



Project Eye-To-Eye

Speaking Board: Mouth-To-Mouth

Breathing Life into the Public Discourse on LD/ADHD

David Flink

Speaking Board — Mouth-To-Mouth — David Flink

I) Program Summary

As a person labeled with dyslexia and ADHD, David Flink will walk the audience through his journey of educational and personal change, empowering people to think differently about individuals with LD/ADHD and the concept of learning itself. As someone who has devoted his career to empowering individuals who learn differently, Flink centralizes his lecture around a message of empowerment, academic success and educational revolution for people who think differently. The speech will also focus on practical, accessible, and hands-on tips for academic success providing alternatives to the method of teaching and learning, which assume that everyone learns the same way.

II) Abbreviated Biography

David Flink: Executive Director / Co-Founder, Project Eye-To-Eye



Diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD at a young age, David Flink is a member of the first generation of people with learning disabilities to be provided with intervention and accommodations. There are 45 million US residents with learning disabilities, yet David felt like a failure. Although his parents and teachers frequently told him he would be able to go to college, David would have found that message more believable if it had come from a person with a learning disability (LD) who had finished college. With that in mind, David co-founded Project Eye-to-Eye in 1998, while he was a student at Brown University. Pairing students with LD of college and high school age with those in elementary, middle, and high school, Project Eye-to-Eye is the nation's only mentoring program for people with LD. Project Eye-to-Eye has grown to include 38 chapters in 18 states, and in the last year the organization has given more than 250 public

presentations to over 15,000 educators, parents, and students.

Ultimately, David wants to change both the public's perception of learning disabilities and the law's response to them: "Our goal is equal access to school and employment." He also wants to change education admissions testing requirements, educate people about existing laws on workplace accommodations, and encourage the enforcement of these laws. In addition to his ongoing work as executive director of Project Eye-to-Eye, from 2002 to 2004 David was an admissions officer at Brown University, serving as disabilities liaison for all Brown applicants with disabilities. He has spoken at colleges and universities across the country and in April 2009 he spoke at the Education Revolution Conference held in San Francisco's AT&T Park. That conference is recognized as the largest gathering of people with learning disabilities. David holds a master's degree in disability studies in education from Columbia University and bachelor's degrees in education and psychology from Brown University where he graduated with honors.

III Lecture Outline and Learning Outcomes

Central to David Flink's talk is the philosophy of asset-based community development. Rather than pathologizing a community and conceptualizing disability support work as part of a continuum of services, Mr. Flink will speak about first identifying what is right with the LD/ADHD community and mapping assets, not needs, to be leveraged towards change. David Flink's talk will provide an archetype for community and personal empowerment that will allow each audience participant to leave his presentation with a concrete action plan to implement within his or her own life and respective community.

1) The Art of Labeling Students

David's talk will begin with unpacking the biological realities of learning disabilities and explaining how these cognitive differences become labeled.

2) Pathologizing Difference

The talk will shift from a medical understanding of labeling students to exploring the systemic marginalization and devastating consequences of pathologizing a condition of difference as a deviant disability.

3) The Untold Stories - Part I

In an effort to shed light on the stories of those who carry the label of LD/ADHD, David will bring forward "stories from the trenches." David will share the difficult and often painful stories many do not hear, drawing on both his experiences as a labeled different learner and those stories of the hundreds of labeled students he has come into contact with through his work as a speaker and as Executive Director of Project Eye-To-Eye.

4) The Untold Stories - Part II

In addition to sharing often troubling stories of students who struggled in the trenches of an education landscape that was created without the different learner in mind, David will also share breathtaking stories of success. These stories stem from helping define empowerment through self understanding, mentorship, the courageous acts of mentors and teachers.

5) How to Spell Revolution

The second half of David's lecture will conclude by making full circle and drawing out the teachable moments of both the clinical and ethnographical research shared throughout the talk. David will outline practical, accessible, hands-on tips for academic success for people in the following four areas:

Teachers: How to be a more inclusive teacher for all learners.

Students: How to become a tolerant, empowered, and successful learner regardless of if you have a label or not.

Parents: How to make the landscape for your child's education smoother by knowing your tools and rights, which will be paramount to your child's success.

Community: How to change communities with individual actions.

Each presentation can be tailored to his audience and clients' unique requests