March 2nd is the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel known worldwide as the beloved Dr. Seuss.

Dr. Seuss was born Theodor Geisel in Springfield, Massachusetts, on March 2, 1904. While on a family vacation he was captivated by the rhythmic sounds of the cruise ship’s engine and came up with And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street published in 1936. The Cat in the Hat was published when he turned 50 (in 1954), and the rest is history. Theodor Geisel died on September 24, 1991. Dr. Seuss is eternal with 44 children’s books to educate and inspire many generations to come.

Dr. Seuss famously said, “Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.” Inspired by this quote and a class project many years ago, I have been using Dr. Seuss to teach LEADERSHIP to college students for close to 25 years. Although, one could easily use any of Dr. Seuss’ stories to teach leadership, my favorite is Yertle the Turtle. I use children’s books (a lot of Dr. Seuss books) in many different ways. Adults including college students love to regress. The joy on their faces when you pull out a children’s story book is priceless. Once they realize you are serious about using a children’s book to teach leadership, students really get into. After reading the book out loud to the group, I lead a discussion using a tried and true “reflection” outline asking three questions: WHAT? – SO WHAT? – NOW WHAT?
The discussion is lively, fun, and meaningful. The insights about leadership the students come up with are incredible. It is magical. Thank you, Dr. Seuss for your wonderful stories which continue to teach and motivate. Dr. Seuss’ birthday has sparked me to launch a series of PCPop blog posts about “Story Book Leadership” — starting with Yertle the Turtle.

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss!

{Now off to the movies — The Lorax opened in movie theaters worldwide this past weekend, Dr. Seuss’ birthday — but read the book first, please.}

For more information on Story Book Leadership, read the PC Pop posts as follows:

- Story Book Leadership — “Harold & the Purple Crayon”
- Story Book Leadership — Getting Started — 8 Steps to Powerful Presentations
- Story Book Leadership — Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit
- Story Book Leadership — Book List

Saying Goodbye: You’re Off to Great Places

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You’re off to Great Places!
Saying Goodbye can be a powerful and transforming action that many Leaders overlook. Leaders spent a tremendous amount of time and energy building a hardworking, cohesive team and often see great results. But Leaders fail to give appropriate praise and recognition which should include some type of ceremony at the end of the year. In many team situations there is a clear and definitive “end” of the year, completion of the work and inevitable dissolution of the relationships. This is especially true in organizations in which the leader, chairperson, or president must be elected (or re-elected) each year — like student organizations and societies in college and high school. It is that time of year when some students are getting ready to graduate and for life after college, and all of the other students are preparing to move on to the next level of leadership. Leaders often let the outgoing members of student organizations just fade away though and allow the incoming Leaders and the formal graduation ceremonies take precedence. What Leaders must do however is give formal recognition to the accomplishments of the team which has been together for the entire year and most likely has many wonderful things on which to reflect and of which to be proud.

Great Leaders spend part of their tenure recognizing accomplishments, rewarding good work, working on team building and trust among group members, and empowering and encouraging their team members to work hard, take risks and make history. Ironically these same Leaders often leave office and fade away without properly “Saying Goodbye” and more importantly without allowing the team members to say Goodbye to each other. When Kouzes and Posner talked about “Encouraging the Heart” they were not only referring to recognizing individuals throughout the entire year but also having an upbeat year-end celebration to give closure to the entire team (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Encouraging the Heart is based on two commitments: recognizing contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence and celebrating the values and victories by creating a spirit of community (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). For some leaders Encouraging the Heart comes naturally but for most it is not their strongest trait. Believe it or not it is easier for many Leaders to “Challenge the Process” but Encouraging the Heart frightens them. Yet is it so important that Kouzes and Posner dedicated an entire textbook to this one behavior of their Leadership Challenge — Encouraging the Heart. Now there’s a book, Encouraging the Heart workshops, and the Encouragement Index. So don’t blow it by not coordinating an end of the year celebration. According to Kouzes and Posner the importance of Encouraging the Heart is backed up by research that reports that approximately one-third of North American workers say they NEVER are recognized for a job well done, a little more (44 percent) say they receive little recognition for a job well done, and only 50 percent of Leaders say they give recognition for high performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Great Leaders know that people matter, and Leader must make people feel in their hearts that they are valued and appreciated — and we’re not necessarily talking about money or salary.

You’re off and away.

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You’ll be on your way up!

You’ll be seeing great sights!

You’ll join the high fliers

Who soar to high heights.

