

## **ABSTRACT – Why Emmanuel Can't Read**

Well-meaning people buy books based on budgets, word counts, or word list criteria with little thought about whether the child will enjoy the book or not. Books are bought according to some ancient, outdated system that said 7 year olds shouldn't read books that have words like *inspire*, *incredible*, *confident*, *happiness*, or *uncomfortable* because they are above their grade level is counterproductive. 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.

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

People often say to me, “Paul, this "books are toys too" stuff is crazy! Kids won't respect books if we teach them this”. But tell me something you love that you don't respect? The simple truth is: if we love something, we respect it.

It is quite simple really: 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, or others to learn. If we can be self-learners we can be anything we want to be because we can teach ourselves.

If we can have great, fun stories that are well illustrated with illustrations, names, 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.