The Interactive Storybook

Children are by Nature inquisitive. They desire to learn and wish, like anyone, to feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. Too much learning is done by rote, memorization vs. actual learning through experience. This takes away the exploration and sense of accomplishment that learning should actually produce. Our typical school environments turns inquisitive young people into regurgitating robots. The results of rote learning were fine for the farm/industrialized economy and even for the cubical office experience. Robots have taken away much of the farm and industrial jobs, software is daily eliminating positions once thought critical in an office. These changes create new opportunities also, ones that will not be satisfied with the educational process in place.

TV also dampens independent thinking and the desire to learn. Everything is presented to you without consequence. The experience of emotions is without thought, action or consequence. “The earlier children acquire a passive TV habit, the more likely attention span will not develop normally. Young children can be entrained to keep watching TV. The faster pace of the images they are watching, the more likely they will keep watching and the more likely the child's attention span will be jerked around. … Contrast this externalized control of attention with the internal control required while participating in a self-directed play activity. The child… determines how long he or she will attend to individual tasks.”

Interactive Opportunities are the only ones that do have cause and effect. This project is to create an opportunity for a child to understand causes and effects without hurry or excitable response. A story that is engaging, yet allows time for thought; that can be put down and returned to. One that responds to how long a child wishes to engage with it each time. This project also creates opportunities to understand causes and effects, the reward of conscious informed choice and independent thinking. This project is to create an opportunity for a rewarding experience that will, hopefully, counteract the over stimulation of current media and the lethargic rote experiences often found in our public school systems.

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1 Healy, Jane. ENDANGERED MINDS: WHY CHILDREN DON'T THINK AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT (1990, Touchstone)
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Target Audience:
- The primary audience is a child must be able to understand and accept an imperfect or unhappy ending.
  - Children who can read – Grades 1 and 2 – is what I anticipate now – possibly older as the story may become more complicated and longer. Have to research and write the story first.
  - Older Children, Caretakers or Parents interacting with younger Children who may not be able to read at the level of the book.

The Goal:
- To create an interactive experience that encourages learning, where the Child makes choices and there are lessons to learn.

Types of Lessons:
- Each of us is responsible for our lives the way they are
- We all must live with the consequences of the Child's decisions
- The easy way isn't always
- There is more than one way to accomplish a goal
- Cooperating is good sometimes
- Independent thinking is always the way to make a decision
- Learning is fun
- Choices should not be made blindly – you should become informed first

Research
- Reading stories directed at different age groups from 1st to 3rd grade
  - To understand the level of reading and comprehension at each level
- Alternate ways to present material html vs. programming
- Current research as to the most meaningful way to present interactive material to children
- Test with Real Children when almost done.