



**SEE IT.**

**SAY IT.**



**DO IT!**

**The Parent's & Teacher's  
Action Guide to Creating  
Successful Students  
&  
Confident Kids**



**DR. LYNN F. HELLERSTEIN**

## **Praise for *See It. Say It. Do It!***

*Dr. Hellerstein's considerable experience in using visualization to enhance the visual process as an optometric practitioner is the basis of this book. She provides her model of visualization and the means to implement it to foster success in school, athletics and other real life situations. Her target audience is parents and teachers. However, the contents of this book is of significant value to other professionals who seek to improve the quality of life of their patients. These include optometrists, psychologists, physical and occupational therapists.*

—Irwin B. Suchoff, O.D., D.O.S., FAAO, FCOVD  
A Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus  
State University of New York, State College of Optometry

*Dr. Hellerstein has provided invaluable information regarding the benefits of visualization whether you are in the field of education, an aspiring athlete, or a concerned parent. As a college professor working in teacher education, I look forward to using this book with pre-service teachers in order to equip them with the background knowledge and important practical application of using visualization techniques in helping every child move toward academic success. As a parent, I will use these strategies with my boys as they face rigorous academic and athletic challenges daily."*

—Vicki Nilles, Ph.D. Candidate  
Assistant professor of teacher education at Metropolitan State College,  
Educational Consultant, Parent

*If your child struggles with self-esteem and confidence, you'll love See It. Say It. Do It! Dr. Lynn Hellerstein has created a practical and down to earth guide for helping your children tap their inner emotional and intellectual resources. When kids feel good about themselves they naturally perform better. This book will take you step-by-step through the process of helping your children transform negative thoughts, images and feelings into positive affirming ones that result in successful behavior and feelings of greater confidence. Dr. Hellerstein shows you how to incorporate these strategies naturally into everyday activities. See It. Say It. Do It!—an easy-to-read book overflowing with powerful life tools!*

—Deborah Sandella Ph.D., R.N.  
Psychotherapist, *Releasing the Inner Magician*

*Having worked with amateur and professional athletes alike, this book is a must read for all individuals involved in meaningful movement. The information, techniques and activities in this book benefit our children on every level of life's learning journey.*

—Sue Lowe, O.D., FCOVD  
Past Chair of the American Optometric Association Sports Vision Section

*As a family, we feel Dr. Hellerstein saved my daughter and gave her a future of endless possibilities. When Alexi hit a wall in third grade (academically her work plummeted, emotionally she was falling apart and her self-confidence was non-existent) I was told I had too high of expectations and she was "average at best." I knew in my gut this was far from the truth and I pursued help from outside resources. Thankfully, I was referred to your office. After 4 months of vision therapy and visualization strategies, she thrived academically (well above her peers), read like a fiend and her self-confidence blossomed. Today she is in middle school, thriving in the gifted program in both language arts and math. We could not have done it without you. We are thrilled with our experiences. They have truly been life changing for our girls. Thank you, thank you, thank you!*

—Jennifer Wenger, Parent

*Hooray! Dr. Lynn Hellerstein has created an exciting, fun and positive model for assuring students' success from the inside out. Since the first time I went on an amazing hot air balloon ride with her in my mind's eye over 20 years ago, I have been impressed with her understanding of visualization. Capitalizing upon over two decades of clinical experience, Dr. Hellerstein really understands how teachers and parents can help their kids develop the important visualization skills necessary to read with comprehension, write coherently, play sports proficiently, and behave with confidence. Her See It, Say It, Do It! Model should be an inherent part of education from pre-school through the high school years, in public, private, parochial and home-school settings.*

—Patricia S. Lemer, M.Ed., NCC  
Executive Director, Developmental Delay Resources (DDR)  
*EnVISIONing a Bright Future*

*American author, Alfred A. Montapert, noted that, "to accomplish great things, we must first dream, then visualize, then plan.believe.act!" Or as Dr. Lynn Hellerstein states in her new exciting book on visualization, See It. Say It. Do It! She covers the topic of how to use visualization to improve the student's response to the world as it challenges, stresses, and pushes them to act. Teachers, clinicians, parents and all who interact with children will find this book useful in helping a child achieve their goals. Visualize this book being in your hands today. Now act on that visualization. You'll be glad you did!*

—Dominick M. Maino, O.D., M.Ed., FAAO, FCOVD-A  
Professor of Pediatrics/Binocular Vision, Illinois College of Optometry

