to understand text without all the similes and metaphors! Martin explained the language of Shakespeare would give me so much power and gravitas and that it didn't matter that I didn't understand it at first. He encouraged me to keep reading it and to feel my way through, that there was something divine in this language. And that changed my whole perspective. He was the perfect drama teacher because he taught me to use the things I had experienced as a kid and to channel these negative and troubling emotions in my acting.

He was all about high stakes, danger, taboos and was really funny; these are my assets in terms of expression.

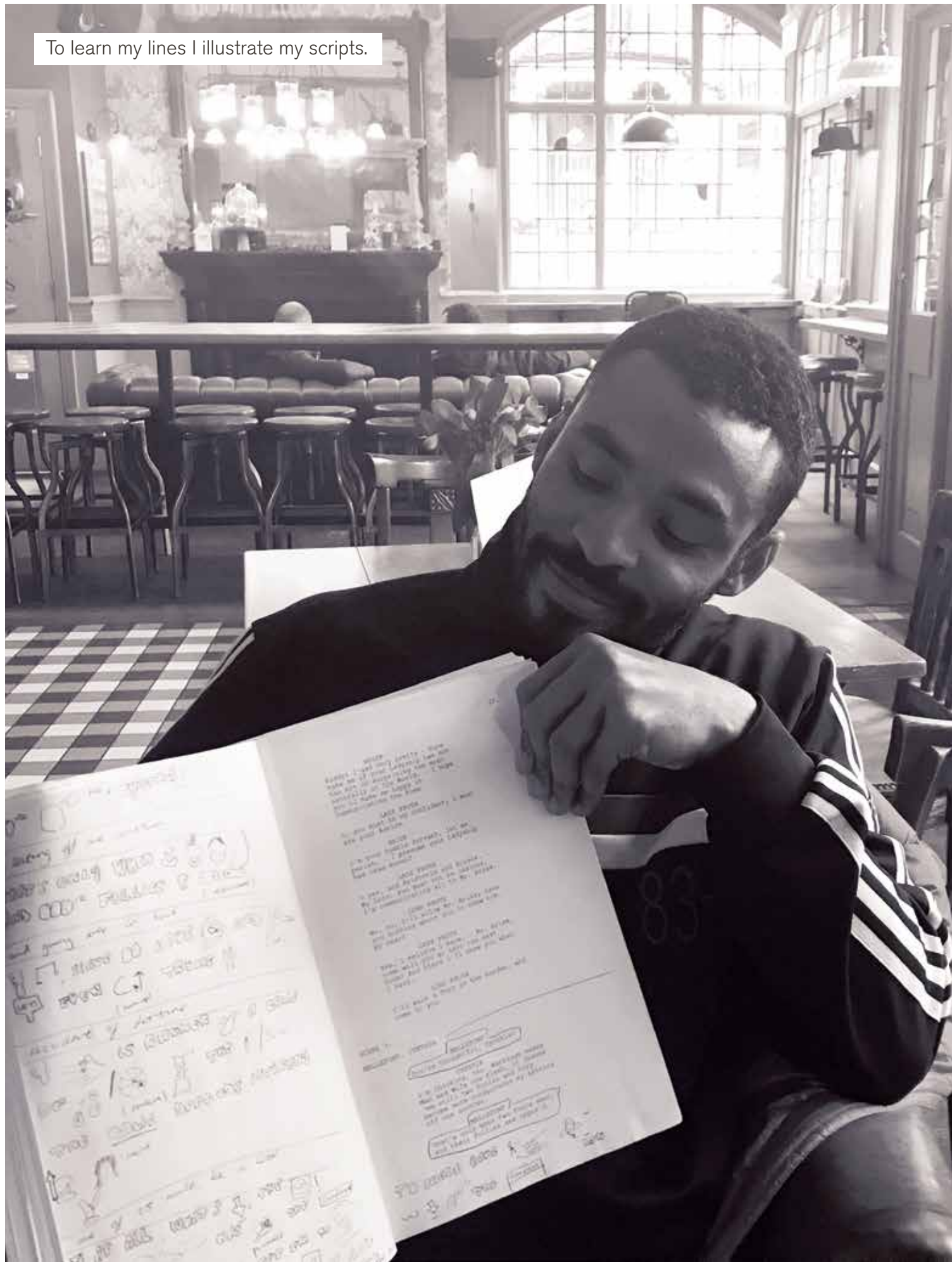
My parents were very reward based, if I did well and got good grades my mum would reward me with some money, trainers or a tracksuit. That was for copying my clever friends' homework, I've never told her that! I was clever and intelligent, I just didn't know how to write it down. I couldn't articulate myself, that didn't happen for a long time. If I was trying to get a message across it would get muddled in my head. I didn't have the vocabulary to put it together, which meant I was coming at things from my feelings.

When I did eventually learn how to express myself, I realised the most important thing was what I was feeling. I now see these feelings of anxiety and depression as a beautiful thing in my life, because the struggle is the part that helps you get from A to B, but when you're struggling you can't see it.

Be fearless to all your struggles and they won't hold any power over you. They become part of you and you'll get through it.

You don't need validation from anyone, you don't need to be picked out to be great, you don't need to wait for someone to say 'You are a star'. You star in your life from today.

To learn my lines I illustrate my scripts.



MARK GROTEFELD

WHEN I'M INTO SOMETHING, I'M LASER EYES ON IT, 100% FOCUSED

My first job after university was as a mountain biker, I had a cycling deal from 22 to 26 and raced all over the country. I loved it, but for a more long-term career, I decided to go back to university, studied Marketing and got my Masters with distinction. My career in marketing began at Electrolux, then Pioneer Corporation recruited me; I run the small part of it that is tech for DJs.

The job is amazing; I travel all over the world, Ibiza, Miami, Berlin. It's DJs, dance music, nightclubs, bars and parties!

I've built an amazing team and brand. Pioneer DJ has gone from a £1million business to a £250million business, it's the dominant player in the DJ tech field. I'm at the market end feeding back from the club owners and DJs like Paul Oakenfold, Roger Sanchez, Pete Tong and Fat Boy Slim.

I've never liked the corporate desk environment and thankfully they've let me get on with it in my own way. It suited me to not attend the board meetings. I kept under the radar; I could be whom I wanted, wear what I wanted and manage my own time. I know what my strengths are and being dyslexic I know I have weaknesses; I get around these by hiring good people.

I've become a very good assessor of people; I get their vibe. I recognise what I need, I am big on delegation.

My team knows how I work. I'm open, they know I'm dyslexic and that I can't spell and hate admin. That's not to say it isn't frustrating working with me! But we have a symbiotic relationship; we support each other. I need different people and skills; I need the mix.

It's taken years to build this environment around me that allows me to flourish. I'm protected from the things I am weak at.

My strength is the back end thinking, the big picture and the vision. I can map out flows of technology; see what's trending on the fringe and how to work it. I can see the complexity of a system; I am strong at that, colleagues will say 'Wow Mark where'd you get that?' But once I get into the detail of something, the more administrative it gets, that's when I lose interest and motivation, it's the point I have to build other people in.

In meetings when I'm making notes on a whiteboard in front of senior managers from different divisions, I'll draw emojis and diagrams, use lines, triangles and dots, anything to avoid writing words. I'm used to people sniggering a little bit when I'm doing weird doodles.



PHOTO: DAN REID

MARK GROTEFELD

WHEN I'M INTO SOMETHING, I'M LASER EYES ON IT, 100% FOCUSED

It's a different visual method to get a concept across quickly. People will be thinking 'This isn't conventional...but he knows what he's talking about!' I know it must correlate and I wonder if my strengths are compensatory because of my dyslexia, or is it that I have ability in one area and so lose processing in another?

Growing up I understood that I had inherent oddities. At school my reading was slow, I'd be on page ten when everyone else had finished the book. I was confident enough to know I was bright and wondered why I couldn't read out loud? The teacher would think I was messing around because my classmates would laugh as I fumbled to pronounce words; instead of blushing I had no choice but act up, and get into trouble.

Being charming is very important for dyslexics; authentic charm will get you everywhere.

I had to work out what I was good at and it's 'people'. As I don't like writing things down I have to be comfortable talking, to be able to sell in concepts and bring people along with me. I knew I had to encourage people to trust in me and to follow me, because I'm no good at following. If I follow them, they'll ask me to do the admin, if they follow me I can ask them. In presentations I make sure I know what I'm talking about, I'll have the construct of the presentation and flesh it out on the wing. I don't mind pausing and thinking about a word, it's got an element of authenticity because I'm not just reading something rehearsed. I care about what I'm saying. I learnt that skill as a necessity.

I think in colours, it's like a mind map that I see in my head.

When I'm giving a talk and have four points to make, I'll see the first point as one colour, and the next point as another and so on, it's a visual link that works for my memory. I can't learn by rote, in that one context I'm the dunce but in others I'm top of the class. My learning has become accelerated since podcasts. My brain loves learning and listening to people discussing and questioning a concept, rather than reading or listening to someone regurgitate.

I've carved out a life for myself that I always wanted. I've built a team around me that is authentic and real; we are happy and love what we do.



INTERNATIONAL MUSIC SUMMIT

Concentrate on one thing at a time,
it's not effective to multi-task.
Irlen lenses enable me to read fluidly.

OBI OHAKA DANIEL

I EMPATHISE AND CONNECT

I grew up in Nigeria in the 1970s. I was the youngest of seven children, a shy 'forgetful' kid who had lost confidence and academic direction. I felt I messed things up academically. I could hardly speak and used to stutter a lot.

I became a silent person.

I was the only dyslexic in the family. My mum, brothers and sisters did well at school. My dad was top of his class 'the brain of the school', education was very important to him. He said to us 'No one is going nowhere until you have got a degree, because I know that as soon as you leave my house you will not study!'

I did get my degree with retakes. I worked so hard, I basically lived in the university. I found it very hard to keep up with the course work, in the early 90s with no computers everything was handwritten. As a slow reader I have to read a page over and over. In those days nobody knew about dyslexia, so I was not supported.

But I would pay attention to the lectures and I remembered everything. My memory is very good!

My dyslexia was finally identified while training to be a social worker at the age of 32. I was a student on a social work placement when my practice teacher/manager Christina Pearce spotted it. She was observing me on a practical assessment that was going really well. She said 'You don't sound like a new social worker, it's like you've been in the job for years!'

Christina recognised my challenges and explained dyslexia. It was exactly what I was going through. Until that point, I was fighting to remain on the course, I knew something wasn't right but I didn't know what, I thought I couldn't do things. She is the mother of my liberation! She really made the biggest difference to me, she taught me techniques and told me not to worry. My personality and confidence really came out and I went on to qualify as a social worker. I talk a lot now!

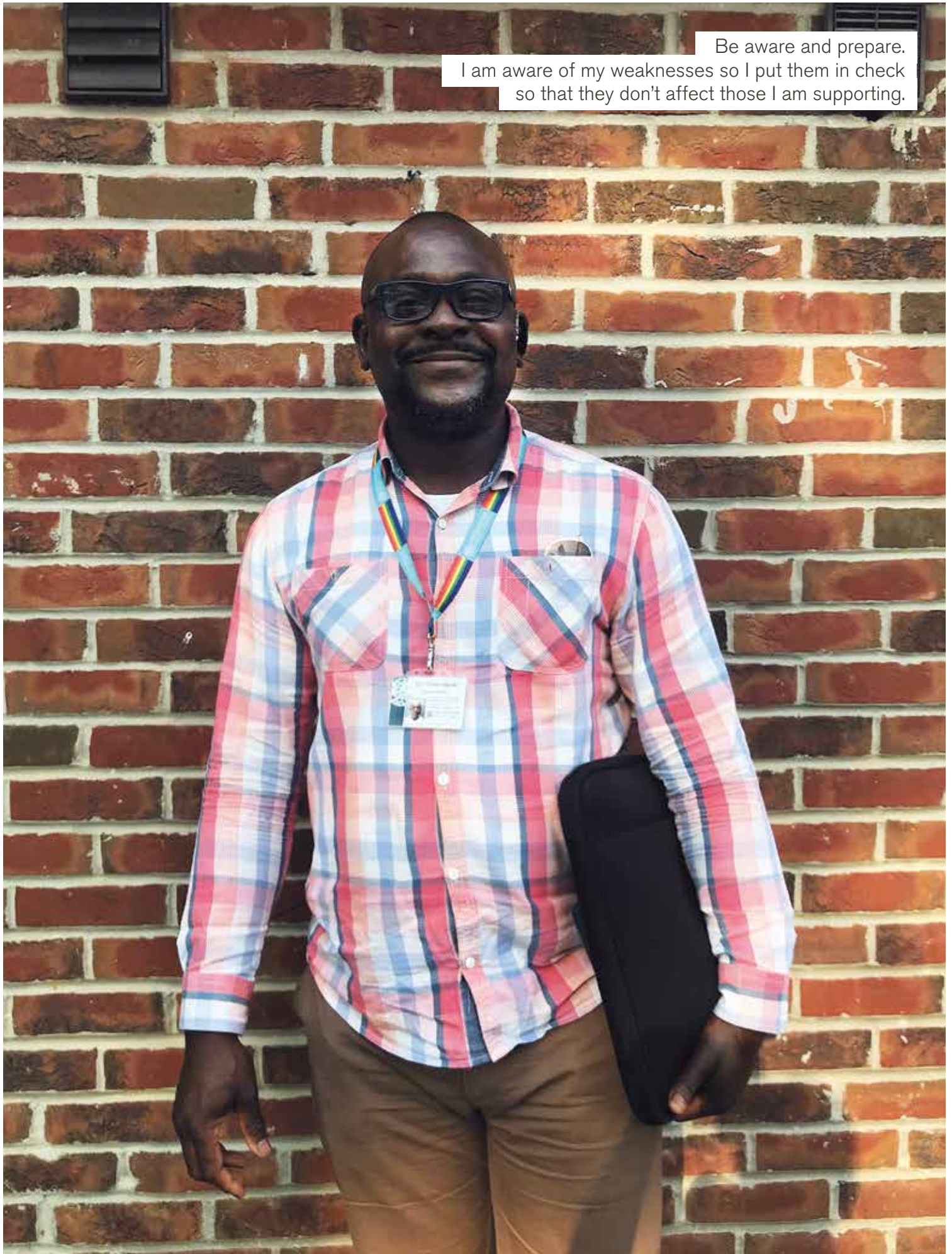
Over time I have developed what I call 'two reading brains' one that reads fast and a second that picks out errors. I am a very fluent talker but when I am composing something to write I skip over words and my sentences are disjointed, it makes no sense at all sometimes.

My brain works faster than my hands. I have overcome my writing errors by writing very slowly.

I now work with the learning disabilities team. I love working in this field, it's my favourite area of social work. Dyslexia means I understand about learning differently. I empathise and can offer support to my clients who tells me they love working with me.

Dyslexics can often see the blind spots that others can't see. It can be awesome!

Be aware and prepare.
I am aware of my weaknesses so I put them in check
so that they don't affect those I am supporting.



OLIVER WRIGHT

GETTING TO THE POINT

I went to school in the days when unless you were massively dyslexic, you were, in the words of my teachers, 'careless, lazy and not concentrating'. I was assessed for dyslexia when I was doing my A-levels, thanks to a substitute History teacher, fresh out of university and only six years older than me. He questioned why I was so articulate but made so many mistakes on paper, and wondered if dyslexia might be the reason for it. Thirty years on, I am still dyslexic, still can't spell and still miss out words. I can spend an hour reading through a piece I've written, but I can't tell you if I have the right spellings.

