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Some rough ideas -- I hope to freshen things up a bit later today.

> *In the Foreword to Mindstorms, Papert talks about his childhood fascination with gears. Describe an object from your childhood, and explain why it was important to you (then and later).*

Books. I've always had a fascination with books, even when I couldn't read them. As a little girl, I loved how orderly the rows of words lined up on each page, how each page in turn was neatly piled on top of one another, and how it all came together, bound within a cover. I felt smart when I held a book. I'd pretend to read it like grown-ups do. But, aside from being an accessory to my daily outfits, books were necessary tools. Being a shorty (then and now), they acted as ladders and seat cushions. I also discovered that books were useful for smushing bugs (Sorry Ximena!). As I grew older, the role of books grew in my life as well. As an only child, I would spend evenings cuddled up with a book -- if I couldn't play with someone, the book played with me. I learned to be patient, to share, to work hard, and to make jokes from books. Today, my relationship with books has evolved yet again. I still love how they look, how they feel, and how they make me feel smart...or dumb or numb -- more the latter than the former. Most importantly, though, books provide the best way (for me) to relax and to escape from the pressures and stresses of everyday life.

> *What idea (or passage) in Mindstorms was most provocative, intriguing, or surprising for you?*

Surprising -- The passage (pp. 113-114) in which Papert describes how children tend to erase their entire projects when the results are not as they had intended/hoped struck a cord with me as often that's what I do. He continues to say that children do so in order to cover-up their failures, to wipe out the evidence. I wonder if I'm subconsciously doing the same thing. My excuse is I tend to start over because I'd rather begin afresh instead of being plagued by the ideas that led me to do what I did before. Papert also mentions "debugging", working with what is in front of us and figuring out what's wrong/what needs to be changed from there, and how children are more likely to begin debugging when they begin to learn that making mistakes are okay -- does it work the other way around?

> *Mindstorms was written nearly 25 years ago. Which ideas in the book stand the test of time? Which ones don't?*

I believe the book in its entirety will stand the test of time, but the idea that stands out most to me is one of Papert's messages of empowering children through technology. The examples that litter the book, especially the one of Deborah (pp. 118-119), exemplify how excellent computers can be as tools in education, how astonishing the depth and complexity of the issues they can cover and address (when used properly -- Papert mentions early on his vision is "the child programs the computer" not "the computer is being used to program the child" [pp. 5]). The only danger would be for instructors to run wild with this idea, forgetting that although computers can be many things and serve many purposes, they cannot replace the need for human interaction. ...Or can that happen? What if we're able to develop graphics to a point where we can see another person in cyberspace, facial expressions, body language, and all? Just a question...rather creepy when I think about it!