*This is a book that all teachers and parents would benefit from reading. Teachers need to know that often poor readers aren't generating visual images in their minds from the text. When this skill doesn't come naturally—it has to be taught! Standard reading programs don't always address visualization techniques. Children need to see pictures in their head in order to re-tell a story or write a story. This book will be a most valuable addition to educational material.*

—Shirley Osorno, M.Ed.  
Retired teacher and school administrator

*If you're a parent, share this book with your friends. If you're a professional, use it as a blueprint to expand your views about vision. I began the book wondering if it was ahead of its time, and finished it with the realization that its transformative power is timeless.*

—Leonard J. Press, O.D., FCOVD, FAAO  
Optometric Director, The Vision & Learning Center, NJ

*Dr. Hellerstein is a world-class optometrist and vision therapist with pioneering expertise. She has written See It. Say It. Do It!, whose format is easy to read, access, and understand. As a Physician's Assistant with 30 years of experience, I hear concerns from many parents about their children's school performance. I strongly recommend this book to parents, educators and therapists whose children are challenged by learning at school and who want a guide to using visualization for success and confidence in everyday situations.*

—Daniel T. Kamlet, PA  
Partners in Pediatrics, Denver, CO

*This method has "kid magic." Dr. Hellerstein delineates the child's mystifying process of creating visual images, transferring the elements to paper, and putting out his unique words to the awaiting world. This child has then left his mark. The pride and the satisfaction reveal the essence of the child's spirit while the finished product shows a flash of his soul. The sequential steps of the See It. Say It. Do It! establish a memory for success. Every educator and parent must reference this book for the success of our youngsters.*

—Patricia Atwell  
Tutor/Academic Coach/Educator

*Through the years, as a parent, teacher and vision therapist, I have witnessed how visualization greatly impacts children's learning, as well as impacting my own personal confidence. If more parents and teachers utilize the tools in Dr. Hellerstein's book, See It. Say It. Do It!, they will find visualization as useful as I do.*

—Stacie Ryman M.A., COVT  
Retired teacher

*Reading problems are frequently tied to vision problems; the eyes must be able to focus correctly at reading distance. Dr. Hellerstein has treated children with vision problems for years and teaching them wonderful visualization techniques. She shares these important learning tools with us in this wonderful book! Parents and teachers will be thrilled with her insight into learning. I know I will be referring to her book often in my tutoring practice!*

—Claudia Earley: M.A. in Spec. Ed.  
Private Reading Tutor

*This is a valuable resource in bridging the school-home gap. It reinforces for educators the importance of visualization to all students and gives parents step by step examples of how to encourage and implement visualization practice.*

—Laura Hamilton  
Meadow View Elementary, Enrichment Teacher

*I believe it to be a very useful resource for parents and teachers and hope to use techniques you have taught us in teaching this year. Thanks for your enthusiasm, guidance and care and support through the years. You have taught me personally new ways to look at my world and care for my family. You are a blessing Lynn.*

—Krystal Kaes

Parent of child in vision therapy, Home Educator

*In her book, Dr. Hellerstein provides an insightful overview of the role visualization plays in learning. Her practical activities make it easy for teachers and parents to implement theory into practice providing children with a powerful learning technique. For those of us who continually search for ways to help struggling children reach their potential, this book will be a useful guide.*

—Betsy Kutrumbos, Ph.D., Educational Counseling Services

*Dr. Hellerstein has cracked the code to learning for all types of students; visual, auditory as well as kinesthetic type learners can gain insight and inspiration from the stories and examples given by Dr. Hellerstein. See It. Say It. Do It! is an easy read, no nonsense approach to learning, communicating and just plain being successful in all areas of one's life...in and out of the classroom, sports field, and boardroom! Parents, teachers, coaches and people who just want to improve their daily communication and effectiveness should make this book a must read!*

—Audrey Boxwell, Ph.D.



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**DR. LYNN F. HELLERSTEIN**



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## Dear Parent and Teacher ...

**A**s I have watched my patients grow, develop and succeed as adults and now bring *their* children in for vision care, the satisfaction of making a difference in a person's and a family's life has been immensely gratifying. After my 30 years as a developmental optometrist in private practice, I grew tired of hearing the stories of frustration, anger, and poor self-esteem that so many children struggle with—and unnecessarily so. It is my desire to share my years of experience and lessons from my patients, therapists and teachers that has motivated me to write this book.

