

Initiative

Character... It starts with me!

Vs. Idleness

ROBIN'S READING LIST

NOVEMBER 2013

I WILL

- Do what is right before being told
- Not put off until tomorrow the things I can do today
- Contribute to the success of the whole team
- Be a part of the solution rather than the problem
- Look for ways to help others

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Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it

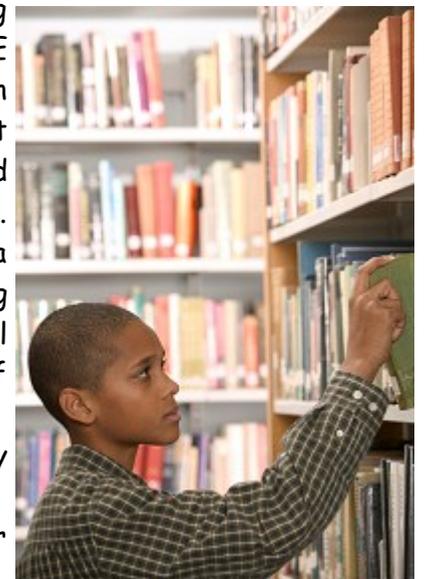
Pre. - Grade 3:

The Dog Poop Initiative by Kirk A. Weisler

This book was inspired by an event that took place in the summer of my life as a soccer coach and dad. My family and I showed up to the soccer field where my five-year-old son was going to play, and as the two previous teams finished up. As our boys gathered, some helpful parents from the already playing teams pointed out a large pile of Dog Poop on the field, and warned us to point it out to our boys. A few moments later, the coaches of the departing teams also pointed out the poop, and gave us the same admonition. Next came the referees assigned to the field for the evening, who told us the same thing! After this third warning, my son's other coach and I looked at each other and, without saying a word, turned and went to separate trash cans on the field in search of something we could use to scoop up the poop. We found a large piece of cardboard, and had it cleaned off the field in less than a minute. I still remember some of the dumbfounded and bewildered expressions of the "Adults" who had so helpfully pointed it out - but who, apparently, had never considered actually cleaning it up! As I viewed all the parents that lined the field, and pondered all the parents and coaches who had been there throughout the day - each one dutifully and diligently passing along the "Poop Warning" - I marveled that NONE had taken the initiative to clean it UP! What an opportunity to teach, by example, the important principles of service, teamwork, selflessness, and INITIATIVE to colleagues and friends and family. There's such a tremendous amount of people with a lack of initiative in society. The ever-growing mindset of "It's not my job," or "Someone else will do it," plays itself out all too often in myriads of ways that impact each of us on a daily basis.

The Berenstain Bears Don't Pollute (Anymore) by Stan Berenstain

When careless citizens pose a threat to Bear



Robin's Reading List

Country's environment, Brother and sister Bear form the Earthsavers Club. Their spirited ecological efforts deliver a timely message about the urgent need to mend our polluting and wasteful ways.

Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust by Eve Bunting

This unique introduction to the Holocaust encourages young children to stand up for what they think is right, without waiting for others to join them.

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney

Alice Rumphius, who longed to travel the world and live in a house by the sea, like her grandfather, and do something to make the world more beautiful, has a timeless quality that resonates with each new generation. The countless lupines that bloom along the coast of Maine are the legacy of the real Miss Rumphius, the Lupine Lady, who scattered lupine seeds everywhere she went.

Grades 4 - 8:

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Ivan is an easygoing gorilla. Living at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, he has grown accustomed to humans watching him through the glass walls of his domain. He rarely misses his life in the jungle. In fact, he hardly ever thinks about it at all.

Instead, Ivan thinks about TV shows he's seen and about his friends Stella, an elderly elephant, and Bob, a stray dog. But mostly Ivan thinks about art and how to capture the taste of a mango or the sound of leaves with color and a well-placed line.

Then he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from her family, and she makes Ivan see their home—and his own art—through new eyes. When Ruby arrives, change comes with her, and it's up to Ivan to make it a change for the better. He becomes part of the solution for himself and Ruby.

Counting By 7's by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now. Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is not a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her unique spirit allows her find ways to help others as she contributes to the success of the hodge-podge group of people surrounding her.

Glory Be by Augusta Scattergood

Each year, Gloriana Hemphill celebrates her Fourth of July



Robin's Reading List

birthday at the community pool. But the summer before her twelfth birthday, in 1964, Hanging Moss, Mississippi, is in turmoil, and that turmoil reaches right into Glory's life. Yankee "freedom people" have infiltrated the town, rousing rabble and insisting the white-only pool be desegregated. The town council, in response, has closed the pool "for repairs," indefinitely. And so Glory's summer, once a promise of happy tradition, is now fraught with changes. Glory worries that the pool will never open in time for her twelfth birthday. When Glory befriends a new girl in town from the North, her eyes begin to open to what is going on around her, and she finds the courage to stand up for what she now believes. This story embraces every aspect of initiative.

