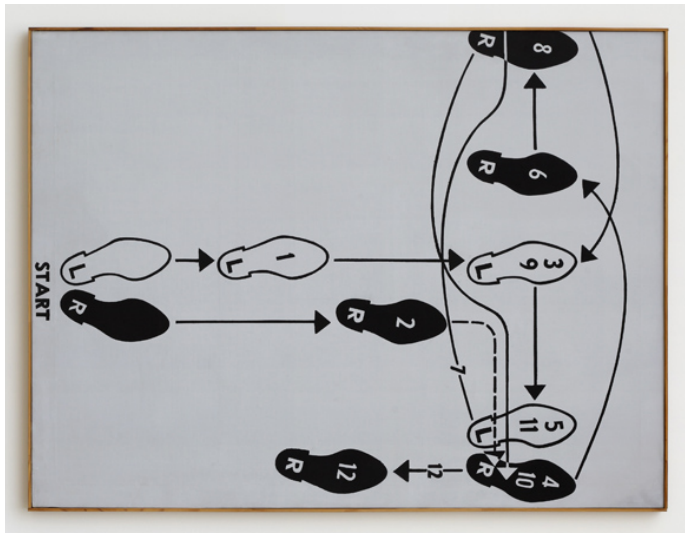


THE RELUCTANT WRITER

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



Imagine that you're suddenly asked to perform onstage with a group of professional dancers. This is a pretty good metaphor for what it's like to perform academically when your information processing is atypical. Would it help if you were introduced to the group as inherently uncoordinated? What if the group kept a vigilant eye out for anything you did wrong, and then simply advised, "Don't do *that!*" Would it help you to dance better?

The truth is that, even without professional skills, you could probably put in a decent performance if you were given positive instructions...that is, if you were told specifically what *to* do rather than what *not* to do.

You would do even better if you were encouraged to bring your *strengths* to the performance. You might be able to make costumes, keep a percussive beat, or tell jokes. You would certainly be more engaged, and the whole performance would benefit.

Unfortunately, we have a cultural tradition of responding to differences, in others and ourselves, by looking for *deficits*, scanning for "errors" or "undesirable" results, instead of articulating positive instructions. For better results with dancing, writing, or any other form of learned expression, the key is to resist our instinctively negative reactions, and instead to identify the *steps* required, and the *skills* we have available.

CONSULTING SCHEDULE

(I'm focusing on individual consulting this term, so there will be no workshops scheduled until the summer. If you're interested in a future workshop, please let me know so I can put you on the list!)



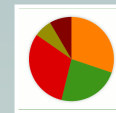
KIDS, age 8-18:

A few after-school time slots (weekdays 3:30-4:30) are now open for the new quarter. I collaborate with each client on a personal project, culminating in a map or book. I incorporate tools for thinking, writing, and regulating based on the client's profile, which can also be applied to writing challenges at school.



ADULTS:

Individual adult clients can schedule weekly sessions (weekdays 9:00-2:30), or arrange a schedule of meetings and draft reviews based on a specific project or deadline.



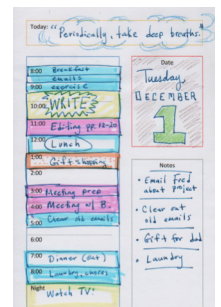
ASSESSMENT:

A written assessment helps you to identify and prioritize your writing goals for a specific project or time period. It provides a roadmap for those working on improving writing skills at home or work, and for families or providers who are coordinating an IEP or intervention team.

*Sessions take place at my Temescal office:
510 49th St. (@Telegraph), #209
Oakland, CA 94609*

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

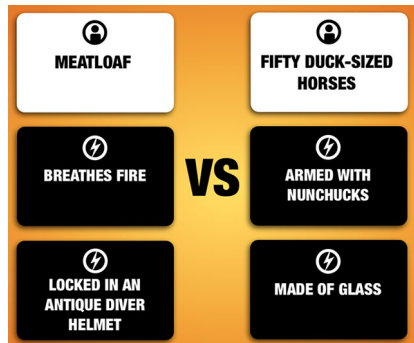
I've been experimenting with a simple daily planning sheet to help me with time management. Five minutes filling it out in the morning makes a big impact on focus and anxiety. You can download the form and instructions for using it on the "About" page of my website.



HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR THE NEURODIVERSE & THE WRITING-AVERSE

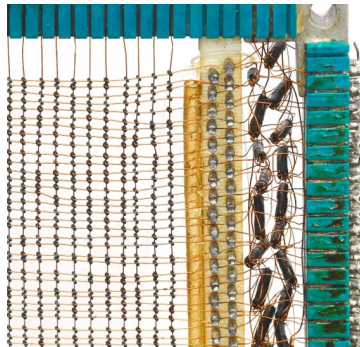
I spend a lot of time researching and testing books, games, and other products that I think might help me or my clients with things like creative thinking, articulating ideas, planning, and organization. Since it's the gift-giving season, I thought I'd make a few recommendations! (I am not affiliated with any of these products or vendors).

STORYTELLING WITH PARAMETERS



SUPERFIGHT (\$35; Games of Berkeley) is a card game that pits imaginary superfoes against one another. Each player draws a character (Hermione, Ghandi, The Statue of Liberty) and two attributes (“controls magnetism,” “has feet instead of hands,” “can take the form of any toiletry”). Each player then makes an argument about why his or her character would win in this fight. Simple, quick, smart, and fun to play, this game appeals even to pragmatists who would otherwise avoid such an open-ended, creative, and social activity.

THE ART & NARRATIVE OF CIRCUITRY



My son advised me not to recommend books as gifts, because nobody likes to receive them. Forging ahead, I also found that this book is out of print. I recommend it anyway! **CORE MEMORY: A Visual Survey of Vintage Computers** by John Alderman (\$20-\$80, Amazon Marketplace) is a collection of incredible photographs of old technology, from the holdings of the Computer History Museum in Mountain View. An in-print alternative to try is **The Computer: An Illustrated History** by Mark Frauenfelder (\$30).

A PROBLEM-SOLVING FIDGET



PLUS PLUS MINI (\$20-\$35, Fat Brain Toys; sometimes available at Greetings on Piedmont Ave., Oakland) is a simple construction toy, consisting of colorful plastic pieces, all the same size and shape. They have a satisfying feel and interlock into infinite 2- and 3-dimensional objects. The uniform shape makes it challenging to figure out how to execute curves, parallel lines, etc., so playing with the pieces tends to have a simultaneous relaxing and focusing effect. They are mathematical, analytical, tactile, and creative at the same time.

VISUAL PLANNING AND NOTETAKING



The **ACTION DAY WEEKLY PLANNER** (\$20, Amazon) has a great layout for listing your goals, identifying next steps, delegating work, and visually blocking out time for activities each day. Even if you already use a computer calendar, this is a good supplement, to help you plan and prioritize more actively.



The **SKETCHNOTE HANDBOOK** by Mike Rohde (\$32, video edition, Peachpit.com) teaches you how to take visual notes to improve your focus, memory, and enjoyment during lectures and meetings. Can also be used for brainstorming and visual mapping. No artistic skill is required.