I've always been quite bloody minded. English is a completely ridiculous language: forget dyslexia, it makes no sense.

As the dyslexic journalist AA Gill pointed out 'I gave up on you lot when I discovered you spelt phonetically with a ph!' He wrote so beautifully.

I did have extra time in exams, it was quite useful to have a bit longer to put my thoughts down on paper, but it made absolutely zip all difference to my spelling. I would rather be assessed on exam results than on course work, it's the way my brain works. If I have a week to do something and try and make it perfect, I lose interest and can't be bothered.

I find a deadline concentrates the mind; I have found the perfect job for me!

I have always been interested in journalism and have always asked questions. But it was when I studied the History of Politics at university and got involved in the student paper that I was sure it was what I wanted to do. I was very lucky I went into journalism at the time I did because I had spellcheck which negated the worst aspect of my dyslexia. I'm pretty sure my dad, who was also a journalist, was dyslexic too. He certainly couldn't spell and with only a typewriter it would have been much harder for him.

I find, research and write the story and over my career only one wrong word has slipped through the 'spellcheck net' and appeared in print! At 'The Times' newspaper an article will be read by at least three people before it goes to print. A sub editor will read for sense, check spelling and grammar and write the headline. That's a job I could never do!

I found English quite dull at school and find academic writing needlessly complicated. I like language and have an ability to explain something in a way that people will understand. I am 'unimbued' by the rules of grammar; I don't bother with it and let it flow. It's the content and knowing what you want to say. The golden rule in journalism is that you have to deliver to a hard deadline. The worst thing you can do is not to write anything, it's worse than writing something bad! Writing is a bit of a gift but it's also a learnt thing that you get better at the longer you do.

There are benefits and those benefits are worth waiting for.



Quam Christiani Fidei, Quamque Libertatis, Quamque Veritatis
causam, S. C. Cantuar. Archiepiscopus, et Capitulum Cantuar. Ecclesie, Anno 1534.



Sub editors.
Spellcheck.

PAUL BRAZIER

DON'T LET YOUR BEGINNING BE THE END OF YOU

Like many, the beginning of my life didn't give any obvious signals to how I would get a career, let alone make a living for myself. Looking back, I was so frustrated, but I was building a resilience and determination that would help me in the future. Insecurities and a lack of confidence hold most of us back. I learned over the years not to let it take over. I had problems with dyslexia. I say had, because I don't think about it now, it's just part of me. It turns out to be a very positive part.

We all have things that make us feel inferior. It turns out that these can be a virtue.

I've got a Brummie accent, well actually, if I'm being fussy, it's a Black Country accent. I've had plenty of people rib me about that. But it's who I am, and my upbringing has served me well in advertising. And I have a soft voice that doesn't exactly project well. Perhaps it makes people listen more.

So many circumstances conspire to make us feel inferior. I can track one instance back to a comment from an exasperated teacher when I was just ten years old. I was standing with my mum in the corridor at school when, as if I wasn't there, she said:

'Oh well, he's always got his art to fall back on.'

I felt invisible and I thought 'Am I really that useless?' It was humiliating. I couldn't have felt any worse about myself. That sentence stayed with me as I grew up. It was such a loaded sentence. Not just a criticism of me but a comment on art itself; inferring that art is this secondary stream of education. Teachers then had no idea what all these young people with creative talents could end up doing.

When you look at the creative industries and the huge contribution they make to our economy, it's not just about art and creativity, it's also about business.

I now know there are many opportunities in the creative sector. This is how allcreative.com came about, my website about helping young creative people on the first steps of their career.

I think the beginning of the journey with dyslexia is so hard, so tough on young people. I can see it in my 14-year-old son right now. But the brilliant thing with dyslexic people is if they can get through that beginning, they will gain a stamina and determination that will help them through other challenges in life.

Advertising gave me the opportunity to work with some of the world's best creative strategists and account people, famous film directors and really smart clients. What surprised me was they all need each other to solve a problem.



PAUL BRAZIER

DON'T LET YOUR BEGINNING BE THE END OF YOU

Being dyslexic means my brain is wired differently to most. It seems to be able to condense lots of complicated data and turn that information into a simple memorable idea.

I've learned that if the answer looks complicated, it needs more work. It's not like maths, no one wants to see my hard work and workings out. The skill is to make the answer look easy. If it's a great idea then I know with collaboration we'll work out how to do it, they will help me see the ideas through. Opportunities come from problems, and problems are a big part of creativity, if there wasn't a problem then we wouldn't have the job solving it.

The best part of my job is the thinking of ideas and collaborating on them. It's playtime! All the what ifs...

If we can get over the beginning of self-doubt, it's amazing what young people can do. I never would have imagined that one day I would end up helping to run the biggest billing advertising agency in the UK. I really hope that this book encourages some young dyslexic people to realise they could make a valuable contribution to the world and to others. There are so many problems in the world today that need solving, it gives humanity an opportunity to work together and find some positive solutions. Dyslexics should take part in any opportunity however big or small. They are so much more than this condition and have so much to offer.

If I could give my younger self some advice it would be:

Reach out, lots of people want to help.

Try to see a problem as an opportunity.

Be patient with yourself.

Keep being enthusiastic. It's infectious.

Keep bouncing back.

You can't do it all by yourself.

If you are dyslexic there is a mountain to climb. Turns out that it can be a big beautiful mountain. If you climb just a tiny few steps every day, every now and then you'll look down and realise just how far you have got.

Since 1962, the D&AD Pencil has represented the very best in design and advertising. Winning a Pencil remains the pinnacle of advertising careers and as a non-profit association all of D&AD's surplus goes back into education.



1993 D&AD SILVER AWARD
FOR THE MOST OUTSTANDING CHARITY PRESS
ADVERTISEMENT - PAUL BRAZIER (ART DIRECTOR)

1994 D&AD SILVER AWARD
FOR THE MOST OUTSTANDING COLOUR NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT
- PAUL BRAZIER (ART DIRECTOR)

PAUL SMITH CBE RDI

BE INTERESTED AND INTERESTING

I've been working in the crazy world of fashion since 1976 and am best known for adding a splash of colour or twist to classic tailoring. I left school at 15 without any qualifications and went to work as an errand boy in a clothing warehouse in my hometown of Nottingham. I took evening classes in tailoring, and then went to work on Savile Row. The rest is history!

Growing up I had no idea I was dyslexic, I was never great at school but I got by on my ability to chat and communicate with people, a trait I inherited from my father. I'm not very good at reading out loud and I do a lot of public speaking. I remember the first time I did an organised talk I tried to read from notes, it was very tough, very nerve-wracking. I now use images on screen as a visual aid and that makes a big difference in helping me to explain the point I want to make.

I understand my weaknesses and I play to my strengths. I keep at it, and never think I've made it, there's always someone around the corner who'll try to overtake you in the fast lane.

I would say my way of being, and my success, are down to my wife, Pauline, and my father. In terms of being thoughtful, having good manners, in keeping my feet on the ground and not having a big ego. And of course our high quality, easy to wear clothes, which hang alongside hand picked curiosities which I collect from my travels around the world. All our shops are similar but different, in that they reflect the place they're in. All of it is down to Pauline really.

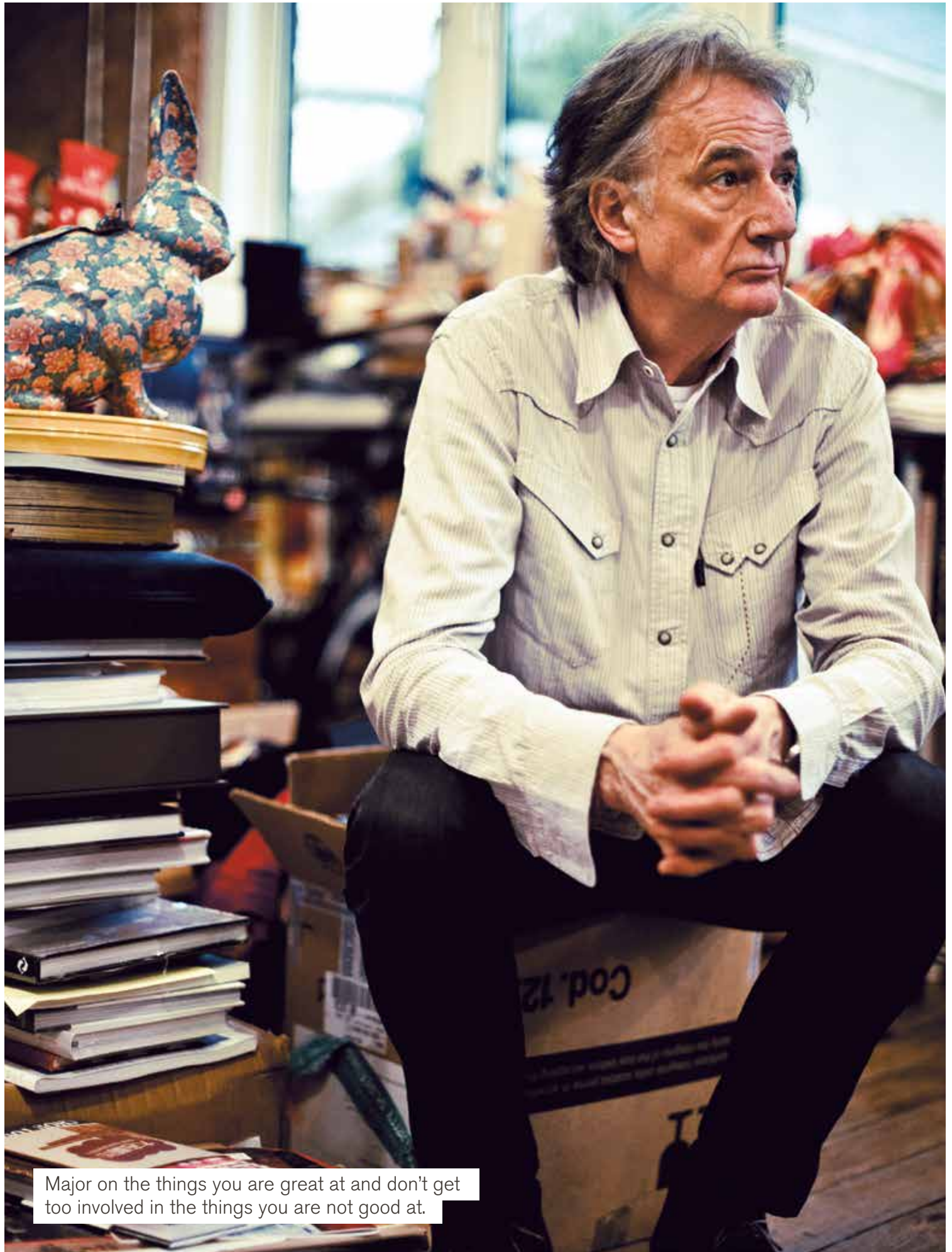
The main thing to understand about dyslexia is it's not a bad thing, often dyslexics like myself are more lateral-thinking, more open and more creative.

Unfortunately, in today's world we are so swept away by comparing what other people are doing: their wealth, their fame, and their material gains, but honestly happiness and health are far more important than any of those things.

Asking for my favourite colour is a difficult question for a clothes designer because I like to play with different colours. I use a lot of colour, unlike a lot of other fashion designers who use black, navy and white, especially designers who are influenced by the more minimalist Japanese designers.

I use colour like a writer would use a punctuation mark!

For me, it's about a coloured sweater with a navy blue suit or a colourful tie with a white shirt.



Major on the things you are great at and don't get too involved in the things you are not good at.

PETE COHEN

YOU ARE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BE AND MORE!

But I didn't always think like that. As a child I was very insecure and had no self-confidence, I would stutter and miss out words reading aloud and my classmates would laugh. Negative teachers predicted I wouldn't get any qualifications; I proved them right and I left school with just one O-level. The only thing I was good at was acting, especially improvisation.

It's still true to say that being on stage is when I feel most alive!

I got the good parts in amateur dramatics productions but they would often get taken away from me because it took me too long to learn the lines. Luckily for me I found the next best thing! I studied sports science and became a fitness instructor. I loved getting up in front of people, the more I enjoyed it, the better I got...AND I was inspiring people!

The superpower I have is to believe in people; just because you've been given a label it doesn't make it so.

I was really lucky to have such great parents, my late Dad was my hero, he knew the challenges I had to face, how far I'd come and always told me he was proud of me. They each gave me a great piece of life advice: Mum's was 'There is an answer to everything'; and Dad's was 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'.

Your future is unwritten, you have the power to change.

What drives me now is motivating and inspiring people, giving them a different perspective, there's nothing better than when someone says 'I've never thought of it like that!' I've written books 'Shut the Duck Up' and 'Inspirators', and spoken to thousands of people all over the world. Coached business executives, professional athletes and everyday people, encouraged them to think outside the box, believe in themselves and take positive actions.

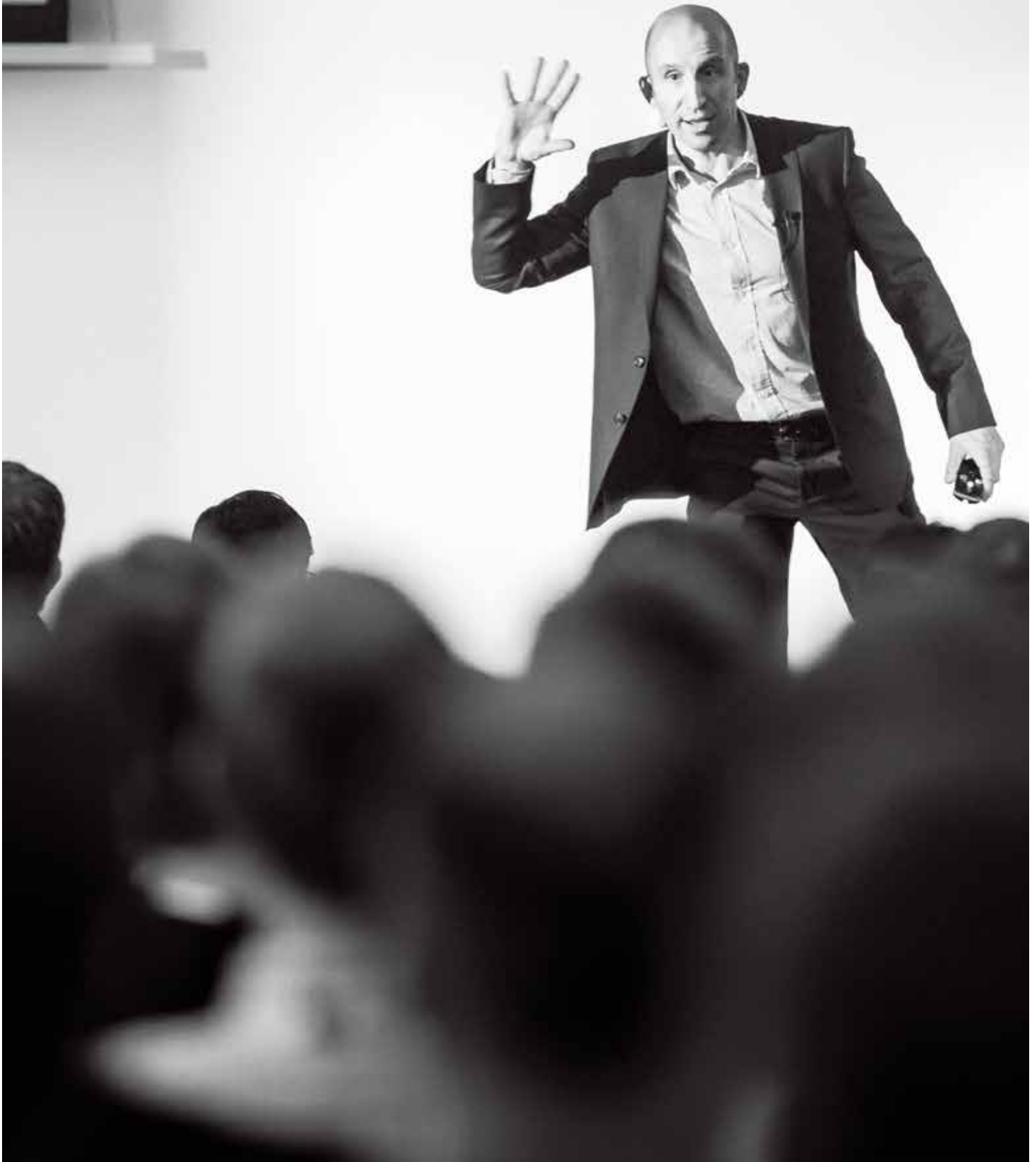
I'm obsessed with finding solutions to problems.

