

My Journey with Dyslexia

Bill Allen, Founder, Magical I Am Inc.

Early Years

In 1963, at age 7, I was diagnosed with dyslexia. Not much was known about it then. Both the headmaster at Brandan Hall, a learning disability school, and an expert learning disability therapy doctor, and Dr. Ginsberg, lacked confidence in the diagnosis or in how to treat me. My dyslexia correction consisted of a “three-year” treatment with tons of eye exercises as well as rote and drill consisting of phonics and phonemes. When I entered fourth grade, I was supposedly reading at fourth-grade level. I was able to get through high school and college primarily because my mother, who was a history major and an English minor, basically wrote my papers for me. It is a gross understatement to say that both of us experienced a lot of pain and frustration with each other as these papers were written.

College Years

At college, besides my mother’s continuing help, I had my girlfriends write for me. I remember my last college girlfriend being totally shocked at my inability to put a string or two complete sentences together. Despite my continuous struggles, I managed to do reasonably well in college by finding ways around the system (typical dyslexic behavior). Again, I often relied on others to write or edit my papers. I didn't know it at the time, but whether it was elementary school, high school, or college, anxiety was always an issue that led to self-medicating with alcohol and marijuana. I have since learned that marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs induce a loss of brain integration. We dyslexics have enough trouble maintaining brain integration without the recreational hallucinogenic drugs my peers and I toyed with. Because alcohol is not hallucinogenic, it is often the drug of choice for the dyslexic.

Despite all my issues, I managed to graduate from college with a 3.0 average and spent two quarters on the Dean's List at the University of Georgia and Georgia State University.

"I knew on the day I graduated... I could not write a simple business letter."

Adulthood

I knew on the day that I graduated from college that I could not write a simple business letter. I was still petrified to speak in public and at the mere thought of it. Of course, the actual act of public speaking was more than embarrassing. Those were two things I always assumed I would be able to do upon graduating from college. In 1996, at the age of 42, I had a thriving residential real estate business. I was always a good “salesman,” with strong social skills that enabled me to get others to make up for my lack of reading and writing skills. But being good at selling did not prevent me from suffering bouts of depression. After my real estate assistant quit, I entered into my fourth depression, and it was a deep one.

Davis's book led me to miracles and challenges

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6-13-23 BJ

Through several serendipitous events during a two-week period, I was led to the Davis book, "The Gift of Dyslexia," and miraculously, within 72 hours of completing the book, I found one of the two people living in Atlanta – a population of 3.5 million in 1996 -- who had been through the Davis's Dyslexia Correction Program.

"I came back ready to take on the world. Then reality set in."



At the time, I had a wife and two kids, ages two and four. A heated discussion took place between me and my wife regarding me going to California and spending money we did not have so I could take the Davis program. The argument ended with me saying, "I'd like to see my children get married. I have had four, beyond brutal, devastating depressions, and at this rate, if I don't find a solution for what is going on, I am not sure I'll see my children get married."

The week-long Davis dyslexia correction methodology resulted in me learning/knowing the root cause of my mood disorder issue and how to "tame the dragon," the Mind's Eye, and the mastery of abstract words and symbols. I had crossed the Rubicon, saying to myself that no child should have to go through school like me by creating an unhealthy dependency on others for the English language, i.e., reading and writing.

Then Reality Set In

So, I came back charged and ready to take on the world. Then reality set in. I didn't know it at the time, but it would take 27 years and numerous disappointments (so many rejections that I can't begin to count), along with numerous failures, to find a way to get my solution/work out to the world in a format that the dyslexic population could afford.

I spoke with several dyslexia schools in Atlanta but to no avail. Most importantly, my conversation with one of the nation's leading dyslexia learning to read schools, the Schenck School (whose annual tuition in 2023 is \$39,800) ended with the founder saying, "We can get the dyslexic to read; it is just getting those dang words down on paper that is so difficult for the dyslexic."

The reason for this is simple. Writing is so difficult for the dyslexic because when the dyslexic writes, they must think about each and every word they put down on paper. In other words, the dyslexic is constantly thinking in terms of meaning and, because of the very nature of abstract words, which have no three-dimensional meaning, reading and writing with abstract words symbols is often an exercise in futility.



