

PRO The notion Dyslexia's my superpower. that dyslexia imparts cognitive strengths is a pillar for a movement celebrating dyslexia's advantages and asserting that the brains of people with dyslexia are different, not defective.

This premise can be a lifeline of hope for parents and students drowning in the academic challenges that often overwhelm learners with dyslexia. Hope—the promise of reaching a distant shore—can make a world of difference.

The parade of "celebrity dyslexics" marching through most stories about dyslexia in the popular press helps impart that hope and highlight dyslexia's hypothesized upsides.

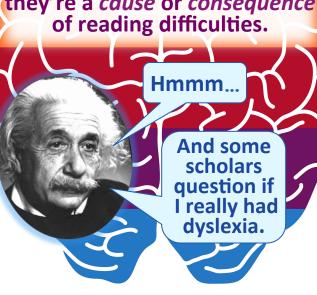
Not everyone buys the "dyslexia-talent hypothesis." Some argue it's a Pollyanna-ish myth that can be damaging when expectations of having certain abilities aren't met.

Others question if all or even most people with dyslexia have such talents and point out that for every celebrity with dyslexia, countless people struggle with its harsh consequences.

Some assert that early identification and intervention and appropriate accommodations and assistive technology must be THE focus. Some worry that stressing difference vs. disability threatens enacted rights and service eligibility.

Still others point out that empirical/scientific evidence supporting a talent-dyslexia hypothesis, while intriguing, remains thin. (So far!)

Some empirical studies do show certain visualspatial strengths/processing differences, but it's unclear how much real-world advantage they confer or if they're a cause or consequence of reading difficulties.



Which Pros/Cons Resonate Most For You?

PRO 8. Yes!

Positive thinking can impart the will to keep striving & thus improve chances for success

PRO **1.** Yes! The disability paradigm

is incomplete; there are myriad examples

dyslexia

7. No! For some, upside expectations can prove disappointing

CON

(more failure!); also for every celebrity success story, thousands struggle

of talent & CON

PRO 6. Yes! High profile suc-

cess stories offer lifelines of hope & evidence of a dyslexia-talent relationship



CON 3. No!

2. No!

Empirical evidence is

meager; this is just an

(phenomenon of per-

ceiving false relation-

ships); & any talents

develop as defaults

since reading-related paths are blocked

illusory correlation

And because illiteracy & academic failure are so harmful, teaching reading & protecting rights/ services must be THE priorities

CON 5. No!

And print literacy will remain a gateway for full participation in society PRO 4. Yes!

Anyway, technology is making print literacy less vital, maybe moot

1. Dr. Geschwind speculated that the pattern of neural development in dyslexia may reflect a mechanism advantageous to the population as a whole, since it leads to diversity and patterns of talent.

2. But we lack the body of empirical research and evidence needed to categorically assert there is a dyslexia advantage.

3. On the other hand, as Dr. Sagan said, "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

6. Finally, the environment often determines if a learning difference is a disability

> or talent. 5. There are many myths about dyslexia, so it's important to get our facts straight—what we



4. So, we don't know

for sure if there's a benefit to dyslexia. We do know that every child has strengths & affinities that should be nurtured. For those with dyslexia, this may be vital!



do and don't know ... so far!



International Dyslexia Association (DyslexialDA.org) **Get the Facts • Find Solutions • Take Action**