When I think of the power of visualization and the great successes I've had with thousands of patients using these strategies, I am truly excited to get *See It. Say It. Do It!* into your hands. Imagine your children having powerful tools to help them learn and increase their personal growth and development. Imagine that they are given the opportunities to learn these tools early in life, so that they can develop, build, deepen and enhance their abilities for lifetime learning while loving life and building solid relationships. Watch them grow and blossom. You will be giving them a gift for life!

This book is for every parent whose child struggles in school, or gets stressed before taking a test, or lacks confidence dealing with situations and classmates. It's for parents who envision more for their children and want them to get the best possible start in life. It's also a resource for teachers to augment and invigorate their current lesson plans.

*See It. Say It. Do It!* outlines a model for success. It is more than just a primer on “visualization.” It gives you a step-by-step process to help your child achieve the school goals—and life goals—that your son or daughter needs. Along the way, you both will gain knowledge and resources about the critical link between vision and learning. I developed the *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* and have been using it in my vision therapy practice for many years. I have seen the results and they are astounding.

This book also exemplifies how the power of the *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* can transform you personally. It did for me. I was a workaholic who thought I was quite proficient at balancing the stresses of a successful practice and those of raising a family. However, my life took a dramatic turn when I encountered a medical crisis in 2002 that threatened my physical and emotional stability.

I found it difficult to think clearly, work, or be productive. I felt that I had crashed and burned. All the work, the accolades and awards, and my successful business partnership, which seemed to define who I was, were no longer priorities. Because of this health crisis, I lost my confidence and sense of who I really was. I searched for answers, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. My journey during this time took me through traditional and non-traditional medical and healing resources. I didn't realize it, but I was being given the opportunity to “reevaluate” myself and my life.

Through all of those treatment modalities, I was able to learn, heal, and rebuild my life. My experiences with visualization and the *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* through my vision therapy practice was a major component in my healing. I discovered how vast and powerful its potential is in expanding one's life, even in the midst of trauma, pain and instability.

I now am making choices on my life's journey from a totally different perspective, from a more balanced approach, balancing my passion with peace, through visualization and intuition. I have been given another chance in life and want to make the most of it.

My mission is to make a difference in this world, empowering individuals by teaching them to explore their internal and external vision.

Let's start with you and your child!

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences, discoveries, and the magnificent results. I am honored by the praise and thanks I receive from my patients, and thrilled that their vision is improved, and now have renewed confidence and are enjoying life a lot more. Their futures look bright.

Now, when I hear, "Thanks so much, Dr. Hellerstein!" I know a good part of that thanks goes to the development of visualization skills. Thank you to all my patients. Without you I would not have visualized this book!

With love and compassion,

Lynn Fishman Hellerstein

# Introduction

Does your child struggle in school?

Is your child less than enthusiastic about learning?

Have you noticed how stressed your child becomes when it is time for test-taking?

Does your child lack self-esteem and confidence? Is he bullied?

Do you feel that your child may not be reaching her highest potential?

Would you like to empower your child to develop his or her own easy and fun strategies for learning?

**W**elcome to the world of visualization. This book describes what it is, how you use it, and what it can do for you if you learn to use it well. Visualization is easy to learn; we all have the rudiments of it and already are visualizing to some degree ... even the youngest of children.

Children are naturally curious, and they want to learn and explore. As toddlers, they are enthusiastic and love learning. Just watch a two-year old getting into everything in the cupboard, pulling things apart, laughing, questioning. He's having a good time.

But what happens when this youngster begins the formalized process of school? Why do so many eventually dislike and even resent school? What might you do as a parent—or teacher—to help bring the spark back into learning while also helping to reinforce skills in problem solving, reasoning and personal growth?

Let's take reading as an example. Reading is one of the most critical skills necessary for lifelong learning and success. Most young children love to be read to. They look forward to the bedtime ritual of their parents reading them their favorite stories each night. Copies of *Goodnight Moon* and *Curious George* are worn out because children fall in love with the characters and the theme. "Read it again, Mommy," "Read it again, Daddy," is echoed from household to household.