My biggest observation working with dyslexics is that there are lots of things they can do, and better than everybody else! We need to learn how to use dyslexia; the challenge is to become super optimistic. It's so much easier for humans to be negative because that's how we have evolved to survive, being on our guard and aware of imminent danger.

Dyslexics, especially, have to learn to be optimistic.

I think that my dyslexia really helps me speak to my audience, the way my brain works is that I can jump around topics and easily come back to the thing I was talking about. To help people you need empathy; I know what it's like to feel shame and to feel different. Anything is possible! A great mentor will help you look at things from different perspectives.

Laugh at yourself; don't take yourself too seriously.
People only change when their perspective does.
See the obstacles you face as something you
need to go through to learn and be better.



PIP JAMIESON

DELIGHTFULLY DYSLEXIC

I was really lucky to be diagnosed at a young age in the mid-80s, Mum had been to a talk by an American lecturer who was speaking about dyslexia. At that time I had totally fallen behind at school and couldn't grasp reading and writing and the teachers were saying 'She's just not that bright', Mum was like 'Bulls**t!' She recognised...

Dyslexia!!! That's what Pip's got!

Back then schools didn't know much about dyslexia. Mum was incredible and did lots of research, which was tricky back then because there was no internet. She found all these great books to help me, and used to cart me off for remedial classes at seven in the morning to do an hour and a half of work before school.

Dyslexia teaches you to work hard and that anything is possible.

I went to one of the first schools in the country that had a dyslexia unit; it was a lot of hard work. I was embarrassed I was falling behind and used to read books and practise handwriting under my duvet with a torch, I was determined!

Then I wanted to fit in...now I don't!

At 15, it's not like dyslexia went away but I suddenly had enough coping strategies. Looking back I was always very bored at school, I didn't have the same way to engage my brain as everyone else did, so my way of getting round that was being quite naughty.

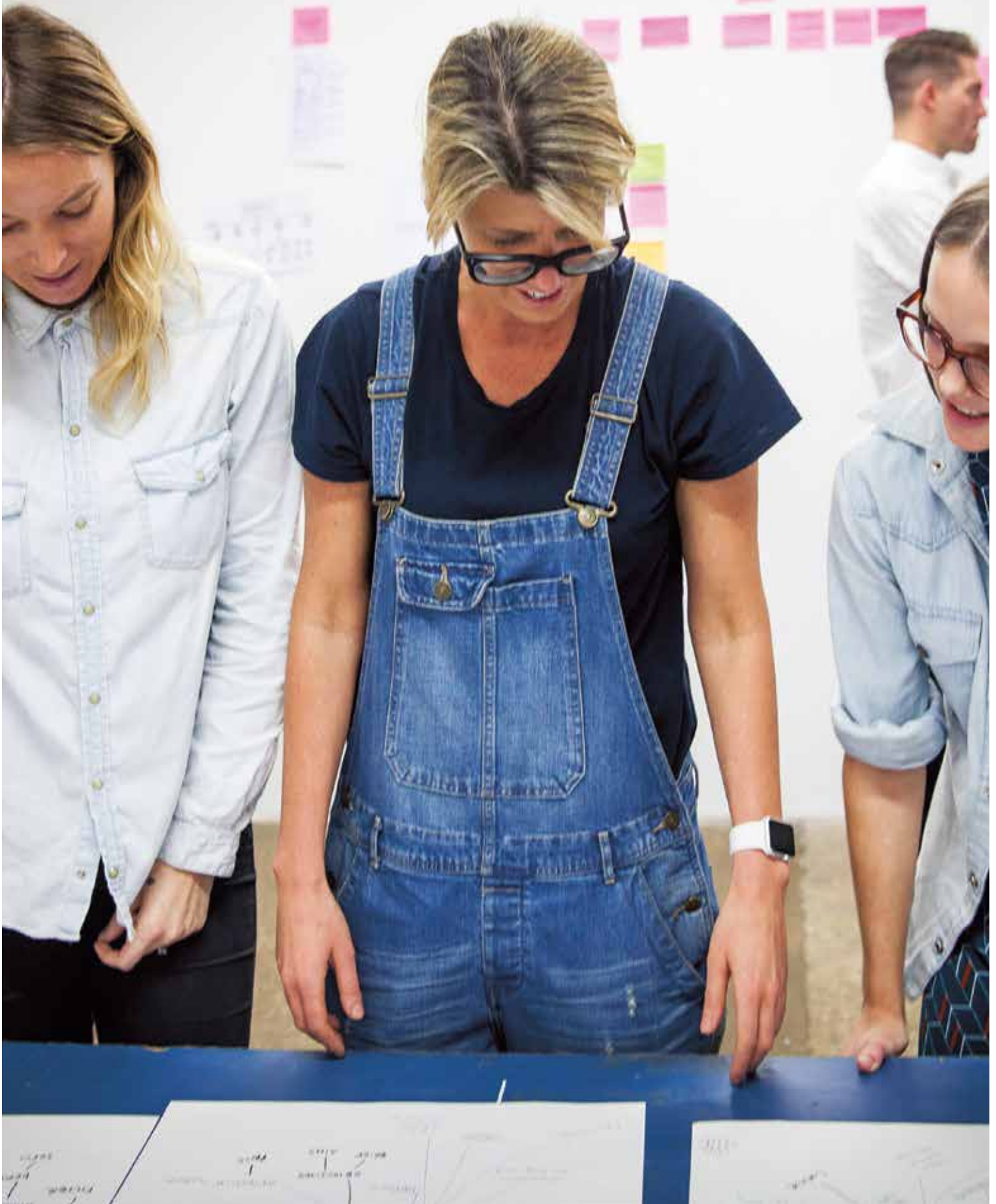
The teachers called me 'Naughty but nice!' I got away with it until I pushed it too far and got expelled!

Mum got me to do an intelligence test quite early on and the guy who evaluated me said I was very bright, so that helped my self-esteem. 'This expert told me I was bright!' That really helped me. My dad worked in the music industry and was amazing for a different reason; I would go to work with him from a young age and send his faxes! He inspired me to love business. I have a very slow reading speed, which is really challenging, but the Audible app has been the most incredible tool for me, I listen to at least a book a week.

I am an Audible junkie!

My slow reading speed makes emails tough, especially anything longer than three paragraphs. I put long ones into a Saturday folder, unless it's from a shareholder! Otherwise I can waste a lot of my day just reading emails. I catch up at the weekend. My incredible husband will proofread all my major emails and any articles I write.

When I do presentations I only have pictorial slides, big photos just remind me what to say.



PIP JAMIESON

DELIGHTFULLY DYSLEXIC

I put ‘Delightfully dyslexic’ at the bottom of all my emails so that I can smash through them and not worry about spellings!

I do a lot of talks about dyslexia and tell people to be upfront, it goes from people looking at your error and thinking ‘Ooh, idiot’ to understanding and sympathising. I am actually verbally OK and a friend said to write like you talk. My team think I’m mad but I will sit there and I will smile, it makes emails friendly, and I will write what I’m saying. I find the way they teach English, the correct way, is a nightmare because it sounds formal and inhuman.

I still don’t know the difference between a noun and verb!

Another useful tip for responding to emails is that I have memorised templates. I have got stock standard responses for about 95% of emails I get! My memory has always been really good, if I write it down, I memorise it. I have a contextual memory, not a detail memory, I can remember the context of an email I sent 15 years ago but I still don’t know my own phone number!

It’s magic building your own business, curating a team around you, and watching it all thrive.

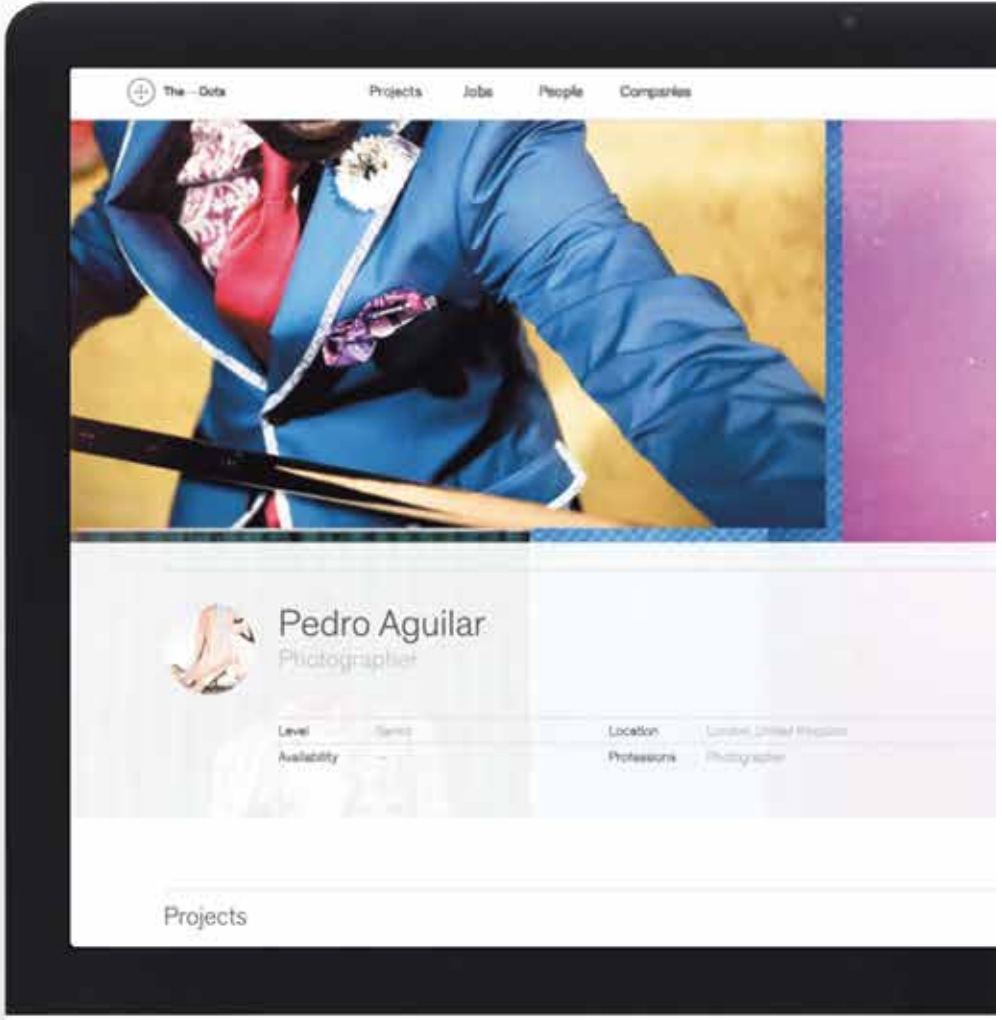
I’ve built something in The Dots, which is bigger than myself; it helps others get access to the creative industries. A visual showcase opposed to a written CV, a creative version of LinkedIn. We have around 12,000 creative companies that use us to find new talent.

I am a hugger!

I’m very tactile and have lots of empathy. I did some research on it and there’s a Yale study that says dyslexics are more empathetic, that’s definitely a huge strength when it comes to building a team. And that’s what business is all about, having the right people around you, one of the reasons that dyslexics tend to be more natural entrepreneurs. I genuinely care about my team and they stay with me.

I recognise my strengths and weaknesses and I need people around me who can do the other things that I’m not so good at. I know I am not good at everything. I can delegate because I’ve always had to. I made so many mistakes in my first business and learnt from them. The nature of innovation is that you will always make new mistakes, but never repeat the ones we’ve already made!

If you’re not making mistakes when you’re building a business, you’re not pushing the boundaries, you’re just copying someone else.



RASHID PHOENIX

THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE OF KUNG FU WAS MY UNIVERSITY

I was interested in lots of things at school, but the way subjects were taught where you sat, listened to the teacher, and took notes didn't work for me; I was completely useless. Even if I managed to write down what they'd said, it would be unreadable. I was so busy concentrating on my handwriting that I wouldn't be focusing on what they were saying. I had a lovely helper, but I found it was really embarrassing when I was young, she'd sit with me in lessons sometimes. While everyone else is talking and enjoying the subject, I had her sitting next to me going 'Come on Rashid...' I wasn't naughty but some teachers thought I was because I'd keep asking questions after they'd finished explaining. It was because I still didn't understand what they were saying.

I can't remember something unless I understand it.

My mum has always pushed me, and was the one that made me realise I didn't have a learning disability; school can make you feel you have, but you don't. It's just a different way of thinking. We're a different kind of people and the world is full of different kinds of people.

So every day after school I would go home and watch martial art films, they were always about somebody who had some sort of adversity. They would learn Kung Fu, which in Chinese means a skill developed through hard work and dedication.

I didn't do great in my GCSEs, but loved music and was naturally good at it compared to academic stuff. I went to a music production college but because my GCSEs were mediocre they wouldn't let me onto the course I wanted to do. I ended up on the foundation course, which was too basic and beneath my skills, it put me off music completely.

Martial art films were still my biggest inspiration.

The constant theme running through these stories was to go to China, to the Shaolin Temple to learn Kung Fu from the monks. I thought to myself, I need to go there! The desire was so strong but I needed to raise the money. I gathered friends with similar interests and convinced them they needed to go too! I'm good at motivating people to do stuff. We would practice our acrobatics in the park and people would come and watch us, eventually we put down a hat. We had figured out how to make some money!

China was a crazy experience; it was really intense, eight hours of hardcore training every day, I acquired the skill. It made me strong psychologically too.

Learn how your mind works and understand your superpower.
Don't compare yourself to other people.



PHOTO: CHARLOTTE DEAR

RASHID PHOENIX

THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE OF KUNG FU WAS MY UNIVERSITY

To cut a long story short I came back to London and got into being a stunt performer. My first credits were in the movies 'Fast and Furious' and 'Thor'.

