

YOUR FREE READER'S COMPANION

The First 30 Days Toolkit

*A companion to Newly Diagnosed Dyslexic Adult Workbook · by Eleanor Hayes,
M.Ed.*

Thanks for picking up the workbook. This companion is the printable toolkit — reading-strategy cards, a strengths inventory, a workplace accommodations starter, and a confidence-rebuilding audio. Print it, mark it up, make it yours.

A late dyslexia diagnosis isn't bad news. It's the explanation you were owed years ago. You were never lazy and you were never not trying. You were running a different operating system in a world built for the standard one. These tools are for your system. — Eleanor

Reading-Strategy Cards

Cut these out, or just dog-ear the page. Try one at a time — keep what works, drop what doesn't.

When text swims or you lose your place

- Use a ruler, card, or your finger as a line guide.
- Increase font size and line spacing on any screen; try a cream or gray background, not stark white.
- Try a dyslexia-friendly font (OpenDyslexic, or just larger Arial).

When you read but don't absorb

- Read it once for the gist, then again for detail. Two fast passes beat one slow one.
- Listen and read at once: text-to-speech while your eyes follow. This is huge.
- Summarize each paragraph in the margin in your own words.

When the page is overwhelming

- Cover everything but the current line/paragraph.
- Break it into 5-minute chunks with a timer. Reading isn't a marathon.
- It's okay to use the audiobook. Comprehension is comprehension.

Personal Strengths Inventory

Dyslexic brains are often strong where it counts. Tick what sounds like you — this is your real résumé.

- [] I see the big picture / connections others miss
- [] I'm a strong problem-solver, especially out-of-the-box
- [] I think in pictures / 3D / spatially
- [] I'm creative — ideas, design, storytelling
- [] I read people and situations well
- [] I'm resilient (you've been working twice as hard for years)
- [] I'm good at practical, hands-on work

Write one time each strength helped you: _____

Workplace Accommodations Starter

You don't have to struggle in silence, and asking is not weakness. Reasonable, common, low-cost asks:

Challenge	A reasonable ask
Reading long documents	Get them early; use text-to-speech software
Note-taking in meetings	Record (with permission), or get notes shared after
Spelling/writing under pressure	Use grammar/spell tools; ask for written-instruction backup
Proofreading critical work	A second pair of eyes / extra time
Verbal instructions vanish	Ask for a follow-up email summarizing

You can request these informally with a manager, or formally — in many places dyslexia is a recognized disability with legal accommodation rights. The book covers your options; this is just the starter list.

A 30-Day Gentle Plan

- Week 1 — Understand. Read (or listen to) the diagnosis chapter. Start the strengths inventory. Reframe: explanation, not failure.
- Week 2 — Equip. Try two reading-strategy cards. Set up text-to-speech on your phone/computer.
- Week 3 — Apply. Pick one workplace or daily-life accommodation and try it.
- Week 4 — Rebuild. Notice what's gotten a little easier. Listen to the confidence audio. You're not fixing a deficiency — you're working with your brain at last.

That's the toolkit. This week, do one thing: fill in the strengths inventory. Most newly-diagnosed adults have spent decades on a list of what's "wrong" with them — it's time you had the other list. When this workbook has helped you feel a little more capable and a little less alone, I'd be grateful to hear it, and in a couple of emails I'll share how a quiet word from you helps it reach the next adult who just got the same overdue explanation.

You were never the problem,
Eleanor Hayes