Today, though, too many children struggle in the process of learning to read on their own although they still love to be read to. *What is happening here?*

Good readers report they often "see movies in their heads" when reading; that is, they visualize the story as it unfolds. Sometimes they see themselves in the story. Children who don't like to read rarely experience seeing movies, imagining the story or seeing themselves within it. When a child says that reading is "boring," trust him, it is—letters and print are boring to him. Nothing has sparked his imagination ... yet.

When you read to your child, it is far easier for him to picture the story, just like a movie. There is no struggle to figure out words or letters. The characters come to life. Think about all the little boys that morphed into Luke Skywalker as he fought the evil Darth Vader in *Star Wars*. Or in *Harry Potter*, when boys imagined being Harry, and girls, Hermione, with their magical powers. Remember how the tiger-striped cat grew into Professor McGonagall?

One of the greatest challenges is when a director takes a writer's work and converts it into a movie. He has to visualize what the author meant. When Hagrid takes Harry Potter on his first visit to Diagon Alley, they go through a dark, ancient door in the streets of London. Harry and Hagrid step back into times past, into what is a pub. Exiting the pub, Hagrid enters an enclosed brick way. With his umbrella, he taps on a brick on the wall in front of him. It magically pulls apart and Harry and Hagrid step into a whole new world:



bats, owls, goblins, magic wands and wondrous broomsticks. Harry is in awe. And so is the viewer. The director has created a movie that has become a children's classic, out of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. This is visualization at its best.

However, if your child has struggled in learning to read, and then undertakes the reading experience, he spends most of his time figuring out what the words are. He doesn't even get a chance to fall into the story; much less visualize what's going on or what could happen. In the *Harry Potter* scene above, a struggling reader would miss the nuances that the director of the movie was able to take from the book and deliver on the screen with such pizzazz.

If reading becomes a challenge and non-enjoyable, your child will most likely resist reading, and avoid any homework requiring it. Frustration grows. As a parent, you can observe his frustration; but often it is masked by avoidance behaviors.

You will learn several strategies in this book that introduce and use visualization techniques. I'll share activities to develop and enhance your child's learning skills and life skills in the areas of—

- *Academics*: reading, creative writing, spelling, math, homework, and test-preparation;
- *Sports*; and
- *Personal development*: stress management, handling fears, dealing with bullies, and building self-confidence.

## **Who Can Visualize for Success?**

Everyone! You are visualizing, even though you may not be aware of it. Picture yourself on your dream vacation. Are you lying on a white sandy beach, cruising through the Greek Isles, or sitting in Fenway Park watching the Red Sox beat the Yankees? Guess what? You are using your visualization skills!

The ability to generate and use imagery begins when children are very young. Think about toddlers and pre-schoolers. They invent names, animals,

situations and almost anything to keep their active minds going. This all comes from developmental experiences. Visualization skills are developed in the young child just as are coordination and other cognitive skills.



A note about the term *visualization*: Some people think of “new age” when they hear the word *visualization*. It is now a topic found in science books and is beginning to be taught in mainstream schools and sports. Anyone can use visualization principles; it does not require a belief in any specific religious or spiritual entity. Rather, a commitment to enrich your experience and knowledge, along with keeping an open mind, are the necessary ingredients to explore visualization strategies.

Some people visualize quickly; some do it easily; some don't know if they visualize; some visualize with tremendous detail; and some have an awareness or feeling but don't see visual pictures.

Empires have been built based on a person's ability to visualize—they see the big picture. One of the biggest was created in 1955. Six thousand people were invited to the Grand Opening of Disneyland—twenty-eight thousand showed up because the buzz was that Disneyland was the place to be. And it was!

Walt Disney was a visualizer; he saw every detail of Main Street, Frontier Land and the Magic Kingdom. He called his process “*imagineering*.” Imagine what it took to create Disneyland and later, Disney World and Epcot Center! Walt Disney died in 1966. His visions continue to live long after Disney World was birthed. When someone said to Mike Vance, the creative director of Disney Studios, “What a shame that Walt didn't live long enough to see all this,” with an amused look, Vance replied, “But he did see it. That's why it's here.”

What Disney did was take a visualization step, and that's what you're doing, by building your child's awareness, as well as your own, of his visualizations skills. He, and you, will be amazed at what happens.

