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An Interview with Don M. Winn: Sir Kaye is now on Audio!

*Feb 5, 2018 by
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Columnist*

Michael F. Shaughnessy –

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1) Don, let's discuss what is happening with you this coming year. First, I understand that Sir Kaye is now available on audio books. How did this come about?

I loved being read to when I was a kid. I've often mentioned that my favorite childhood memories include the times I spent with my grandmother in shared reading. And later, after I started school, I vividly remember story time, where the teacher would read to the class from a popular book, a chapter or two a day. I was transfixed by every word and visualized the story being played out in my imagination. This daily engagement is what developed my love of great stories.

There is no better way to encourage reading and to build a love of story than to read aloud with our young ones. This is especially important for children who really struggle with reading to the point where they cannot imagine reading ever being pleasurable.

In today's hectic world, it's becoming more and more of a challenge for many parents to find sufficient time to read with their children. That's why I make sure that all of my Sir Kaye books are available in audio format, not just in print!

Listening to books can be a real inroad into the heart of the challenged reader. The more they can become engaged with great books, the more they'll develop a love of story, which gives them a

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reason for developing the tenacity and resilience they need to work through their reading challenges. Tenacity and resilience are key because learning to read is a process that takes a *lot* of time. Let's face it, for the struggling child or dyslexic, reading feels like a frustrating, endless slog with a very little payoff. But if they are regularly hearing great stories read by a person who is a good reader, they can then see the big picture of the story, its characters, plot, humor, and suspense, rather than just their struggle to make sense of each individual letter or word. That makes all the difference! Enjoying audiobooks can help dispel the negative emotions the child may have previously associated with books and reading, and introduce the wondrous notion that reading is one of life's great joys.

2) Where can teachers and parents get these audio books, and at the risk of seeming crude, how much does an audiobook cost? (I still read the old fashioned way- with a book in my hands that I can underline and write in the margins)

The audio editions of the Sir Kaye books are available on Audible.com, Amazon.com, and iTunes. The full retail price for each audiobook is around \$14.95 and is less for Audible members and on Amazon. Occasionally the audiobooks are on special for as little as \$1.99.

3) Exactly what is the process of making a paper book into an audiobook? How does one go about it?

The first step in the process is that the narrator must read the book in its entirety. This introduces the narrator to the plot and characters. Experienced narrators describe actually picturing the characters in their mind as to what they would look like and how they would interact with the other characters.

Then the narrator will read each chapter through several times to become familiar with the wording and the writing style of that particular author. Once that is done, recording can begin. Some narrators have their own in-home studio, others work for a studio that employs several narrators. Chapters are usually recorded one at a time. The editing process involves playing the chapter back and listening for errors made during the recording. This is a slow process. When reading aloud, the mind sometimes goes faster than the eyes and it is very easy to misread a sentence and substitute a word such as "the" with "a." When errors are discovered, the sentence in the recorded file is selected, deleted, and then re-recorded correctly and placed back into the recorded file.

The final phase of editing involves going through each chapter and removing unwanted noise, such as breaths, background noise, or whatever else doesn't belong.

4) Happy Moments is one of your newest projects – tell us about this.

This book will be a compilation of happy moments that real people have shared from their lives retold in either prose or poetry and presented in a picture book for parents and children to read together. The book will be a reminder that a fantastic life is really a string of small moments that become dear to us. It will remind adults (and teach kids) that spending time together and nurturing meaningful connections with one another is what life is all about.

People from all walks of life can contribute their favorite happy moments they experienced as children. This book will teach children how to focus on everyday happy moments as a way of coping with challenges or disappointment. After all, even when we're having what we might think of as a "bad day," it's still possible to focus on the happy moments that are right there in front of us. It will broaden children's views of the world and create a sense of empathy that will stay with them into adulthood.

Happy Moments webpage: <http://www.donwinn.com/happy-moments-project.html>

5) What has been the reaction to your audio books?

The reaction to the Sir Kaye audio books has been very positive. Below are two reviews from parents posted on Audible:

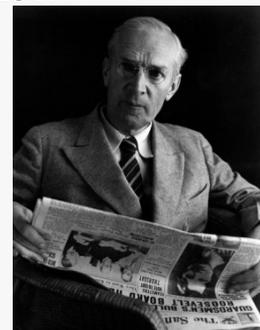
"Fun and Light!"

My 5-year-old son and I listened to this story together. We enjoyed it and it gave us things to talk about. He's a little obsessed with knights right now, so the topic is perfect. It gave me an opportunity to talk about how not all knights were "good guys." It was a good book for the two of us to listen to and enjoy together and we can't wait for the next book in what will hopefully be a long, successful series.

"FINALLY!! A GOOD book for BOYS! "

I don't usually listen to audio books, but this one was a life-saver! Right after purchasing, my kids came down with the flu...we sat and listened together on the edge of our seats! They absolutely loved it, as did I, and they've already started listening to it again! I LOVED, LOVED, LOVED the fact that this was a fun (and wholesome) story that was TOTALLY age

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appropriate for my 9-year-old son, but was still completely enjoyed by my 8-year-old daughter as well!