I still keep my dyslexia to myself but every time I go to a casting I have to fill out a form, I'm sure as soon as I put it down in front of them they realise or think I'm stupid. I always worry they won't be able to read my handwriting and I won't get the job. I've even mis-spelt my own name before! I am really used to castings, but it's something about writing that makes my hands shake. It's really hard fitting my handwriting into the boxes; it's always the smallest box for your address. I squeeze it in and then it doesn't make sense, so I scribble it out...it gets worse and worse!

The film industry is dyslexic! It's completely disorganised. I never know when I'm filming.

I will get filming dates and these dates will change, a lot of the time I won't know until the night before when they set the call sheet. It's really difficult to stay on top of what's going on. I need a clear visual diary so I can see where I need to be. I sometimes use a whiteboard, it has to be laid out in a really graphic way for me. That really helps.

I work in my imagination; I picture it and then create it. Dyslexia gives me vision; it's not words, it's pictures, I visualise the stunt.

The director will ask me to do something that sounds impossible: smash through this window and get run over by a car! I then have think of a way to make it look like that on screen, but without actually dying or putting myself in real danger. I am able to see the final shots, watch the movie in my head. It's an illusion. If it's a big film it will be a stunt coordinator who designs the stunt, knowing what I am capable of. On TV shows it's often up to me to come up with the stunt with the coordinator and tell them what I can do. It's about collaboration.

I'm all or nothing, if I'm not going to be the best there's no point in doing it at all.

My love for martial arts has led me on a path different from most people, I often felt like I was a mad man spending my days and nights training instead of studying and then going to China to study Kung Fu instead of university. Don't ask me how but by some miracle it worked out better than I ever dreamed. And now I have the honour of being part of those movies and stories that inspired me so much as a child.

Follow your dreams, no matter how weird or crazy they are.

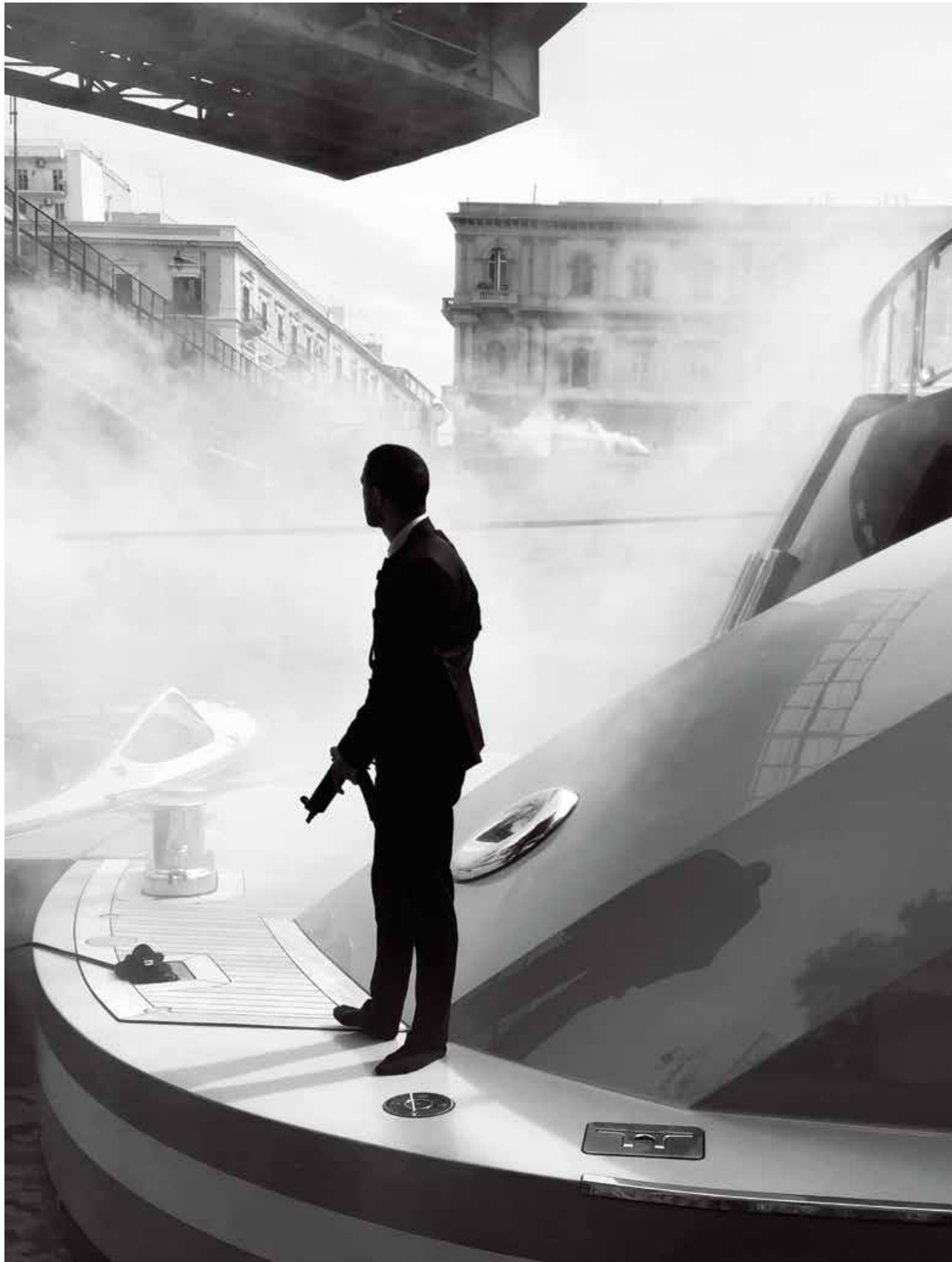


PHOTO: MORGAN CHETCUTI

RICHARD GREENWOOD

ONCE I FOUND DESIGN I FELT AT HOME

I loved school!

I really enjoyed it but I didn't get anything out of it. I look back and realise that I hid myself within a class of 30 kids, and just bumbled along. In senior school I was in the bottom set, our classroom was in the RoSLA Building, and we were known as the RoSLA Block Kids!

Monopoly was a game I loved to play with my family, but landing on 'chance' or 'community chest' made me feel 'aghhhhh!!!' From an early age I found it impossible to read those cards out loud. Mum would say (not in a nasty way) that I read the words I wanted to see, not the words that were written down. It's interesting playing Monopoly now in my fifties, because reading those cards still gets me in a pickle.

Libraries are a complete mystery to me! I'm lost and feel completely overwhelmed by everything that's on the shelves.

I remember as a child poking my head around my sister's bedroom door, and seeing her lying on her bed reading a book. I recall thinking 'ooh I'll be able to do that in a couple of years' but that moment never came! On the flip side when playing Lego with her, she complained that I had all the best bricks. Mum intervened, swapped the Lego and off we started again. To me I was happy with whichever pile of bricks I had, but my sister's building was no better with mine.

Design had never been discussed at home or school, it was a careers advisor that suggested I go to Art College because I loved woodwork and metalwork. Everything made sense once I got onto my art foundation course and was in the company of other designers: 'Oh I get this now!' Graphic design, product design, interior design, sculpture, I could do all of these if I'd wanted to. That was a very proud moment for me and my parents, who were probably thinking 'What the hell are we going to do with this boy?!'

As a dyslexic finding your niche in life to fulfil yourself is really important.

My spelling is like the Morecombe and Wise piano sketch, I play the right keys but in the wrong order! I can incorrectly spell the same word three or four different ways, using all the correct letters but in the wrong place. As a Project Manager people never come to me with good news, they come with problems that need fixing. And I like to fix things! There is always a solution, it's just a question of finding it. I have a lot of patience and am prepared to wait and think things through. Sometimes I don't have an instant answer, I need to think about it and then get back to them the following day. I've had some of my best ideas at four in the morning, you wake up and go 'ahhh that's the solution'.

Sleep on something; don't try to force the answer there and then.

I am a morning person, if I have to write a report I get up at six.
I prefer yellow paper notebooks.



PHOTO: JANE APPELBY

RICHARD KIDD

THE JOURNEY IS YOURS

Being creative is like drawing breath, I have to do it. If I stopped doing it something inside of me would die and I'd be unhappy.

I didn't discover I was dyslexic until I was 23, consequently all my school reports said 'Richard is a lovely lad, he just needs to try harder.' My overwhelming thought was 'They have no idea how hard I've tried!'

It was easier to say 'I'm one of the lads, I'm not trying', but I really was trying!

I left school and did the PRC for the Royal Marines before deciding it wasn't for me. I then went on to work as a prison officer in Leicester. I was truly miserable. I went to see my incredible old drama teacher Robert Staunton and told him how depressing my life had become, his response was:

'Go to drama school!' So that's what I did. At 23 I got into the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, I quit my job, sold my house and moved to London. Thanks Bob!

As a professional actor one of the worse moments for me is 'read throughs', on the first day of the rehearsal the room is full of all those involved, the director says 'OK! We're going to have a read through, don't feel under any pressure!' PRESSURE! I prepare for this moment by reading the script in advance over and over again. It's that or looking stupid as I stumble or say a word wrong causing great hilarity to all...but me!

I don't really express myself in a conventional way; I illustrate phrases and use comparisons to explain feelings and ideas to my students.

As a teacher I burst with pride watching my students on stage and giving a performance, and when their parents tell me that their child is much more confident after working with me.

I can tell a story in an exciting way and visualise a play on stage before it's been acted out.

I'm proud that a friend and I wrote an stage play adaptation of 'A Christmas Carol', it was published by Oxford University Press and is now used in the Key Stage 2 syllabus nationwide; the achievement is sweeter because a Theatre Company initially rejected it.



I collect fountain pens, I have learnt to write with them in a way that looks really beautiful... and also hides potential spelling mistakes! Honestly. 'Oops, I'm dyslexic' is something I'm not ashamed to say.

RICHARD MACER

IT'S A WAY OF THINKING BUT NOT IN WORDS

In the 1970s kids like me were affectionately described as 'retarded'. I was struggling so much that my parents moved me to a private primary school, which took me on the condition that I dropped down a year. At sports day the last race was called the 'odds and sods' race, it was for all the kids who were differently abled, I was always entered. I won it twice, but how very 'unpolitically correct'. I had to work incredibly hard to learn to read and write. I had a problem with short-term memory, processing speed and sequencing.

I would escape from the horrors of the classroom into an imaginary world.

The headteacher at my secondary school was a lovely man, he had seen a reference for university written by my form teacher and it wasn't very good. So he stepped in, saying he was compelled to write as he'd seen this awful reference and that it didn't do Richard any favours. He went on to eulogise about me in a really beautiful way. He didn't have to do that, but I thought it was an amazing thing to do. I got the place.

I was assessed with a 'specific learning disability' at 51 years old, but have developed lots of coping strategies. My test results showed I was 'slow but accurate', it's a key vulnerability for me, I always felt slowness equated to stupidity.

I manage to create a level of disorganisation for myself which is almost commendable!

I think I have created a style of documentary making that is quite singular. I have my own style and it has certain ingredients that help make it distinctive. It is the rapport I have with the people I am interviewing. And my ability to spot a storyline and follow it through so that it translates well to the screen. Using multi layering of storylines to create drama makes film making very exciting to me.

I can see the wood for the trees in terms of narrative. I know who to film, when to film them, and what to film them doing.

When you're starting out in life the biggest ambitions seem daunting and mountainous to scale. I feel anybody can do anything if they put in enough hours, within reason, there is no reason you cannot achieve. Part of me feels about myself that if I had been more clear sighted about what I would become I would have been able to do more.

Life has taught me that you should have high ambitions.

Be ambitious.



PHOTO: RICHARD MACER

SALLY GARDNER & SPARROW THE DOG

WORDS ARE OUR SERVANTS; WE ARE NOT THEIR SLAVES

I was born near the Cadbury's chocolate factory in Birmingham, but grew up in Grays Inn. Both my parents were lawyers, they were divorced when I was nine years old and both remarried. I went to school where I was bullied for being different. I was the child who lost information rather than retained it. Up until I got to Central St Martins Art College where I shot from the bottom to the top like a little rocket.

I hated school. I've spent 42 years recovering from my education, from being told that I wouldn't amount to anything. I was told in my English exam not to make a noise with my pencil. 'There are children here going to university and you're not. So don't disturb them please.'

I had a head full of stories but an absolute inability to get them out.

Even as a child I had this image of myself as a really good ideas person, I could lose a whole day telling myself a story. The world in my head was more real than the outside one, as clear to me as if I was there. I could have ended up in a looney bin if I hadn't found a way to get the stories out of me.

I still tell myself stories. I've decided it's like being an actor: your stage is your book. Dickens used to do the same; I think he was probably dyslexic too. He favoured one copy editor who transcribed for him, as his handwriting was so damn difficult to read. If you're dyslexic, do joined up handwriting then you can put the dot anywhere, as long as you put the right amount no one's going to notice!

I have terrible trouble with time, I don't feel like I connect with it. I feel the same with the written word. The level of trouble I have to get them down: without Steve Jobs wonderful Apple computer I would never in a million years been able to do what I do. I write my stories on the computer using double line spacing and I like the font big. On a good day I use dark orange or blue, or if I'm not sure about the words I put them in a very pale colour so that I can come back to them.

At the end I do what I call the stitching, I sew the words together.

I have worked with my wonderful editor for years; we work so closely together, it's now symbiotic. She gives me the clean script. We have terrible arguments about words and moving things around. For me it always rests on the rhythm of the language. When I first started working with her I think she thought I was bonkers, I would sound out the rhythm of the sentence without the words...dum de dum de dum. I write short and sharp sentences in short chapters, for children and grown ups, we all have a short attention span!



I read out loud all the time to anyone who will listen.

SALLY GARDNER & SPARROW THE DOG

WORDS ARE OUR SERVANTS; WE ARE NOT THEIR SLAVES

Make each word work; you don't need added words to make it count. I love words that take you there immediately.

Make the words you use sing and dance.

So this is how my grammar goes, you have to breathe while reading, so you don't want to have long sentences, like when reading Proust you're dead, no commas to breathe! I'm with Hemmingway on this.

I have a terrible problem with numbers, I get them mixed up, someone would say 'I'll meet you at number 15', and I can't work out if it's 51 or 15, so I'll have to go ahead of time and ring doorbells!

The dream I had at school was to be a writer, but how could I tell anyone that? I couldn't spell, they would have laughed at me. In the end what really matters is you keep the dream going.

Words are our servants, we are not their slaves, it matters not how we spell them, it matters what we say.

I don't know where I got my inner confidence from because dyslexia really beat me up. In hindsight I think it's the power of storytelling. Like a Cinderella story to myself, I told myself 'I'm not this feeble thing, I'm going to be more, they haven't seen me yet.' I had a fire in me, when you are down at the bottom you can only rise.

The person who made the biggest difference to me was Judith Elliott, the doyen of children's publishing at the time. She discovered Helen Oxenbury, famous for illustrating 'We're Going On A Bear Hunt', and the Ahlbergs who wrote the classic 'Peepo'. Judith believed in me and said, 'Sally you're going to write a novel!' And I never looked back after that.

Dyslexia is a knot and our school system just makes the knot tighter by pulling on the strings. I see kids and grown ups walking around with such a big knot in them. We can undo the knots.

I believe we need to celebrate the diversity in the brain, just as we do now with sexuality. Our strengths are our differences.