Think of it as building blocks. You first need a foundation to support any structure that is built. The *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* is the beginning of building your child's solid foundation. The visualization activities are the tools to help him get there—to become a successful, confident student. As your child practices visualization more frequently, and trusts the process, he begins to "see" success and have a lot of fun, whether it is at school, in sports, or in social situations. The *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* revealed, becomes a habit and part of his everyday routine. I knew I was on target when one of my 10-year-old patients wrote,

I can enjoy life now because I can get through anything without having to stop and wait to understand it. Answers come much more easily, as well as imagery in books. This has opened up my eyes (no pun intended) to a whole new world.

When your child starts to use these tools and strategies and incorporates them into his everyday life activities, the benefits will stay with him forever—you've given him a gift for a lifetime.

## How to Use This Book

This book is made up of four parts. Each section includes Activities to support its specific theme. The first part explores what visualization is and how it develops. In the second part, the *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* is introduced. The model was developed in my optometric practice. The acronym VDAT is the adult terminology for the *See It. Say It. Do It! Model*. It stands for Visualize, Declare, Take Action, and Transform.

Visualize is **See It.**



Declare is **Say It.**



Take Action is **Do It!**





The model leads to Transformation, which for your child is a huge **Ta-Dah!**

The third section includes specific visual processing skills and visualization strategies relating to school subjects that can help your child. Implementing them results in greater learning and confidence.

The final section provides a variety of topics that focus on personal growth, from getting along to dealing with scary and emotional situations.

A more thorough explanation of vision therapy as well as the results of our patient survey to evaluate effectiveness of their vision therapy is included in the Appendix. A glossary of vision terms and resources is also given.

Some of the chapters will have a numerical reference at the end of a sentence or paragraph. You will find details of a study or citing per the chapter in the Endnotes section at the back of the book.

I make suggestions on where these Activities can best be used throughout the book. Sometimes a road trip is a perfect place for one Activity; another might be at the dinner table, or just before a final bedtime goodnight. You'll also find **Dr. H's Insight** with each chapter—my "ahas" to you.

There are many books for adults on visualization, on business development, career goals, wealth development, meditative and spiritual growth. They are wonderful resources and I encourage you to use them for yourself if, after reading this book, you agree with me that visualization tools and practices can help on many levels and at any age.

I am surprised, however, that there aren't more books for parents and teachers about visualization for children. Since kids are on such a rapid learning curve, introducing visualization skills early in life gives them an advantage in schooling and social skills.

## Special Note to Parents and Teachers

These activities are for use both at home and school. Teachers may want to include some of them in their school program or curriculum.



If your child is struggling in school, consider having him tested for learning difficulties. In addition, make sure you have him evaluated by a developmental optometrist. Why would I suggest that? One out of four children has vision problems that could impact learning! I've seen miracles happen when children receive vision therapy for problems including: tracking, focusing, eye teaming, visual information processing, eye-hand coordination, even clumsiness and attention problems. It is amazing how reading fluency, handwriting, spelling, coordination and confidence improves when vision skills are addressed.

**WARNING:** *See It. Say It. Do It! Model* is not a substitute for vision therapy nor does it take the place of appropriate education.

Boys and girls can benefit equally from visualization skills and the strategies in this book. For simplicity, I use the words "he" and "she" interchangeably throughout.

If you have questions after you complete *See It. Say It. Do It!* or would like to relate experiences with visualization, please contact me. My information is at the back of the book.

Now, are you ready to learn and have fun at the same time? Then let's get going. The first chapter awaits you.

## Part One

# Visualization ... The New Frontier

**See It** *Visualize*

+ **Say It** *Declare*

+ **Do It** *Take Action*

---

**Ta-Dah!** *Transform*

**The See It. Say It. Do It!**  
**Definition of Visualization:**

The word, *visualization*, conjures up many images and meanings for people. Visualization is defined in numerous ways, depending on the person and the type of discussion and situation.

For example, *visualization* may be simply defined as utilizing visual mental imagery or picturing in your "mind's eye." Or the term *visualization* may refer to a more multi-sensory inclusive term utilizing seeing, hearing, touch, smell and taste imagery as well as body sensations.

*The ability to imagine, sense, become aware of, move,  
manipulate and expand the pictures in  
your "mind's eye" and the feelings or senses in your body,  
thereby developing new perspectives and creativity.*

*Visualization* is the "knowing," or "I got it," or "gut feeling," through the orchestration of your senses.

