



PERSPECTIVES

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RESILIENCE AND RESOURCEFULNESS: LIFE WITH DYSLEXIA

Creativity

Determination

Strengths

Opportunities

Talent

Success

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Flourishing with Dyslexia

by Colin Poole, Artist



I'm Colin, a card-carrying dyslexic. Dyslexia is one of the greatest gifts I have been fortunate enough to be blessed with. Of course

it is an inseparable part of my being and hard to know what parts of who I am can be attributed to the big "D." I would not trade my gift for those few perks non-dyslexics seem to have. The idea of being a non-dyslexic is too scary to contemplate.

I hear people say things like, "I remember twenty years ago. I confused my left and right and got lost on the freeway...I must be dyslexic." It seems cute and in vogue to an outsider, but there is often a heavy price for this gift. Yeah, of course there is a downside. There are things that are so challenging that they are not worth the effort.

My spelling is creatively haphazard, generally phonetic, and occasionally readable.

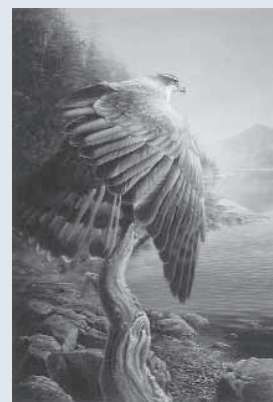
Dyslexia manifests itself differently in each person. I can't remember names. Don't bother introducing yourself; the likelihood of me remembering is remote. Of course people hear this and think that I will remember their name because they're special. Yes, everyone is special, but I am still unlikely to remember. Even people who are close to me say things like "you should try harder." I am sure these same people look at a paraplegic and say "come on, get out of that wheelchair...all you have to do is try harder." I have tried throughout my life. Years ago I moved to a new town and thought I could get a handle on this name thing. I

focused, I concentrated, and I repeated the name and did word association. The results? Well, here is an example: I met a guy named Ken; I repeated his name when he introduced himself. He was dating a girl who looked like Barbie, so every time I saw him I thought "Barbie and Ken." A week later I was ready to try out my new prowess with names, so when I saw him I said, "Hey Ken, how's it going?" He replied, "Fine, but my name is David." Amusing sometimes, but usually frustrating. Books I have just

read, restaurants that I have been to dozens of times, relatives I have grown up with, girlfriends that are always less than charmed when I blank on their names (Colleen's name would have seemed like a no-brainer—but the similarity to my own had to be pointed out to me). I have gotten to the point that I usually say, "Sorry, I don't do names."

My spelling is creatively haphazard, generally phonetic, and occasionally readable. I have even managed to misspell my name on an SAT. When I read

I could begin with influences—how the sculptor Una Hanbury, my grandmother, mentor, and hero—seeded lessons in my childhood that continue to blossom. Or I could write of the old icon painter who invited me to create in his studio and gave me his love for tradition, mythology, and the Greek isles. But I'd rather you see it in the strengths of my landscapes and the hues of my forms.

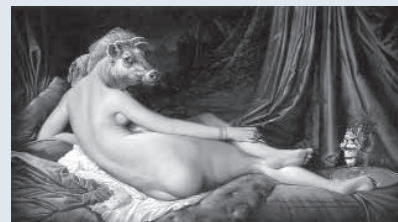


I could write of the intensity of my days—how I cherish nearly every moment, sketching the mood and scene on tattered scraps of paper, café napkins, or in the back of my mind to be later manifested in oil or bronze.

I could describe my craving to wander and my desire to play. But hopefully you feel this in the twists of my Tuscan dirt roads, or in the shadows of the bordering cypress trees.



I would love to create a map for you—directions to show the routes of my mind—how thoughts move from female form to Mediterranean landscape to a beautifully pocked and scarred quince. But I am no cartographer and would much rather paint than play with a compass.



I could tell you of my travels—trips that have little to do with pretention and everything to do with the search. I could write of how I have missed planes and rescheduled itineraries so that I might stay in a land just a bit longer, knowing that the scene I seek is too near for me to depart. And then words would tumble over themselves in my excitement to tell you what I dreamed and found and painted. But in truth I wish you to experience my work unencumbered by my words.

Visit www.ColinPoole.com to see more work by Colin Poole.

the Lewis and Clark journals, the author mentions that standardized spelling was not commonplace and that one word was spelled more than 20 different ways. Personally, I am far more versatile and spell most words in an infinite number of ways. The University of Nebraska's website refers to the "charming peculiarities" of Lewis and Clark's spelling and in another place describes the misspellings as "delightful and ingenious." My teachers were not so glowingly complimentary about my spelling. My word usage is often contorted to work around words that spell-check can't catch (area/aria; message/massage). When I handwrite notes, I use my personal scribble, which is designed to disguise spelling indecisions. A few other things that I have challenges with: Dates—hopeless. Birthdays—ditto. I still don't know my parents' birthdays. Holidays—same. I have no idea if Memorial Day is at the beginning of the summer or at the end of it and no clue what day or month. Phone numbers—ick. My best friend has had

the same number for over 20 years, and I could not even tell you the area code. Toss in a little sprinkle of ADD and the frustrations multiply.

So, why wouldn't I trade all this crap in for what is behind door number 2? This gift also has serious perks. How I create, think, process information, and view the world around me are all tied in.

***When I was in school
I wondered why I didn't
understand; now
I wonder why "they"
don't understand.***

Thanks to ADD, multitasking comes naturally. I listen to books on tape while I work (over 3,500 so far) and can comfortably toss in other activities

without even realizing it. Sifting and condensing information is part of understanding it, so I can explain the theory of relativity in a sentence or express the essentials of form and imagery. My focus, both consciously and unconsciously on the visual and tactile world, has become another priceless ingredient in my artwork. I think effectively in 3D which comes in handy when I am reconfiguring a Corvette suspension system or troubleshooting a glass manufacturing production line. This is also an invaluable tool in the creation of my sculptures, some of which are fully formed in my mind before they become reality. The 3D viewpoint also plays a strong roll in my paintings.

When I was in school I wondered why I didn't understand; now I wonder why "they" don't understand. My life and my viewpoint are distinct, and I love it this way. Dyslexics are often the inventors, the artists, and the creators. We are the different people who make a difference.



Some of my earliest memories were of sculpting in my grandmother's studio. The renowned sculptor Una Hanbury was not only my grandmother but my also my mentor, hero and the one who introduced me to the world of art. Ever since those childhood days my work has been infused with a certain amount of serious play and I continue to create in her Santa Fe atelier. I still think of sculpture as my first love.

When sculpting, I am simultaneously building and developing the form while carving and discovering the shapes within. Often the creation of sculpture is something my hands do innately. Throughout my lifetime I have focused both consciously and unconsciously on the visual and tactile world that surrounds me.

There is a strong link between my work and my lifelong passion for Greek sculptures. The ancient Greek marbles are often worn by the passage of time into the simplest of forms. I am searching for the essence of the figure and how this nucleus can evoke the exuberance of dance and motion or the silence of tranquility. Accentuating the quintessential characteristics of the figure is an exploration into the spirit, strength, and vitality of the body.

