

Reading for Empathy,

Acting for Community

The "Another Kind of Hurricane" Project

Reading for Empathy, Acting for Community

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The "Another Kind of Hurricane" Project (AKOH Project) hopes to inspire classrooms and other groups of readers to build connections to other schools or communities in need. We know that reading fiction builds empathy and we know that children can feel powerless when disaster strikes in their hometown or in other parts of the world. **The AKOH Project** seeks to turn empathy into the power to help and to connect.



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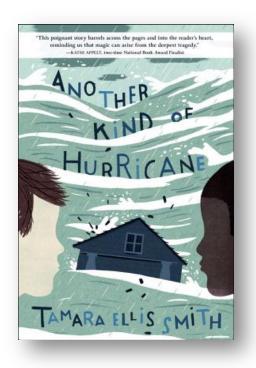
ABOUT THE BOOK

Another Kind of Hurricane

By Tamara Ellis Smith Published by Random House Children's Books ISBN-13: 9780553511932 Age Range: 9 - 12 Years

In this stunning debut novel, two very different characters—a black boy who loses his home in Hurricane Katrina and a white boy in Vermont who loses his best friend in a tragic accident—come together to find healing.

A hurricane, a tragic death, two boys, one marble. How they intertwine is at the heart of this beautiful, poignant book. When ten-year-old Zavion loses his home in Hurricane Katrina, he and his father are forced to flee to Baton Rouge. And when Henry, a ten-year-old boy in northern Vermont, tragically loses his best friend, Wayne, he flees to ravaged New Orleans to help with hurricane relief efforts—and to search for a marble that was in the pocket of a pair of jeans donated to the Salvation Army.



Rich with imagery and crackling with hope, this is the unforgettable story of how lives connect in unexpected, even magical, ways.

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PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"Elegant prose and emotional authenticity will make this title sing not only for those who have experienced tragedies, but for everyone who knows the magic that only true friendship can foster." —Kirkus Reviews, **starred review**

"The author is at her best when she conveys emotionally charged moments, with the prose reminiscent of a free verse poem...It is refreshing to see the feelings of two middle grade boys explored so fearlessly...This is a novel that will spark contemplation and discussion." —School Library Journal

"Smith sensitively depicts both Henry's rage toward the mountain he loved for betraying him and Zavion's consuming feeling of obligation to the home that has vanished. As the boys' paths converge, their stories are gracefully laced together and their individual communities are vividly imagined." —*Publishers Weekly*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tamara Ellis Smith earned her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She lives in Richmond, Vermont, with her family. This is her first novel. Visit her on the Web at tamaraellissmith.com.

WHY CREATE AN AKOH PROJECT?

A) Empathy & Reading

Studies are beginning to show what educators and families have always known, that reading about others instills empathy in the reader. When the reader comes to know Zavion and his extended "family" in the novel **Another Kind of Hurricane**, the vast and enduring tragedy of Hurricane Katrina becomes specific, personal, and deeply felt. When readers come to know Henry and his extended "family," they come to understand the ravaging power of grief and that recovery may be found in unlikely places and people.

"Reading fiction provides an excellent training for young people in developing and practicing empathy and theory of mind, that is, understanding of how other people feel and think."

-Maria Nikolajeva, Professor of Education, Cambridge University, author of "Did you feel as if you hated people?' Emotional Literacy Through Fiction"

B) Disaster & Insecurity

The past decade has seen both an increase in natural disasters and large-scale violence and an increase in the coverage of these events in kid-accessible media. It is no longer an issue of just turning off the evening news when we want to protect kids from the worst. Our students, our kids observe trauma (even through the lens of media) and are left with feelings of insecurity. Most of us have also witnessed how the death of one child (like Henry's friend Wayne) can reverberate throughout a school community.

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"Disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced trauma, has merely seen the event on television or has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur."

—FEMA, "Helping Kids Cope with Disaster"

Resource: FEMA, "Helping Kids Cope with Disaster" https://www.fema.gov/coping-disaster

C) Volunteering & Giving

Reading a novel about characters' perseverance in the face of disaster and death helps kids cope with their insecurities. Additionally, volunteering in their community or another community in need empowers kids. After reading **Another Kind of Hurricane**, can you and your readers envision a volunteer opportunity? What kind of project would compel your readers? Is there a local, national, or world event that this book reminds them of?