You say that you're a writer
but that's absurd
how do you write
if you cannot spell the words?
Listen, it's not the way I spell
that makes me want to write
It's the way I see the world
That makes me want to fight
I challenge you – see the words as I do
feel them sting your skin
the meaning often shocking
the way the nib goes in
to relish discombobulate not to moderate
your passion not to murder language
in an artificial fashion

SARI RÄTHEL

TOGETHER IS BETTER, IT'S MORE FUN

My first word was 'necklace'. My parents own a bead shop, so I grew up around jewellery.

What bothers me most about my dyslexia is that I cannot remember what I've just read. I can read the same page over and over and still don't know its content. I have no trouble reading out loud, but it makes it harder for me to understand the meaning when concentrating on pronouncing the words. At school I was so lucky to have my good friend sitting next to me telling me what I'd just read!

I grew up in Germany where dyslexia was not such a big topic as it is in the UK. So, I only found out I am dyslexic and dyspraxic when I got to London to do my MA in Jewellery Design at the Royal College of Art.

I was very happy to discover I was dyslexic and dyspraxic. It finally explained why I am clumsy and dreamy! It just all made sense.

Working directly in materials feels more natural to me, rather than drawing, so I do my mock ups for jewellery in brass. I'm very quick and good at shaping metal. I would love to be better at drawing though, it really helps to communicate ideas, but I find it hard to capture 3D objects in 2D.

I live very much in the moment. I am not too worried about what's coming up or what has already happened.

I love working with Ricarda. We have the same creative vision for RÄTHEL & WOLF and explore new ways of wearing jewellery. Our pieces co-exist harmoniously with the body, no piercings needed. Working as a team, we have naturally focused on our individual strengths. The business is doing really well and there is always something exciting happening.

The spark comes when we work together and our ideas bounce off each other.

For my dissertation I researched using videos and used Google Books to find key words and excerpts from bigger texts. Seeing a thick book makes me nervous!



SEBASTIAN BERGNE

MAKING EVERYDAY OBJECTS SPECIAL

Dyslexia caused me problems until I started doing my written work on a computer and my spellings were auto-corrected. My experience up to that point was when anyone read anything I wrote, they got bogged down by sentence structure and spellings and couldn't see beyond that. At school the teachers used their red pens to underline the bits that were wrong and didn't seem to give me the credit for the content. I worked enormously hard and scraped through my O-levels.

I wish I could tell the 13-year-old me not to care so much about what other people thought. I'd tell him he'd win awards and create things people enjoy every day!

Now I write a lot about design, I really like writing, I find it bizarre having had such difficulties, it's an unexpected achievement.

My family enjoys that the dyslexic in the family has had so many things published.

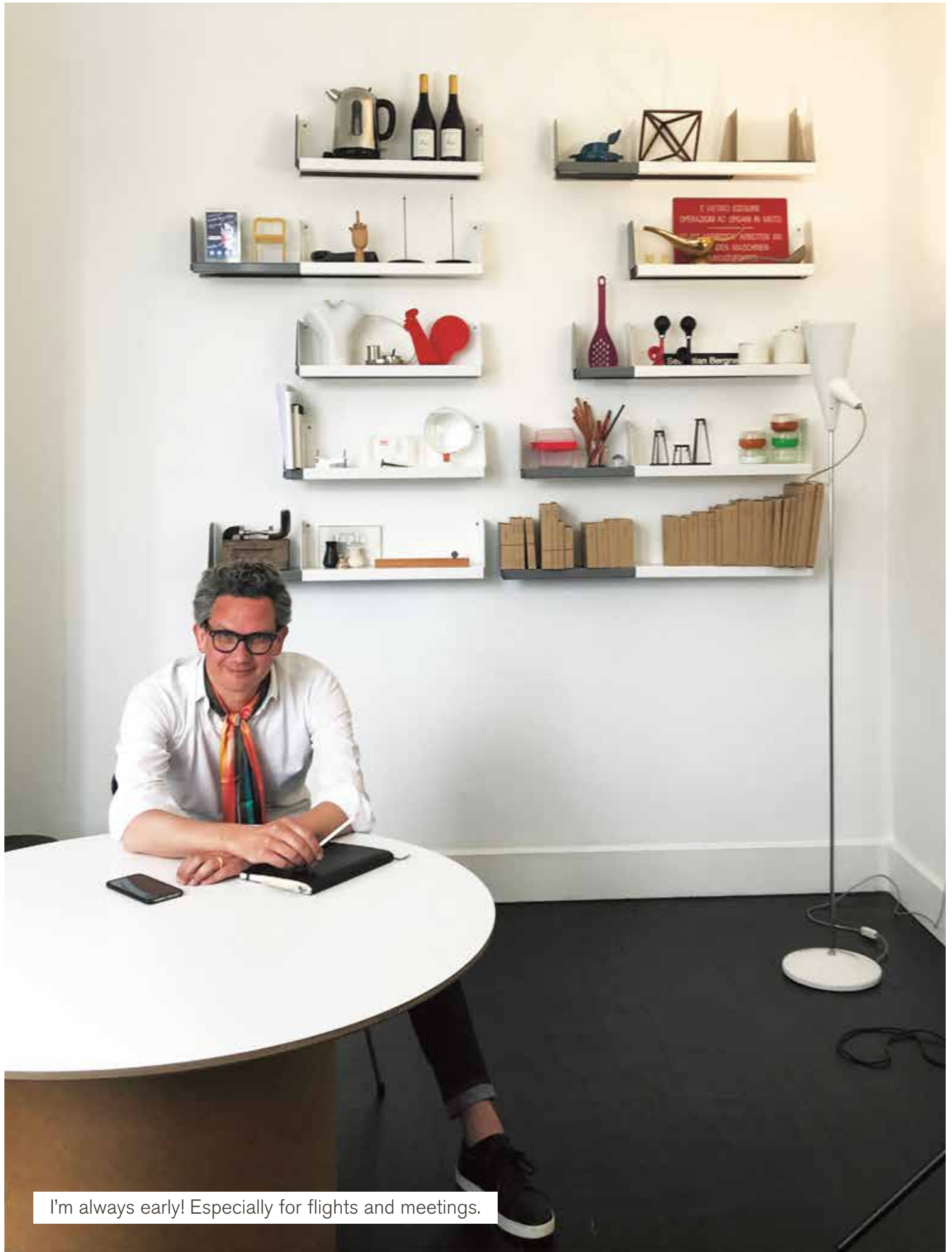
I learn to speak languages by ear; I learnt French from my French wife and Italian while we lived and worked in Italy. We lived in this really nice building with lots of Italians to listen to. After a while I noticed that people would giggle when I spoke Italian... It turned out because I was surrounded by lots of women I was using the wrong gender and speaking Italian as if I was a woman too!

I love my work as an industrial designer, I have always been passionate about art and design, it's a privilege. I take it seriously, perhaps even too seriously.

To design an object with the right balance of being better, memorable and unique is really interesting to me. I've got a great collection of coat hangers; there are so many amazing ways to hang up a jacket!

As a designer you have an opportunity to design in a way that is memorable.

The way I think helps me to advance my design, when I have an idea I can see it in 3D in my mind, I know when it's right and I don't have to go through all the processes. As a design tutor I think my dyslexic students do see things differently. It's not necessarily about the result, it's how they approached the task and get there.



I'm always early! Especially for flights and meetings.

SEBASTIAN CONRAN

IN THE DESIGN INDUSTRY IT'S ACTUALLY A STIGMA IF YOU'RE NOT DYSLEXIC

Before I went to school I was considered a bit of a prodigy, at six years old I could beat adults at chess, take broken clocks apart and get them working – ta dah! And then I went to school... I fell from being a confident little child to someone who felt a bit stupid 'cause I could not read or write properly. At school I remember the master saying:

'I don't understand you Conran! You seem such a clever chap to talk to, yet your academic work is dreadful!'

I was lucky to go to a school with a fabulous sculpture teacher and metal and wood workshops; this was where I loved to spend my time. I endured the other classes, although the sciences interested me. I failed all my written exams, but got 92% in my maths exam, that got me into the next school where I could study sciences.

I loved the sciences because it was dextrous; all about cooking and making stuff! Chemistry was cooking and Physics was making, intuitively I understood.

The sciences provided opportunities for my creativity, like making fireworks! From an early age I wanted to be an inventor, this was my trajectory. I wanted to go to Bristol University to study Engineering, but school didn't think my written English was good enough. So I opted for Industrial Design and Engineering at Central. I arrived at art school to do my foundation and, WOW, almost everyone else was dyslexic too. All of a sudden I went from being someone with low self-esteem to a successful Industrial Design student, although private school became a stigma.

Life got a lot better when my conceptual poster design was selected for the prestigious end of year show; it left the Graphic Designers a little p*ssed off!

Whilst at art college I did a few rock 'n' roll years. I was a roadie for The Clash, I knew how to change a plug and design their T-shirts, record sleeves and posters. Not a typo in sight!

I worked my way up to Head of Design at Mothercare, after a stint at brand consultancy Wolf Ollins. I then started my own design consultancy Product Identity Design (PID). As a dyslexic it was putting my thoughts onto paper that was my biggest challenge, I would slave over proposals and writing reports took me days of anxiety. Verbally, I was articulate, but I could not write. Then my mother changed my life by gifting me a PA's salary for a year!

Keep it simple! Use as few words as possible.
Read George Orwell who writes fantastic simple English.
Learn what dyslexia is all about; understand how your mind
thinks and how you are different and special.



SEBASTIAN CONRAN

IN THE DESIGN INDUSTRY IT'S ACTUALLY A STIGMA IF YOU'RE NOT DYSLEXIC

I draw a lot. I draw to explain stuff, especially useful when I'm working in foreign languages. I always keep a notebook, they are lovely to look back on.

I now realise the benefit of dyslexia is that I see the big picture. I perceive things that others can't. For example, when I'm designing a product, I'm designing the whole experience: from a well-designed object, beautifully packaged that is a joy to use, to understanding the manufacturing process and where the materials come from. That big picture thinking is so important for design as fellow amazing dyslexic Steve Jobs understood too, and Einstein noted 'Creativity is the sum of imagination and knowledge'. I believe that a key dyslexic strength is nurturing imagination; anyone can acquire knowledge, but if you haven't got an imagination you're stuffed! I don't know for sure, but I guess there is a high percentage of dyslexic Nobel Prize Laureates, the ultimate commendation awarded for creativity.

Design is a legacy of thought, but what is a legacy of design? Hopefully not landfill!

My father Terence Conran was always very encouraging, he gave me tools and taught me in the workshop at home. I loved making Airfix models but he'd have been more impressed if I'd made them from scratch! All my life I've made things and been interested in how things work. An ex-girlfriend recently reminded me that I kept a motorbike in pieces in my bath tub! As a child I would have loved someone to explain to me what was going on in my head, and that I wasn't stupid. I spent years feeling bad about myself; dyslexia can erode your self esteem. It's really important to feel good about yourself; I still have to pinch myself every time I get a doctorate now!

I wish the six-year-old Sebastian knew he would be a visiting Professor at Bristol Robotics Laboratory designing robots like MiRO!

My insightful dyslexic son said to me 'The thing about being dyslexic Dad is that you just have to work harder, and working harder means that when you come into the real world you're used to working harder than other people. This is an advantage.'

ROCK FESTIVAL
de MARSAN 5/6 AOUT



THE CLASH

"WHITE RIOT"
45t CBS 5058
30cm CBS 82000



STEVE EDGE

SIDESTEP THE OBVIOUS

When I was a kid, my family didn't have a lot of money. We lived in rented council housing in London, and my father worked long hours at Smithfield Market. But what we lacked financially, we made up for in laughter and love.

I was this skinny, barefoot four-year-old with blonde hair down to the floor. I'd run around in clothes I'd made myself, usually dresses. It's fair to say I was a bit different from the other kids.

But I got a lucky break. One day, a friend of the family, a lovely woman named Valerie, was round at our house and she said to my parents, 'This kid's not bonkers, he's dyslexic. Let me teach him one-to-one.' So, instead of going to school every day, I went to Valerie's beautiful house. She'd teach me in the mornings, and her husband Dennis would let me work with him in his workshop after lunch. He was this amazing guy who ran three practical building magazines. This was way before Apple Macs or CGIs or any of the technology we have today, so when we ran an article on how to build a Mirror dinghy, we had to make it ourselves and photograph it at each stage.

To my great disappointment, I had to go to school for a couple of years when I turned 13. Luckily, they let me live in the school's art department, meaning I could mess around with glitter, magic markers and plastic scissors to my heart's content. This must have paid off, because a year later I won a 'Young European Artist of the Year' competition, which led to a job offer from one of London's leading design agencies. One of the accounts I worked on there was The Muppets by Jim Henson. After a year or two working on the account, Jim came up to me and said, 'I'm not getting rid of you, but this amazing opportunity has come up. This guy loves your work and wants you to go and see him.' It was George Lucas!

It turned out he wanted me to work on the set for 'Star Wars' and 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'. On 'Raiders', Spielberg asked me to fill in for Karen Allen when she couldn't bring herself to do the snake pit scene. Which meant I ended up shaving my legs and going knee deep in snakes with Harrison Ford!

I guess part of this confidence comes from my childhood. I've always been comfortable in my own skin because I found my passion for art and design really early on. When you find your passion, you become good at it. When you're good at it, you work hard at it. And the harder you work, the better you become. Then you become unstoppable. My dyslexia has never stopped me. Not once. In fact, it's given me this great advantage. I've always made things and been good with my hands. And dyslexia helps with this. It helps me picture what I want to make before I make it, down to the very smallest detail. I can mentally flick through every Pantone colour to see which one works. I visualise in 3D, which is handy because it means I can see the finished product straight away.



Talk to people, tell the world, be proud of your dyslexia. Once you start embracing it and opening up, you never know how far it will take you.

STEVE EDGE

SIDESTEP THE OBVIOUS

That's why I do what I do today. I have my own branding agency. We look after some of the world's greatest brands. They come to us because they've lost sight of what they stand for. They need guidance, so that's what we give them.

We help them tell the world what they do and what they believe in. And we make sure they do it in a beautiful, memorable way.

Design aside, I love my work because it's all about people. I love people and I'm lucky enough to be blessed with emotional intelligence. The board members we work with are great people, but they don't tolerate fools. When I talk, I can see them thinking, 'Who's this guy?' They're already out to get me! But I win them over. They'll start telling me about their company: its profile, target audience, where they've come from, where they're going. Then they'll look at me and see I'm not taking any notes. But I don't have to. In my mind, I'll be thinking 'bin it, bin it, bin it, f***ing remember that bit, bin it, bin it...'

I collate all the bits I need and create a story. Every brand has a story to tell, even if they don't think they do. A strong brand is a brand that tells a powerful, compelling story. Because people are drawn in by inspiring stories. But to create inspiring stories, you need to think laterally, not literally. It's no use throwing a load of information at people. They won't take it in. You need to create that 'wow!' moment in their minds. That's the power of the brand.

I truly think my dyslexia has played a massive part in getting me where I am today. Brands come to us because they want something fresh and exciting. They want a different perspective. And that's what I can give them.

But don't get me wrong. It's not always easy being dyslexic. My main struggle is transportation. I panic just going to a train station. I can't help it. It's absolute hell. The train timetables are gobbledygook and immediately forgettable. The information just doesn't go in.

