

Jane Eyre.... That was the first real book I remember reading. I was in kindergarten at the time and the librarian found me curled up on the floor of the library with about 20 books spread out all over the floor. 27 years later and I still recall the look on her face as she thought I was destroying books set aside for the older kids. Imagine a mixture of terror touched with a slight dab of death! I felt certain my school career, if not my life, was about to end. Luckily, for me, things worked out. Once I had convinced her that I was reading and not terrorizing these amazing works of written art ~ she made it her job to introduce me to every kind of world imaginable ~ through books. My parents quickly followed her lead by giving me the complete works of JRR Tolkien for Christmas that same year. I have been hooked on reading and writing ever since!

Reading became a way for me to interact and become strong in the world. It opened up doors to conversations and many learning experiences that have left me feeling fulfilled as a person. My enjoyment of reading and writing are part of what encouraged me in my path to volunteer. I am a writer that felt the need to do more for society and hoped that my talents could help me explore this need. A few years ago, I found myself volunteering in a manner that had me creating books about kids in the foster system. This amazing experience would never have happened if I had not been willing to read about these children and learn from their lives. I found myself connected with others and able to help society. I also found myself becoming a better person from the sarcastic bit of chaos that I had been.

I have found over the years that reading is important to society for many reasons ~ the least of them being the few I have mentioned here. In a society where money talks, the ability to read can open the doors to more people in big business, it can help in interacting with people of all nationalities, and it can allow these interactions to bring money to the economy. To name a few humble reasons for its importance to society, reading can help a child or adult's self esteem, it can bring parents and children together, and the ability to read something as basic as a first aid manual could save someone's life. I have been grateful for my ability to read as it has helped me become a better, stronger person and a bit of an entertaining one as well! After all, there is nothing like being able to share with close friends a tale of intrigue or laugh until you cry at a tale of comedic misfortune.

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2008