"A wonderful, empowering message for kids is that they're important enough to have an impact on someone or something else." —Kids Health on "Community Service"

"Working in community service can bring kids and teens in touch with people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, and education and income levels. They'll learn that even the most diverse individuals can be united by common values." —Kids Health on "Community Service"

Resource: Kids Health, "Community Service" http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/volunteer.html#

ENVISIONING AN AKOH PROJECT

Curious City and author Tamara Ellis Smith do not have a set project for **The "Another Kind of Hurricane" Project** (AKOH Project). While we offer two sample projects in this guide, we hope that the book leads to an exploration of how we are all connected and how connections can be built through communication and volunteering.

Below are four ways you can explore what the book means to your readers and how you might help in your community or another:

A) Look to the Characters

What did the characters do in the face of the massive destruction of Hurricane Katrina and/or the death of Wayne? Brainstorm a list with your readers.

List of Characters

Zavion—10-year-old boy, New Orleans Ben—Zavion's father, artist

Ms. Cyn—Grand dame of Baton Rouge, Skeet's mother-in-law Skeet, Tavius, Enzo—brothers in Baton Rouge Osprey—Enzo's daughter

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List of Characters (cont.)

Pierre—Baton Rouge Salvation Army Cora—New Orleans Salvation Army Luna—Owner of Luna Market Tiger—New Orleans parrot Diana—Baton Rouge Parrot Rescue Guru

Margarita—Vermont truck driver from Spain

Henry—10-year-old boy, Vermont Brae—Henry's dog Wayne—Henry's best friend Jake—Wayne's father Annie—Wayne's mother Tiger—Annie's cat Nopie—Neighbor of Henry and Wayne Eliza—Henry's mother

The Marble

Some Ways the Characters Helped

| Action | Character |
|-----------------------|--|
| - Donated clothes | Eliza |
| - Delivered donations | Jake, Margarita, Cora, Pierre |
| - Made & shared food | Ms. Cyn, Zavion, Cora, Luna |
| - Offered shelter | Ms. Cyn, Jake & Annie (Wayne's family) |
| - Created art | Ben |
| - Helped animals | Diana, Nopie |
| - Made people laugh | Skeet, Tavius, Enzo, Osprey, Henry |
| - Believed in & | |
| shared a marble | Wayne, Henry, Zavion |
| - Built friendships | • • |
| & community | All |

BONUS: Look for **The "Another Kind of Hurricane" Project: Blue Jeans Drive** included in this guide. The project encourages a school or other group to identify a sister classroom or group in an affected community and hold a blue jeans drive for that community. Families are asked to donate a pair of new or used jeans and leave something in the pocket (like a marble or letter) as a community-to-community connection. Look for it on pages 7-10.

B) Look to the Region

The novel was released near the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Despite being a decade in the past, the effects of the hurricane endure. Do your readers want to help New Orleans (NOLA)?

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LowerNine.org

You have already helped NOLA by buying a copy of the novel **Another Kind of Hurricane**. A percentage of author Tamara Ellis Smith's profits from the sale of the novel goes directly to lowernine.org.

lowernine.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the long-term recovery of the Lower Ninth Ward of NOLA in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the levee breaches of 2005. To date, lowernine.org has fully rebuilt seventy-five homes and has completed smaller repair and renovation projects on hundreds more, bringing home more Lower Ninth Ward families than any other single organization.

Can you find other ways to raise funds for lowernine.org? If a trip to NOLA is possible for your group, lowernine.org offers volunteer opportunities for student groups.

Big Class

Readers all over the country are donating copies of **Another Kind of Hurricane**—as well as other multicultural children's books—to Big Class, getting meaningful stories directly into the hands of the children they represent.

