The human mind develops over a lifetime—and it's never too late to make a positive change.

The latest on how to keep your brain healthy and sharp at every age

By Susan Ginsberg, Ed.D.

A growing body of research on how the mind ages is encouraging. It challenges the conventional wisdom that the mind inevitably declines as we get older. It makes the connection between physical fitness and mental alertness. Brain health is closely related to heart health—in other words, stronger heart, sharper memory. And it shows that children’s eating and exercise habits lay the groundwork for a healthy life as they grow older.

We’ve learned that the human mind develops over a lifetime, with some abilities peaking early and others kicking in later. In practical terms, the new research means that no matter how old you may be at this moment, it’s never too late to change your brain for the better, says neuropsychiatrist Richard Restak, M.D. He suggests thinking of the brain as a “work in progress that continues from birth till the day you die.”

This insight—that the brain retains plasticity across the entire life span—is fairly new. It has also been found that the brain is resilient and has a lifetime memory. For example, if you used to play the piano or chess but you stopped years ago, those circuits can be revived.

Making the heart-brain connection

The benefits of an alert, challenged brain and an active lifestyle can be found at every age, and the “use it or lose it” formula applies to all of us, no matter how old we are. Dr. Restak suggests these positive steps to help us get smarter and stay sharper:

Think about thinking. This is called “metacognition” and it involves becoming an expert on how your own mind works. Analyze your memory patterns. What kinds of things do you forget and what do you remember? Can you rattle off your student number from college years ago but can't seem to remember your new cellphone number? Be your own best critic. Develop plans and strategies to compensate for your specific problem areas.

Improve your recall. These days, if we miss a message, we can usually just click and play it again. But this may
encourage mental laziness in other areas. We need to pay attention to paying attention. For example, to remember where you parked your car or left your glasses, take a deep breath and repeat one location detail out loud.

Write down a series of random numbers, starting with 5 digits. Without looking, repeat them aloud or in your mind, one per second. Work your way up to 9 digits. Do the same with words, but spell them aloud or in your mind, one per second. Without looking, repeat them aloud or in your mind. This may sound a little odd at first, but it’s been found to increase one’s ability to recall names. (See On the Job on remembering names, page 6.)

Use mental images. It can help your “prospective memory”—the ability to remember to do something in the future. For example, every day after breakfast, visualize yourself taking your vitamin D supplement and checking your to-do list for the day.

To strengthen your visual memory, study the seating arrangement at your next meeting. Then close your eyes or look away. See if you can recreate it in your mind. Or, as you wait in line at the supermarket, take a mental snapshot of the people in the next line over. Turn away and recall as many details as you can. Then look back and see how well you did.

Make emotional connections. It’s important to remember feelings that accompanied an experience as well as the experience itself. One way to do this is to look at an old photo of yourself. Begin a written or mental “dialogue” between your “former” and “current” selves. Another way is to think about your friendships from an earlier time.

Develop a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. The normal human desire for clarity and closure often leads us to jump to conclusions or accept a simplistic explanation without carefully considering the facts in front of us. Go to www.puzz.com or www.puzzles.com. Or search online for “brainteaser,” “puzzle,” “anagram” or “logical challenge.” These activities are good practice to help you keep an open mind.

Stay (or get) interested in art and music. Simply listening to music can sharpen your brain, says Dr. Restak. He even suggests that Mozart contributes to multilevel thinking. Seeing and studying works of fine art can also improve your memory and other thinking processes by creating new linkages and networks within your brain.

Creative pursuits help too. Writing poetry, painting a portrait or improvising on a musical instrument can strengthen one’s powers of association that play a key role in remembering information and finding solutions to problems. “Creative thinking gets both sides of the brain working,” says neurologist Alice Flaherty. And it’s not limited to making art or music. To deal with challenges that demand imagination and resourcefulness, it helps us find new strategies and combine different ideas into new concepts.

Go beyond your comfort zone. While the brain is adaptive, it also tends to be lazy, particularly in relation to intellectual activity. To stay sharp, we need to push ourselves and try things we’re not necessarily good at or comfortable with.

For example, if your training and career is in the arts, learn more about science. Read challenging books. Take courses. Travel if you can. And whatever you get interested in, look for ways to share your new knowledge with others.