I continued to pursue my vision of helping kids and worked as a Davis facilitator for nine years. This led me to develop and co-author “The Learning to Read Program” with one of my current Magical I Am partners, Marcia Hart. I believed in this learning methodology so strongly that I used my savings to self-fund “The Learning to Read” 13-volume structural graphic pop-up 3-D art books with electronic voice, which debuted in 2007. Those who purchased our program did succeed and hundreds of parents were delighted. Years, and sometimes over a decade later, I

received numerous college graduation invitations from my students from the following schools: The University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Georgia Tech, University of Mississippi, Coast Guard Academy, The Citadel, Louisiana State University, the University of South Carolina, The University of North Carolina and many other college and trade schools.

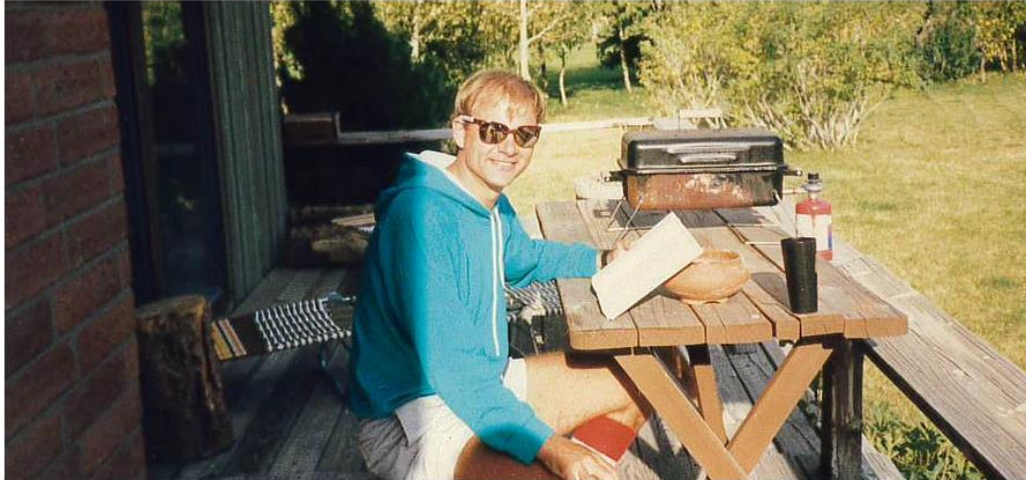
All Roads Led to Developing Sky Village – Trail of Spells

Adversity, when embraced with perseverance and persistence, usually leads to something far greater than one’s initial expectations. I knew I was on to something, but the fact that continually gnawed away at me was the fact that 99% of dyslexic children and their families do not get the treatment they need.

There are several reasons why, but the main reasons are the costs and to a lesser extent the time required. Current dyslexia schools and programs are extremely expensive (the average annual tuition is \$25,000 and are time consuming); therefore, many parents are unable to get the needed help. In addition, our educational system is unequipped to diagnose dyslexia in young children, often labeling them “problem children” or with ADD. Children who fail to get treatment can be left behind by society, unable to find work, unable to “fit in.” The percentage of dyslexics in our juvenile systems and prisons is dramatically higher than in the general

population. There obviously needs to be a solution that will be affordable to the 99% of the families struggling with dyslexia in America. **Sky Village – Trail of Spells** is that solution.

Sky Village – Trail of Spells is the product of years of perseverance and persistence that has led to a product whose three-dimensional creativity and simplicity is exponentially greater than I ever envisioned possible while being affordable to anyone that has access to a smartphone or tablet.



Since 1996, I've dedicated myself to ensuring that your child won't have to go through what I, and millions of other dyslexic and reading challenged children, have gone through – *“An unhealthy dependence on someone else for the English language.”*

My lifelong journey has led to **Magical I Am's production of Sky Village – Trail of Spells** so that your child can thrive, and our society can benefit from the ever creative out-of-the-box thinking of the dyslexic's Mind's Eye and mind.

Learn to Read, so you can Read to Learn.™