Big Class is a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating and supporting the voices of New Orleans writers ages 6-18 through creative collaborations with schools and communities. Big Class offers a variety of free, innovative programs that provide underresourced students with opportunities to explore their creativity and improve their writing skills. They also aim to help teachers get their classes excited about writing. Their services are structured with the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

Books can be shipped to: Big Class | 3718 St. Claude Ave. | New Orleans, LA 70117

Resources: Book Lists from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)

"30 Multicultural Books Every Teen Should Know" http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/detailListBooks.asp?idBookLists=253

"50 Multicultural Books Every Child Should Know" http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/detailListBooks.asp?idBookLists=42

C) Look to the Helpers

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." —Fred Rogers

The Red Cross

The Red Cross responds to approximately 70,000 disasters in the United States every year, ranging from home fires that affect a single family to hurricanes that affect tens of thousands to earthquakes that impact millions. In these events, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, health, and mental health services to help families and entire communities get back on their feet.

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The Red Cross offers general volunteer opportunities and specific ways to help when disaster strikes. The <u>organization welcomes help from Elementary and Middle Schools</u>.

Resource: Red Cross: Ways to Volunteer: Elementary & Middle School http://www.redcross.org/support/get-involved/school-clubs/middle-elementary

D) Look to Ourselves

The novel has many themes, but the theme that affects each of the characters individually is <u>perseverance</u>. Can a reading, discussion, and exploration of perseverance help in the growth of every reader, no matter what they face?

Can you work with a school or community counselor to discuss with children what their personal reactions are to the book?

BONUS: Look for **The AKOH Project: Magic Marbles** included in this guide. The art and writing project asks readers to explore the ideas of Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline, and the ability to "Break Through Brick Walls," and finally how they come together to make Perseverance. That exploration in words and ideas is collaged into a plastic ball to create one's own marble. Look for it on pages 11-17.

AKOH PROJECT IDEA: BLUE JEANS DRIVE

A) About the Project

In Tamara Ellis Smith's novel *Another Kind of Hurricane* (Random House), two boys from opposite ends of the country make a connection through a pair of donated blue jeans, a pair of jeans with a marble in the pocket. This project takes you through some sample steps for holding a Blue Jeans Drive for another school. The blue jeans can be a carrier of messages or objects that build connections between the donor kids and the recipient kids. You can even choose to include a copy of the novel.

B) Background: A Pair of Pants Inspired the Book

Did you know that the novel was inspired by a real pair of pants? In August 2005, in the days immediately following Hurricane Katrina, Vermont author Tamara Ellis Smith and her then-fouryear-old son Luc dropped off food and clothing at their local police barracks.



Luc asked his mother, "Who will get my pair of pants?

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The jeans were headed to New Orleans, 1,600 miles from where Luc and his mother lived in Vermont. Luc's question made Tamara envision a four-year-old kid who would soon be wearing Luc's green pants with the moose on them. Luc's question connected the two boys. His question—his curiosity about this other kid—led to the creation of the novel *Another Kind of Hurricane*.

C) Clothing Drives: Discouraged on Large Scale But Welcomed on Local Level

You will read on many disaster relief sites that large-scale clothing drives are discouraged. Communities affected by a natural disaster can become flooded with clothing that is difficult to process and clothing that does not serve the immediate needs of the community.

Your Blue Jean Drive, however, can be highly effective if you establish a relationship with a sister school, classroom, or community center and let them know what you are sending and why.

D) Discussion Questions: Explore the Story & the Idea of a Blue Jeans Drive These questions (or ones of your clever devising) could help your readers connect the novel to a volunteer opportunity.

- 1. What did Henry's mother donate to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina?
- 2. What was inside the pocket of Henry's jeans?
- 3. What was Henry's reaction when he found out the marble had been donated along with his jeans? Why?
- 4. Do you have a special object that brings you luck or reminds you of a special person or event? How would you feel if your mother accidently gave away that object?
- 5. Can you list all the hands the jeans (and the marble) passed though before they were given to Zavion? *Answers could include*: Eliza (Henry's mother), Margarita (truck driver), Pierre (Baton Rouge Salvation Army), Tavius, and Ms. Cyn.
- 6. Was Henry right to want the marble back? Do you think Henry was selfish?
- 7. What did Zavion feel when he discovered the marble in the pocket of the jeans? Why?
- 8. Why do you think Henry was able to let the marble go in the end?
- 9. Do you think Zavion and Henry will share the marble the way that Henry and Wayne did?
- 10. Do you think the marble is magic?
- 11. Two boys, separated by 1,600 miles, meet because a marble. Is that magic? Would the meeting have happened without the marble?
- 12. Would the meeting of Henry and Zavion have happened without a pair of donated jeans?
- 13. Does your family ever donate old clothes?
- 14. What would you think of us gathering up old blue jeans to share with a group of kids that are having a hard time?
- 15. Can you imagine who might get your pair of jeans?
- 16. Could we put some small object in the pockets to surprise the person that gets the jeans? Could we write that mysterious person a letter and tell them about the kid who once owned those jeans?