Stay active and eat healthy. In some ways, the healthy brain gets even stronger with age. For example, studies confirm that accumulated knowledge and expert skills (a.k.a. wisdom) increase as we get older. A recent Duke University study found that emotional savvy also appears to grow with age.

Regular exercise helps keep the brain well oxygenated and encourages the creation of new brain cells. Thirty minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week have been found to enlarge the “hippocampus,” the part of the brain that regulates emotion and memory. Strength training has been found to improve “executive function,” the brain’s ability to focus, process information and make decisions.

Lifestyle choices can make a big difference too. Don’t smoke. Drink moderately (no more than one a day is best), and eat a brain-healthy diet with plenty of B vitamins and omega-3 fats—and a minimum of processed foods.

See “Healthy foods for heart and mind” on page 7.

What works for the adult brain works for children too

Children who are physically fit have been found to do better on tests of thinking than kids who are less fit. Researchers at the University of Illinois have shown that two parts of the brain are larger among fitter kids. One is the “basal ganglia,” which helps maintain attention and “executive control,” the ability to coordinate actions and thoughts crisply. The other is the “hippocampus,” which is associated with more complex memory. Working together, these two parts of the brain allow some of our most intricate thinking.

A long-term study in Sweden reported that, among more than a million 18-year-old boys who joined the Swedish army, better fitness was correlated with higher IQs, even among identical twins. The fitter the twin, the higher his IQ. The fittest of the young men were also more successful in their careers than the least fit.

But the study found no correlation between muscular strength and IQ scores. And while there’s no evidence that exercise alone leads to a higher IQ, researchers suggest that aerobic exercise produces specific growth factors and proteins that stimulate the brain.

“More aerobic exercise!” for young people, suggests Professor Georg Kuhn of the University of Gothenburg, senior author of the study. He encourages parents to get kids moving, preferably away from video games. A still-unpublished study from Dr. Kuhn’s lab compared the cognitive impact in young people of 20 minutes of running on a treadmill with 20 minutes of playing sports-style video games at a similar intensity. Running improved test scores immediately afterward. Playing the video games did not.
Whose rules apply at grandparents’ house?

My parents are great with our kids, but we don’t always agree on child-rearing issues. Is it unrealistic to expect grandparents to follow parents’ rules when our children, who are 4 and 7, spend time at their house over the holidays?
—M.E., Yonkers, NY

Parents and grandparents seem to disagree most in areas of safety, discipline, food and manners.

SAFETY can be an issue because grandparents may be unfamiliar with some potential hazards out there now such as air bags and microwave ovens. Another is that children should not be allowed to play around with exercise equipment that has gears. Stationary bikes cause many hand and finger injuries every year.

Go over swimming, biking and seat belt rules. Review the Consumer Product Safety guidelines to make sure the house is child-proofed for kids of any age. This is important because a third of childhood poisonings take place in the homes of grandparents.

EATING is another area where generations often clash. While it’s fair to expect grandparents to abide by your overall approach, it’s probably best to let them do their own thing. If they introduce kids to different, even exotic, foods that you don’t serve at home or take them to restaurants where they’ll try new things, that’s great. And if you’re lucky, grandparents will also reinforce your attempts to teach table manners, but in a relaxed and fun way.

There’s no harm in having different expectations in different households. Children just need to know the groundrules. Some grandparents don’t allow feet on the furniture or let kids leave the table without permission.

And occasionally they’ll break parents’ rule on candy (with a whisper, “Don’t tell your mother”). This is the kind of secret bonding that every child will remember.

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Parents on the phone talk less to kids

Does the constant use of smartphones and other technology interfere with parent-child communications? So it would seem, says Dr. Dana L. Suskin, a University of Chicago language researcher. She recorded the use of language in six high-tech households: once with the devices on, once again with them off.

In four of the families, the difference was striking. When parents turned off their smartphones and laptops, verbal interactions with their kids increased—and, with two of the families, more than doubled.

Granted, this was a small study, but others have produced similar findings. Dr. Sherry Turkle of MIT has been studying how parental use of technology affects children and young adults. After 300 interviews over five years, she’s found that feelings of hurt, jealousy and competition have spread. She’ll publish her findings next year in a new book Alone Together.

“There’s something that’s so engrossing about the kind of interaction people do with screens that they wall out the world,” Dr. Turkle said. “I’ve talked to children who try to get their parents to stop texting while driving and they get resistance, ‘Oh, just one, just one more quick one, honey.’ It’s like ‘one more drink’.”

