"Find out who you are and do it on purpose.

Dolly Parton

*"Without knowledge, action is useless
and knowledge without action is futile."*

Abu Bakr

*"Part of the education of every child to show it as
many as possible of the various types of lives
which make up the world around it... School is
the beginning of the child's life work."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

*"Not everyone can become a great artist, but a
great artist can come from anywhere."*

Pixar's *Ratatouille*

"Journey learning" makes you the protagonist of your education.

WHAT'S JOURNEY LEARNING?

The idea that studying a skill or seeking knowledge is just a part of larger process to achieve a goal or a mission, and that education has a bigger reason.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

How does a bird fly? Why do we dream? What is anger? Does the sun have a birthday? As kids, we're full of curious questions. In fact, following these curiosities led to the progress of many domains and disciplines, from physics to poetry.

Yet today, seeking knowledge has lost its goal of understanding and progressing ourselves and our worlds. Instead, education is often a hurdle to making money, filling a resume, or achieving status—not a journey for a sense of purpose.

Without that goal-oriented curiosity, school, work, and life can feel unfulfilling and useless.

Journey learning reframes education as studying for a goal, especially to follow our natural curiosities. By seeing our education and life experiences like a journey, we can better understand every up, down, test, and wisdom. With new skills, we earn a sense of purpose and stability: healthy aspirations, especially in a world of so many questions.

SEEING CAUSE AND EFFECT (CONNECT THE DOTS)

Journey learning asks us to draw from our past experiences and look for patterns in our work styles, attitudes, time management, and subjects and roles we prefer. What kinds of work trigger a flow state? Are there topics I care

more about than others? What's my stress threshold? Do I work well with others? Am I hard to please? As we ask questions like these, we grow more aware of the causes and effects in our lives so we can better play along.

EVERYONE'S GOT A COOKIE TRAIL

We all have patterns in how we react to our education, career, and life experiences. There are infinite dots to connect and stories to tell about ourselves. Discovering these journeys and taking advantage of them is a skill we all share.

Even our myths and movies consistently show us that this process is natural to our shared, human experience. To understand our journeys and how they change is to discover who we are and what we're made of.
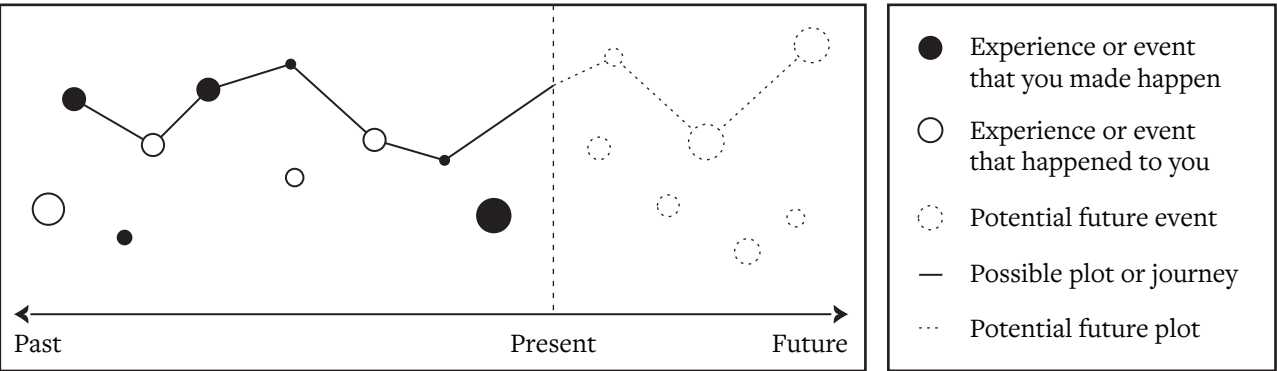
Definitions

STORY	A series of experiences or events (think: an Instagram or Snap story).
PLOT (STORYLINE)	The pattern that connects some experiences together, start to end, through cause and effect.
JOURNEY	A type of plot that involves personal growth, understanding, and progress.
JOURNEY LEARNING	Seeking knowledge to understand or progress yourself or your world.
YOUR WORLD	Your perception of the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" of the way things in life are. Informed by your story, plot, and journey.

PLOT TWISTERS	Practices to discover the journey in your education and life story.
COOKIE TRAIL	The visual interface that shows a story, plot, and journey over time.
ROLE MODEL	Someone whose cookie trail you admire.
HINDSIGHT	Seeing how a past experience in your story can be a plot point.
FORESIGHT	Seeing how a future experience in your story can be a plot point.
EARTH'S TO-DO LIST	The database that reframes a career as a goal-oriented task to aid human flourishing.*

* Aristotle: "activity in accordance with virtue."