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E) Establish a Community-to-Community Connection

Which community you choose depends on the exploration you do with your readers. Has there been a community in need in the news? Has a natural disaster struck somewhere in the country? Has a neighboring school lost one of their students? You can also look to a community that has suffered in previous years. Communities feel the impact of a natural or more personal disasters for years after the incident. You also may be more likely to make a solid connection to a school after the main part of a crisis has passed.

You also may want to simply establish a link regardless of whether or not the community has seen hardship.

Who is your best contact? Should you reach out to an educator teaching the same grade level as you? Should your librarian reach out to a local librarian? Should a principal try and reach a principal?

An introduction letter could include:

My classroom has just read and discussed Tamara Ellis Smith's children's novel **Another Kind of Hurricane** (Random House). In the story, two boys from opposite ends of the country make a connection through a pair of donated blue jeans, a pair of jeans with a marble in the pocket. The marble, and the connection it creates between the boys, helps each boy heal from recent difficulties. My readers were inspired by the book and want to make a connection across the miles to other kids.

We would like to make a connection by sending blue jeans to you. In the pockets of the jeans, you will find small objects and/or notes that my readers want to share with yours. Would you like to receive such a package? We would also include a copy of the book for your possible read-aloud.

Feel free to send us a list of the genders and sizes of your kids and we will match jeans to their needs. If that is too time-consuming, we will simply mark the jeans we collect with the sizes.

I envision this as a partnership between our classrooms and communities, so I welcome any ideas you have!

F) Family Participation & Enlisting a Volunteer

You know the parent or parents who can rally all your families to action. Can s/he send a letter, email, or text to jumpstart the project with families? If you have a list of jean sizes from your sister community, can s/he make sure all the sizes are represented?

An introduction letter to families could include:

_____ classroom has just read and discussed Tamara Ellis Smith's acclaimed children's novel *Another Kind of Hurricane* (Random House). In the story, two boys from opposite ends of the country make a connection through a pair of donated blue jeans, a pair of jeans with a marble in the pocket. The marble, and the connection it creates between the boys, helps each boy heal from recent

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difficulties. Our kids were inspired by the book and want to make a connection to other kids.

Together they have chosen a classroom in ______ to receive blue jeans with messages and/or small objects in the pockets to build connections between our two communities. (The privacy of our kids will, of course, be closely monitored.)

- Do you have one or more pairs of kids' blue jeans you could donate to the cause? They need to be sent in with your student by ______. (It would be great if you ran them through the wash before sending!)
- 2. If you can, slip \$1 5 in the pocket of the jeans. These funds will help us cover the cost of shipping and the cost of a copy of the book *Another Kind of Hurricane* which we will also send.
- 3. If your student wants to, pick out a small toy that s/he is willing to part with to slip into the pocket of the jeans. The toy shared in the book is a marble. A marble would make a wonderful, story-rich connection.
- 4. Reach out to me if you are willing to donate \$20 for me to source blue jeans in sizes that we have not been able to match with our sister community.

G) Create a Package

Objects

Small toys or objects chosen by your readers from their home will make the receipt of the jeans more personalized and tied to the story. The strongest object connection to the story is, of course, a marble.