Not all child-development experts agree that laptop and smartphone use by parents is a bad thing, especially because interactive devices enable some parents to spend more time at home, a good thing.

But we do know that engaged parenting—talking and explaining things to children, and responding to their questions—is the bedrock of early childhood learning. “Distracted time is not high-quality time, whether parents are checking the newspaper or their BlackBerry,” says Dr. Frederick J. Zimmerman, of the UCLA School of Public Health, who has studied how TV can distract parents.

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Study finds happy people more likely to skip the chit chat

A study from the University of Arizona asserts that happy people tend to have more substantive conversations than people who engage solely in small talk. The researchers don’t say whether a good conversation causes happiness or vice versa. Maybe it’s a combination of the two.

The ability to make small talk is still a useful social skill—and perhaps is a way to enter into a deeper, more probing conversation. Matthais Mehl, Ph.D., coauthor of the study, suggests four ways to encourage meaningful conversations:

- You can talk about politics, technology, even what you watched on TV, but there needs to be some personal disclosure. You have to reveal something about yourself.
- Give your full attention when you’re talking to someone, instead of going through that list of to-dos in your head.
- Find some common ground that offers a ready path to more meaningful exchanges.
- The place counts too. It could be a corner table in a busy coffee shop or a secluded park bench—but wherever it is, it’s important to feel relaxed and comfortable. And this is true for a one-on-one talk or a group discussion.
Raising the alcohol issue with an older relative

Of the more than three million older Americans who have a drinking problem, many of them began to abuse alcohol for the first after the age of 65. This may be surprising, but the reasons become clearer as we learn more and more about the aging process.

Alcohol becomes more potent as the body ages, and the ill effects of drinking are multiplied by many drugs commonly prescribed for older people. Others factors that can result in alcohol dependence include retirement, poor health, the loss of a loved one and feelings of isolation.

To make matters worse, older people tend to be more resistant to getting help for a drinking problem. They are less likely to be affected by the constraints faced by younger people, such as the prospect of losing a job, a drunk-driving arrest or rejection by friends and loved ones. Older drinkers may also fear being sent to a nursing home if they do seek treatment.

Diagnosis can be difficult

Unfortunately, alcohol abuse among older people is not that easy to diagnose. Many of the symptoms are the same or similar to those associated with aging: tiredness, loss of appetite, forgetfulness, losing things, frequent falls, depression, dementia and incontinence. And adult children who did not see a drinking problem when they were growing up are less likely to recognize one now.

For some older people, isolation is a symptom. For others, the reverse is more likely the case. Drinking cocktails with friends is an encouraged form of socializing at many retirement communities.

But even after a drinking problem is acknowledged, many families just don’t want to confront it. Some have the attitude: “At their age, what’s the harm? Let them drink.” Or if drinking has been a long-term problem, family members may feel there’s nothing anyone can do to change the situation.

Treatment works

It’s not true that older people are unable to overcome a drinking problem when they seek treatment, their recovery rates are as good as for any other age group. In fact, 12-step programs have been found to be particularly successful when older people are meeting with others of their own generation.

The challenge, of course, is to get an older person to acknowledge that he or she has a problem and then to agree to get some help. Here are some suggestions for ways to approach this situation constructively:

- **Lectures don’t work.** Your relative may already be feeling bad about himself or herself, so a stern lecture from you will probably just make matters worse. Choose your words carefully. Express your interest in helping by saying, “I’m concerned about you.”

- **Express some hope.** Give your older relative or friend the message that treatment can and will work and will improve the quality of the person’s life.

- **Describe the effects of the problem.** Use terms that are most important to your relative: for example: how the person’s drinking affects other members of the family or the health implications of drinking or what other people might be saying.

- **Use less threatening terms.** Don’t label people. Talk to your older relative about “drinking” or a “drinking problem.” If alcohol abuse is a continuing rather than a new problem, don’t dredge up unhappy incidences from the past.

- **Get doctors involved.** Check on any possible adverse effects of mixing alcohol and prescription drugs. Since medical doctors seldom raise the subject of drinking, simply asking this question is a good way to signal that your older relative may have a problem.

- **Talk about the dangers of drinking and driving.** If this becomes a real problem with your older relative or friend, you may need to get tough. You may have to warn the person that you will notify the Department of Motor Vehicles.