# 1

## What is Visualization?

**I**magine this ...

Your plane descends after a long trip circling an island—your destination. You land and after some instructions from the flight attendants, you deplane and are greeted by a beautiful young woman who gives you a colorful, aromatic lei. You can feel the breeze and smell the salt in the air and the warmth of the tropical sun. Where are you?

It's Opening Day. The sun is out, the field is groomed, you hear the National Anthem being played, the crowd is packed, the vendors are selling hot dogs, peanuts and beer, and you can hear the organ playing "Take Me Out to the \_\_\_\_\_ ." Where are you?

The engines are roaring, you can see heat waves rising from the track and smell the fumes from the cars. The green flag signals the crowd that the race has begun. Where are you?

You are surrounded by excited children peering through fences. A woman is telling several families about the bird aviary. You see the monkeys swinging from limb to limb. You hear the roars of the hungry lions. Where are you?

If you responded Hawaii (or a tropical island), ballgame, Indianapolis 500 (or any auto raceway), and the zoo, you have experienced visualization.

Visualization techniques are used all the time in children's games (although they don't realize it). They also are used in business, sports, healthcare and schools; in other words, just about everywhere. Consider these:



- A popular movie in 2004 was *What the Bleep!* In it, Dr. Joe Dispenza, the author of *Evolve Your Brain*, reports that the same parts of the brain light up on an MRI when a person looks at an actual object, or if he imagines the same object in his mind. The brain does not distinguish the difference between real and imagined experience.<sup>1</sup>
- Visualization affects your outcomes. Jack Canfield, in *The Success Principles*, writes, "Your ability to visualize your dreams will serve as a catalyst in their creation."<sup>2</sup>
- In *Golf Digest*, October 2000, it was revealed that Tiger Woods first started working with Dr. Jay Brunza, a psychologist, who coached him on techniques for relaxation, visualization and focusing. He taught him how to enter into his "Zone," where he was able to achieve peak performance. Tiger Woods' experience echoes baseball great Yogi Berra, who said, "90 percent of this game is half mental."
- Researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, found that guided imagery can help you use the full range of your body's healing capacity. They are exploring utilizing guided imagery for the treatment of cancer, preparation for surgery, chronic stress and headaches.<sup>3</sup>
- Harvard University researchers found that students who visualized in advance, performed tasks with nearly 100 percent accuracy, whereas students who didn't visualize achieved only 55 percent accuracy.<sup>4</sup>

If you examine the success principles of Tiger Woods, Yogi Berra and Jack Canfield, you'll find that a common denominator is visualization. The lesson: create and use the image that leads to the action that will bring you what you want.

For kids, that result could be earning a good grade, making a new friend or scoring points in basketball. For you, it could be getting a promotion or going on a special vacation. For children and adults, it also includes gaining self-confidence, happiness, and a personal peacefulness.

## Visualization Has Deep Roots

Is visualization something that twenty-first century scientists dreamed up? No! Visualization is as old as the hills. In fact, there are references to imagery as far back as 348 B.C. when Aristotle theorized that “man cannot think without mental images.” But now that we are discovering it is a skill, we can actually train and develop ourselves to get the things we want or become the person we want to be.

And there is science behind it. Previously we thought that most of our learning occurred when we were young and it went downhill from there. Scientists and doctors continue in their research that shows that our brains change and are able to learn new things even as we age. The original belief was that only children had malleable brains—adults were stuck with what they had. In *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain* by Sharon Begley, she cites multiple studies that show that the brain can change, including that of a mature adult. Neuroplasticity is the term used to describe this phenomenon. It means that the brain has the ability to change with learning.

## One Learning Style Doesn't Fit All

Different types of learning styles have been identified, most simply described as visual-spatial, auditory-sequential, or tactile. Most children as well as adults have a preferred learning style, but in general, it is not at the exclusion of the other styles. The individual must be able to integrate and use his entire brain for learning and performance.

Observe your child's responses, body actions, and language. He often shows you what sensory system he relies on most frequently—indicative of his preferred learning style. For example, if your child starts his sentences with ... “Imagine that,” “Picture this,” “See you later,” or “Did you notice?” he tends to process in a *show me* versus *tell me* manner. This child is a *visual-spatial learner*.

If he has more of an *auditory-sequential learning* style, you hear comments like, “I hear you,” or “This doesn't sound right.” If he reads well, he tends to assemble toys in a step-by-step fashion, per the instructions.

And if she likes to say, "Keep in touch," "This doesn't feel right," or "I have a gut feeling," she is a *tactile learner*.

