Seeing the the World Differently: A Legacy of Visual Thinking and Neurodiverse Learning, Three Generation.

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A Patterned Mind in a Verbal World

I've always known I was different. Not in a way that made me feel less — just other. I saw the world in patterns, puzzles, and sequences. My job has a manager I could walk into their shop, watch someone run it once, and replicate the entire routine the next day. Not because I memorized it, but because I saw it — like choreography unfolding in my mind.

That visual processing became my superpower. At university, while others struggled to connect theory with practice, I could instantly map academic concepts onto real-life scenarios — especially within prison rehabilitation. Eventually, lecturers asked me to teach students how to bridge theory and lived experience. It was surreal. I wasn't just learning; I was translating.

The Academic Barrier

Despite my strengths, the education system wasn't built for minds like mine. The Wechsler Adult Reading Test required a reading age of 113 to pass a degree. Mine was 66. My spelling age hovered around 7–8 years. Yet I could read 98 CVC words in a minute, process visual information rapidly, and solve complex problems without needing words. But the moment I had to verbalize, my scores dropped to low average.

My son Richard faced different challenges. His working memory was poor, his reading comprehension age was 11 years and 6 months, and he struggled to read from the board — something I could do effortlessly. But he had stronger verbal foundations than I did, and with the right support, he could navigate school more effectively.

Beyond Dyslexia: A Unique Profile

My assessments revealed something more complex than classic dyslexia. I had auditory and visual sequencing memory difficulties, compounded by verbal comprehension weaknesses. Most dyslexic individuals have strong verbal abilities with specific memory processing challenges. I was the opposite — my visual strengths had developed at the expense of verbal skills. Whether consciously or not, I had adapted to survive in a system that didn't recognize my way of thinking.

Three Generations of Learning: A Comparative Snapshot

Profile	Jacqueline (Mother) 44 age	Richard (Son) 24 age	Henry (Grandson) 9 age
Reading Age	10 years 11 months	15 years	Age-appropriate (with support)
Spelling Age	7–8 years	14 years	Developing well
Working Memory	Visual dominant	Poor	Supported early
Strengths	Visual processing, pattern recognition, practical application	Verbal reasoning, resilience	Multi-sensory learning, early intervention
Challenges	Verbal comprehension,	academic structure Reading from board, processing speed	Still emerging, but well-supported
Support System	Self-developed strategies, visual tools	Family-led learning adaptations	Cascade-informed, multi-sensory education

A Legacy of Learning

Now, watching Henry at nine being assessed with a multi-sensory approach — using phonics, rhymes, visual tools, and chunked learning — I feel a sense of hope. This is the kind of support I fought for decades ago. The methods I developed through Cascade, the software I helped shape, the visual and kinaesthetic strategies I taught — they're now being recognized as best practice.

It's not just about dyslexia. It's about honoring different ways of knowing. Visual minds. Practical thinkers. Pattern seekers. We don't fit the mold, but we build new ones.

Three Generations, One Legacy: A Cross-Generational Look at Neurodiverse Learning

Jacqueline (Mother) – The Trailblazer

• Era: 1990s–2000s
• Diagnosis: Dyslexia with complex auditory and visual sequencing difficulties
• Strengths:• Exceptional visual processing
• Pattern recognition and practical problem-solving
• Ability to link theory to real-world systems (especially in prisons)

• Challenges:• Severely low reading and spelling age (reading age 10 years 11 months, spelling age 7–8)
• Verbal comprehension and academic expression

• Support:• Minimal institutional support
• Self-developed strategies using visual, kinaesthetic, and multisensory tools

• Impact:• Founded The Cascade Foundation
• Reformed prison education and neurodiversity training
• Pioneered trauma-informed, visual-based learning long before it was mainstream

Richard (Son) – The Bridge

• Era: 2000s–2010s
• Diagnosis: Working memory difficulties, mild dyslexia
• Strengths:• Verbal reasoning stronger than yours
• Resilient learner with family-led adaptations

• Challenges:• Poor working memory
• Difficulty reading from the board
• Slower processing speed

• Support:• Home-based learning strategies rooted in your experience
• Early exposure to visual and auditory tools

• Impact:• A Practising Pupil barrister and school governor
• Embodies Cascade's values in his professional and personal life
• Supports others with similar challenges, including his own children

Henry (Grandson) – The Beneficiary of Legacy

• Era: 2020s
• Diagnosis: Early signs of neurodivergence (under assessment)
• Strengths:• Access to multi-sensory learning from the start
• Supported by a family that understands neurodiversity
• Confident, curious, and expressive

• Challenges:• Still emerging, but being addressed proactively

• Support:• Phonics, rhymes, visual tools, chunked learning

• Cascade-informed strategies now embedded in mainstream education

• Impact:• Positioned for success with early intervention
• A living example of how generational wisdom transforms outcomes

What This Shows

Generation	Systemic Support	Family Knowledge	Educational Tools	Outcome
Jacqueline	Minimal	Self-taught	Self-created	Built a movement
Richard	Moderate	Inherited	Home-adapted	Professional success
Henry	Strong	Ingrained	Mainstreamed	Empowered early

From Struggle to Strategy: How Three Generations Rewrote the Rules of Learning

I didn't grow up with a label. I grew up with questions. Why did words slip through my fingers like water, while patterns and puzzles lit up my mind like fireworks? Why could I run a shop after watching someone once, but stumble when asked to explain it in writing?

It wasn't until I was a mature student at Southend College that I was formally diagnosed with dyslexia and other neurodivergent traits. My reading age was 10 years 11 months. My spelling age hovered around 7 to 8 years. On paper, I shouldn't have passed a degree. But I did — not because I fit the system, but because I found ways to work around it. I built my own scaffolding out of visual memory, practical logic, and relentless determination.

That's how The Cascade Foundation was born — not from theory, but from lived experience. I saw what others missed: that many people in prison weren't broken, just misread. They had stories like mine. Visual thinkers. Pattern seekers. Survivors of trauma. People who'd never been taught in a way that made sense to them.

Then came Richard.

Raising a neurodivergent child when you're neurodivergent yourself is like navigating a maze with a mirror. Richard had his own profile — poor working memory, difficulty reading from the board, slower processing speed. But he also had something I didn't: a mother who understood. I adapted everything I'd learned — phonics, rhymes, visual tools, chunked learning — and built a world around him where he could thrive.

And he did. He became a practising pupil barrister. A school governor. A mentor. He carried the Cascade values into every courtroom and classroom he entered.

Now, there’s Henry.

At nine, he’s already being assessed with the kind of insight I could only dream of at his age. His school uses multi-sensory methods. His family knows how to support him. He’s growing up in a world where neurodiversity is not just acknowledged — it’s embraced.

Three generations. One thread.

What began as a struggle became a strategy. What once felt like isolation became innovation. And what was once a personal battle has become a public legacy.

I look at Henry and see hope. I look at Richard and see resilience. I look at myself and see the roots of a revolution.

We didn’t just survive the system. We changed it.