Also remember that every group, team or organization goes through developmental stages explained well by Bruce Tuckman’s Group Development Model. Tuckman’s original stages of development, as you will recall, are as follows: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing (Tuckman, 1965). In 1977, Tuckman with Mary Ann C. Jensen added a fifth stage: Adjourning. Adjourning has also been referred to as the De-Forming or Mourning stage. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) realized the function or design of many groups is to complete a series of tasks and to dissolve. Even if the group continues to exist the members of the group will be different and the developmental stage would revert to the Forming stage also know as Re-Forming and Re-Storming. Adjourning allows for the group to continue on with new members, new leadership and a new set of goals and tasks to complete. According to Tuckman and Jensen (1977): When it is time to end or change
the group in some way, managers can be perplexed by the blind refusal to change or contemplate a future that is different from today. This requires the skills of “Change Management” Leaders to be deployed, for example in celebrating the successes of the past whilst steadily revealing the inevitability of the future (Tuckman & Jansen, 1977). As with beginnings, rituals help people cope with the changes of ending. If properly implemented the Adjourning stage which includes Encouraging the Heart behaviors can be transforming for all members including outgoing members and new incoming members as well.

The 3-steps to a successful “Goodbye” are as follows:

- **Celebrate**
  - Bring all members together
  - Have a meal
  - Dress up

- **Recognize**
  - Say Thank you
  - Recognize major accomplishments
  - Honor members – leaders, staff, volunteers, advisors
  - Give a Keepsake

- **Leave a Legacy**
  - Pass the Gavel
  - Introduce New Leadership
  - Share Vision for Future — finances, services, programs, and leadership

On and on you will hike.
And I know you’ll hike far
And face up to your problems
Whatever they are.

From an organizational perspective, plan the ceremony and pick a date as soon as possible. Get the event in everyone’s calendar and make it an expectation to attend. Assign the planning of the event to someone on the executive team. I prefer the event to be coordinated and planned by the vice president. The VP has enough knowledge and connection to the entire organization to plan something appropriate and special. Make sure the event is within the budget and communicated as an expectation as well as a priority. Most of your budget will be needed for food and beverages and the gift to all members. That being said focus on the objectives of the event which represents the Heart of the organization — the people, relationships, memories, and the personal growth of each member; therefore, don’t let the lack of funds prevent you from planning something creative and special. Everyone should attend. Everyone who attends should feel very special at the event. Everyone should be acknowledged, thanked and recognized — EVERYONE. This is consistent with the principles of the Relational Leadership Model concerning Empowerment and Inclusion (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007). Be careful not to plan one of those banquets that makes a few people feel great and most feel ignored and under-appreciated (again). A proper Goodbye is wonderful and uplifting for EVERYONE!

And will you succeed?
Yes! You will, indeed!
(98 and ¾ percent guaranteed.)
How you Say Goodbye is up to you and should be appropriate for the culture and consistent with the values of the organization. Here are some ideas that may work for you.

- **Thank You** — A thank you gift that each member may take away. It may be engraved with the "year" or term of office or something that can be personalized like a picture frame.
  - **Flowers** — a flower for each outgoing member
  - **Gift** — glass, mug, picture frame (for the group photo mentioned below)

**Recognition**

- **Plaque** — may include photo, name, year or term of office
- **Certificate of Achievement/Excellence** — this is most inexpensive recognition item you can give but it will be treasured by the members. They look great if you use multi-colored certificate paper, and they can be personalized and signed by the VIPs of the organization. For a few more cents, you purchase certificate covers and fancy stickers and ribbons to make the presentation even more dazzling. Check with your national/international office for pre-printed certificate paper.
- **Photo** of Group — the photo may be distributed electronically or made available online; the photo should include a “key” with names of everyone pictured and not pictured.
- **Logo Item** — a lapel pin, patch, medal, hat, fancy pen, coaster, etc. If the organization is a national/international or has a specific logo, there may be items for sale from the national office.