Cookie Trail Example

The y-axis measures the amount of self-awareness and personal growth of the event, determined by its numbers on the five Plot Twist axes.

- ● Experience or event that you made happen
- ○ Experience or event that happened to you
- ○ (dotted) Potential future event
- — Possible plot or journey
- ⋯ Potential future plot

Past — Present — Future

Journey Learning Product Ecosystem

Documenting hindsight — Exploring foresight

1. Plot Twisters

Reflection activities to open the story of your education, career, and life.

Plot Twisters are my playground experiments as I develop the science of journey learning. As I invent metrics, I'll update and perfect my Plot Twisters.

PLOTTWISTERS.ORG

2. Cookie Trail Files

Visual documents of your life story, plot, and journey to help explore who you are.

Your Cookie Trail Files store what Plot Twisters measure over time, providing quantified insight into your patterns in school, work, and life.

COOKIETRAILS.ORG

2½. Role Model Trails

Cookie trails and advice of inspiring and successful journey learners.

Role models can illuminate your potential future options. You can compare your cookie trails to theirs to contextualize your own patterns.

COOKIETRAILS.ORG → ROLE MODELS

4. Earth's To-Do List

Career projects to add to your cookie trail that support human flourishing.

Earth's To-Do List has potential paths for every cookie trail. As I define the goals of human flourishing, the projects available will evolve.

EARTHSTODOLIST.ORG

PLOT TWISTERS

REFLECTION ACTIVITIES TO OPEN THE STORY OF YOUR EDUCATION, CAREER, AND LIFE.

Feelings Designer
Make a pattern that matches how you feel.

Printable | Create now

Five Second Futures
You wake up in a new life. What do you do?

Printable | Let's play

Lemonade Mixer
Find where your work habits fall on a spectrum.

Printable | Start here

Busy Bee?
Exercises to help manage your priorities.

Printables ⌄ | Let's play

The Homework Plot Twister
Reflect on your work for a project, assignment, or event you made happen.

Protagonist Pages
What's your story? Where's it going?

Printables ⌄ | Start now

Printables ⌄ | Do it online

Plot Twisters are reflection activities to open your life story.

WHO AND WHAT

I am creating a digital world of personal metrics, metaphors, mnemonics, and storytelling tools to help to reveal the cookie trail of your experiences. Growing up, balancing my explorative hobbies with an academic and social life generated a lot of anxiety for me. In my conversations with others, describing experiences from stress to takeaways of an assignment seemed to be missing a standardized language. Therefore, I invented a quirky, mnemonic-based language to improve self-reflection.

Control of Emotion | Playing Along | Defining Contentment | Eliminating Waste | Intentional Growth

WHY AND HOW

There are no cohesive resources or tools in education to document hindsight. Through metaphors that quantify and qualify the lessons we learn from our lives, we can see clearly the experiences that have shaped us. The five axes above are categories of the abstract, implicit lessons learned in school.

Every Plot Twister connects to at least one of the five axes and clarifies our relationship to it. Each student should understand their work styles, habits, and tendencies, and be self-aware enough to direct that knowledge toward their academic and social responsibilities.

AESTHETIC DECISION

Stylistically, Plot Twisters is inspired by Highlights Magazine, Mad Libs, Neopets, Club Penguin, and The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster—some visual staples from my childhood. Because this aesthetic is not found in the visual palette of today's youth, which is largely saturated by social media and gaming. Visually the activities are memorable, which was corroborated by 24 user tests with students in elementary through high school.

Plot Twisters help you quantify your self-awareness.

Derived from 67 in-depth interviews of how kids, teens, and adults reflect on memorable experiences, I compare their creative and work processes with existing narrative frameworks. I analyzed how plots like the Hero's Journey are similar to the storylines we perceive in our own lives.