- **Don’t count on drastic measures to work.** Throwing out someone’s liquor bottles is almost never the solution to a drinking problem. Like all people with a drinking problem, older people will get help when they are ready.

- **Consider an intervention.** This involves a face-to-face meeting during which caring family members, friends and professionals state their concerns and offer a plan for treatment such as going to AA, checking into a hospital detox unit, or entering a substance abuse treatment facility. Counselors at your local Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence can help you plan an intervention.

- **Visit www.nia.nih.gov.** It’s the website of the National Institute on Aging. Type the words “alcohol abuse” into the search window. You’ll find a wide range of resources to help older people with a drinking problem.
Kids’ sleepovers are good for parents too

By Marcia Y. Cantarella, Ph.D.

I know my son’s close friends because they’ve slept over at our house many times. We enjoyed that special familiarity that comes from seeing sleepy faces around the breakfast table on a Saturday or Sunday morning. Some of my son’s friends are part of our extended family—as he is of theirs, even now that they are grown.

Here are some of the benefits of sleepovers.

- **Parents can learn a lot about their children’s friends.** Like who eats like a horse, who hates vegetables, who is chatty, who is well-mannered, who is a follower and who’s a leader. Often we find out that our own first impressions of a child were wrong.

- **Other parents get to know your children.** It was a source of great joy to me that my son was welcomed at his friends’ homes. And why not? He was sweet, talkative and always offered to help. Being a guest sometimes brings out the best in our children.

- **Sleepovers can help you find things out about your own child.** What kind of friends does he or she feel comfortable with for an extended period? Who is not asked to sleep over? Children get a chance to show parents their choice in friends—a test in your approving their judgment.

- **Kids see how other families live.** This is especially important now, when more and more of our friends and neighbors—and our children’s classmates—come from cultures with different customs from our own.

- **It’s inexpensive fun**

For busy working parents, a sleepover can also be a way to barter some time and space—and it is economical entertainment. The treat for older kids especially is getting together with buddies, presumably to stay awake half the night—talking, eating, watching TV and making a mess of the bedroom. At our house, we were willing to close the bedroom door on kids and let them make a mess. But we popped in from time to time through the evening—and the children knew that the room had to be back in order by the next afternoon.

We found that one-on-one sleepovers with a good friend worked the best, especially with younger children. Threesomes could be troubling and group sleepovers for birthday parties and other special events require much more planning and supervision.

**Sleepover tips and cautions**

- **Ask about allergies.** Find out if a child is allergic to foods, feather pillows, pets or anything else. Have emergency numbers and instructions from parents.

- **Establish clear ground rules.** Cover noise, TV, video games, computer use and any other concerns you may have.

- **Stack your refrigerator with foods you want the children to eat.** Have healthy snacks like popcorn or cut-up veggies on hand.

- **Remember that you too are on display.** And even if you’re on your best behavior, don’t be surprised at the brunt of barbs and giggles (One of our son’s friends does a great imitation of my husband.)

Go for it. Sleepovers are a great part of growing up.

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“The author is a Consultant in Higher Education, Diversity, Access and College Success.
‘I recognize the face. What is his name?’

By Anne Baber and Lynee Waymond

Remembering people’s names is something that’s expected of us constantly at the workplace. Why is it so difficult to do?

For starters, we don’t try very hard. Someone sticks out a hand and says, “Hi, I’m Jennifer Allsgood.” The other person shakes her hand and responds, “Bob Shafer. Nice to meet you.” The name exchange takes less than five seconds—it’s no wonder name exchange takes less than five seconds—it’s no wonder we don’t remember. We need five seconds—it’s no wonder name exchange takes less than five seconds—it’s no wonder we don’t remember. We need to slow down a bit and linger a little longer over the name exchange. Here’s how.

Avoid a head-on name collision

When someone says his or her name, do not immediately reply with your own. Focus initially on learning the other person’s name. You can accomplish this by doing three simple things. Try them and they will help, even if they feel a little awkward at first.

Repeat the first name. “Nice to meet you, Jennifer.” Then hang on to it long enough to introduce Jennifer to one other person at the event. Focus on remembering the first name only, using the “divide and conquer” principle.

Ask for the last name again or confirm it. You might say, for example: “And your last name is...?” or “Tell me your last name again” or “And your last name is Allsgood?” When people say their last name separately, they tend to speak it more clearly—instead of running first and last names together as they so often do.