**Program**

- **Emcee, Keynote, Presenters** — decide who will be hosting and emceeing, select and invite a keynote, and select presenters
- **Keynote Remarks** — should focus on Leadership and leaving a legacy for the future. Considering using creative, leadership focused quotes and books like Oh, The Places You’ll Go! by Dr. Seuss. (More information on how to use Story Books in Leadership may be found in this PCPop post: Story Book Leadership: Getting Started.)
- **Script** — Write a script. Do not ad lib or “wing it.” Don’t deviate from the script once it is written because it was developed to give everyone equal recognition and assures that no one is singled out as extra special (unless that is part of the original plan). We have all witnessed this disaster — when the emcee calls up each member to receive their certificate and offers personal remarks about one particular member and then has to come up with something equally impressive for everyone else. It never works out well, and it makes the program awkward for everyone.
- **Awards** — are optional. If you choose to give awards like best program, best committee, best chairperson, best senior, best alumnus/a, etc — make sure they don’t do more harm than good.
- **Special Recognition** — decide if you wish to honor specific groups or categories of members like all graduating seniors, all executive team members, advisors, staff, or committee chairs.
- **Creative Presentations**: Superlatives, Limericks, Funny Awards for each member. With these creative presentations you must make sure there is one for each member. A small group of officers or committee members may create these presentations or they can create the awards and superlatives and have the members vote (like “Most Likely to Succeed”).
- **Passing the Gavel**: Give the outgoing president an opportunity to give remarks about the year’s accomplishments and highlights. The outgoing president then presents an engraved gavel to the new president for the upcoming year. The new president shares his/her vision for the next year building on the success and hard work of the outgoing members.
- **Photo/View Slideshow** — Every organization should have a director of communications who is responsible for taking pictures and video at all events. Their ultimate goal is to have enough photos to create a meaningful slideshow for the end of the year banquet. The slideshow can then be shared online with all members — another gift for all members — as well as alumni and friends of the organization.
- **Music/dancing**:
  - Dinner music — if you have the funds, during dinner it is a nice touch to have
live music featuring a piano player, jazz combo, violinist, or harpist.

- **Dancing** — After the formal presentation, some group may enjoy dancing to a DJ, who will also play “dinner” music and supply you with a microphone and sound system for your keynote and presentations.

- **Food & Beverages** — Dinner, Lunch or Breakfast
  - **Plated** — served, sit-down meal; must coordinate special dietary meals in advance
  - **Buffet** — hot meal, easier to accommodate special dietary needs
  - **Picnic** — variety of menus will work: burgers/dogs, steak/potatoes, shish kabobs, bbq (ribs, chicken), clam bake
  - **Hors d’oeuvres** — this is a great option if your budget will not allow for a full meal but make sure the food is hot and plentiful.
  - **Desserts** — this is another great low(er)-budget option but make sure you have healthy options too like fruit smoothies, yogurt, granola, fruit salad or fresh fruit platters.
    - Buffet with a chocolate fountain (Yum!)
    - Ice Cream Sundaes — make your own — make sure you have lactose-free (soy) and lower fat options like sherbet.

- **Beverages**
  - **Cash Bar** — general rule of thumb is that if more than half of your honorees and guests are of legal drinking age a cash bar would be appropriate. You may disagree but I don’t think using organizational funds to pay for an open bar is appropriate.
  - **Coffee** — if dessert is a part of the event, coffee would be a nice addition.

- **Venue** — once you decide on the program and the food you would like to serve, you have a few options for venue. Remember to ask about catering options, food charges, vegetarian options, tax charge, service fee, tip/gratuity, bar fee, bar minimum, security requirements and any other costs. Make sure you ask about specific requirements and the cost, if any, for a microphone, lectern, video projector, screen, dance floor, linens, flatware, centerpieces, table for awards, etc. Options for your venue are as follows:
  - Banquet hall
  - Hotel banquet room (tend to charge extra for everything — so, get a quote!)
  - Private home (obviously technology challenges)
  - Park, beach, golf course club house, country club, pavilion, outdoor plaza/patio, neighborhood clubhouse
  - Restaurant — private room
  - Museum, gallery

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**Be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray**

**Or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O’Shea,**

**You’re off to Great Places!**

**Today is your day!**

**Your mountain is waiting.**

**So... get on your way!**

(Dr. Seuss, 1990)

It sounds like a lot of work, but the rewards are tremendous. Each one of your members will feel wonderful about their experience with the organization, be proud of what they were able to accomplish, and be confident that their contributions are appreciated and valued. New incoming members and officers will be inspired to continue to work hard toward accomplishing the mission and vision of the organization. You will have started a meaningful tradition that members will look forward to attending each year. You will have become a great Leader who is comfortable Encouraging the Heart and understands the importance and significance of the Adjourning phase of group development. “You’re off to Great Places – Today is Your Day – Your Mountain is Waiting – So, Get on Your Way!”
References:


For more suggestions on must-read LEADERSHIP books, check out this PCPop blog post:

- **Leadership Books – Recommended Reading**

For more on Story Book Leadership, check out these PCPop blog posts:

- **Story Book Leadership – Getting Started – 8 Steps to Powerful Presentations**
- **Story Book Leadership — Book List**
- **Story Book Leadership – Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit**
- **Happy Birthday To You, Theodor Geisel!**

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**Story Book Leadership – Getting Started – 8 Steps to Powerful Presentations**

*In Books, Children's Literature, Dr. Seuss, Group Dynamics, Leadership, Literacy Month, Lorax, NEA, Pop Culture, Reading Across America, Story Book Leadership, Theodor Geisel, Uncategorized, Yertle the Turtle on March 15, 2012 at 10:01 am*

“Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.”