As a mother, I loved that the hero (Sir Kaye) has no “super-powers” or magic, but depends totally on his intelligence, strength of character, and a strange talent (don’t want to kill any surprises!) to defeat the kingdom’s villains. I so appreciate someone who has finally written a book that appeals to a boy’s sense of honor and “manhood” in such a positive way.

This book has values and moral lessons intertwined with humor and adventure that are so refreshingly age appropriate. We (me and my kids) cannot wait for the next book, and we hope that there are many more! Thanks, Mr. Winn!

6) Do you narrate or read your own audiobooks? Or does someone else do this for you?

I use a professional narrator, Stephen Marsden, Ph.D. for all of my audiobooks.

7) In your mind, what are the benefits of an audio book?

When new or struggling readers view words on a page, they can become overwhelmed and frustrated. They can’t see the potential, what it can mean for them, or conceive how to proceed (or even why they would want to do all that work).

To illustrate, only a cruel person would tell a hungry toddler, “there’s corn, potatoes, and tomatoes out in the garden, and eggs in the henhouse,” and expect them to take care of themselves. The child doesn’t know how to harvest, wash, prepare (or even reach!) those things. They have no concept of what all those things can become. Instead, we patiently prepare a tasty meal, showing the toddler the beautiful sheen of a tomato warm from the sun, giving them one to taste as we scramble their eggs and fry potatoes for them. Then we sit down to enjoy the meal together. Next time the child is hungry, they’ll be eager to come out to the garden with us and help gather the eggs and produce, learning a little more each time, and enjoying the process and learning to appreciate everything that goes into being nourished.

Audiobooks and all forms of reading aloud follow this model: they introduce young or struggling readers to the delight of the finished product, whetting their appetite with stories that have characters they love, exciting plots, mysteries, and adventure. Rather than just seeing books as the struggle to decode the next letter or word, and reacting with frustration, the child sees that listening to stories about people with feelings and interests like theirs is a wonderful, joyful experience. Every book is like a garden of words, full of potential to nourish and uplift the reader. Once the child experiences this, they can finally see the point of all the hard work necessary to harvest that potential for themselves and be motivated to move forward.

8) What are some of your next projects?

I’ve just started working on a new multi-sensory picture book series to help build a pre-literacy foundation from ages newborn to first grade called **Reading with Reggie**. The books are intended for shared reading. Reggie is a character in the *Sir Kaye, the Boy Knight* series who struggles with dyslexia. So now we’re introducing him to our youngest audience as a guide to the challenges of learning to read and write.

Reggie is the perfect guide: he lives these struggles, is funny, shares his feelings when he’s frustrated because things aren’t working right, and most importantly, learns how to deal with negative feelings and move forward into growth.

The goal of the series is to help adults build a foundation for literacy in their children and to see what forms of sensory engagement are the best fit for their child’s learning style. Reggie will help kids figure out what works for them, and maintain a positive sense of self and their own potential.

I’ve written some magazine articles and blogs about the benefit of [Multisensory Literacy Instruction](#) in helping ALL kids learn to read. For details about the beauty and effectiveness of using this technique, see this interview of Faith Borkowsky, author of [Reading Intervention Behind School Walls](#).

This series will also capitalize on a technique called, [A Hero of Self-Reference](#), which involves using a character with feelings and struggles like the child experiences to help him or her not feel like they’re the only one dealing with these challenges, reducing their feelings of shame, and providing a foundation for a sense of hope for themselves as they see their hero conquer their own challenges

9) Do you have a website and what would I find there”?

Yes, my website is www.donwinn.com, and my team and I work hard to keep it up to date and make it a dynamic resource for parents, homeschoolers, and teachers. Dyslexia/reluctant reader topics are easy to find in the archive, and teaching aids, activities for each book, coloring sheets, and more are

- Inside the Criminal Mind is Inside the Cybercriminal Mind
- Michael Nuccitelli, Psy.D. Internet Safety Notes & Quotes
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available free at the click of a mouse. Videos, news archives, current and past articles in periodicals, and reviews are available as well. My website is also the portal where readers can communicate with me. I love questions and feedback from readers and do my best to answer each query personally.

All of my books are available in softcover, hardcover, and eBook format and all the Sir Kaye books are available as audiobooks and can be purchased from most online resellers: [Amazon](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), [Audible](#), etc.

My picture books are also available for significant discounts to schools, libraries, non-profits, retailers, and vendors directly from [Cardboard Box Adventures Publishing](#) or [Ingram/LSI](#).

The Sir Kaye titles are available for significant discounts to schools, libraries, non-profits, retailers, and vendors through [Progressive Rising Phoenix Press](#) or [Ingram/LSI](#).

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