Resource: Bulk marbles can be purchased online at House of Marbles. http://www.houseofmarbles.com

Writing Assignment

Do your readers want to write notes to the kids that will receive the jeans? Perhaps they could write a story telling about a typical day their jeans have spent. (You know how to protect your readers' privacy. They should not include their last name or where exactly they live.) Consider also the socioeconomic differences between the two communities. You may not want your readers to tell about how these jeans went to Disney World or on vacation to Aruba. The writing assignment should highlight the senders' and recipients' commonalities.

Consider the discussion and writing exercise embedded in the Magic Marble art activity on pages 11-17. That activity asks kids to consider Perseverance and may lead to poems or other writing to share with the sister community.

Sizing the Jeans

As your parent volunteer coordinates the collection of jeans, s/he could staple a card to each pair with the size noted. This will help distribution on the other end. S/he may need to shop a local thrift or consignment store for missing sizes to match the sister community.

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Including a Book

The sister community can truly understand the symbolism of the jeans and whatever is included in the pocket of the jeans if they are able to read a copy of Tamara Ellis Smith's *Another Kind of Hurricane* (Random House). Would you be able to send one with your package? Know that a percentage of author Tamara Ellis Smith's profits from the sale of the novel goes directly to help lowernine.org rebuild New Orleans!

H) Continue the Connection

What can you do to continue the connection you established between your two communities?

I) Document & Share

Tamara Ellis Smith would love to share your project on her blog and to add to this document with any and all clever ideas you come up with. Share any pictures, ideas, and outcomes with Tamara at tam@tamaraellissmith.com.

AKOH PROJECT IDEA: MAGIC MARBLES

A) About the Project

For the three 10-year-old boys in Tamara Ellis Smith's children's novel *Another Kind of Hurricane* (Random House), the marble that passes between them is imbued with luck and possibly magic. For Henry it also stands for all that is left of his friendship with Wayne. For Zavion, who has lost everything, the marble is something concrete to hold, to own, to build upon. The marble also manages to bring Henry and Zavion together to connect and to ultimately heal. Whether or not the reader believes the marble is lucky or magic, it is a symbol for the boys' perseverance.

The following art and writing project asks readers to explore the ideas of Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline, and the ability to "Break Down Brick Walls." Each of these ideas are glued together with Community to make Perseverance.



That exploration in words and ideas will be collaged inside a plastic ball to create one's own magic marble.

This exploration of words and ideas could also become a writing assignment. Could that assignment align with in the Blue Jean Drive idea on pages 7-11? In that project, letters are slipped into the pockets of jeans donated to a community in need.

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B) Art Supplies

1. Clear Plastic Ball Fillable Ornaments (80 mm-110 mm)

Each reader will need one ball ornament. These ornaments split into two pieces. We will be using the concave interiors as a collage surface. The ornaments run approximately \$1-2 per ball.

Resource: http://amzn.to/1Q6uvvI

2. Mod Podge (Gloss preferable, but Matte is fine)

Each reader will need 1-2 tablespoons in a paper cup or other container.

3. Brushes

Each reader will need a small paintbrush to brush Mod Podge into the ball halves.

4. Colored Tissue Paper

One pack with multiple colors is sufficient.

5. Colored or White Copy Paper

1-2 sheets per student

6. Scissors

One pair for each reader.

7. Marbles

It would be wonderful to have large marbles to pass around as inspiration.

Resource: http://www.houseofmarbles.com

C) Read Aloud

You might ask two of your readers to alternate reading aloud some key Henry and Zavion scenes from the book before starting a discussion.

Zavion:

The wind wrapped itself around the two-by-fours that held Zavion's house straight and tall. The wind pushed and moaned just beneath the drywall. Papa had said they needed to get to the attic, to the highest point in the house. But the attic didn't seem high enough.

The wind snuck through the walls. First blowing up and then pounding. Then sideways. Pound. Then down. Pound. Then down again with a piercing squeal. Zavion didn't know where he would feel it, or where he would hear it next. His teeth chattered. He squeezed his eyes shut, but that didn't stop the wind and that didn't stop his body from shaking so hard he thought his heart might shake right out of his chest.

Henry:

Henry's legs ached to run, his breath and heart pounded in his ears. To run on the mountain, behind Wayne's house, in their small town in northern Vermont, half a continent away from the hurricane in Louisiana. Henry wanted to run on the mountain with Brae at his heels and Wayne by his side. Like the very last time. He'd never run on the mountain again. Not with Wayne. It wasn't going to happen. Ever. Again.