Inspired by this Dr. Seuss quote and a class project many years ago, I explored the use of story books in my work in higher education. (Read PCPop blog post: *Happy Birthday to You, Theodor Geisel!* I have been teaching LEADERSHIP to college students for close to
25 years and have been using Children’s literature for over 15 years. When attending retreats, workshops and conferences, adults including college students love to regress. The joy on their faces when you pull out a children’s story book is priceless. Once they realize you are serious about using a children’s book to teach leadership, students really get into it. After reading the book out loud to the group, I lead a discussion using a tried and true “reflection” outline asking three questions: WHAT? – SO WHAT? – NOW WHAT? The discussion is lively, fun, and meaningful. The insights about leadership the students come up with are incredible. It is magical. (Read the entire story in the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit.)

So follow these 8 simple Steps for a successful leadership development teaching experience using Children’s literature.

Story Book Leadership guidelines are as follows:

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVE – Decide what your learning objective is (see list below).

2. SELECT A BOOK – Select one or several Children’s Book(s) with a similar message. (Read the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Book List for suggestions.)

3. FORMAT – Decide how you will use the Children’s Book. Some ideas are as follows:
   - Read to large group; lead large group discussion.
   - Split large group up into small groups; have each group read the book and have a small group discussion; have all small groups report back to large group; lead large group discussion.
   - Use the book as the focus or a primary part of the workshop or educational session.
   - Use the book as a small part of a larger retreat or full day conference.

4. Have at least two copies of the book — one for you to read; the other for showing the pictures to the group.

5. SETTING – Have the room set up like “story time” in Kindergarten; have an arm chair for the reader and ask the students to sit on the floor around the chair. Be creative and have fun with it — wear a cardigan like Mr. Rogers.

6. ENGAGEMENT – Recruit a volunteer to show pictures to the group. This is where the extra copies of the book come in handy.

7. GET STARTED – Sit and Start by doing the following:
   - Show the book — Read the title and the author
   - Explain expectations – ask them to:
     - pay attention
     - listen with leadership in mind
     - be ready to have a lively and meaningful discussion after the book is read to the group
   - Read the book — using a lively, animated voice – taking it seriously though
   - Make sure the volunteer showing the pictures from the story is keeping up
   - Finish – repeat the title and author
   - Begin reflection discussion, using the following questions:
     - What?
       - “someone please give us a plot summary describing the main elements and themes of the story”
     - So What?
       - “why do you think that I chose this book to read to you at this time with your group?”
       - “what lessons do you think I had hoped you would get from this story?”
     - Now What?
       - “now — how can you use this new information learned from this story to make a positive change in your group?”
       - “please give some examples of things you may do or changes you may make based on the lessons learned from this story.”

8. CLOSING
   - Question — “how did you feel during this exercise?”
   - Give a summary of the comments you heard during the reflection discussion
   - Challenge them to follow up on some of the suggestions made during the “Now What?” part of the discussion.
   - Thank them for playing along and being good sports — and emphasize how you
Some of the LEARNING OBJECTIVES or topics that can be further explored using Story Book Leadership techniques are as following:

- Brainstorming
- Budgeting – Financial Responsibility
- Burnout
- Communication
- Co-sponsorship
- Creativity
- Diversity – Inclusion
- Fund-Raising
- Holidays
- Individuality
- Meetings
- Overcoming Fears
- Peer/group pressure – Group Think
- Persistence
- Power
- Problem Solving
- Responsibility
- Risk Taking
- Role of Advisor
- Social Action – Civic Engagement
- Stress management
- Team-Building
- Time management – Prioritizing

Also remember that every group, team or organization goes through developmental stages explained well by Tuckman's Group Development Model. Story Book Leadership works well in starting a discussion with a group to help the members work through or enhance the “stage” in which they are or are approaching. The Tuckman’s stages, as you will recall, are as follows: **Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning**. I particularly enjoy using Story Book Leadership during the Storming and Adjourning stages.

