

BOOK REVIEW

See It. Say It. Do It. The Parent & Teacher's Action Guide to Creating Successful Students & Confident Kids By Dr. Lynn F. Hellerstein

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Reviewed by:
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The intent of this book is clearly stated in its title. The model and accompanying methods to attain the intent are primarily a product of the author's experience as an extremely successful behavioral optometric practitioner and her role as a successful parent and spouse. But more telling is the path Dr. Hellerstein took that became the impetus to write this book.

Several years ago she drove me from Denver to Estes Park in Colorado where I was co-presenting a regional clinical seminar. During that ride she confided that she had recently undergone a medical crisis that had a profound effect on her physical and emotional stability. At that time I perceived that she was at a turning point in her life. As Dr. Hellerstein states in the first pages of the book, she then went through a series of traditional and non-traditional medical and healing regimens. These led to a re-evaluation of her values and priorities, and an eventual rebuilding of her life. At some point there was an epiphany that brought her to apply the visualization (*see it*) declaration (*say it*) and implementation (*do it*) model that she had developed in her vision therapy practice to herself. The results have been a new outlook on life and the inspiration to write this book.

The book is divided into four parts, each with several chapters. Part one first covers a general overview of visualization. Dr. Hellerstein makes the important point that an individual's ability to visualize is a function of his learning style. Thus, the

visual-spatial learner is most apt to easily visualize, while the auditory-sequential and tactile types will find it more difficult, but not impossible. The author provides an example of a pre-visualization relaxation technique and an example of a visualization technique. A second chapter in this first part provides a clear and easily readable discussion of the visual process and its development. She stresses the importance of an extensive vision evaluation by an optometrist with interest and expertise in its functional, behavioral and developmental aspects. Dr. Hellerstein offers the parent or teacher a vision checklist that serves as a red flag indicating a need for such an evaluation. The point is also made that an intact and optimally functioning vision system is a prerequisite for visualization to occur.

The second part is composed of four chapters, each discussing one element of the model. The chapter on *See It* (visualization) goes into more detail and examples of the pre-visualization relaxation and actual visualization techniques. In this regard Dr. Hellerstein stresses the importance of body awareness particularly during this phase of the model. The chapter on *Say It* (declaration) shows the logical sequence of vocalizing the goal that was determined by the visualization. The *Do It* (take action) is highlighted by a discussion of an optometric intern, Joni, who was doing a clinical rotation in the author's office. Joni was a perfectionist, and consequently had difficulty in completing her vision evaluations of patients. Dr. Hellerstein discussed the problem with the intern and brought her through an abbreviated version of the model. Joni first visualized a place where she felt confident and safe. This brought about a feeling of relaxation, and Joni was able to declare her sense of greater confidence. The author includes a letter written to her by the intern at a later time in which she reports the ability to apply (*Do It*) her newly found confidence and self

esteem, not only as an optometrist, but in other areas of her life. The final chapter in part two focuses on an element of the model that isn't stated in the title of the book, the *Ta-Dah*. This represents the culmination of the process. It is essentially a transformation of the individual who has utilized Dr. Hellerstein's process successfully, and now is capable of applying it to other life's challenges. So, it is not an endpoint, but rather a beginning where the individual has a new or invigorated sense of responsibility for her actions and accomplishments.

Part three is entitled "School Readiness & Skills". It contains nine chapters, the first of which discusses the negative effect of video games on school performance. Dr. Hellerstein cites the relative isolation and lack of gross motor movements as primary causes. The remaining chapters presuppose that her process has been applied and then provide a rationale and activities for: learning to maximize abilities in: sequencing, visual information processing, reading, spelling, creative writing, math, homework and tests, sports and music.

The final part of the book is entitled *Personal Growth*. It can be viewed as an extension of the *Ta-Dah* (transformation). The focus is on building self-confidence. As in all the other sections, a number of techniques are included in tabular form to attain the particular goal. Throughout the book there are boxed in areas that contain Dr. Hellerstein's insights. These summarize and go beyond what was in that chapter. An additional chapter in part four contains her final insight. She then summarizes her thoughts, and shows how she applied the model in visualizing, declaring and writing transformed her words into the book.

In addition to the four major parts, there is a section with: an appendix that discusses vision therapy; a resource center that

Continued on page 18

BOOK REVIEW: See It. Say It. Do It. continued

names organizations to which the parent or teacher can consult; suggested readings and finally a glossary of vision terms.

This soft-covered book is well organized and the graphics are attractively and professionally done. It is an easy read and brings the reader along in a logical and sequential manner in understanding and applying Dr. Hellerstein's model. The target audience is parents and teachers; nevertheless, other professionals can use all or parts of the model in enhancing the care of their patients or clients. It is an obvious tool for those optometrists who provide vision therapy. However, the model has optometric potential beyond vision therapy. For example, consider the patient who is unable to keep his eyes open during testing of IOP. Instructing him to relax, visualize having the test done, then declaring that he can keep them open, and finally doing it, may transform him into compliancy.

See it. Say It. Do It. is available from OEP for \$25. For ordering information, call 949-250-8070.