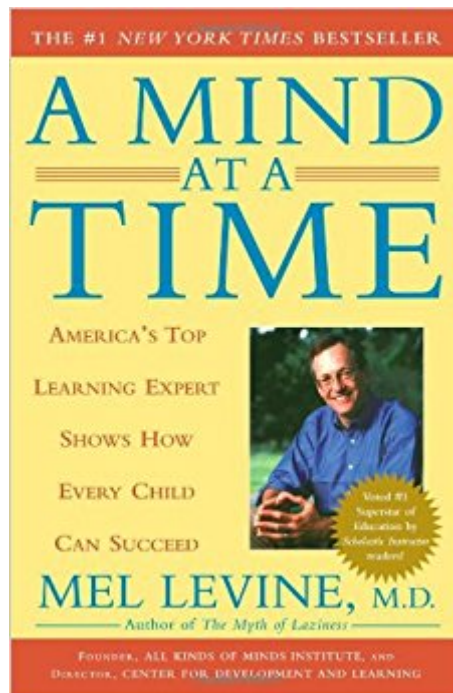


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# A Mind At A Time: America's Top Learning Expert Shows How Every Child Can Succeed



## Synopsis

"Different minds learn differently," writes Dr. Mel Levine, one of the best-known learning experts and pediatricians in America today. Some students are strong in certain areas and some are strong in others, but no one is equally capable in all. Yet most schools still cling to a one-size-fits-all education philosophy. As a result, many children struggle because their learning patterns don't fit the way they are being taught. In his #1 New York Times bestseller *A Mind at a Time*, Dr. Levine shows parents and those who care for children how to identify these individual learning patterns, explaining how they can strengthen a child's abilities and either bypass or help overcome the child's weaknesses, producing positive results instead of repeated frustration and failure. Consistent progress can result when we understand that not every child can do equally well in every type of learning and begin to pay more attention to individual learning patterns -- and individual minds -- so that we can maximize children's success and gratification in life. In *A Mind at a Time* Dr. Levine shows us how.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Other reviewers have discussed the pros and cons of Dr. Levine's theories in depth, so I won't go into those; in the field of cognitive psychology, I'm an interested (and, I think, fairly well-read) amateur rather than a professional. That said, I feel that this is an important book for both parents and educators. The child's "job" of learning how to function in the world, and mastering the many tasks set for him/her by the educational system, isn't an easy one. The human mind is complex and

multifaceted, but our schools tend to think of "intelligence" as a narrowly defined set of skills, and anyone who doesn't do well in those must be either stupid or lazy. (Levine notes that the moral implications of such judgments, e.g., that a student "doesn't try hard enough" or is "unmotivated," can be devastating to a child, and are often grossly unfair.) The irony is that -- as Levine points out -- the abilities that enable a child to succeed in school aren't necessarily those that conduce to success in later life; so, by rewarding performance only in certain areas, we doom many children to a low opinion of their abilities and ignore a wide spectrum of human potential. Although the subject isn't exactly lightweight, I found the book appealing and highly readable. Dr. Levine clearly has great respect and affection for his young subjects, so his anecdotes are engaging and (often) amusing. I was especially tickled when he urged a young client not to let his teachers "catch him doing something right" because from then on they'd hold it against him. In school, I was a "divergent thinker" to the max: if a subject interested me, I'd do a brilliant job, but if not I'd blow it off. So my occasional successes turned into threats: "See how well you can do if you just TRY hard enough."

Dr. Mel Levine, Founder of All Kinds of Minds Institute and Director of the University of North Carolina's Clinical Center for Development and Learning, describes himself as "a pediatrician with a mission." He is "obsessed with helping children find success." Indeed, after three decades of working in schools and with children, Levine is receiving national attention. Not only is *A Mind at a Time* a bestseller, Levine has recently been featured on several national talk shows and on the ... documentary *Misunderstood Minds*. *A Mind at a Time* is easy for the lay person to read and understand. Although Levine closely follows educational research, he does not cite research studies in *A Mind at a Time*. Rather he bases the book on "objective clinical observation." Levine writes, "For me these kids have been like textbooks on learning and mind development. I can learn more about a child by getting to know her well than by reading a list of computer-generated test scores. In fact, whenever I participate in the clinical evaluation of a child, I see some facets of brain function that I have never before seen." A genuine appreciation of each child shines through each of the case vignettes that Levine includes in *A Mind at a Time*. This appreciation is not merely compassion for a child dealing with learning difficulties; it is a celebration of the unique combination of strengths and weaknesses that makes up each child's mind. Optimism also pervades the discussion of each child. Levine identifies eight "neurodevelopmental systems" that work together during learning. The relationship between these systems is similar to that between the body's physiological systems (such as the circulatory system and the respiratory system).

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