

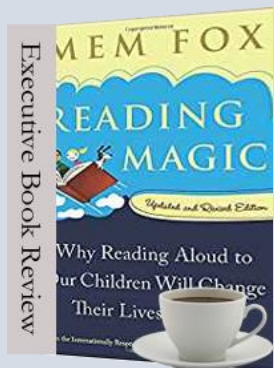


Book #110  
Event #209

## Reading Magic (and beyond)

by Mem Fox

Reviewed by Robyn Tresnak



### About the Author

Mem Fox began her work in theater and quickly moved into literacy studies. In one presentation she shared that literacy "is my passion, my battle and my mission, and my exhaustion". She is from Australia, yet her books are well known around the world. Fox has written over forty children's books and eight non-fiction books for adults regarding literacy and learning. Until 1996 she was an associate professor of education and now continues in education by presenting at conferences worldwide.

Mortimer Adler, author of *How to Read a Book*, was an American philosopher who was born in 1902 and lived almost a hundred years (He passed in 2001). He went Columbia University and completed his Ph.D. in Psychology, even after dropping out of school as a teenager. In 1927 he wrote his first book, then wrote more than seventy books over the next fifty years.

### About the Book

*Reading Magic* was written to detail the value of reading to young children, not only on their young lives, but the impact into adulthood. Fox also describes the joy for family members when they share in these moments with others. The pages are filled with inspiring, true stories of families who prove the positive benefits of reading aloud, as a push toward a lifelong love of books and learning.

Originally written in 1940, then revised in 1972, *How to Read a Book* still impacts lives today as a book to demonstrate the value of active and analytical reading. This book shares various dimensions and goals of reading. Ultimately, it communicates the value of lifelong reading and learning.

### The Book's ONE THING

Reading with a family whether family by blood, profession, or interests, leads to delight and food for thought, which presents a lot of goodness and positive growth for the entire community. Read continually... experience books, learn from books, share books!

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## Learning to Read

“Only a mother”

If reading aloud had such a powerful impact on my child’s life and on her ability to learn to read, I felt I had no business keeping it a secret. I had to spread the word.

[Where in your life are you “only”? How can you “spread that word”?]

Create a relaxing space for children to begin to learn to read and then they want to continue reading. As we share words and pictures, ideas and thoughts, pain and comfort, through the pages of a book, we connect minds and hearts with those reading with us. The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks between a child, a book, and the person reading. It’s the relationship winding between all three.



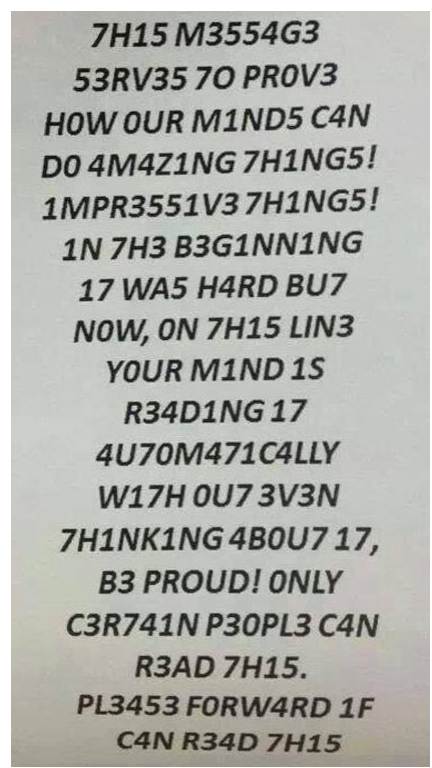
Reading is being able to make the print mean something. Reading is getting the message. Reading means the ability to make sense out of print, not sound from print.

When we read, we take in as much information we can, as quickly as possible to help us predict more efficiently what the next word will be, and the one after that, and then the next and the next.



Learning to read is more about learning language than it is about making sounds from the letters on a page.

Accodrning to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the lttters in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is that the frist and lsat lttters are in the rghit pclae: the rset can be a toatl mses but you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. This is bcuseae we don't raed ervey lteter but the word as a wlohe. So, hey, waht does this say about the improtnace of phonics in raeidng?



