

For me, dyslexia was nearly as bad as the feelings of anxiety, shame, and low self-esteem that it caused. For me, 'learned dependency' was the real enemy, the self-narrative that "I can't do this" can destroy children's learning potential for the rest of their lives. That was ALMOST me. I've spent the last 30 years unlearning the lesson that dyslexia taught me, that society has no use for me. How many other people were taught that lesson by ignorant teachers and bullying classmates? How many of them are in prison or on welfare, or simply divorcing themselves from the country around them? All we need is a little awareness and education, teaching the teachers to teach these kids that their curse is actually a blessing. My mother did it for me, she made sure I was tested, that I was tutored and she worked with my teachers to develop coping skills that I still use to this day. I learned by audiobooks and untimed tests. I got as much one on one instruction as I could. I've learned that the blessing of my dyslexia is just that because it forced me to be a critical thinker and truly understand what I was learning instead of just memorizing and regurgitating it for a standardized test. Dyslexia forced me to think outside the

conventional cube and maybe that manner of thinking is why I've been invited to speak at the US Naval War College, at West Point, at various military and homeland security exercises and at a few strategic studies groups that I probably shouldn't be talking about here. And I'm just the tip of the iceberg. How many class clowns or troublemakers or dropouts could actually be the innovators of tomorrow if parents and teachers understood that dyslexia is both scientifically proven AND scientifically treatable? A little awareness and flexible teaching methods could unlock unlimited potential in these kids who now think they're losers. If we already have mandatory racial sensitivity training for our police, why not have mandatory dyslexia recognition training for our teachers? It's so simple, so easy, and when you look at all the other government programs designed to help citizens help themselves, it's probably the least expensive.

Max Brooks