

To put it simply... I despised reading. As a proud and stubborn fourth grader, I was convinced that reading was... well, pointless. It boggled my mind to think that people my age would spend their time reading book after book, novel after novel, rather than playing out in the front yard all afternoon. The last thing you would find me doing on a Saturday morning was read. I had to figure out a way to trick everyone into thinking I was an avid reader. I even tried to calculate my reading speed for just one page of a book and then calculate how long it might take me to finish the book. One time on my reading log I even signed off my mom's name, *shhhhh*. I thought I was the master of deceit, the most brilliant fourth grader in the world. *Who was going to catch me now?* I had escaped drowning in those pages filled with black ink haunting my nightmares every night.

Alas, I thought this plan was brilliant and smart until this scenario took a turn for the worse. It ultimately backfired! I showed up to school thinking that I had pulled the heist off, but I had no idea what was going to happen next. I was scheduled to take an AR test. A TEST! AR was short for Accelerated Reading. Who would have thought that AR was the AP Physics of fourth grade for me. I had just "finished" the book *Wonder*, written by RJ Palacio. I finished the test as I sat at the computer in Ms. Heechen's fourth grade classroom, examining the giant 1 out of 5 on the screen; a blanket of sweat suddenly appeared on my forehead. I tried to hold back my tears while sitting next to my classmates because I was extremely embarrassed at that moment of pure failure. I had aced every other test in my life, but this, this was the first test that I had actually failed. I could not hold back my tears, so I stayed in at recess to talk with Ms. Heechen. I explained that I didn't understand why reading was important. Everyone always would say that you needed the skill for reading for life. I was more focused on the scientific elements of life, for I thought I would not need to read as a doctor one day. *How would reading Junie B. Jones, and all of the Nancy Drew mystery series help me to one day become a doctor? Or save a human life?*

Ms. Heechen showed me how reading was important to any career I end up in. She worked with me to find the type of books that I liked and set goals for myself with more challenging books ultimately increasing my reading speed and comprehension.

I will never forget this important lesson, to first realize that my devious plan would have never worked, and more shockingly, that I would one day learn to love to read!

Although I am still STEM minded, always performing stronger in math and science classes, I have practiced these essential habits that I was taught in fourth grade and I am now avidly reading two to three novels a month. As a fourth grader I would not even recognize myself today. I would be surprised at the love and appreciation that I have for not only reading and writing, but perhaps all forms of literature including poetry and scientific essays, which I will one day utilize as I strive for a degree in biology. I hope to one day use the lessons that Ms. Heechen taught me to one day combine my new love and passion for reading and writing to beautifully mix this love with my love for science and math as well.