

# words worth

Jaynie Ralph believed that help with dyslexia was only available for students – until an intensive one-on-one course made her realise she needn't stay lost for words

At the back of my mind I always knew that I was dyslexic, even if I couldn't actually spell the word itself. All the clues were there: I was poor at English and maths at school; large dictionaries scared me; hand-writing letters traumatised me; and the thought of reading out loud gave me sleepless nights. Although I went on to gain a degree, I'd written myself off as a creative type who, in the words of my teachers, "could do better". I subconsciously accepted the fact it would be something I'd have to cover up for the rest of my life.

These days, students with dyslexia have support on offer, but at the age of 33, I was amazed to discover there was still help available for me. My salvation came in the form of Lynne Smith, a dyslexia consultant and Davis Dyslexia Correction facilitator.

The first thing I learned is I am in good company. Having dyslexia means I am rubbing shoulders with the likes of Steven Spielberg, Pablo Picasso and John Lennon. Dyslexia needn't be seen as an affliction, but rather a gift that came as part of a unique way of seeing the world. Next, I participated in a simple exercise in which I had to take control of my mind's eye for the first time. Becoming aware of it and moving it for the first time in my life made me feel like I had just got off a roller-coaster, leaving me feeling queasy and light-headed. Nevertheless, something profound awoke inside me and I spent the rest of that evening in a slightly peculiar state. I felt sure taking the course was going to be a significant turning point and I couldn't wait to see what was coming next.

Constructing the alphabet out of clay wasn't exactly what I was expecting, but as Lynne explained, dyslexic minds thrive on creative processes, especially using three dimensions. Once the letters were made, I held each one in turn and looked at them with my mind's eye held in check. I was astounded to realise there were some letters I really hadn't seen before, and was still struggling to.

It's no wonder I had battled with reading and spelling all my life.

The letters I had most difficulty with were the ones to which I'd attached negative emotions. Some were letters that began the names of major relationships in my life, while others seemed to have no clear explanation at all. Using my imaginary scissors, and without the need for discussion or counselling, I started to snip and cut the attachments from the letters. Once the troubled letters were cleared I then had a mental image of what each letter actually looked like and was able to recite the alphabet back to front without relying on the rhythm I had learned at primary school. It was a very draining exercise, but I finished feeling energetic and emotionally lighter.

Over the next three days, Lynne and I explored basic grammar, reading newspapers, books, magazines, dictionaries, writing techniques and playing games encouraging interaction between the right and left side of my brain. We made models out of clay for words that had no mental images – like 'and', 'me' and 'consequence'. Lynne was the epitome of patience, support and understanding throughout.

After the full five days of the course my spelling and grammar had notably improved and I found I had developed the ability to focus and calm my mind whenever I wanted. I was even over-excited about the prospect of reading the mind, body and spirit books that have weighed my bookshelf down for years. Most importantly, rather than be ashamed of it, I was actually quite proud of being dyslexic.



For more information contact  
Lynne Smith, Dyslexia Consultant and  
Davis Dyslexia Correction Facilitator.  
Phone or fax 01273 723920  
email [lynne@dyslexia-sussex.com](mailto:lynne@dyslexia-sussex.com)  
or visit [dyslexia-sussex.com](http://dyslexia-sussex.com)