

Passages from

*Open a World of Possible:
Real Stories About the
Joy & Power of Reading*



OPEN a WORLD of POSSIBLE

From “How to Read a Book”:

Don't rush though:
Your eyes need time
to taste. Your soul
needs time to wonder.

—*Kwame Alexander*

OPEN a WORLD of
POSSIBLE

Reading energizes
my heart with a
dream for a better life.

—Jimmy Santiago Baca

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Yes, getting lost in a
book is a magical thing.
But finding your way
because of a book is better.

—*Kylene Beers*

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What I did understand was
the pleasure that good
stories offer and the power
of books to introduce me
to lives and experiences
beyond my own.
I was “hooked on books,”
as the saying goes.

—*Rudine Sims Bishop*

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I felt a calling to introduce
others to the power
of story—to help them
experience the life-changing
potential of literature.

—*Marcus Curry*

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It was just me and comic books, paper, pencils, and crayons—plenty of resources to learn to read and write for a motivated six-year-old.

—*Ruth Culham*

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I am the daughter of a voracious reader and an intellectually curious person.

Books and magazines and maps were ever-present in our home. I never doubted that words belonged to me.

—*Carmen Agra Deedy*

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Books are like
friends to me.
Reading made me
what I am today.

—David Lee Finkle

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During a time when
I felt like an outsider,
the characters I met in
the books I read
affirmed my existence.

—*Marcelle M. Haddix*

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I think of the authors who
give me ideas for writing—
and for the craving to write
that reading brings.

—*Jane Hansen*

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Books are the threads we
follow, that lead us home,
to our own voices—
to ourselves.

—*Georgia Heard*

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A childhood spent among
books prepared me for
a lifetime as a reader.

—*Carol Jago*

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A poem is not something
we consume, but in some
mysterious way it consumes
us and from this process
something new is born.

—*Barry Lane*

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If we do, indeed, believe
in the power of reading,
we must also believe that
each of us has an obligation
to protect that power so
that it remains available
to every person who seeks it.

—*ReLeah Cossett Lent*

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I can learn about anything,
travel anywhere, ask my own
questions, and seek my own
answers because I read.

—Donalyn Miller

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If one book, discovered at age 12, could exert such influence on me, then there was the grand potential that some other book, discovered by some other reader at age 10, 20, or 90 could transform that reader's life.

—Robert E. Probst

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Through these reading experiences, I was able to make a new home in a foreign place.

—*Meenoo Rami*

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Those who work to help children become fluent and joyful readers are, in my opinion, doing the same essential work as medical doctors who help their patients breathe.

—*Timothy Rasinski*

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Hearing my father's stories
drew me closer to books
and the stories they held.

—Laura Robb

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Hearing family stories,
the luxury of dramatic play,
reading and loving books—
eventually led me to my
writing life and the most
wonderful gift in return, readers.

—Pam Muñoz Ryan

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The Carrot Seed,
written by Ruth Krauss and
illustrated by Crockett Johnson,
exploded my three-year-old
mind and reshaped it in
the most perfect Zen way...
that needs not a bit
more explanation.

—Jon Scieszka

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Every book I read changes me in some way. Like everyone else, I am a work in progress, and reading helps me become more insightful, and, I hope, a better person.

—*Yvonne Siu-Runyan*

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Books allowed me to see that imagination is essential to considering perspectives beyond my own and really listening to others in order to work for transformation and change.

—Kathy G. Short

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Many of the texts I read as a child have been like roadmap markers, showing me a range of life options, suggesting the advantages of one direction over another, helping me define myself not only as a reader but also as a human being.

—Alfred W. Tatum

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Reading is a thrilling and
“dangerous” game, a way
of surfing on the crest of the
future’s breaking wave,
of questioning the status quo,
of becoming something new.

—*Jeffrey D. Wilhelm*

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Our librarian introduced us
to imaginary stories and
wonderful characters that
we would not have met
on our own.

—Joanne Yatvin

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Choosing the books you want to read (and perhaps recognizing yourself in the main characters) is the surest way to become a curious and motivated reader.

—Dick Robinson

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Once I began to read,
I began to exist.

—*Walter Dean Myers*