

WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE DO IT?

From all the school report cards that my mum kept, there's a couple of themes that stick out. From primary school, it was clear that I was a little shy, and I started school with lots of remedial reading lessons. I remember the flip card sessions dragging on and being incredibly bored by them.


We sat on small chairs facing a small table. These little tables and chairs were much smaller than we had at home. My teacher, Mrs Grootveld, was tall and she looked like a giant trying to fit onto these tiny chairs. She held up the flip cards with their big letters and accompanying pictures and s-o-u-n-d-e-d out the words. At that time I didn't know the meaning of the word humiliation, let alone how to read it or spell it, but I understood the sniggers and the whispering every darn time I was called over to the remedial learning area. It was so boring and the feeling of isolation was unbearable! Until I figured out how to 'cheat' the system.

I was good at drawing and loved pictures. I also had a very active imagination and loved being read to. So I started sorting my remedial words into pictures (the words themselves), and within a few short weeks I was released from remedial reading hell. "Most Improved", was added to my first school report.

I'm glad that the initial drudge of remedial reading classes didn't put me off books and reading. But trying to find any time to dedicate to books has become harder over the years. That was until technology tapped me on the shoulder by way of my iPad. My iPad gives me something that I never had before — portability to carry a number of books and magazines. I recently roared through the latest biography from Betty White and most of this was read on public transport.

I received a Google news alert about a new 'dog book', that turned out to be the story of Gidget the Chihuahua who starred in many famous Taco Bell commercials in the US. I was interested to read it, so went to my favourite book-buying site and within minutes I was reading about co-author Sue Chipperton's training methods. Within 24 hours I had organised an interview with Sue for this edition of the magazine.

Of course there were a lot of people poo-pooing book readers like the Kindle when they first arrived on the market. Because there's nothing like the smell of an old book and there's no greater experience than opening and flipping the pages of a crisp new publication. But for me, the iPad is a god-send. Instead of packing four novels for a trip overseas, I can simply buy them online and have them downloaded within minutes. The same goes for magazines. Now I can flip through my favourite mags or I can catch up on daily newspapers. Train and bus journeys are much quicker as my mind is transported to new worlds and experiences. The last two edition of Urban Animal are now available as a podcast through iTunes and this gives us another method of delivering our magazine to our readers.

I do love new technology, it's a part of who I am. But I think if a school report was written about me these days, it would still have the same underlying themes: "Lisa is easily distracted"; "Lisa should apply herself more"; and "Lisa plays well with others". 



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