Ask a question or comment on the person’s name. For example: “Do you like to be called Jenny or Jennifer?” Or “Allsgood. What a nice name. Sounds optimistic.” Just don’t try to be funny or say something too obvious.

Now it’s time to teach your name

Notice we haven’t said anything yet about helping people remember your name? You can do three simple things to make it easier.

Give ‘em a double dip. Say your first name twice. “Hi, I’m Bob. Bob...Shafer.”


Make your name memorable. Say something to help the other person remember your name. Spelling can help—we learn best when we can see letters in our mind’s eye. Of course, it depends on your name. Nancy Mann likes to say, for example. “It’s Mann with two n’s. I’m the only woman in real estate in Kansas City who’s a Mann.”

More tips to try

Keep using the person’s name. As the conversation moves along, say the other person’s name from time to time (but not in overbearing or obnoxious way), “Are you a new member, Fred?”

Look for a personal connection. “My college roommate’s name was Adam.” Or “Nice to meet you, Harriet. Did I hear your name mentioned as one of the new board members?” Or “I think our kids may go to the same school.”

Say it again as you leave. Repeating the name one more time before you part will help to reinforce your learning. “Good to meet you, Rhoda.”

Don’t make assumptions. Previous generations of immigrants tended to Anglicize their names. The actress Anne Bancroft, born in the Bronx, was Anna Maria Louisa Italiano. The German-born pianist changed his name from Steinweg to Steinway. But this practice has declined. Do not assume that someone with a foreign-sounding name was not a native-born American. When Ying Chie introduces herself, she’s often asked: “Where are you from?” She replies, with some irritation, “San Francisco.”

If you’re the newbie in a group, you can’t always control the name-exchange experience. If you are quickly introduced to a new group of people, just smile and say hello. Then go back to each individual and introduce yourself one-on-one, using the new system.

Next time you have a memory lapse, try this

We’ve all met a lot of people, so it’s easy to forget names. But don’t give yourself a pass with the disclaimer: “I’m so bad with names.” Try these options instead:

WALK UP to the person, stick out your hand and say your name. You’re banking on ritual. The other person will most likely do the same.

IF YOU CAN remember where the two of you met or something you talked about, refer to it. That way, you are acknowledging that your prior meeting was memorable. “I remember we talked about the seminar you attended. I’m Todd Watson.” Since you have offered your name, the other person will usually follow your cue.

ASK FOR HELP. Look around for a friend. “Jerry, I know I’ve met the man over there with the red tie. Remind me of his name.”

DON’T SWEAT IT. Often, a person’s name will occur to you as the conversation goes along.
8 easy tips for reducing salt in your diet

1. Don’t sprinkle salt into the water you use to cook pasta, rice, hot cereals and vegetables. At the table, taste your food before you add salt.

2. Flavor foods with fresh and dried blends of herbs and spices rather than salt. These blends can be found in most grocery stores.

3. Eat fresh vegetables whenever you can. If you use frozen or canned vegetables, make sure they don’t have any added salt.

4. When you use canned tuna, rinse it to remove some of the salt. Use fresh rather than canned or processed poultry, fish and lean meat.

5. When you buy prepared foods, look for low-sodium options containing less than 5 percent of the Recommended Daily Value (RDV) of sodium. Avoid high-sodium foods that contain 20 percent or more of the RDV of sodium.

6. Snack on fruits and vegetables. Steer clear of the chips and pretzels. Or try a handful of salt-free nuts or a cup of plain popcorn.

7. When you eat in a restaurant, order your salad with oil and vinegar on the side.

8. Processed seasonings such as soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, steak sauce and bouillon cubes are loaded with sodium. Avoid prepared salad dressings, deli meats, canned or dried soups, sauces and snack items. Go easy on the condiments such as ketchup, mustard, pickles and olives.

—Adapted from the Harvard Health Letter

Will the real whole grains please stand up?

Breakfast cereals have come a long way since the days of "snap, crackle and pop." The Cereal Project, a database at www.mrbreakfast.com, lists more than 1,220 products. And, as we all know from TV commercials and a walk through our supermarket, cereals are a large and heavily marketed sector of the U.S. food industry.

