

# Dyslexia — Anxiety and Depression

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Since 2006, I have come in contact with thousands of dyslexic parents, hundreds of dyslexic teachers, and quite a few principals. From these conversations, I've concluded that the main emotional issue that is disrupting the dyslexic child's ability to learn is the mood disorder of anxiety.

*Anxiety is the fear of what may or may not happen. ~ Brett Smith*

## **Anxiety**

The mental uneasiness or distress arising from the fear of what may or may not happen is worry, a German word meaning to strangle or choke. And in the case of the dyslexic child, this worrying or anxiety leads to mental and/or emotional strangulation of their mental capacity. The consequences of anxiety are:

- An inability to concentrate as the mind seems to become divided
- Significantly reduced productivity
- Relationships with friends and family can be dramatically affected
- An inability to make decisions due to dismay
- Energy is zapped and time is wasted
- Confidence is paralyzed even while attempting to do the simplest tasks
- Enjoyment of life is fleeting at best

For me personally, when I look back at my elementary, high school, and college years, I see them fraught with too many anxiety episodes to begin to count. Fortunately, these episodes were not long in duration. During these years, I knew I had emotional academic performance issues that could very quickly inhibit my ability to think straight. It wasn't until my college sophomore year that I learned the term for them was anxiety or really an anxiety attack.

## **Depression**

If anxiety is not checked, it can or will lead to depression. During these formative years, I had a pretty good diet, but what really saved me from long episodes of anxiety was sports. No matter how uncomfortable academia was for me, I could

always count on 2 to 4 hours of pushing myself physically in sports. I was good at it and looked forward to it. Whether it was organized sport or just a pick-up game with my buddies, I played to have fun and I played to win. Perhaps more importantly, the camaraderie with these friends meant the most to me back then, as they still do today. Because of this "working it out," I slept well during these years. I can't begin to stress how important sleep is for the recovery of the mind, body, and spirit.

The month I graduated from college, an emotional bomb exploded. I had a falling out with the person with whom I had built an unhealthy dependency on for the English language. The day I graduated from college, I knew that I couldn't write a business letter, but I had no idea of the emotional dependency I had created. My mother nor I had any idea of the devastating mood disorder effects it would have on my psyche. Creating an unhealthy dependency on someone else for the English language, more times than not, will lead to an emotional Pandora's box. For the first time ever, anxiety did not disappear in an hour or two. Sleep was disturbed and incomplete. Days of anxiety lead to weeks and then after 4-5 weeks, I dropped into my first depression that was beyond emotionally brutal.

**Beware:** The role of the parent is to help their child correct the reading and writing disability associated with their child's dyslexia. Once this is accomplished, the parent can guide (parent) the child but can no longer help the child by doing the work for him or her. If you do, the mood disorder consequences could become unbearable for your child as well as for you!

In today's ever-expanding digital world, there are so many vehicles that can be used to pursue learning. But the plethora of new products using old methodologies are not the solution for the dyslexic's learning issues.

These tools act as another subject or book that they must learn, hopefully to learn to read and write and do well in school. Even to this day, as a corrected dyslexic of over 25 years, I push back on any new tool in which I must read to learn. So, as a parent, you have to decide which product/methodology your child is going to learn from and stick with it. If after 6-9 months you see no marked improvement, then try something else.

Fortunately, for you and your dyslexic child, Sky Village - Trail of Spells can be played on a parallel track with any phonics or phonemic awareness learning methodology your school uses. Simply put, Sky Village - Trail of Spells is edutainment and these

other learning tools require the dreaded age-old rote and drill technique(s), which often make learning to read and write difficult for the dyslexic child.

### **Medication**

Sleep for your child and you are a necessity. I recommend you pursue an alternative medical approach first if you are going to work on remedying your sleep behavior. If that does not work, then pursue pharmaceuticals. What I have told my clients over the past two decades is that if you find something that improves sleep and focus, then use it. Hopefully, once your child has corrected the reading and writing disability associated with their dyslexia, the medication can be left on the shelf. I firmly believe that if you correct the reading and writing issues before fourth or fifth grade, the medication can be left behind. That said, I have only my gut and my intuition to rely on here.

### **Worry**

Worry does not benefit either you or your child. Mark Twain said it best, "I've lived through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened." It is important to know that anxiety does not come from thinking about the future, it comes from wanting to control the future. Be concerned about your child's future and realize that worry does not take away tomorrow's troubles. Worry takes away from today's peace. So, take it step-by-step. Use the 3-D Learning tools on the Magical I Am website and daily begin correcting the reading and writing disability associated with your child's dyslexia. I am quite confident that one day in the not-too-distant future, your child, as well as you, will view dyslexia as a treasured gift. A gift not to be traded- A lifelong friend!

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