

Why Emmanuel Can't Read by Paul H. Sutherland

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“What age group is the book for?” The former member of Parliament asked, looking into my eyes for an answer. “Age 0 to age 88,” I answered. He looked at me and said “I mean, is it for P2, P3 P4?” he asked. “What classes would use it?” —“Any class,” I replied.

The Former MP had been involved in Education at the ministry level and was very passionate about education, which is one of the reasons we were chatting.

As if I had not heard him, he asked again. “Paul, what classes would we buy this book for?”

—I said “We create books that have great stories, have each page well illustrated, use high quality paper, and then we think about every word, every illustration, and how each page is put together.” I explained. “We don’t think about Age”. We think: “Is this book a book that kids & even Adults will LOVE?”

—I have had dozens of conversions like this over the years. M-and-I think more than anything, this conversation illustrates the root of why Emmanuel, and Hasa, and Michael, and Doris can't read.

—It seems, well-meaning Ministries, NGO's, Teachers, and parents buy books based on budgets, word count or word list criteria with little thought about whether the child will enjoy the book or not. Books are bought according to Buying books because they fit in some ancient, outdated system that said 7 year olds shouldn't read books that have words like inspire, incredible, confident, happiness, or uncomfortable INCREDIBLE, CONFIDENT, HAPPINESS or UNCOMFORTABLE because they are above their grade level is counter-productive. The goal of education is to create self-reliant learners, learners who are curious and want to grow, to learn, to explore, and of course to read, because it is fun, fulfilling, and enjoyable.

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—Books are meant to teach us. We need to learn to read - so we can read to learn. Unfortunately, But the education industry has not realised that if we want children to learn to read – to really learn to read well – they need motivation MOTIVATION. And the best kind of motivation is motivation that is positive.

—There are many reasons why Emmanuel can't read. Many Parents struggle to afford school fees, have little money to buy books, and little time to sit and enjoy a book for even a few minutes with their child. Like their parents, they grew up in a home with no books, so they have little connection to the importance of reading competency as a key to success.

Emmanuel ~~also~~ is also caught in a cultural trap. ~~and~~ He ~~can't~~ read because he has been taught to hate ~~HATE~~ books, to look at books as something to drudge through ~~thru~~ because mom, dad, or teacher, says "Read this and shut up!"

—He grew up hearing, "No! ~~NO~~ You can't play until ~~ill~~ you read that book", and depending on his age or school, Emmanuel was hit ~~Hit~~, criticized, or made to feel dumb ~~Dumb~~ because he read cow "Cow" as cat "Cat" or their "Their" as the "The". ~~So~~ Emmanuel is ~~afraid~~ afraid of books.

~~It is not his teachers fault.~~

—When Emmanuel ~~he~~ was young, if he had a book in the house his, ~~the~~ parents would say, "Deon't touch it. You'll get it dirty". ~~If~~ he ~~the~~ child was looking at the book, his ~~the~~ parents would say, ~~said~~ "Be careful!; Deon't rip the pages.; Deon't spill anything on it!" or "Look! You wiped your nose on the book". ~~So~~ ~~SO~~ Emmanuel learned one thing:; books are going to get you into trouble. ~~Stay away.~~ If you're reading a book and you accidentally spill some ketchup ~~eat~~ up on it, you will get yelled at for not "respecting books".

—~~So~~ ~~SO~~ Emmanuel has learned simply that "books suck!"

—And Emmanuel's ~~teachers~~ have reinforced that notion.

————— Why Patrick Loves Books

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—Patrick's parents realized from their own life experience that if their ~~there~~ son was going to be successful, ~~that~~ he needed to learn to read English very, very well. They had struggled all ~~their~~ lives, and had little money, so they wanted to make it count. They bought just one book for Patrick. ~~W~~ ~~And~~ ~~when~~ friend's would ask what gifts to give Patrick for his birthday or Christmas, "Well illustrated, books." ~~w~~ ~~Was~~ always the answer.

Patrick's parents ~~They~~ also realized that motivation is ~~always~~ the key to raising a great reader, and that love motivates better than fear. So, they allowed Patrick to play with books from birth. Patrick would look at the pictures, chew on the book, ~~play~~ with it, and do things like see how the ~~pages~~ would woosh whoosh as he flapped the book. He ~~HE~~ learned that books were fun. Often, he would sit on mom ~~Mom~~ or dad's ~~Dads~~ lap and he would just turn the pages and look at the pictures, feeling loved and happy interacting with his parents.