Reading is an activity, so it should be active. We cannot read with our eyes immobilized and our minds asleep.

When you practice a specific activity, you continue it as if the activity was something you were born to do. Make a habit out of reading.

It is hard to learn to read well. Not only is reading, especially analytical reading, a very complex activity, it is more of a mental activity than physical. It is here that one must think about their own thinking. Most people are not accustomed to doing this, but once a person learns this, they become a stronger reader.

## Listening to Reading

Children's brains are only 25% developed at birth. The more stimulation the baby has, the more rapidly that development will occur. Because words are essential in building the thought connections in the brain, the more language a child experiences, through books and through conversation with others, the more advantaged socially, educationally, and in every way that child will be for life.



Children who are read to early and regularly acquire the skill of listening and the desire to hear stories. They understand the pleasures waiting for them in books and develop the ability to concentrate and relax.

The more we know about language and the more of language we know, the more simplistic it is to read.

Songs and rhymes provide comforting rhythms in children's early lives and expose kids to gorgeous forms of language. They are a natural extension to the heartbeat of the mother and the rhythmic rocking of a child in loving arms.

Experts in literacy and child development have discovered that if children know eight nursery rhymes by heart, by the time they are four years old, they are among the best readers by their early elementary years.



Impact of Reading

“The more you **read**  
the more **things** you know.  
The more that you **learn**  
the more **places** you’ll go.”  
-Dr. Seuss

...At twenty-one months this very young child had a speaking vocabulary in excess of five hundred words, which his mother attributed to what he had gained from books.

The more we know about life, the universe, and everything, the easier it is to read.

Expanding experiences in any direction helps to better understand how the world works.

Many have the purpose for reading, to gain increased understanding. For intelligent and curious people radio and TV are never enough. Admittedly, television serves some of the functions well, such as visual communication ... but it may be seriously questioned whether the advent of modern communications through media has much enhanced our understanding of the world in which we live.

Consider how a catcher in baseball has to be active in the game. It is as if the pitcher is the “sender” and the catcher is the “receiver” in the activity. Each part of the activity is different, but the only passive part is the ball itself. A writer is like this pitcher, and the reader, the catcher. The actual writing is the ball. The art of catching is the skill of catching every kind of pitch. Similarly, the art of reading is the skill of catching every sort of communication as well as possible.

Ask questions while you read, especially those that you must try to answer personally in the course of the active reading.

Discover the theme of the book and essential, subordinate themes.

Discover the main assertions and arguments that constitute the message.

Discover the significance and where more knowledge is desired.



## Sharing Reading

Colin Thiele, Australian children's author claimed he learned more from read aloud days "by accident" than any other school day of the year. Roald Dahl claimed that reading aloud moments taught him more about writing, than formal English lessons.

The ups and downs of our voices and our pauses and points of emphasis are like music, literally, to early of young children.

We don't need any special talents or knowledge to be able to provide a solid literacy grounding for our children. We should not suddenly become teachers of our children. We must be ourselves. Subtlety is the key.

Too many homes have no books in them. How can books become attractive if there aren't any lying around to flick through or to become absorbed in?

In school every child knows who the best readers are ... and the worst. Pressure and a sense of failure are no help at all to learners. Be encouraging, even far past formal school days.

We need to mesmerize babies in the first months of their lives with the rhyme, rhythm, and repetition that's so common in books or the very young. Learning to read is a joy, not a race. Learning to read comes from the happiness of reading. Love is essential to brain development ... this is bonding. Bonding through books helps the brain develop.

If the reader of a practical book accepts the ends it proposes and agrees that the means recommended are appropriate and effective, then he must act in the way proposed. This is your task and your obligation.

There is no limit to the amount of the growth and development that the mind can sustain. The mind does not stop growing at any particular age, only when the brain itself loses its vigor, does the mind lose its power to increase in skill and understanding. The mind can atrophy, like the muscles, if it is not used. Atrophy of the mental muscles is the penalty that we pay for not taking part in mental exercise. Reading well, which means reading actively, is not only a benefit in itself, but a means to advancement in our work or career. It also serves to keep our minds alive and growing.