It's like trying to catch ten wasps in a jam jar...impossible!

The first thing I do when I walk into a station is find someone to help me. I explain I'm dyslexic, and they're always amazing. People are kind. They'll take me by the arm and say, 'Don't worry. Where are you going?' That's when I can relax.

With dyslexia, and life in general, it's all about finding what you enjoy. Don't get hung up on what you can't do. Find that thing you're good at and go for it. I guess that's the moral of the story. Celebrate yourself, find your passion, share it with the world. Take pride in your dyslexia!



STEVEN NAISMITH

GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

The biggest challenge for me is anything to do with spelling, although it's much better now, partly down to getting older and being more confident in myself. And with all the technology that's around, like smart phones and social media, I am involved with words more than ever before. What I find hardest is when I've spelt a word incorrectly in an email or a text, once sent it's gone and I can't change it. Reading is less of an issue because if I'm reading something that doesn't come across right I know I can read it over a few times and work out the word one way or another.

When I was younger at school I found it really tough, not outwardly, I didn't get bullied or stuff like that, it was more classroom situations. I felt really uneasy and embarrassed when the teacher would pick people to read out loud. I would dread my turn so I would skim read the pages ahead in case she picked me, then she would ask a question and I hadn't been listening because I was reading ahead, and I'd look silly and embarrassed because I couldn't answer. I was just trying to gain an advantage but she didn't know that. At this point I didn't know I was dyslexic, I found out half way through secondary school. I was about 14 years old.

I wasn't bullied at school because I was always sporty and really good at football, which earned me a lot of respect. Being good at sport can help you be popular at school; it was a wee bit like that for me.

I didn't experience low self-esteem issues because I had football, and in Scotland it's the biggest sport. It's football, football, football! So being good at that gave me a lot of street cred. I also had a couple of bigger sisters at the school which made me feel more secure having older siblings there with me. When I was about six years old I was the best player in my team, I was going on trials at professional clubs before any of my friends, or anyone I knew. From eight I knew football, it came really easy to me.

To be a great footballer you need to be able to picture something before it happens and be in the right place at the right time, for me I would definitely say that is down to dyslexia.

A lot of the goals I would score pundits would ask 'Why was he there? It doesn't make sense for him to be there.' But intuitively I know where to be. Others might say it's luck, but the amount of times I've done it in my career, it can't be just luck. I am sharp at noticing things; I can work out which is the best position for me to be in to get a shot at goal, to score a goal, or to do whatever I need to do in the game at the time. It would be nice to think that through the challenge of dyslexia something unique and positive has come about in enabling me to have the career I have in professional football.



Coloured overlays and extra time in exams were massively helpful. I prefer to read on cream paper with blue text, the letters don't get so mixed up or go back to front.

STEVEN NAISMITH

GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

When I played for Scotland I was one of the best in the squad for seeing these things.

The thing I am proudest of is not an achievement; it's being involved in dyslexia awareness and learning about it. I was probably in the last generation at school thinking that dyslexics were often seen as silly or less intelligent. It has really stuck with me so to be involved with the charity Dyslexia Scotland and to advocate for dyslexia is really important to me. Recently I was at a secondary school and a young girl stood up and gave a presentation about dyslexia in front of the whole assembly. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen, being in that situation at her age there is no way I would have been confident enough to do that.

Being open about my dyslexia has meant a lot of people, including other footballers, come to me and talk about their dyslexia. I suspect a very high percentage of footballers are dyslexic because they have the right skill set. They are thinking differently and that's what makes them great.

My advice to kids when classmates laugh or pass comments is to remember they are such small things in the bigger picture. In ten years time when you're grown up you'll think 'Why did I let that effect me so much? I'm not less intelligent than them, I just see things differently and I'm much better at X, Y and Z!'

I hated that nervous anxious feeling in my body when I got picked to read at school, when I get that feeling now it'll take me right back to the classroom. I look back and think it's crazy that I should have been made to feel like that; I'd done nothing wrong. I'd say to a young me, try not to feel that way, you made it a bigger deal in your head. I would hate kids to feel like that now.

Use the tools you've got at your disposal, you're just as intelligent, you just understand things in a different way.

I would tell my teenage self not to be so shy or embarrassed about being dyslexic, but instead to see it as an advantage. Why would you want to be the same as everyone else? When you can be different and have an advantage, be unique! A lot of people have said that to me along the way, and it's so true; I learnt that for myself in my mid-twenties.

NAISMITH

14

STEVEN 'WOODY' WOODGATE

CREATIVE RENEGADE

As children the world is our playground, and we are not yet burdened by social expectations. We have complete creative freedom in a world full of wonder. We can do and imagine anything.

Throughout primary school I didn't speak properly or coherently. Many struggled to understand me, throwing 'what?' at me like it was my fault. I saw a speech therapist and always had a teaching assistant beside me.

I struggled.

It was in the school nativity that I had one of the most significant moments of my life. I was dressed as a builder (well someone's got to build the stable!), wearing my Dad's tool belt. The cool kid, Craig, was meant to rush to the front of the stage to thank everyone for coming and to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Pretty daunting for any five-year-old, I saw Craig struggling and looking nervous, so to help him out I marched up, dodging the teachers who were trying to stop me, and did it for him! Oblivious to my issues, I spoke loud and clear, not burdened by my condition. A moment of complete creative freedom. After the show I couldn't figure out why my mum was in floods of tears. It was the first time I wanted to be a communicator.

#proudmum!

Education needs to change. Technology can help create a fair, balanced playing field for those with learning differences. Having struggled with exams throughout my teenage life I was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyspraxia at the age of 22. I managed to get into University, just, by hitting the minimum threshold. I had a lot of 'feedback' about how my handwriting was terrible and was costing me marks. It's something I couldn't help; the time pressure was on. The stigma around 'invisible disabilities' was obvious.

After Uni I worked really hard to fulfil my dream to become a sports journalist. But after one football match I had to dictate handwritten copy over the phone, which I found impossible, without technology as my trusted sidekick, I was left exposed. I couldn't be equal and I thought my dream was ruined. After some time travelling, I went back to University with the sole purpose of challenging everything.

To be creative, to learn and be curious.

It was here I learnt about the 'dark arts', I learnt how to communicate via digital channels. I started to understand social media, how to communicate, how to change opinion and how to create a buzz. Technology gave me a platform to exercise my creative urges and pushed me. Where I had my challenges with traditional methods of communications, I was having fun learning and discovering new methods.

Good technology!
Cortana, Siri, Immersive Reader on One Note,
Read Aloud text to speech.



STEVEN 'WOODY' WOODGATE

CREATIVE RENEGADE

Amazing things can happen when you put your mind to it; technology and being creative helped me.

Working in tech there are so many smart people, A* Oxford grads with Business MBAs. I arrived curious and wanted to learn everything. I know I can rub people up the wrong way, but it's how I've succeeded here by 'positively irritating people', in terms of asking challenging questions. I know the end destination but I don't know what lane to be in! Sometimes you have to overtake sometimes slow down and sometimes pull in, but it's all part of the journey.

The biggest thing I have learnt over the last five years is how to be me, and how to work alongside people that have the skills I don't.

I'm lucky working for a big tech firm, I can access all the latest technology, like 'accessibility' options to break down big chunks of text into more manageable language to read out loud. Learning tools are integrated into much of Microsoft's software and I'm learning new features and 'life hacks' every day. I soon discovered I could be as productive as I could be creative. Accessible technology has given me confidence and the opportunity to do things on a level playing field; before now, I used to discreetly record some meetings and make notes afterwards, with dictation tools I can do that instantly. For spelling I can say the word into any device and see immediately how it's spelt. Or if I didn't know how to say a word, I would use the read aloud feature.

Technology is finally catching up with dyslexic thinking, not the other way around. It's a diverse skill, very needed.

Those with skills of finding creative solutions to problems will be the ones that are successful in the future. Those with the ability to think, to have fun and solve the world's problems.

Up until a couple of years ago, I kept my dyslexia quiet, I didn't tell anyone. I didn't disclose it on any job applications, I didn't want to be judged by an invisible disability. But with technology being able to create a fairer platform for everyone, it will breed confidence to anyone who may have a learning disability. Technology isn't just about cool gadgets, it's as much about sociology and psychology and how people use it to get the best out of themselves.

I wish I could tell my teenage-self this: People who say 'But you can't do that' aren't very important. I don't take 'no' too seriously nowadays. I see the world slightly differently. And I'm happy to.



TOM PELLEREAU

FIXING THE SMALL FRUSTRATIONS IN LIFE

From the age of five I wanted to be an inventor; fascinated by how things worked, I loved taking things apart and rebuilding them. My first commercial invention, an S-shaped nail file designed to follow the natural shape of your nail, has gone on to sell millions across the world.

I'm probably best known for winning BBC One's 'The Apprentice', and becoming Lord Sugar's first business partner; it was amazing to have someone like him believe in me.

While on the show my dyslexia led to a couple of embarrassing moments on a trip to France, but luckily my faux pas didn't get aired! I find learning foreign languages incredibly difficult, I work abroad a lot, and it would be really nice to be able to speak other languages, it makes me feel embarrassed.

At school my best friends used to call me 'chameleon' because I'd mastered being invisible in French class to avoid having to answer questions! They'd joke 'Were you even there, Tom?' At 14, I was moved up a set for all subjects because I was good at Maths and Geography; unfortunately I was not so good at spelling. My English teacher used to make us write out each spelling mistake ten times, I'd make about 50 mistakes, which equals a lot of words! The resulting work had no effect as later I'd spell the word wrong again. I had a number of phenomenal teachers: one taught 'study skills', such as Tony Buzan's mind mapping – a skill that totally changed my life.

I wouldn't have passed an exam without mind maps; it's such a powerful method for organising and memorising information.

As Lord Sugar's business partner we meet regularly, you know the drill...he'll ask direct questions and put me on the spot, but sometimes my words vanish and I struggle to answer him. I know he finds this intensely frustrating; he can be a pretty fierce character! But he's incredibly helpful. The bottom line is that business is doing well.

I find it easy to see how things might work in my head. I can kind of pick them up and spin them around then change pieces. The struggle is then communicating so I usually get a glue gun and make them! Recently I was playing around at a manufacturer's and they told me something I wanted to make would be impossible, but I could see it in my head so I disappeared down to their lab for a few hours and came back with a working prototype! However having an idea is not enough, real inventorship is getting a product on the shelf and takes months and months of hard and often boring work.

Amazing dyslexics, you'll have to work bloody hard at school and work, but through creativity and hard work you could become the best in the world!



To understand things I have to write, sketch or mindmap them, otherwise my short-term memory can't cope.

On 'The Apprentice' we weren't allowed a notebook or pen outside filming, which I found impossible. So I used to hide a pen and paper in my jacket pocket and under my pillow at night, then wrote notes in the bathroom when no one was looking!

TRIX WORRELL

IT'S A CURSE BEING A WRITER AS YOU LIVE IN YOUR HEAD THE WHOLE TIME

Having won Chanel 4's debut writing competition aged 28, I pitched an idea and was commissioned to write and direct 'Desmond's'. It became Channel 4's most successful British sitcom running for seven series and watched by over five million. 'Desmond's' is an affectionate comedy about the lives of a black working class family set in a barber shop in Peckham. I now write and produce films and television.

My biggest challenge as a dyslexic is that I feel a fraud as a writer! I've won awards but I still feel that one day I'm going to get found out. I've worked with several writers who aren't dyslexic and they merrily type away, but I can't do that. The whole writing process for me is far more laborious.

I constantly come up with great ideas and I put that down to dyslexia.

When I have an idea it has to fester, I 'walk around' it, talk to people about it and get to know the characters. I handwrite the first draft; it's just a splurge! It's the only way I can keep up with my brain; the only problem with that is that my writing looks like doctor's scribble, it takes some deciphering!!! I then type it up which I used to find really painful, but actually it's an editing process for me, by the time I've finished I've read it about a million times!

I went to Peckham Manor School, which we dubbed 'Peckham Madhouse'. I found school tough, and felt there was something wrong with me but I didn't know what it was, it didn't have a name then. I was considered stupid because I couldn't read a passage out loud, my classmates would laugh at me; kids are cruel. I was left alone, maybe it's one of the reasons I'm a writer, it's the being left alone thing.

You have to develop mechanisms to survive, I was different and got picked on and it manifested itself into fights. So my brother introduced me to Bruce Lee films and martial arts. I thought if I can fight, then I don't have to suffer the anxiety.

Friday afternoons I would bunk off school and go to a venue called 'Crackers' off Soho square. We'd stuff our school uniform in our bags and dance to Jazz funk.

To have Denzel Washington in my first ever feature film 'For Queen and Country' was just extraordinary. My mentor Martin Stellman, best known for writing the British cult movie 'Quadrophenia' was the one who encouraged me to write. I think writers are born; it's a thing, an ability. And it's not just about having a great idea; the hardest part is sitting down and writing.

My greatest achievement is winning a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for my writing, from the Royal Television Society. It means so much because it's a vote by the industry, by my peers for my ability to do the work. I have all these ideas and I have to put them down. But as soon as they're down and I've released some mega bites of space in my brain...then another idea comes along and fills it back up again, it drives me mad for another six months! I tell my students 'It's a curse being a writer as you live in your head the whole time!' Now I embrace my dyslexia, I don't think I would be a writer if I weren't because I see things slightly differently and I'm sensitive to situations.



Go with your passion and never let dyslexia get in the way.

PHOTO: JANE WORRELL

YOU

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE COLOUR?

Be an amazing dyslexic and use your dyslexic thinking in wonderful ways and explore the things you are good at. These may not be conventional subjects taught at school or a job mentioned in this book.

What's your dream job? Perhaps it doesn't exist yet! You may be the one to create it.



ACADEMIC



ACTOR



ACTOR



ADVERTISING



ARCHITECT



ART CONSULTANT



ARTIST



AUTHOR



BLOGGER



BRANDING CREATIVE



CAMPAIGNER



CAREERS ADVISOR



CARTOONIST



CHEF



CHOREOGRAPHER



CODER



COMEDIAN



CREATIVE DIRECTOR



DESIGNER



DESIGNER



DESIGNER



DETECTIVE



DRAMA TEACHER



ENTREPRENEUR



EXHIBITION DESIGNER



FARMER



FASHION DESIGNER



FILM DIRECTOR



FILM MAKER



FILM PRODUCER



FOOTBALLER



FURNITURE DESIGNER



GRAPHIC DESIGNER



HEAD TEACHER



HR CONSULTANT



INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER



INVENTOR



JEWELLERY DESIGNER



JOURNALIST



JUDGE



LIFE COACH



MARKETING DIRECTOR



MILLINER



MUSIC INDUSTRY



PERSONAL TRAINER



PODCASTER



PRODUCT DESIGNER



PSYCHOLOGIST



PSYCHOTHERAPIST



SOCIAL WORKER



STUNT PERFORMER



SURGEON



TECH. CEO.



WRITER



YOU

YOUR TURN

**What's your biggest challenge as a dyslexic?
What gets you in a pickle?**

A memory that makes your toes curl?

What makes you burst with pride?

**Who has inspired, encouraged and made a difference
to your learning and confidence?**

What are you good at? Please show off here!

What are the benefits of 'dyslexic thinking' for you?