—As Patrick grew, his Dad would ask ~~might say~~, "Patrick, want me to tell you a story?" ~~And~~ Patrick would go grab ~~a~~ book, climb on dad's ~~Dads~~ lap, ~~and~~ ~~and~~ Patrick would open the book. Patrick and his dad ~~And they~~ would look at the pictures together. Patrick might say "What does that page say daddy? ~~Daddie~~" Patrick would ask. ~~And~~ ~~and~~ daddy ~~Daddie~~ would not read the words, but he would say, "The girl is riding on the bBoda bBoda, really fast and, she is happy!" And Patrick would say, "Oh," and turn the pages. He would ~~and~~ stop on another page and look in his dad's eyes and say, "Ehh," as he pointed to the grandfather

making a ~~Wooden b~~Bike for Amani. ~~Then Patrick's dad and the Dad~~ would tell a story about that page.

Patrick learned that books were fun. ~~From a young age, he~~He learned ~~young~~ that his parents loved books, loved to have him on their lap with a book, and that books were something to connect over and with.

~~People often say to me, I often get from people~~ “Paul, this “books are toys too”; stuff is crazy! ~~K~~kids won’t respect ~~books if we teach them this~~them”. ~~I say But~~ “{Tell me something you love that you don’t respect?” ~~The s~~Simple truth is: ~~—if~~ if we love something, we respect it. —If kids love books, they will respect them. If they love books, they will want to have you read ~~the~~books to them as they ~~begin to~~ realize that stories are fun and entertaining (around age 2 to age 4).

~~—A child's~~Their attention span is not that long at ~~such~~ a young age, ~~-so~~ maybe they will ~~only~~ be able to sit and listen ~~to get~~ 10 pages ~~-thru-~~, but that ~~'s~~is ok. Patrick would sit on a parent’s lap for hours and listen-, while his brother would have to go run around, tease his younger brother, or get a drink -10 minutes in. Both boys find books fun-, but Patrick ~~truly, well he~~ loves books.

~~—So,~~ let’s get to the psychological-, brain science: ~~the~~ —“maths” on why Patrick loves books-.

- 1) ~~4)~~aths” on why P—to play with and enjoy his one and only book -when he was a baby. He learned that books connected him -with caring adults, are fun to look at, ~~wh~~oosh, -and push along the floor like a block.
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- 2)His parents made books a positive, love filled experience of connection and joy.
- 2) ~~—~~
- 3)His parents made books a positive, love filled experience of connection and joy.ictures, chew on the book child. Like their parents read in the newspaper, or stories they knew from when they were young.
- 3) ~~—~~
- 4)Patrick’s parent knew that if they could get Patrick to -fall in love with books, he would WANT TO LEAN TO READ.
- 4) ~~—~~
- 5)They also knew he would admire and respect books-, because we respect what we love.
- 5) ~~—~~
- 6)Patrick's parents knew that there is no right way to read a book. If ~~Patrick~~he read the book from back to front that was fine. Eventually, Patrick realized it was more enjoyable to start at the beginning of a book.
- 6) ~~—~~

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7) Patrick realized it was more enjoyable to stay, so they only had a few books. But these books were fun, well-illustrated, and contained great stories and made for children 0 to 88.

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8) When Patrick got to school, he did not mind that some of the books were a bit boring, or were not well-illustrated, or not much fun. But in his heart he knew that reading and books were fun, enjoyable, and good. Patrick realized that if he learned more words that he could read even better stories. He realized if he learned more words, he could read on his own and not have to bug mom or dad to read to him. In fact, he could even make his parents happy by reading stories to them. His parents and they enjoyed being read to, even if they had the same story read to them 100 times.

8)

9) Story read to them 100 times if they ever; once we learn to read – we can read to learn. When we learn to read well the world opens up to us and we are no longer dependent on a teacher, computers, and others to learn. We can teach ourselves. We can learn about accounting, law, medicine, art, food, success, or finances. We can read fantastic fiction at 3 in the morning or even on the back of a boda boda. And if we can be self-learners, we can be anything we want to be. Because we can teach ourselves.

It is sad that it seems there are to be more Emmanuel's than Patrick's in Uganda. I do know one thing for certain: the parents, teachers, caregivers and MPs that are listening to me speak today read this column will now know the "maths" of creating a reading culture in Uganda. If we can have great fun stories that are well illustrated with illustrations, names, and pictures, and situations that Uganda's children can relate to, then achieving the goal of creating a vibrant, positive, "BOOKS ARE TOYS TOO" culture in Uganda is definitely achievable.

Paul Sutherland writes on success, values, virtue, finance, and happiness for adults. Along with the team at Smart Toto he writes, edits and creates FANTASTIC, INCREDIBLE, BEAUTIFUL children's stories for children age 0 to 88. Amani the Boda boda Ryder, Sitwe Joseph goes to school and Sitwe Joseph go to Worship are current Smart toto titles now. Three new books are getting ready to print: Do you like Grasshoppers and Chapati? Congazori, and 100 stories will be available by June.

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