

Dyslexia WA

harness the gift

NEWSLETTER

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Leonardo da Vinci - should he be the pin up guy for right brained people everywhere?

"Right-brained" is a term often applied to that sector of the population who tend to think visually, are 3D thinkers or who have more of a movie running in their heads rather than sentences or sequences of words.

They are the creative people, the 10 to 15% of the community who become artists, actors, builders, designers, architects, gifted sportspeople, engineers, people readers or those who have that intellectual edge.

Not all of them are dyslexic, but all dyslexic people belong in this group.

Many of Leonardo's sketches, designs and ideas have been brought to life and exhibitions of his machines have been shown world wide (including Western Australia).

Models of Leonardo's designs are on permanent display at Clos Luce. (The Close Luce became the summerhouse of the kings of France in 1490, and where Leonardo passed away in 1519).

The four visitor rooms in the Close Luce basement provide insight into the comprehensive knowledge of Leonardo da Vinci the engineer. 3D animations and 40 models show the diverse range of



A portrait of Leonardo da Vinci, circa 1600. The artist died in 1519.

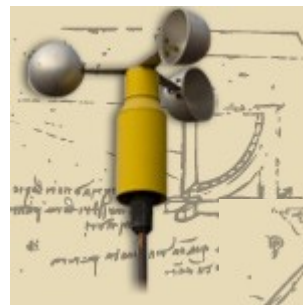
**Not all visual people
are dyslexic,
but all dyslexic people
belong to this
creative group.**

Leonardo da Vinci's intuitive grasp of engineering: aeroplane, automobile, helicopter, tank, and more.

Could people with dyslexia, and similar conditions, quite rightly claim Leonardo as their hero, role model, celebrity, No 1

ticket holder?

To be a member of this special group of people surely is something of which visual thinkers can be proud.



Anemometer

Self-propelled
cart



parachute



helicopter

Dyslexia: not a disability, but a visual-spatial thinking style which succeeds with a visual-spatial teaching style.

Bring back some of those old favourite rules... perhaps

Merriam-Webster, dictionary publisher, once facetiously tried to account for all exceptions with the following:

I before e, except after c;

Or when sounded as 'a' as in 'neighbour' and 'weigh'.

Unless the 'c' is part of a 'sh' sound as in glacier;
Or it appears in comparatives and superlatives like 'fancier';
and also except when the vowels are sounded as 'e' as in seize or 'i' as in height;
Or also in 'ing' inflections ending in '-e' as in 'cueing'.

Or in compound words as in 'albeit';
Or occasionally in technical words with strong etymological links to their parent languages as in 'cuneiform'.
Or in other numerous and random exceptions such as 'science' 'forfeit' and 'weird'.

Weird!



Leonardo da Vinci - did he have ADHD?

ADHD, as well as several 'conditions' often portrayed as 'disabilities' (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and others) are more accurately described as different ways of thinking, not disabilities.

Embracing and celebrating this minority portion of our community is a first step towards understanding and providing opportunities for these people to succeed and use their significant talents to enable their creativity to flourish.

The following is part of an article from Science Daily ... See www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190523202604.htm.

Date: May 23, 2019

Source: King's College, London

Leonardo da Vinci produced some of the world's most iconic art, but historical accounts show that he struggled to complete his works. 500 years after his death, King's College London researcher Professor Marco Catani suggests the best explanation for Leonardo's inability to finish projects is that the great artist may have had Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

In an article in the journal *Brain*, Professor Catani lays out the evidence supporting his hypothesis, drawing on historical accounts of Leonardo's work practices and behaviour. As well as explaining his chronic procrastination, ADHD could have been a factor in Leonardo's extraordinary creativity and achievements across the arts and sciences.

Professor Catani, from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's, says: 'While impossible to make a post-mortem diagnosis for someone who lived 500 years ago, I am confident that ADHD is the most convincing and scientifically plausible hypothesis to explain



Statue of Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo's difficulty in finishing his works. Historical records show Leonardo spent excessive time planning projects but lacked perseverance. ADHD could explain aspects of Leonardo's temperament and his strange mercurial genius.'

Like many of those suffering with ADHD, he slept very little and worked continuously night and day by alternating rapid cycles of short naps and time awake.

ADHD is a behavioural disorder characterised by continuous procrastination, the inability to complete tasks, mind-wandering and a restlessness of the body and mind. While most commonly recognised in childhood, ADHD is increasingly being diagnosed among adults including university students and people with successful careers.

Leonardo's difficulties with sticking to tasks were pervasive from childhood. Accounts from biographers and contemporaries show Leonardo was constantly on the go, often jumping from task to task. Like many of those suffering with ADHD, he slept very little and worked continuously night and day by alternating rapid

cycles of short naps and time awake.

Alongside reports of erratic behaviour and incomplete projects from fellow artists and patrons, including Pope Leone X, there is indirect evidence to suggest that Leonardo's brain was organised differently compared to average. He was left-handed and likely to be both dyslexic and have a dominance for language in the right-hand side of his brain, all of which are common among people with ADHD.

Perhaps the most distinctive and yet disruptive side of Leonardo's mind was his voracious curiosity, which both propelled his creativity and also distracted him. Professor Catani suggests ADHD can have positive effects, for example mind-wandering can fuel creativity and originality. However, while beneficial in the initial stages of the creative process, the same traits can be a hindrance when interest shifts to something else.

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Professor Catani, who specialises in treating neurodevelopmental conditions like Autism and ADHD, says: 'There is a prevailing misconception that ADHD is typical of misbehaving children with low intelligence, destined for a troubled life. On the contrary, most of the adults I see in my clinic report having been bright, intuitive children but develop symptoms of anxiety and depression later in life for having failed to achieve their potential.'

For more... Follow the link at the beginning of this article.



Vincent Fantauzzo... Archibald people's choice winner 2008, 2014; GQ Artist of the Year 2014, husband of Asher Keddie; dyslexic.

MELBOURNE artist, Vincent Fantauzzo, likes to chat about growing up with dyslexia and painting people he loves.

Winning the Archibald People's choice, 2008...
Portrait subject Heath Ledger said it would 'change their lives...' Did it?

"On so many levels. We spoke about how great it is to be able to support ourselves by doing what we love. What he said really hit home when he was gone; I realised it's so easy to take that kind of thing for granted. It brought me close to Heath's family and friends."

Since meeting Asher...

"I'm a lot more organised! We're both passionate about life and get to share love and creativity. We understand each other."

On a trip to Alice Springs...

"I get goosebumps thinking about it. My friend introduced me to local indigenous artists and I

was overwhelmed by the way they make art; they're very true to their own stories. I learned a lot."

About his two sons...

I love to see their little faces first thing in the morning when they look at each other. Luca tries to make him laugh and Valentino just giggles and it's beautiful. So cute!

On having dyslexia...

"It helped me develop in other ways, like drawing and communication. These days, parents and teachers see the upside of creativity and diverse thinking; dyslexia doesn't have the same stigma. For me, speaking about it is important so others know it's not going to hold them back – and it might actually be a blessing."



Vincent Fantauzzo and Asher Keddie.
Picture: Christian GillesSource:News Corp
Australia