What are your coping strategies?

What is your top tip?

And what's your favourite colour?

PART TWO

ITS NOT ALL BLACK & WHITE.

Sound advice from dyslexia experts.

DESIGN GUIDE

HOW TO USE PART TWO.

The opposite page shows how an expert's page is laid out. Their key message is in colour. Some are proudly amazing dyslexic too, we've illustrated this with our hashtag [#amazingdyslexic](#).

**Favourite
Colour**

Number

NAME

JOB TITLE & COMPANY NAME

Key Message.

WISE WORDS

WHAT MAKES A DYSLEXIC AMAZING?

With a different set of questions we interviewed experts who assess, teach, support, inspire and campaign for dyslexics. They shared their knowledge and in part two we pass it onto you.

The Expert Questionnaire

1. What is your job title?
2. What do you do?
3. What is your big message?
4. What are your top tips?
5. What are dyslexic super powers?



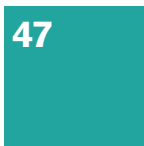
PART TWO

DYSLEXIA EXPERTS

IT'S NOT ALL BLACK & WHITE.

The colour grid opposite shows the dyslexia experts in first name alphabetical order with a number for quick reference. Job titles and company names are listed below.

47. CEO, Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity
48. Director, Adjust Services
49. Broadcaster, The Dyslexia Quest Podcast
50. CEO, British Dyslexia Association
51. Secondary School Counsellor
52. Founder, Dyslexic Design
53. Headteacher, Bruern Abbey Specialist Dyslexia School
54. Professor, Magdalen College Oxford
55. CEO, Made By Dyslexia
56. Educational Psychologist
57. Trustee, Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association
58. Author, Writer
59. Marketing Director, Direct Line Group
60. Founder, Exceptional Individuals, Dyslexia Recruitment Agency
61. Education Consultant, Thinking Classroom
62. Dyslexia Coordinator, The Royal College of Art
63. Founder, Dekko Comics
64. Specialist Dyslexia Tutor, Lime Tuition



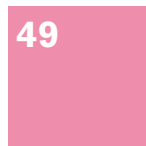
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ANDY
COOK



48

DANIEL
AHERNE



49

ELISHEVA
SCHWARTZ



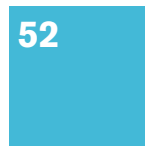
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HELEN
BODEN



51

HELEN
EVANS



52

JIM
ROKOS



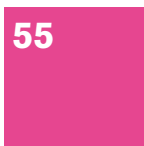
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JOHN
FLOYD



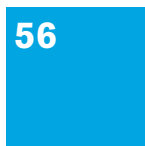
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JOHN
STEIN



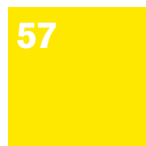
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KATE
GRIGGS



56

KATHERINE
SHARKEY



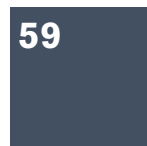
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MARCIA
B-BAILEY



58

MARGARET
ROOKE



59

MARK
EVANS



60

MATT
BOYD



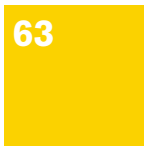
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MIKE
FLEETHAM



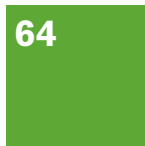
62

OONA
RANKIN



63

ROSSIE
STONE



64

SALLY
ASHCROFT

ANDY COOK

CEO. HELEN ARKELL DYSLEXIA CHARITY

Believe. Achieve. Succeed.

Helen Arkell overcame her own dyslexia and was an inspirational figure ahead of her time. People with dyslexia continue to benefit from her and the charity's support, advice and expertise.

The Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity was set up in 1971 with the mission of providing expert support to children and adults with dyslexia. The personal touch is at the heart of our work.

We give people the tools they need to learn in their own way. We help each person to understand themselves better, finding ways forward that play to their strengths. We train teachers as well as parents, so they are better able to support their children with dyslexia. We help employers to get the best out of their staff.

We play our part in raising awareness of dyslexia with the public in general as well as with government. Together we inspire people to believe in themselves, achieve their goals and succeed on their own terms.





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DANIEL AHERNE

DIRECTOR. ADJUST SERVICES

Harness the power of dyslexia.

I am enthusiastic about the recruitment of neurodiverse thinkers in the workplace and how their specific skills can benefit the whole team. My job is to help employers unleash the potential of their dyslexic employees.

The best coping strategy at work is for a manager to understand the positives that dyslexic thinking can bring to a workplace, as well as understanding what adjustments may be needed for dyslexic employees to succeed.





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ELISHEVA SCHWARTZ

BROADCASTER. THE DYSLEXIA QUEST PODCAST

On a mission to help you flourish.

Through my regular podcast 'The Dyslexia Quest' I delve into all things dyslexic with experts and successful dyslexics. My quest is to fully understand the strengths and difficulties of the dyslexic mind and to empower us to succeed in the real world.

Learning takes place when we are secure, valued and able to take risks. Trust your own learning style and create a personal assistive technology toolbox with computer software and apps.

Stay curious.

#amazingdyslexic



HELEN BODEN

CEO. BRITISH DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

Giving a voice to dyslexic people.

As the architects of our own lives we must build a life we want to live; if you don't like the design don't be afraid to change it.

Since 1972 the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has been a membership organisation working for a dyslexia-friendly society. My colleagues and I are the voice of dyslexic people, whether old or young. Dyslexia need not be a barrier to achieving your potential, but too often it is. To change that, we can't be lone voices, as dyslexics we need to come together and say that with the right support the challenges are manageable, and the strengths it brings are immensely valuable to organisations and society. Working with schools, the media, government and business, we set the standard to which specialist dyslexia teachers are trained, lobby for better laws and offer advice to people struggling with their dyslexia and those around them.

The best part of my job is meeting the best of dyslexia, the remarkable people. Dyslexia can often be a challenge, especially at school, but every day, I see people who have persevered and found environments in which they can flourish. Not just contributing to making our country greater, although dyslexics are doing that all the time, but in making life better in small ways, through creativity, compassion and commitment.



HELEN EVANS

SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Help is always out there.

I help students when they are struggling with the anxiety that can come with being a dyslexic in our current school system. Together we look at ways to manage this stress and cope better.

My advice is to talk. It's amazing how many people within your own circle will have something helpful to say. Recognise there are so many people like you, who have found winning strategies for learning differences just like yours.

Wear your dyslexia difference with pride and celebrate the strengths that come with learning and seeing things differently. Be creative and work on your strengths, we are all different for a reason.



JIM ROKOS

FOUNDER. DYSLEXIC DESIGN & INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER

Let's remove the stigma.

I had the idea for the exhibition 'Dyslexic Design' after listening to a radio call-in show on dyslexia. I was very interested to hear what callers had to say, but was disappointed because they focused on the negatives. It was frustrating as I recognised that dyslexia gave me such positives, and as an industrial designer the ability to do my job well.

Rather than seeing dyslexia as a problem that needs fixing, 'Dyslexic Design' wants to remove the stigma and promote it as a strength. The exhibition illustrated that the differences are gifts to be nurtured and encouraged young dyslexics during education.

We opened minds to the fact that dyslexia has positives to offer. Dyslexics of all ages felt inspired, excited and optimistic. Visitors stepped back into their everyday lives and saw dyslexia in a different and positive light. It is nice to think that they now use their dyslexic thinking to make the world a more interesting and innovative place.

#amazingdyslexic



PHOTO: RUTH WARD

JOHN FLOYD

HEADTEACHER. BRUERN ABBEY SPECIALIST DYSLEXIA SCHOOL

A lot of carrot* & confidence is the key to academic success.

There's never been a better time to be a young dyslexic! What's so nice is that recent research shows the skills needed for the future job market are skills that dyslexics are inherently better at than average people, such as collaborating, making connections, empathy and communication.

At our school we make a big difference to children who've previously had a wildly inappropriate education experience. Our lessons are geared up for a dyslexic way of thinking.

We try and avoid copying down from the board as it makes for a really boring, slow and frustrating lesson for everyone. We ditched homework as it finishes you off at the end of the day! Things are more visual, diagrammatic or film based. The big difference is that our lessons are dynamic, quite bitty, and stop and start, and the lessons get shorter as they go through the day, finishing on a high with something sporty.

*reward.

#amazingdyslexic



JOHN STEIN FMedSci

PROFESSOR & FELLOW, MAGDALEN COLLEGE OXFORD

I wouldn't want to cure dyslexia; it comes with too many good things.

Often dyslexics are very talented; it's just that their talents don't include reading and spelling. At Oxford University I have been researching the neurological basis of dyslexia for over 30 years and believe it's caused by abnormal development of magnocellular neurones in the brain.

At the Dyslexia Research Trust we have been looking into the way coloured light affects how these nerve cells process visual information. This has led us to develop our special blue and yellow coloured lenses for helping dyslexics to read.

As a result of my work at the Institute of Food, Brain & Behaviour I also strongly recommend omega 3 fish oils which can greatly improve attention and reading progress. 75% of young people now don't eat any oily fish at all – fish fingers don't count!





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KATE GRIGGS

FOUNDER & CEO. MADE BY DYSLEXIA

The world sees dyslexia as a disadvantage, it's not.

I've been lobbying for changes to the education system since 2004. My Xtraordinary People campaign culminated in the Rose Report, a government review that spelt out the importance of identifying dyslexic students and how to teach them. For years we've had the information to make things better, but still dyslexic kids are slipping through the net and their potential wasted. It's time for change.

Made By Dyslexia is a global charity lead and supported by successful dyslexics. Our mission is to ensure dyslexia is properly understood, and to democratise support so all dyslexics can reach their brilliant potential. In 2018 we collaborated with Ernst and Young on 'The Value of Dyslexia' report which identified how dyslexic thinking is crucial for our future world. And we partnered with Microsoft to work together to produce free tools to support and empower dyslexic students.

Experts agree that we need the type of intelligence that dyslexics have, skills like visualisation and problem solving. Let's stop telling these brilliant dyslexic minds they are disabled and teach ALL children the value of creativity and innovation.

MADE BY
DYSLEXIA

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MADE BY
DYSLEXIA

#amazingdyslexic



KATHERINE SHARKEY BSc MSc AFBPsS

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Your time has come.

Imagine being stuck in a job where you're out of your depth, and you'll get some sense of how school feels for children with dyslexia. But growing dyslexia awareness is changing this, as teachers increasingly pick up children's literacy difficulties before a sense of failure sets in.

As an educational psychologist, I come in at this point, testing formally and informally for dyslexia. If it's confirmed, my recommendations will include multisensory teaching, ideally with a specialist dyslexia teacher. Learners with dyslexia must do without skills others take for granted. Happily, schools and universities have started to recognise the resourcefulness and creativity that this requires as qualities conducive to academic excellence.

Changing perceptions of dyslexia come as technology makes it easier for students with the condition to manage a university workload.



WISC-V^{UK}
Stimulus Book 2
Picture Span
Picture Concepts
Arithmetic
Pearson

GROUP 2
Comprehensive Test
of Phonological Processing
Teacher's Manual
C. Hulstijn
© 2001



MARCIA BRISSETT-BAILEY BSc PG Dip MA

TRUSTEE. WALTHAM FOREST DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

**Dyslexia is
unique to the
individual;
my experience
will be different
from yours.**

Dyslexia is not who I am, it's just a little part of me. My experience of dyslexia is interwoven with my culture, environment, class and education; all these things can impact on one's success in navigating life. The turning point for me was a negative comment made to my parents by a teacher 'Marcia is not going to academically achieve! This made me determined to succeed by focusing on my goals.

I learnt about resilience, to believe in myself and focus on my strengths. I co-founded the Cultural Perceptive Committee within the British Dyslexia Association as I was concerned by the lack of representation of people like me and my journey.

I'm keen to raise awareness within the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, break the silence/taboo and tackle the stigma surrounding dyslexia. My hope is to push the agenda of embedding cultural inclusiveness to reflect the dyslexic community as a whole.

#amazingdyslexic



PHOTO: TARA MARTIN

MARGARET ROOKE

AUTHOR & WRITER

Dyslexia is your SUPERPOWER!

I've interviewed people from all over the world about their dyslexia. These include high-achieving, successful adults, who say that if you can find your niche and have the right support, you can achieve more than you ever thought possible; and the school children and teens who shared their stories in my book, 'Dyslexia is My Superpower (Most of the Time)'.

What I've learned is that it's very important to work as hard as you can at school, but your time to shine may be after you leave. At school you might study around ten subjects but when you leave there are many hundreds of different jobs needing all sorts of different skills and these may include one of your very own superpowers.

Also, when you feel confused or criticised, turn to the person who makes you feel good about yourself. Just one person on your side is enough to give you the confidence to succeed.



MARK EVANS

MARKETING DIRECTOR. DIRECT LINE GROUP

Dyslexia is the next big thing in the talent conversation.

Over time, robots and machine learning will automate repeatable processes and linear thinking. However, breakthrough thinking will continue to come from the edges via people with divergent minds. Hence people with dyslexia will become ever more valuable since, whilst they may struggle to do some things that others find easy, they often find it easy to conjure the impossible!

In this way dyslexia and other forms of neurodiversity represent a source of competitive advantage. Forward-thinking marketers should 'look outside the box' to build highly talented teams and create an environment where everyone can be the best version of themselves, regardless of their differences.





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MATT BOYD

FOUNDER. EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS. DYSLEXIA RECRUITMENT

Great minds think different.

Currently a shocking 40% of unemployed people in the UK are believed to be dyslexic; our economy is missing out on a valuable asset. I set up Exceptional Individuals, an employment agency for dyslexics, because filling in job applications can be daunting and excluding; we can help with the practical issues.

We also meet with companies to highlight the proven abilities of the dyslexic skill set. Inclusive employers we have worked with include companies like Ryman, Kantar and McCann London.

It's time to change the conversation around dyslexia, challenge the broken systems and misconceptions around it, and celebrate the incredible work that's being done by dyslexic people.