Zavion:

Zavion turned his head and saw his house—now a small ragged box in the distance. The two-by-fours holding up the house looked like legs. They buckled at the knees and snapped. More tiles flew off the collapsing roof, like birds or bats, spinning and crashing into the water. Zavion grabbed two of the broken slate shingles as they rushed by.

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Henry:

He didn't want to do it, but Henry couldn't keep from looking at Mount Mansfield. There was nowhere safe to look. The hulking mountain was everywhere. Even through stinging eyes, its edges were sharp, like a picture ripped out of a magazine and pasted against the sky. But it was confusing now. It was dangerous.

Zavion:

Except for Papa, everything he had known his whole life was gone. The big oak tree and its shade and the brick walkway leading up to his house. Gone. The house. Gone. Everything inside the house. Gone. And the one last thing that had reminded him of Mama. Gone. All of them swept away in the hurricane.

Henry:

Henry stared up at Mansfield from under the pine tree. He would never, ever get out from under the accusing fingers and glares pointed right at him. Every single tree and rock blamed him, and every stream shouted you did this, you did this, you did this as they flowed down the mountain.

D) Discussion & Writing

1. Explore Loss

Ask your readers to explore Zavion and Henry's losses and imagine their own with dialogue like:

Zavion loses his home and all the possessions in his home.

Henry loses his best friend. And he loses his mountain too; the place where he felt the most at home.

Imagine losing your own things. Imagine your house. Imagine your room. What are your favorite things? What if, like for Zavion, they were gone?

Imagine your most favorite place. What if, like Henry, you couldn't go there anymore?

We could say that Henry and Zavion lose everything. It sure seems like it.

2. Explore What Remains

Brainstorm what remains for Zavion and Henry on a whiteboard or pad. Answers could include themselves, other friends, family, future, hopes, dreams, the ability to follow those hopes and dreams, and, perhaps most importantly, what is INSIDE them.

3. Define & Explore Perseverance

Explore the definition of perseverance with dialogue like:

What is inside of you? What could you achieve even if everything were taken away from you? What gives you Perseverance?

Perseverance is the steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.

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Perseverance is something we already have inside of us but something we can capture and make stronger. We are going to capture it today inside a magic marble.

4. Select Paper

Have your readers select a piece of colored or plain copy paper and take out a pencil to capture some words during your discussion.

5. Explore & Record Passion

Have your readers write down words related to their Passion with dialogue like:

What is Passion? Passion is an intense love or interest in something. Passions is when you love something so much that you are willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish it.

What words come to mind when you think about your own Passion? Write them down in one section of your paper. Be sure to leave good spaces between your words and phrases.

6. Explore & Record Grit

Have your readers write down words related to Grit with dialogue like:

What is Grit? Grit is courage and resolve, hard work, strength of character. It is digging down deep to continue to do something when it doesn't work out the first time.

What words come to mind when you think about your own Grit? Write them down in one section of your paper. Remember to leave good spaces between your words and phrases.

7. Explore & Record Self-Discipline

Have your readers write down words related to Self-Discipline with dialogue like:

What is Self-Discipline? Self-Discipline is your ability to create a structure with which to practice something.

You've got Passion and you've got Grit. Now you need a structure, a way to manage your time and commitment. For example, if you play soccer, you might decide you need to practice goal kicks 4 times a week. Or if you play piano, you might plan to practice 5 hours a week.

Self-Discipline is really about making the choice over and over again to show up and have curiosity. Self-Discipline means showing up even when things look bleak (this is sometimes the moment when a breakthrough occurs. In fact, this is often the moment when a breakthrough happens).

What words come to mind when you think about your own Self-Discipline? Write them down in one section of your paper.

8. Explore & Record "Breaking Through Brick Walls"

Have your readers write down words related to "Breaking Through Brick Walls" with dialogue like:

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What does "Breaking Through Brick Walls" mean? It means obstacles that you run into that you have to find a way around, over, under, or through. For example, your coach tells you that you're too short to play basketball. Maybe you do not get a role in the school play. Maybe your friend tells you that you aren't good at math.