Can you imagine a life without books?  
Can you imagine a life without Executive Book Review?  
Can you imagine a life without the ability to read?  
Perhaps all across the world, even in our community live each day without all of these.  
This is not only true of infants and toddlers.  
It is even the truth for many adults.  
How can we share a lifetime of books and learning with our community?  
Let's brainstorm with our neighbors to consider this question.

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What books would you like to add to your reading list?

See Lifehack's list "30 Books that everyone should read at least once in their lives."

See Time's list "The 100 Best young adult books of all time."

See Time's list "The 100 Best children's books of all time."





## A Retrospective of our last ten books ONE THING

<b>The Best of Jim Collins</b>	<b>Life is people – life is short; Life is doing meaningful things with the ones you love; Increase simplicity; manage time and flow state; manage time with family and friends.</b>
<b>The Magic of Believing</b>	Your strong belief activates the subconscious and puts it to work. It will help you achieve whatever you desire.
<b>Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</b>	“Humility is the mother of all virtues” – Mother Theresa; “Humility is laced in all 7 habits” – Mark Wittig.
<b>The Customer Comes Second</b>	Transform an organization's leadership model and culture to focus on putting the employees first, and the results that will be created will far exceed any forecasted budget projections.
<b>Stillness is the Key</b>	Chop wood, carry water. Let the wild horses run by.
<b>The Method Method</b>	Sustainable human-centered business is the key to thriving in today's reality, daring to do things not only differently but better, existing in between tensions, mashing them up for the greater good, bringing higher purpose based on culture and design.
<b>The School of Greatness</b>	Greatness is not reserved for an elite few, it is something inherent in each of us. It is cultivated from within. The masters of greatness became that way because they applied specific habits and tools to embrace and overcome adversity in their lives.
<b>The Obstacle is the Way</b>	Although we don't control external events, we can control ourselves and our responses to those events. Every obstacle poses an opportunity to improve our condition. We have the power to turn adversity into our advantage and revolutionize our lives!
<b>Just Listen</b>	Be more interested than interesting.
<b>Titan: The Life of John D Rockefeller</b>	We study the lives of famous people who have impacted the world in order to better understand our own impact on the world. Every human being is a complex enigma containing both beauty and darkness.



### Let's Pan for Some Gold

**What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?**

**What is your ONE THING? What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?**



## Our Faculty, Our Sponsors, Our Cause



## Calendar of Events

San Antonio	San Antonio	Corpus	Houston	San Antonio	American Sunrise
"1st Friday"	Wine & Cheese	2nd Tuesday	4th Thursday	"4th Friday"	3rd Wednesday
7:30AM	5:30 PM	5:30 PM	11:30AM	8:00 AM	12:00 Noon
Wittigs	Haworth   Smartworld	Wittigs   Haworth	Wittigs   Haworth	Alpha Home	American Sunrise Good Samaritan
<b>3-Jan</b>	<b>8-Jan</b>	<b>14-Jan</b>	<b>23-Jan</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>15-Jan</b>
Robyn Tresnak Reading Magic and beyond	Pat Whitty The Power of TED	Pat Whitty The Power of TED	Nadia Noel-Anglade The Memo	Nadia Noel-Anglade The Memo	Peter Braeuler Fearless Leadership
<b>7-Feb</b>	<b>12-Feb</b>	<b>11-Feb</b>	<b>27-Feb</b>	<b>28-Feb</b>	<b>19-Feb</b>
John Rugh Made to Stick	Mark Wittig Occasional Magic	Mark Wittig Occasional Magic	Malcolm Coon Surrender Experiment	Malcolm Coon Surrender Experiment	Pat Whitty The Power of TED
<b>6-Mar</b>	<b>11-Mar</b>	<b>10-Mar</b>	<b>26-Mar</b>	<b>27-Mar</b>	<b>18-Mar</b>
Judy Zimmerman	Peter Braeuler Think & Grow Rich	Peter Braeuler Think & Grow Rich	Robyn Tresnak	Robyn Tresnak	John Knotts