Selecting the perfect book is the next challenge. I encourage you to select one of your favorites from your childhood — your passion for the book will add genuine excitement to your presentation. I would love it if you also went to your local library and bookstores (locally owned, of course), sat on the floor over the course of a few months, discovering and rediscovering the wonderful world of Children’s literature. But in case you don’t have time for that level of commitment, a list of some of my favorites can be found in the PCPop blog post: [Story Book Leadership – Book List](#).

Please follow [PCPop with Pablo](#) to read the series of blog posts featuring many of the Children’s books (listed in the PCPop blog post: [Story Book Leadership – Book List](#)) starting with one of my favorites, **Harold & the Purple Crayon** by Crockett Johnson.

For more information on **Story Book Leadership**, read the PC Pop posts as follows:

- Story Book Leadership — “Harold & the Purple Crayon”
- Story Book Leadership — Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit
- Story Book Leadership — Book List
- Happy Birthday To You, Theodor Geisel!

*Oh, the places you’ll go! There is fun to be done! You’ll be famous as famous can be, with the whole world watching you on TV. Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!*
I have been teaching LEADERSHIP to college students for close to 25 years and have been using Children's literature for over 15 years. When attending retreats, workshops and conferences, adults including college students love to regress. The joy on their faces when you pull out a children’s story book is priceless. Once they realize you are serious about using a children’s book to teach leadership, students really get into it. The discussion is lively, fun, and meaningful. It is magical. (Read the entire story in the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit.)

If you too want to use Story Book Leadership techniques with your students, find out how to get started by reading the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Getting Started. Selecting the perfect book is one of the first steps in the process of using Story Book Leadership.

I encourage you to select one of your favorite's from your childhood — your passion for the book will add genuine excitement to your presentation. I would love it if you also went to your local library and bookstores (locally owned, of course), sat on the floor over the course of a few months, and discover and rediscover the wonderful world of Children’s literature. You can learn more about my story by reading the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit. But in case you don’t have time for that level of commitment, a list of some of my favorites are as follows:

- **A Light in the Attic** by Shel Silverstein
- **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day** by Judith Viorst
- **Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday** by Judith Viorst
- **Amelia Bedelia** by Peggy Parish
- **Bartholomew and the Oobleck** by Dr. Seuss
- **Benjie** by Joan Lexau
- **Berenstain Bears and Too Much Pressure** by Jan & Stan Berenstain
- **Big Bad Bruce** by Bill Peet
- **Brave Irene** by William Steig
- *But Not Billy* by Charlotte Zolotow
- *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin
- *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* by Dr. Seuss
- *Eli* by Bill Peet
- *Ella* by Bill Peet
- *Farewell to Shady Glade* by Bill Peet
- *Five Minutes' Peace* by Jill Murphy
- *Frederick* by Leo Lionni
- *Gertrude McFuzz* by Dr. Seuss
- *Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson
- *Hector, the Accordion-Nosed Dog* by John Stadler
- *I Can Lick 30 Tigers Today* by Dr. Seuss
- *I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew* by Dr. Seuss
- *I Saw Esau* by Iona & Peter Opie
- *If I Were in Charge of the World* by Judith Viorst
- *I'm Mad at You!* by William Cole
- *Ira Says Goodbye* by Bernard Waber
- *Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Waber
- *It's Not Fair* by Charlotte Zolotow
- *Jennifer and Josephine* by Bill Peet
- *King Looie Katz* by Dr. Seuss
- *Let's Be Enemies* by Janice May Udry
- *Little Toot* by Hardie Gramatky
- *My First Hanukkah Book* by Aileen Fisher
- *My First Kwanzaa Book* by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate
- *My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins, or Things* by Judith Viorst
- *Nobody is Perfick* by Bernard Waber
- *Nobody Stole the Pie* by Sonia Levitin
- *Oh, the Places You Will Go* by Dr. Seuss
- *Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!* by Dr. Seuss
- *On Beyond Zebra* by Dr. Seuss
- *A Person is Many Wonderful, Strange Things* by Marsha Sinetar
- *Play Ball Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish
- *Pooh: Oh, Bother! No One's Listening* by Betty Birney
- *Pooh: Oh, Bother! Somebody's Grumpy* by Betty Birney
- *Rosie and Michael* by Judith Viorst
- *Seven Candles for Kwanzaa* by Andrea Pinkney
- *Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss
- *Spinky Sulks* by William Steig
Please follow PCPop with Pablo to read the series of blog posts featuring many of the Children’s books listed above starting with one of my favorites, Harold & the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson. If you too want to use Story Book Leadership techniques with your students, find out how to get started by reading the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Getting Started.

