

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for LeVar Burton | Storytelling the Enemies of Education Off (Episode 213)

LeVar Burton has a diverse resume that — presented in full — would stretch the length of the USS Enterprise. But here's a brief summary: He landed his first audition for a major role at age 19 to portray Kunta Kinte in the 1977 television miniseries *Roots*, he hosted over 21 seasons of PBS children's television series *Reading Rainbow*, and he played Lieutenant Commander Geordi La Forge on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. He now hosts the [LeVar Burton Reads](#) podcast, on which he handpicks his favorite short stories and shares them with us.

I wanted to find out why, despite early success, LeVar never had a Hollywood meltdown. Fortunately, he grew up with strong values and surrounded himself with the right kind of people — and we'll learn how to do the same. We'll also talk about the enemies of education and what we can do to make America smart again. This is a tale of self-sabotage, hustle, and resilience, and it's about someone who has probably influenced *almost* every single person listening to *The Jordan Harbinger Show*. And if not? That's about to change [with this episode](#).

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How to Get Kids to Read

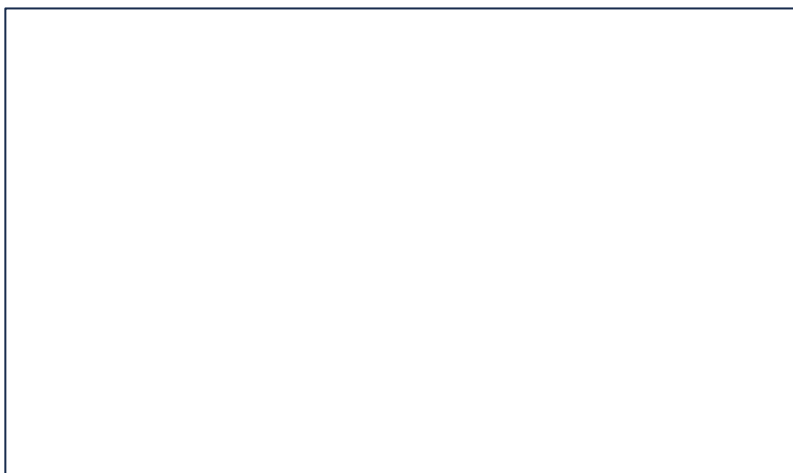
LeVar's mode of education growing up was primarily by reading.

"My mom was a reader," says LeVar. "That was really critical modelling. And I believe it still is. The whole idea of seeing my mother read two or three books at a time for her own personal enjoyment was, as it turns out, really important information for me to absorb."

When parents ask LeVar how they can get their kids to read more, he asks them two questions:

"Do they see *you* reading?" Set a good example by prioritizing reading among your own leisure activities.

"What are your child's passions?" Knowing what they find interesting is a window into what they might like to read.



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Why You Should Read

Even if you don't have any kids who would benefit from seeing you read, it shouldn't be something you outgrow. But if reading doesn't give you some sense of wonder, LeVar's attitude might offer a fresh perspective.

"The book I was reading when I got what reading was all about was Captains Courageous by Rudyard Kipling," says LeVar. "And when I finished that book, I was overwhelmed with sadness. It was because I had left this world that I had become so connected to...to this day, when I'm reading a particularly good piece of short fiction, I slow down the last chapter or so. That's the power of literature. You make the movie in your head. You invest yourself in the story literally."

What pastimes could you cut back on — such as video games, Netflix binging, and Reddit trolling — that would allow you to pencil half an hour to an hour of reading time into your daily schedule?

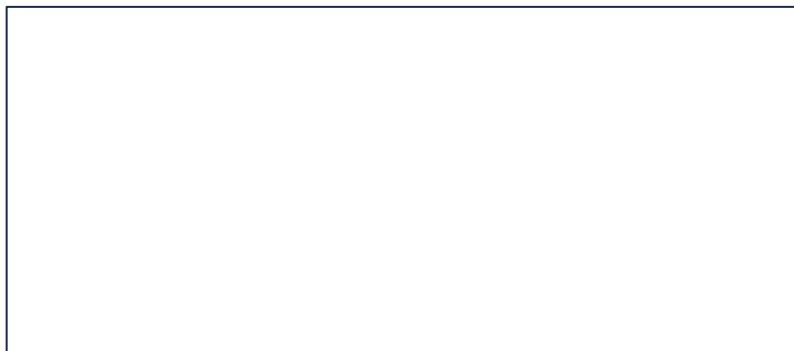
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Noblesse Oblige

As someone who's been an educator in the public eye for decades, I wondered if he's under pressure to be on his best behavior at all times — and if he ever feels the need to clock out from being a Mr. Rogers-like figure to those who look up to him.

“There's a saying in French: Noblesse Oblige,” says LeVar. “Loosely translated, if you are noble in any way, there's a responsibility that comes along with that, and I definitely believe that to be true. My job when I go out in public is to be LeVar Burton, which means to me that when people recognize me and want to interact, unless I'm eating, then I feel it's part of my job to give them a quality experience.”

Challenge: The next time you're in public and somebody intrudes on your solitude, pretend you're LeVar Burton and exercise a graceful air of Noblesse Oblige toward them — unless you're eating! Some things are sacred.



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Enemies of Education

When I ask LeVar what he thinks is the biggest enemy of education these days, he's got a ready answer.

"It's the will of the nation — or the lack of will to really make this the priority that I believe it should be," says LeVar. "That's the problem. It's more than just apathy — it's a decision that we continually make to spend more money on war than we do on educating our kids. That's a conscious decision that adults are making every day."

What other priorities do you see as being misplaced ahead of education? If you were a legislator, how might you rearrange these priorities? Are you aware of what your local representatives are doing to make education a top priority, and are you prepared to put pressure on them if they aren't?

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Not a Good Look

After the success of *Roots* made leading man LeVar one of the most recognizable faces in the country at the tender age of 19, he went through a momentary lapse of humility and felt himself above the audition process for future roles. It was a head-swelling he had to overcome.

“What I didn’t realize was how much I was sabotaging myself by walking into a room with that kind of attitude,” says LeVar. “And when I realized it, I was like, ‘Oh, my God. That’s not a good look.’ In turning it around, I had to remember how much I loved acting and I started looking at the audition process as an opportunity to do something I really, really love, and now it’s just ‘Get me in the room!’”

In what ways have you sabotaged your own success by letting your ego lead the way? How might expressing an attitude of gratitude have changed the scenario for the better?

Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here.](#)

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About



Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers – from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth – and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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