Let's bring this home. What is your preferred learning style? If you bought a kit with all the parts for a new bookshelf for your family room, would you lay out all the parts and then proceed to read all the instructions beginning with #1, or are you someone who pulls out the screwdriver and hammer, rips all the bags open, dumps them on the floor and dives in—instructions, what instructions? And if you are married, what type of learner is your spouse? I confess, I'm the rip-the-bags-open, dump-everything-on-the-floor kind of person. Guess what type of learner I married? Interesting how opposites seem to attract.

Look at the illustration below. Creating the "bridges" between the different learning styles represented in the brain hemispheres (the two sides) is what we call bilateral integration. Many of the activities that you will learn about in the book are intended to build bilateral integration.



In the example of constructing the bookshelf, an integrated learner would start the task by utilizing her preferred learning style. In my case, I would just jump in and build the bookshelf by looking at the picture. However, if I ran into a problem, hopefully I would then refer back to the instructions, utilizing more of a sequential style to complete the task. The same thing should happen with a sequential learner. He may start with the instructions of attaching part A to part B. But if he runs into difficulty, he could look at the picture and gain information to help him figure out what to do next. This is the ideal scenario of integrated learning.

The reason that I bring this up is that you may be one type of learner and your child another. It's important that you understand this difference and be able to work with it. Otherwise, communications deteriorate and homework, for example, becomes a nightmare. In the classroom, if your child is more of a visual learner, and you find that his teacher teaches with a very auditory style, then your child may struggle in the classroom. The teacher may give an oral or written, step-by-step instruction, but your child doesn't get it. He needs to see it or be shown the activity.

**Visual-spatial learners** see the whole picture. They tend to visualize patterns and connections—starting with larger concepts and seeing the final product. They are often creative, and don't learn well through a step-by-step process. They often skip over instructions and just want to "see" how to do it. These kids often struggle in a typical classroom that is structured in a sequential teaching style.

**Auditory-sequential learners** process more in a step-by-step, analytical methodology. They learn from part-to-whole with order, sequence and rules. The typical classroom is often taught in an auditory-sequential manner.

**Tactile learners** need movement and hands-on experience. Words are not as important. These kids are constantly touching and feeling everything.



Your child may be able to start a project. But does he have a strategy to use when he gets stuck? My experience reveals that many children just don't complete the task or get frustrated if they can't easily complete the task. This is most likely to occur because they don't look for or think of additional strategies to assist them.

This is not to say that one learning style is better or preferred over another, just different. All can visualize, but differently. Great companies need a mix of all types of learners, and most families have a mix as well. As a parent, you need to understand your child's learning style and help him to discover the tricks and tools to be successful.

## **I Don't See Pictures!**

What am I doing wrong? I can't get it! All I see is black.

Don't create a situation of additional stress and frustration. If your child doesn't seem to notice the visual imagery, it doesn't mean he's not visualizing. It may be that he is aware through senses besides vision. As with different learning styles, visualization awareness differs. The language used to describe visualization and build skills also differs depending on the child's preferred learning style.

Your language of, "What do you see," or "Picture this," may give you no response. In that case, try changing your language when inquiring or leading visualization activities: "What do you feel" or "What are the sounds?"

Understanding the learning style of your child helps you adjust your language when asking him about his visualization. Use his *preferred language* when working on visualization activities. The easiest way to eliminate problems is to ask multisensory questions using descriptors from all sensory systems.

## **A Blueprint**

How can visualization help you achieve your goals? Call it a "blueprint." Instead of simply imagining or dreaming about something unrelated, imagine and allow a visualization to help you achieve your goals.

Now, apply this idea to your child. Let's say your child wants to earn better grades. He needs to do well on an upcoming spelling test. He pictures in his mind a sequence in which he studies using the visualization techniques illustrated in Chapter 11, *Acing Spelling*. He sees himself taking the test with confidence, seeing every word in his mind as he spells them. In his mind, he then pictures his teacher handing back his graded test with an "A" in her handwriting, at the top of it. He visualizes the steps necessary for him to excel, and sees himself excelling.

By repeating this visualization exercise often, what happens to him when he realizes that he can spell well and he is a good student and succeeds? A big **Ta-Dah!**

### **Up, Up and Away**

For over 30 years, vision therapy has been my passion. It's no wonder that what I did within my office was mirrored at home. My daughters embraced the variety of visualization activities I use. One of my favorite Activities used with my children when they were young was to "take" an imaginary hot air balloon trip.