For more information on Story Book Leadership, read the PC Pop posts as follows:

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- Story Book Leadership — Teaching College Students Using Kiddie Lit
- Happy Birthday To You, Theodor Geisel!

To enjoy my Pinterest board on Story Book Leadership, click here.

Please suggest new books for the list — the list is a work in progress and will be updated as needed. What Children’s Books inspire you and would be perfect for teaching LEADERSHIP…and why? I would love to hear your suggestions and stories.
On March 2, the world once again celebrated the brilliance of Dr. Seuss on the day of his birthday. Dr. Seuss’ birthday is used to launch Reading Month and Reading programs and special events in elementary schools around the country. This year Dr. Seuss’ birthday sparked me to share my passion — teaching LEADERSHIP to college students using children’s leadership. This is the first in a series of PCPop blog posts focusing on Story Book Leadership. Stay tuned for my first book review in honor of Dr. Seuss — Yertle the Turtle. But first here is the story of how I became so passionate about the power and potential of stories originally written and published for pre-school children.

In the summer of 1997, I stumbled on a class that changed my life – the way I think, the way I teach, the way I approach my life. The class was EPSY 5750 – Creativity. It is a part of the curriculum for the Three Summers Sixth Year Program in the Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut. The Three Summer program was developed by the gifted education guru, Professor Joseph S. Renzulli, to give teachers from all over the world an opportunity to join a community of colleagues committed to being the best in developing the talent in each child, take classes and participate in a “confratute.” After three consecutive summers, these professionals earn a graduate level degree – a 6th year certificate.

Dr. Susan Baum, who is a member of the program’s summer faculty, was the professor for this particular class. I wasn’t matriculating as a part of the formal program but somehow I was able to enroll in this class as I was still working on the coursework for a PhD in Higher Education Administration at UConn. In the true spirit of creativity, Professor Baum gave us our project and instructed us to pick a topic that would truly excite us – that we were passionate about – something we always wanted to study in the past but needed permission to pursue. She was giving us permission and inspired us. After weeks of reflection — my topic and my project was decided — using Children’s Literature to teach college students about LEADERSHIP.
Children's books have always intrigued me. One of the most popular classes at UConn for many, many years was an English class known by all as “Kiddie Lit.” Francelia Butler was an inspiration. Professor Butler also knew a few famous people who visited our class. I remember Big Bird, the guy who invented Silly Putty, Maurice Sendak, and the Wicked Witch of the West, Margaret Hamilton, coming to visit our little lecture hall in Storrs, Connecticut. At some point in my life I fell in love with and began to collect children's literature. The lessons found in these seemingly simple publications are powerful — lessons about values, respect, courage, honesty, loyalty, family, hope, persistence, love, service, humility, and yes, LEADERSHIP. It wasn’t until I embarked on this journey – this class project – that I saw the true power of the word, the written word of Kiddie Lit.

I spent the entire summer of 1997 sitting on the floor of the Willimantic Public Library, in the children’s section, reading and reading and reading story books, children's books, and picture books. I soon knew that I was on to something. I found LEADERSHIP in so many stories that I decided to create a booklet which would serve as a directory for me and perhaps other higher education professionals. My professional goals include teaching leadership by giving students opportunities to develop their own philosophy and skills — and to use any means to reach them and to teach them — including Children’s Literature.

The Children’s Literature Leadership Booklet that I created in this class during the summer of 1997 has become a valuable part of my professional library. I refer to it often, and it hasn’t failed me yet. The list of my favorite Children’s books – those that have a profound impact on my teaching – have been compiled in a separate blog post.

Rediscovering the power and potential of using Children's literature to teach leadership is merely one example of how this Creativity course has guided me these past 15 years. By the way, I got an A on the project and an A+ in the class but more importantly — that class, that summer, changed my life.

If you too want to use Story Book Leadership techniques with your students, find out how to get started by reading the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Getting Started. To see some of the best Children’s books focusing on various aspects of leadership, read the PCPop blog post: Story Book Leadership – Book List.

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- Happy Birthday To You, Theodor Geisel!
organizational development, and higher education are his obsessions. The combination of these obsessions defines this blog. Pablo studies students, teaches leadership, researches pop culture, watches a lot of reality TV, ... Continue reading →

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The Descendants by Kaui Hart Hemmings

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