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## An Interview with Don M. Winn: Awards and Acknowledgements

Nov 12, 2019 by  
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Columnist

Michael F. Shaughnessy –

**1) Don, I have just heard that *Raising a Child with Dyslexia: What Every Parent Needs to Know* won its first book award in the Parenting & Family category. First, tell us about this award and all the details.**

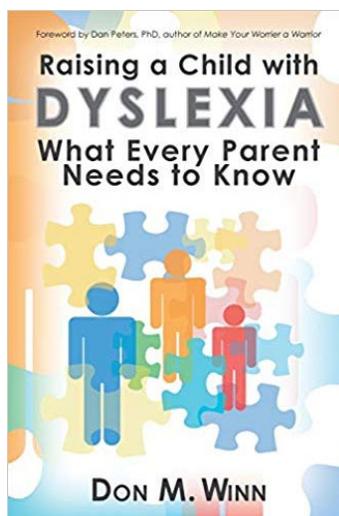
Thank you, Michael, for asking! Yes, it did, and I couldn't be more thrilled. The New York City Big Book Award is one of the few award venues that allows small presses like Cardboard Box Adventures Publishing (my company) to go up against the big publishing houses. Even independent authors can compete! Founders Diane Carey-Pape and Gabrielle L. Olczak both have extensive backgrounds in publishing and education, and Olczak's additional experience in editing means that submissions are particularly well scrutinized. Everyone on the CBA team is happy about this win—it's a real honor!

**2) Now, who exactly is this book written for?**

The information in the book benefits all parents, grandparents, and educators, not just those who have or teach a dyslexic child. This is because encountering struggles and learning how to cope with them are a part of every child's life, and the principles that apply to dealing with those faced by a child with dyslexia apply to other issues faced by all children as well. Parents of a child of any age will find information that will help them understand and decode their child's struggles and discover the path to their potential. Additionally, adults who are dyslexic themselves and anyone who wants to understand more about dyslexia and what the dyslexics in their life are going through will benefit from reading the book.

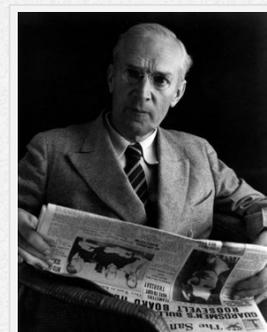
**3) Can you give us an overview of the book?**

Like many current books on dyslexia, there are discussions of what dyslexia is and isn't, when and how to get tested, and working with school administrations to create an optimal learning environment for dyslexic children. But what sets *Raising a Child with Dyslexia* apart is its extensive focus on the social and emotional complications of discovering and living with dyslexia, and how it suggests specific tools and techniques parents can use to help their child cope and thrive. Several child and adult psychologists who have read the book have remarked that the coping skills and compassion that form the core of this book can help the parents of any child raise a healthy,



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**4) And your book *There's a Monkey in My Backpack* apparently did well also in the Children's Motivational Category. And what is this book about?**

In this fun book, a young girl named Anna has a monkey in her backpack that no one can see but her, who keeps getting her in trouble in school and who makes it difficult for her to read, write, pay attention in class, and get her work done. The monkey can represent any challenge or impediment a child might face, including dyslexia. At first, Anna feels alone and frustrated; she seems to be the only student so encumbered. But as the story progresses, Anna becomes curious about her monkey, and as she explores this challenging situation, she actually discovers that her monkey (dyslexia) who causes her so much trouble also presents some strengths and has many helpful lessons to teach her. By the end of the story, Anna not only knows she will be able to finish third grade successfully, but she feels good about who she is and has learned to accept and embrace the monkey in her backpack. Like all my picture books for shared reading, this book contains helpful questions in the back to encourage parents and their children to discuss what they've read together, which extends the fun and offers parents a glimpse of what the child understands from the material.

**5) Tell us about this "Visit to the Steeping Room" blog or is that a web site—and if so, what would we find there?**

My wife and I love to experience things together, especially things that facilitate good conversation, and this local bistro/tearoom is a favorite. Over multiple pots of hundreds of varieties of teas, one could, theoretically, take on just about any challenge successfully, and we have had great conversations there and we've also done a lot of good quality work. Theanine (an amino acid in tea) is great for concentration! [The Steeping Room](#) has an impressive website from which tea lovers everywhere can order tempting elixirs. Their blog has lots of information about all things tea and is quite an engaging read. And if your readers are ever in the Austin, TX, area, the restaurant is not to be missed!

**6) I know you have a bunch of other interesting books that get kids to enjoy reading—tell us about a few of them.**

Of course, there's the four-book [Sir Kaye, the Boy Knight](#) series of chapter books for middle readers (grades 3-5), which feature not only the fun adventures of a twelve-year-old knight named Kaye, but something called a "hero of self-reference" for dyslexics. Heroes of self-reference are characters that have feelings and struggles that the reader can identify with, and Sir Kaye's best friend is a dyslexic boy named Reggie. As Reggie figures out who he is, comes to terms with his dyslexia, and discovers his strengths, he inspires young readers to believe that, although they may be struggling, they can make the best of their situation just like Reggie does and feel good about who they are. And the adventures these two boys have together are the best! Readers who would like to know more can watch a YouTube [video about the Sir Kaye series](#) or a [video about Reggie and his triumphant struggles with dyslexia](#).

I have a number of picture books for shared reading. *The Watch Cat*, about an unlikely hero, is a favorite for its surprise ending, and the Space Cop Zack series of picture books helps kids see how their own imaginations are more fun than anything that can be bought in a store.

*The Higgledy-Piggledy Pigeon* is about a young homing pigeon named Hank, who is an eager new student in flight school. He loves school until he discovers he has no sense of direction. He's embarrassed and ashamed and wants to give up on his dreams and quit school, but a kind teacher shows him how he can compensate for his problem and still succeed. This story is about how everyone learns in different ways, and how anyone can succeed—even despite a learning challenge—with the right kind of help and effort!

*The Tortoise and the Hairpiece* is about a lonely tortoise named Jake who is embarrassed by his bald head. Even when other animals invite him to play, he stays away, convinced that nobody wants to be his friend because he looks different. Then he tries an experiment meant to help him look like everyone else, but it doesn't quite work the way he planned. He learns, however, that no one needs to try to be someone else or look like someone else just to make friends or feel good about themselves.

I have a number of other picture books, and each one is more than just a fun book for children to enjoy with their parents, but teaches life lessons and coping skills while fostering dialog between parent and child.

**7) Where can you learn more about your books and how to purchase them?**

My website/blog is <https://donwinn.com/>, and you'll find lots of information about my books and resources for teachers and parents there.

All of my books are available in softcover, hardcover, and eBook, and the Sir Kaye series is available in audio. Raising a Child with Dyslexia will also be available in audio in January of 2020.

All of my books are also available for significant discounts to schools, libraries, non-profits, retailers, and vendors directly from [Cardboard Box Adventures Publishing](#) or Ingram/LSI.

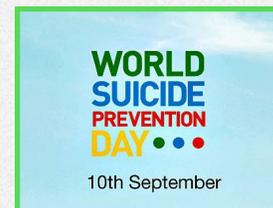
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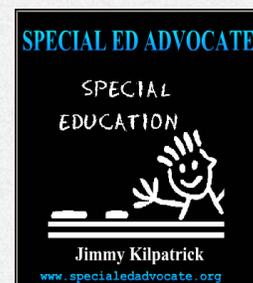
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