Don't You Know There's A War On by Avi

World War II is on everyone's mind and in every headline, and Howie Crispers has a hunch that his school principal is a spy. With a little snooping around, Howie finds out something even more alarming. Principal Lomister may not be a spy, but he is plotting to get rid of Howie's favorite teacher. Howie's dad is fighting Nazis overseas, and his mom is working hard to support the war effort, so Miss Gossim is the only person Howie can depend on. With the help of his friends, and a plan worthy of radio show superhero Captain Midnight, Howie intends to save Miss Gossim! This is another book that embraces the "I Will" statements of initiative. This book works well as a read aloud.

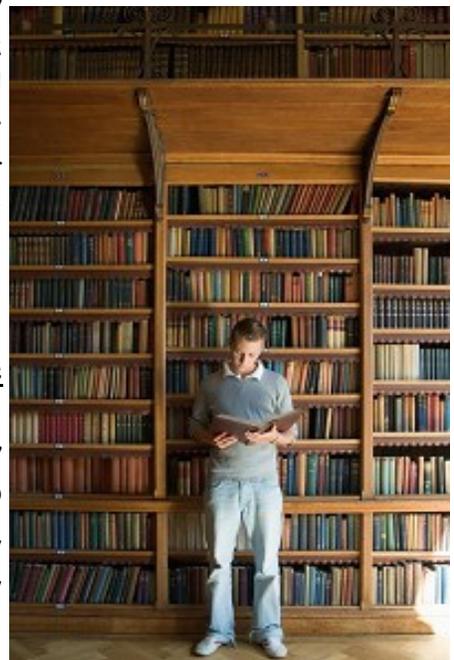
Touch Blue by Cynthia Lord

The state of Maine plans to shut down her island's schoolhouse, which would force Tess's family to move to the mainland--and Tess to leave the only home she has ever known. Fortunately, the islanders have a plan too: increase the numbers of students by having several families take in foster children. So now Tess and her family are taking a chance on Aaron, a thirteen-year-old trumpet player who has been bounced from home to home. And Tess needs a plan of her own--and all the luck she can muster. Will Tess's wish come true or will her luck run out?

Grades 9 - 12:

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens: The Ultimate Teenage Success Guide by Sean Covey

Based on his father's bestselling *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Sean Covey applies the same principles to teens, using a vivacious, entertaining style. To keep it fun, Covey writes, he "stuffed it full of cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all



Robin's Reading List

over the world...along with a few other surprises." Did he ever!! Flip open to any page and become instantly absorbed in real-life stories of teens who have overcome obstacles to succeed, and step-by-step guides to shifting paradigms, building equity in "relationship bank accounts," creating action plans, and much more. Sean Covey is a living example of someone who has taken each of the seven habits to heart: be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put first things first; think win-win; seek first to understand, then to be understood; synergize; and sharpen the saw.

The World We Want: New Dimensions in Philanthropy and Social Change by Peter Karoff and Jane Maddox

In *The World We Want*, Peter Karoff presents a collective vision of an ideal world. By sharing his experiences and through conversations with more than forty social entrepreneurs, activists, nonprofit leaders, and philanthropists who are changing notions of 'the human condition' in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and North America, he describes how new partnerships and approaches are reducing suffering and gaining greater equity for people everywhere. These visionaries are engaged in a struggle of sorts, and that conscious engagement, 'the shoulder to the wheel', is a fundamental part of the world they want. The book weaves together multi-sector, multidiscipline strategies, but, in large part, it is about the power of human connection, reinforced by personal stories of motivation and the human capacity for caring. Without ignoring the institutional and cultural obstacles, and the courage needed to face down the dark side of human behavior, Karoff shows how citizen engagement and open source solutions could tip the scale toward a better world.

First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers by Loung Ung

One of seven children of a high-ranking government official, Loung Ung lived a privileged life in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh until the age of five. Then, in April 1975, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge army stormed into the city, forcing Ung's family to flee and, eventually, to disperse. Loung was trained as a child soldier in a work camp for orphans, her siblings were sent to labor camps, and those who survived the horrors would not be reunited until the Khmer rouge was destroyed.

Harrowing yet hopeful, Loung's powerful story is an unforgettable account of a family shaken and shattered yet miraculously sustained by courage and love in the face of unspeakable brutality. This is an incredible narrative of tragedy, courage, and survival.