But here's the good news: the people who find themselves up against brick walls and create a way to beat them? Those are the people who are more creative and have more inner strength as a result.

What words come to mind when you think about your own creativity and "Breaking Through Brick Walls"? Write them down in one section of your paper.

E) Revisit Perseverance

Revisit the concept of Perseverance with dialogue like:

All of these things that you have – Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline, "Breaking Through Brick Walls" – together make Perseverance. These are the things, no matter what happens to you, that you have inside yourself.

F) Introduce the Marble

Hand out a few marbles for kids to observe, hold, and pass to a neighbor. Transition to a reading about the marble with dialogue like this:

Let's go back to Henry and Zavion. They had a mix of Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline, and the ability to Break Through Brick Walls. One can see all these things as the swirling elements of a marble. But what holds all of those elements in the marble to create the Perseverance they need to survive and thrive?

G) Read Aloud Again

Revisit a marble scene from the book. Ask a reader to read this aloud:

Henry:

It wasn't about luck. It never had been. The marble practically had a string attached to it. Henry saw that clearly now. Zavion saw it. The marble had a sort of magic. Back and forth. Back and forth, weaving between them. And it wasn't just in the marble. It was in the whole world. The magic was in the space between. In all the pieces connecting. In all the pieces connecting, falling apart, and connecting again.

H) The Marble & Community

The elements of Perseverance cannot stay together without Connection or Community. Make this case for your readers with dialogue like:

Elements of Perseverance are swirling within the marble, what do you think contains them? What holds them together?

Think of all the hands that the marble passed through in the story. Who touched that marble or helped it move across the country inside the pocket of the blue jeans?

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Once you start thinking about it, almost everyone in the story has a role to play in that marble passing from Henry to Zavion. It is Henry and Zavion's Community (family, friends, and people they never met) that makes that marble possible.

Does your Community help hold your Perseverance together? Consider for a few minutes who your Community is. Who makes your struggles possible? Who helps all the elements of Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline and the ability to "Break Through Walls" hold together to make your Perseverance? Write down names of those people, or even better yet, what they do for you. Think about words like Encouragement, Reminders, Hugs, and so on.

I) Making Magic Marbles

All of the gathered words for Passion, Grit, Self-Discipline, Breaking Through Brick Walls, and Community can now become connected inside a marble of your readers' making. Introduce the art project with dialogue like:

Now I thought we could each make a marble. We are going to look at all the words we wrote down, choose our favorite ones, and swirl them into a ball with color. That ball, that marble will become a symbol of our Perseverance all held together with the glue of Community.

Resource: Slideshow of Making Magic Marbles images http://www.curiouscitydpw.com/2016/02/22/hurricane-project/

1. Hand out supplies.

Give each reader two halves of a ball ornament, a Mod Podge dollop, a paint brush, and scissors.

2. Cut out words and phrases.

The cut-out words do not need to be neat. In fact, the messier, the better!

- **3. Select 10-12 of your favorite words and phrases.** Arrange the words into two circles on your desk.
- 4. Cup one half of the ball in the palm of your hand.
- 5. Paint a section of the concave portion with a thin layer of Mod Podge. The thinner the layer, the better the result.
- **6. Stick a word on the Mod Podge** so the blank side is facing you and the word shows through on the outside or convex side of the ball.
- **7. Repeat until you have placed words all over** the inside of both sides of the ball. Leave some spaces between the words.
- 8. Imagine the words as part of the swirl of color in a marble.
- **9. Select tissue papers** that contrast or complement the words.
- **10. Tear small pieces of tissue paper** and attach them between and behind the words on the inside of the ball halves.
- 11. Paint the entire inside of the ball halves with Mod Podge once you have a look you want.
- 12. Let dry and connect the two halves to make one magic marble.

J) Document & Share

Tamara Ellis Smith would love to share your project on her blog and to add to this document with any and all clever ideas you come up with. Share any pictures, ideas and outcomes with Tamara at tam@tamaraellissmith.com.

Reading for Empathy, Acting for Community