The cereal business is complicated too, according to the book Cerealizing America by Scott Bruce and Bill Crawford. The authors show how, over the years, breakfast cereals evolved from "health foods" to not so healthy. The practical challenge these days is to get past the hype and figure out which products are truly whole grain, high in fiber, and low in sugar and fat.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) says it’s important to check the ingredients in cereals and to look especially for the following:

Whole grains. Read product labels. Whole grain or bran should be listed first. Ignore claims like “made with whole wheat,” “whole grain guarantees” or “multigrain.” Be aware that rolled oats and oat flakes are whole grain but may not always say so. And it’s OK to count bran (wheat, corn or oat) because, even refined, it keeps much of the good stuff. Soy, flax and sesame seeds may be good for you but are not grains.

Fiber content. Look for at least 3 grams of fiber per 100 calories. It should be the “intact” fiber you get from whole grains, not a slew of “isolated” ingredients food companies count as fiber such as inulin.

Fat and sugar content. Aim for no more than 1 gram of saturated fat per serving and no artificial sweetener. And if you see the words “cookies,” “honey,” “frosting,” “marshmallows” or “sweetened” on the package, chances are it’s loaded with sugar. Dried fruit also adds sugar.

Here are some more suggestions from CSPI:

Keep it simple. Cereal spinoffs tend to be “junkier” versions of the originals. Beware especially of the “3 C’s: crisps, crunches and clusters.” Choose a cereal without a lot of extra ingredients. For example: bran flakes, raisin bran, all bran, Cheerios and shredded wheat. If you like fruit with your cereal, add it yourself.

Don’t be swayed by packaging. Claims on labels that a particular cereal will “balance,” “purify,” “strengthen,” or “heart-healthy,” provides “energy” or has “antioxidants” have very little meaning. Your best bet is to check your favorite cereal to make sure it measures up.

Healthy foods for heart and mind

The Mediterranean diet has long been recognized as good for your heart. Now, researchers are saying it’s good for your brain too (see Front Page Feature). And while there’s no “official” Mediterranean diet, it refers to a diet that is high in fish, fruits, legumes, nuts, vegetables and grains and low in red meats, dairy products, saturated fats and sweets.

To make your diet healthy for both heart and mind, include the following foods as often as possible:

Fatty fish such as salmon (omega-3 fatty acids)
Orange, strawberries, red peppers, tomatoes (vitamin C)
Canola oil, olive oil, nuts (vitamin E)

Broccoli, cantaloupe, carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes (beta carotene)
Blackberries, blueberries, cranberries (anthocyanin antioxidants)
Dried beans, fruits, vegetables, whole grains (antioxidants plus complex carbohydrates for energy)
Bananas, chick peas, fortified cereals, organ meats, spinach (vitamin B6)
Fortified cereals, whole-grain bread, leafy green vegetables (folate)
Eggs, fish, lean meat and skinless poultry (vitamin B12 and niacin).

—Adapted from Mind, Mood & Memory
Helping kids overcome learning problems

Yes, children who seem academically bewildered or whose curiosity seems to have shut down can awaken their early joy and excitement, says Dr. Stanley Greenspan, renowned professor of psychiatry and pediatrics and author whose work is familiar to a whole generation of parents.

His research into the stages through which infants, young children and older children learn to think and problem-solve led him to use the metaphor of a learning tree to describe how kids learn. The roots of the tree represent the different ways kids take in information and plan their actions: for example, how they decode what they hear, see, smell or touch. The trunk of the tree represents thinking skills and how they apply to academic subjects—and also to kids’ friendships and family relationships. The branches represent the essential skills of reading, mathematics, speaking, writing and organizing.

In *The Learning Tree*, Dr. Greenspan provides an overview of the learning problems children face in their early years and beyond. By identifying the building blocks that lead to following directions and understanding science, history and social studies, he found new methods for helping children with learning difficulties.

There’s practical advice about children from infancy through high school. Parents and teachers especially will welcome the sections on finding and solving learning problems early. *The Learning Tree* covers myriad learning difficulties, explaining their origins, offering hope and supplying concrete solutions so that every child can flourish in school and in life.

Dr. Greenspan died shortly after finishing his work on this book. His coauthors were his wife, Nancy Thorndike Greenspan, who collaborated with him on four previous books, and Dr. Richard Lodish, Associate Headmaster of the Sidwell Friends School.

*The Learning Tree: Overcoming Learning Disabilities From the Ground Up* (DeCapo Press/Lifelong Books, hardcover, $26) is available in bookstores and online.