#amazingdyslexic



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MIKE FLEETHAM

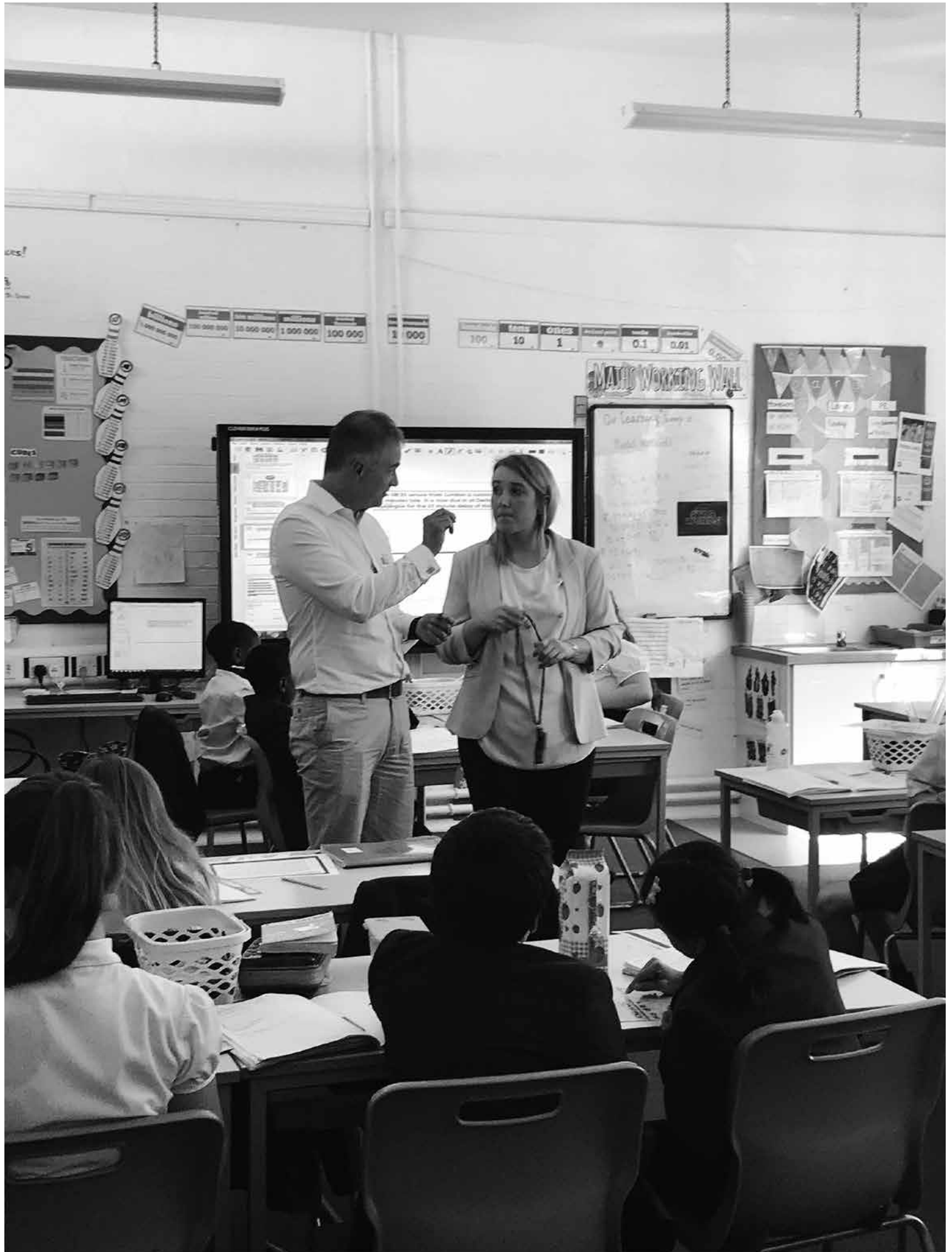
EDUCATION CONSULTANT & TRAINER. THINKING CLASSROOM

Diversity is strength; the world needs you!

We have reached a tipping point and schools need to change because the world is changing. We must prepare children for their futures not our pasts.

My job is to help teachers reach ALL children. I coach teachers via a live video link to the classroom. As a coach, they direct me and I then guide them using a discrete earpiece. It's a real-time collaboration with the teacher who quickly develops their skills and talents. Together, we use the best new educational practices but do not forget the best traditional ones.

The aim is to prepare all children to succeed in life, work and learning and to empower their teachers to help.



QONA RANKIN

DYSLEXIA COORDINATOR. THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

RCA is the #1 college to study art and design. 1 in 3 students are dyslexic.

In common with many art and design colleges, one in three students are dyslexic and/or dyspraxic. As the dyslexia coordinator I screen for both, suggest coping strategies and support students with the obvious challenges and other difficulties they may have with aspects of their professional practices, including their dissertations.

Interestingly I noticed that some of our dyslexic art students struggle to draw accurately from observation. They have a great ability to visualise and make things in 3D but can't always 'draw to their satisfaction' despite having had years of practice.

Lack of self-confidence is the biggest hurdle so finding their strengths and people to encourage and nurture them is key. Everyday I'm surrounded by amazing dyslexics doing incredible things.



ROSSIE STONE

DIRECTOR & FOUNDER. DEKKO COMICS

I've made it easy peasy!

I hated school growing up, and never really felt like I fitted in. I spent years doing poorly in exams doing things the 'proper way' so with nothing to lose I decided to learn my way.

I made my learning fun and easy to remember by turning my revision notes into a comic, and for the first time got amazing exam results! You learn more when you are engaged and entertained.

I created Dekko Comics to help other children learn their school subjects by using cartoon characters like The Doctopus and the teenager Dan, whose body is constantly at war with invading forces!

#amazingdyslexic



SALLY ASHCROFT, PG Dip, BDA, APS

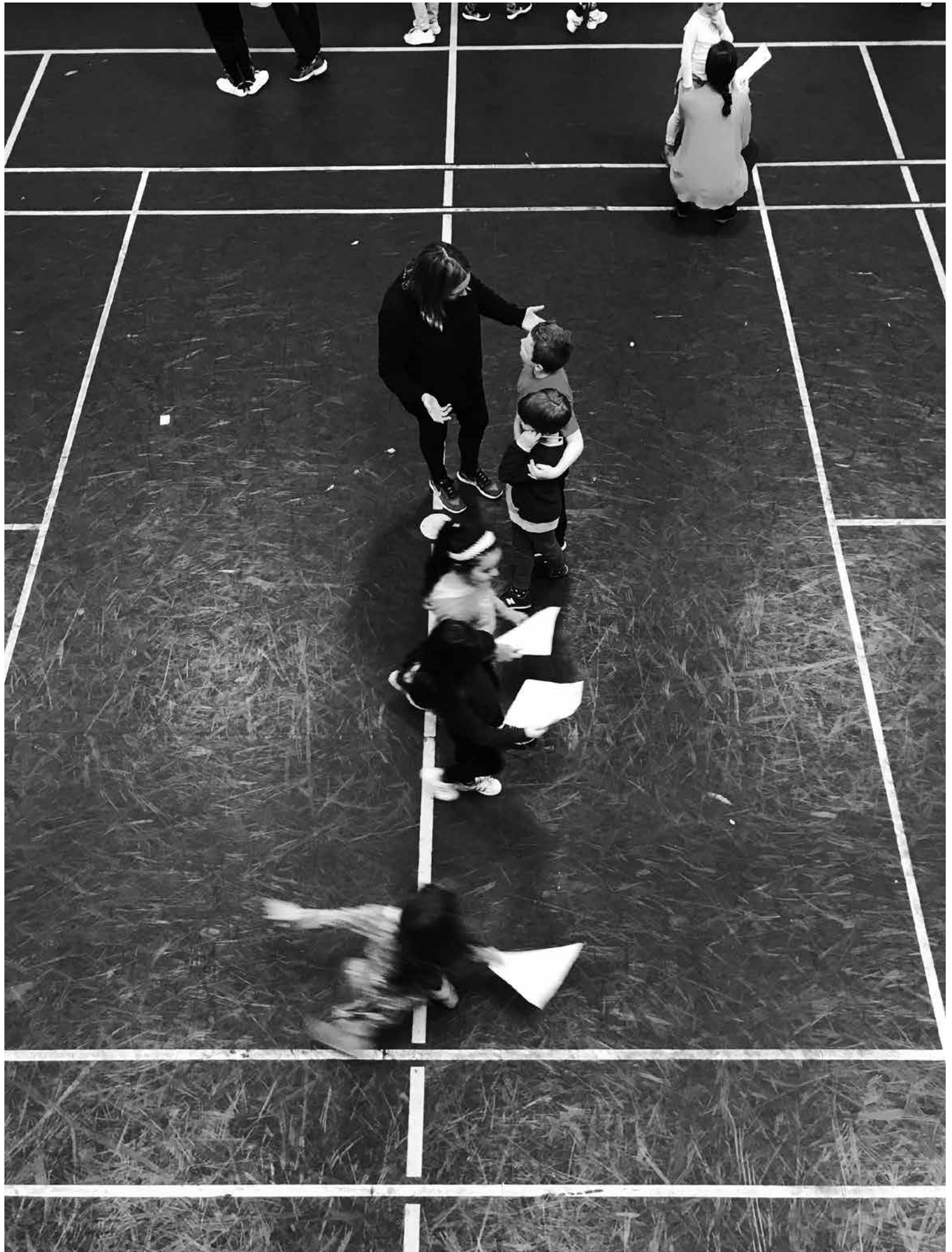
SPECIALIST DYSLEXIA TUTOR

Make it memorable.

Dyslexia can be tricky in school but is not related to how clever you are or what skills you have. Having to persevere and think of new ways to do things are vital skills and will help you reach your goals.

Use drama, art and even sport to make your learning memorable. Fun learning sticks! But nothing beats taking the time to become a fluent reader. Start simple, find series that fire your imagination (try listening to the first few on an audio book) and don't stop reading until it's easy as pie.

Technology is getting better and better, find the aids and apps that work for you so you can focus on what's important: your ideas, imagination and communication.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

COLOURFUL CAREERS.

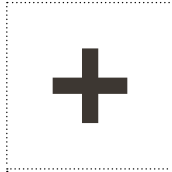
ACADEMIC	ACCOUNTANT	ACTOR	ADVERTISING	ANAESTHETIST	ANIMATOR	ARBORIST	ARCHAEOLOGIST	ARCHITECT	ARTIST	ASTRONOMER	AUCTIONEER	AUDIOLOGIST	AUTHOR
BAKER	BANKER	BARISTA	BARRISTER	BEAUTICIAN	BOTANIST	BRAND MANAGER	BREWER	BRICKLAYER	BUILDER	BUS DRIVER	BUSINESS EXEC	BUTCHER	CARDIOLOGIST
CARPENTER	CARTOGRAPHER	CARTOONIST	CHEF	CHEMIST	CHILD CARE	CHOREOGRAPHER	CODER	COLOUR TECHNOLOGIST	COMEDIAN	CONCIERGE	COOK	COPYWRITER	COUNSELLOR
COXSAIN	CURATOR	DANCER	DENTIST	DESIGNER	DETECTIVE	DIETICIAN	DIPLOMAT	DJ	DOCTOR	DRAMA TEACHER	DRIVER	ECONOMIST	ELECTRICIAN
ENGINEER	ENTREPRENEUR	ENVIRONMENTALIST	ESTATE AGENT	ESTIMATOR	EVENTS ORGANISER	FARMER	FASHION DESIGNER	FILM DIRECTOR	FILM MAKER	FILM PRODUCER	FINANCIAL ADVISER	FINE ARTIST	FIRE FIGHTER
FLORIST	FOOTBALLER	FORENSIC SCIENTIST	FURNITURE DESIGNER	GAME KEEPER	GAMES DESIGNER	GARDENER	GARMENT TECHNOLOGIST	GEOLOGIST	GLAZIER	GRAPHIC DESIGNER	GYM INSTRUCTOR	HAIR STYLIST	HEAD TEACHER
HELICOPTER PILOT	HOMEOPATH	HORTICULTURIST	HYPNOTHERAPIST	ILLUSTRATOR	INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER	INSURANCE BROKER	INTELLIGENCE AGENT	INTERIOR DESIGNER	INTERPRETER	INVENTOR	IT	JEWELLER	JOINER
JOURNALIST	JUDGE	KITCHEN ASSISTANT	LABORATORY TECHNICIAN	LANDSCAPER	LIBRARIAN	LIFEGUARD	LIGHTING DESIGNER	LOCKSMITH	LOGISTICS	LORRY DRIVER	MAKEUP ARTIST	MARINE BIOLOGIST	MARKETING DIRECTOR
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NURSE	OCEANOGRAPHER	OFFICE MANAGER	OPTOMETRIST	ORTHODONTIST	OSTEOPATH	PAINTER & DECORATOR	PARALEGAL	PARAMEDIC	PERSONAL TRAINER	PEST CONTROL	PET SHOP ASSISTANT	PHARMACIST	PHOTOGRAPHER
PHYSICIST	PHYSIOTHERAPIST	PIANO TUNER	PICTURE FRAMER	PICTURE RESEARCHER	PILOT	PLASTERER	PLAY THERAPIST	PLUMBER	PODIATRIST	POLICE OFFICER	PRISON OFFICER	PRODUCT DESIGNER	PROJECT MANAGER
PROP MAKER	PROSTHETIC TECHNICIAN	PSYCHOLOGIST	PSYCHOTHERAPIST	PUBLIC RELATIONS	QUALITY CONTROL	RADIO PRESENTER	RADIOGRAPHER	RECEPTIONIST	RECRUITMENT	REFLEXOLOGIST	RESEARCHER	RETAIL ASSISTANT	RIDING INSTRUCTOR
ROADIE	ROOFER	RUNNER	SCAFFOLDER	SCIENTIST	SCULPTOR	SET DESIGNER	SINGER	SOCIAL WORKER	SOFTWARE DEVELOPER	SPECIAL EFFECTS	SPEECH THERAPIST	SPORTS COACH	STAGE MANAGER
STATISTICIAN	STUNT PERFORMER	STYLIST	SURGEON	SYSTEMS ANALYST	TEACHER	TEXTILE DESIGNER	TOWN PLANNER	TRAIN DRIVER	TRANSLATOR	TRAVEL AGENT	TV PRESENTER	UPHOLSTERER	UX DESIGNER
VEHICLE DESIGNER	VET	VISUAL MERCHANDISER	WARDEN	WATCH DESIGNER	WEB DESIGNER	WEB ENGINEER	WELDER	WELFARE RIGHTS	WRITER	YOGA TEACHER	YOUTH WORKER	ZOOKEEPER	ZOOLOGIST

THE LAST WORD

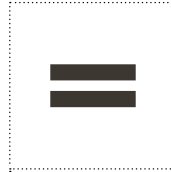
**LOVE WHAT
YOU DO &
WORK
TOGETHER.**



KATE
POWER



KATHY
FORSYTH



AMAZING
DYSLEXICS

TO OUR CREW

**THANK YOU
FOR LOVE,
SUPPORT &
NOURISHMENT!**



ALI



AMY



CHRIS



ELLY & STEPHEN



FIN



GRANNY JUNEY



MOLLY



RAUN



REG & FRED



RICHARD



SALLY



SONNY

by the same authors

The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People

Kate Power & Kathy Iwanczak Forsyth | Foreword by Richard Rogers, Architect



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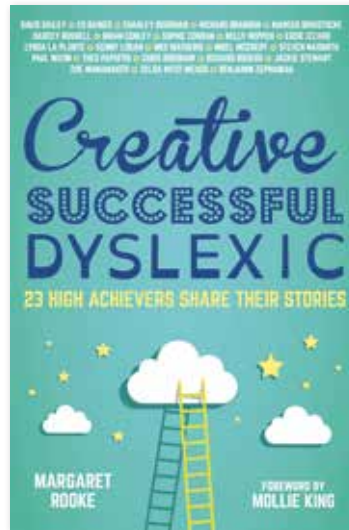
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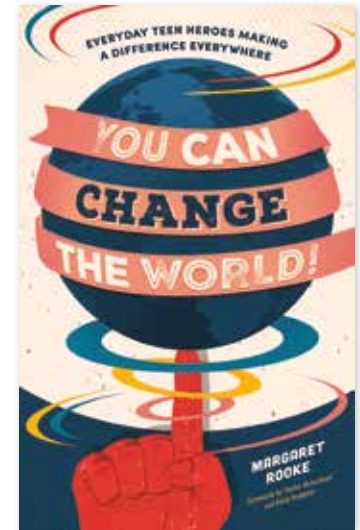
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