Goals and Objectives

Project Goal

- The goal of this project is to create an Interactive Experience in a Storybook format where a young reader will participate in a Hero/Heroine’s Journey and help determine the outcome of the Story.

Objectives - to achieve this goal, the project must:

- Be written in simple enough terms for a young reader to understand the choices and challenges that their chosen Hero/ Heroine will face during their Journey.
- Have enough action and adventure to keep the Participant interested
- Have the Main Hero/Heroine have a personal hurdle from without or within that a young reader can identify with in order that Journey be one of growth and learning.
- Have choices that are age appropriate and require thinking on the reader’s part.
- Have challenges that young readers face today as part of the choices they must make for their Character of Choice.

Target Audience

- The Expected Target Audience will be young readers approximately 2nd through 4th grade. At this age, they already have had personal pleasures, challenges and confrontations that can be utilized as obstacles and choices within the story. They are old enough to understand that some decisions do not always lead to Happy Endings and are able to read a book that has more content than pictures.
- This age group also wants to be perceived as savvy and grown-up; but is typically still young enough to want to believe in the unbelievable in the privacy of their own space.

User Persona

- The Persona of a 2nd to 4th grader is one that still wants to believe in the unbelievable; but may not always have a chance to express this desire depending on their peers and personal maturity level. Thus, the story would not be successful if cultural figures such as Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny were used. Historical or “Other World” Fantasies allow for settings and situations far removed from our life and allow for adventure that young people like to dream about.

User Scenario

- This is to be treated as a book. A private time where a young reader can experience the story and the choices at his or her own pace and without intrusion.
- An opportunity to learn "Cause & Effect” and "Failure & Learning” without having to make a hurried response or listen to the judgment of others. A story that is engaging, yet allows time for thought; that can be put down and returned to.
Rationale

- The Primary Reason to create this Interactive Experience such is to give the young reader an opportunity to make choices and experience success and failure in the privacy of their own space. If they succeed, they can share the experience. If they don't like the outcome, they can keep that particular experience to themselves. They can also duplicate a successful experience with their friends and parents proving to others the success they achieved.

- The story is not a one time opportunity allowing the young reader to make different choices and experiment.

- Children are 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. There is little chance for a sense of accomplishment that learning should actually produce without exploration and a chance to fail.

- Failure often leads the way to Success. Schools don't have the time to allow each child to fail, learn and then Succeed. Rote learning and tests have become the norm. The results of rote learning were fine for the farm/industrialized economy and even for the cubical office experience. Robots have replace people in many farm and industrial jobs; software is daily eliminating positions once thought critical in an office. These changes create new opportunities, ones that will not be satisfied with people who have not had the chance to fail and learn from it.

- TV often dampens independent thinking and the motivation to set upon a task of one's own to learn. Everything is presented to you without interaction. 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 ones that do have cause and effect. This project 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.
Overview of interactive project:

The reader begins the story by choosing between the adventures of two characters – a female and a male. The adventures will be similar in Nature following the typical Hero/Heroine Journey of Growth. The catch will be that there will be choices that may not end up with the “Happy Ending”. Since the audience is to be a young reader, this Journey will be placed in another time or world and will be a Fantasy or Magical in Nature. This will allow the reader to have several opportunities to change their mind and at least one magic escape or rescue. It also allows the other Characters to have abilities and natures that are more fantastic or surreal in order to capture the young reader’s imagination.

The Story will be based on the Stages of the Hero’s Journey

- The Ordinary World
- Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Meeting with the Mentor
- Crossing the First Threshold
- Test, Allies, Enemies
- Approach to the Inmost Cave
- Ordeal
- Reward
- The Road Back
- Resurrection
- Return with the Elixir

Types of Lessons:

- Each of us is responsible for our lives the way they are
- The characters in the story will live with the Readers decisions
- The easy way isn’t always
- There is more than one way to accomplish a goal
- Cooperating is good sometimes but not always – cooperation is judged good first in the eyes of the person asking for the cooperation.
- Informed and Independent thinking is usually the smartest way to make a decision – sometimes you won’t have the information you need so you have to take a leap of faith.
- Learning is fun

1 Healy, Jane. ENDANGERED MINDS: WHY CHILDREN DON'T THINK AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT (1990, Touchstone