These trips helped my family create, practice, have fun, laugh and relax. It was the perfect antidote when they were worried about school or an upcoming athletic competition. They also provided a great opening for communicating with my children as issues with friends or school problems often would come up. We could "look" at the situation from our "balloon" and "see" possible resolutions for these situations. It was so successful when they were little, that the trips became a family staple, even as we are now all adults.

There are certainly many options to create your own personal balloon trip. Just keep emphasizing relaxing, breathing, quiet, safety and fun!

My balloon trip activity focuses on relaxation. You'll find more information on relaxation in Chapter 3, *See It!*

Try this one at home!



### Activity

## Take a Hot Air Balloon Trip

**Purpose:** Visualization for the whole family.

Try this as a bedtime relaxation activity or when preparing for a special event. The first few times you use this, you might read it to your child. Then have fun with it and create your own personalized version of a balloon trip.

### Instructions to child:

Lie comfortably and close your eyes.

Imagine yourself blowing up a balloon—a big hot air balloon.

Notice the color of the balloon—what color is it?

*(Pause)*

Is it big or little?

*(Pause)*

Now take a big breath, allowing the air to fill up your belly (tummy), and then slowly allow the air to move out of your belly into the balloon.

Take another breath in, again feeling your belly rise, and then allow the air to move into the balloon.

Continue breathing in and out until your hot air balloon is just the right size for you.

*(Pause)*

Now, let's get into the basket connected to the balloon.

Is there anything you need such as a jacket, a hat, a seatbelt for safety, glasses for protection, your favorite blanket or stuffed animal?

*(Pause)*

Get comfortable.

When you are ready, allow the balloon to start floating up, going higher and higher and higher.

Continue to breathe deeply and relax.

Enjoy the ride as we go higher and higher.

Wave goodbye to your friends, your school and your homework. Put away any troubles or problems, as you continue to move higher and higher, up to the clouds.

*(Pause)*

Once you get to the clouds, you can get out of the balloon and play in them.

Touch the soft, fluffy clouds that support you and your balloon.

Smell the fresh clean air and cool breeze.

Feel the warmth of the sun, spreading throughout your entire body.

Listen and experience the quiet and calm.

*(Pause)*

See how far you can see, how the big blue sky goes on and on and on.



As you continue to enjoy playing in the clouds, this balloon trip can go several different directions. For example:

You can practice any sport routine in the clouds, always knowing that the clouds will protect and keep you safe.

Or, you can snuggle up in the clouds and fall asleep.

You can get back into the hot air balloon and continue to another fun place, like candy land, or an amusement park, or any other place you would like to go.

Your child may want to come back home and land in his bedroom. Don't be surprised if you all doze off, and the balloon trip continues in your dreams.



## Imagination Has No Boundaries

The following Activity taps the imagination—it's one that kids of all ages can do—it can be done almost anywhere. The sillier the responses, the better.



### Activity My Ape Is ...

**Purpose:** Tapping into your imagination.

**Instructions to child:**

*Parent:* I have an ape. What color is your ape?  
(Just assume he has an ape.)

*Child:* I have a \_\_\_\_ (color) ape.

*Parent:* My ape has a hat. What about yours?

*Child:* My ape is wearing a \_\_\_\_ .

*Parent:* Is your ape wearing any clothes?

(Laughter)

*Child:* Yeah, my ape has purple jeans and ....

Continue after this and the game is on!

If he says he doesn't see an ape, ask him to imagine one, or to look under his seat. Have fun and just start pretending that he has an ape. The point is to keep the dialogue going as long as possible, using as many characteristics as you can imagine: shape, size, color, textures, clothing, objects ...

## **Garbage In, Garbage Out**

There's a common expression used among computer enthusiasts which says, "Garbage In, Garbage Out." Well that's certainly at least as true for what we store and retrieve from our minds.

Let's tweak it, and make it a positive statement:

*The better the quality of the information that our eyes take in, the better our mind's eye will be in using that information.*

In other words, since visualization relies on imagery through the mind's eye, we'll need to pay closer attention to how our eyes gather and process that information. This is where you discover how vision develops and integrates with other senses. Chapter 2, here we come!

Further explore Dr. Lynn F. Hellerstein's

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