This experiment helped me determine the five sets of wisdoms and self-awareness skills earned in an educational journey. Plot Twisters provide a language of visuals and words to explain these personal lessons. Each reflection activity on the platform falls into at least one of the five categories.
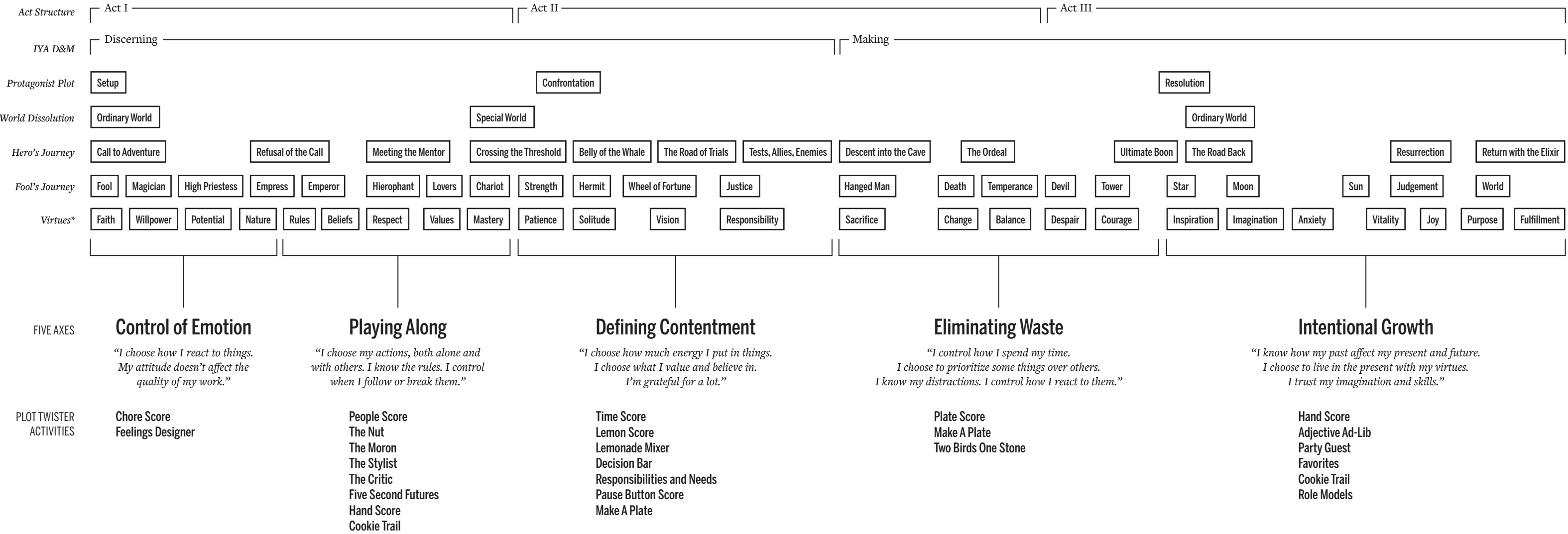
My narrative research isn't a perfect or exact science. As I continue to research how we think about our motivations and habits, these activities and metrics will evolve too.

Plot Twister Personal Statement

I choose how I react to things.
My attitude doesn't affect the quality of my work.

I choose my actions, both alone and with others.
I know the rules. I know when I follow or break them.

I choose how much energy I put in things.
I choose what I value and believe in.
I'm grateful for a lot.

I control how I spend my time.
I choose to prioritize some things over others.
I know my distractions. I control how I react to them.

I know how my past affects my present and future.
I choose to live in the present with my virtues.
I trust my imagination and skills.

I control my thoughts, actions, and reactions.

Journeys and Their Lessons

Act Structure	Act I				Act II							Act III				
IYA D&M	Discerning									Making						
Protagonist Plot	Setup				Confrontation								Resolution			
World Dissolution	Ordinary World				Special World								Ordinary World			
Hero's Journey	Call to Adventure	Refusal of the Call		Meeting the Mentor	Crossing the Threshold	Belly of the Whale	The Road of Trials	Tests, Allies, Enemies	Descent into the Cave	The Ordeal		Ultimate Boon	The Road Back	Resurrection		Return with the Elixir
Fool's Journey	Fool / Magician / High Priestess	Empress / Emperor		Hierophant / Lovers / Chariot		Strength	Hermit / Wheel of Fortune	Justice	Hanged Man	Death / Temperance / Devil	Tower		Star / Moon	Sun / Judgement		World
Virtues*	Faith / Willpower / Potential / Nature	Rules / Beliefs	Respect	Values / Mastery		Patience / Solitude	Vision	Responsibility	Sacrifice	Change / Balance / Despair	Courage		Inspiration / Imagination / Anxiety	Vitality / Joy		Purpose / Fulfillment

FIVE AXES

Control of Emotion
"I choose how I react to things. My attitude doesn't affect the quality of my work."

Playing Along
"I choose my actions, both alone and with others. I know the rules. I control when I follow or break them."

Defining Contentment
"I choose how much energy I put in things. I choose what I value and believe in. I'm grateful for a lot."

Eliminating Waste
"I control how I spend my time. I choose to prioritize some things over others. I know my distractions. I control how I react to them."

Intentional Growth
"I know how my past affect my present and future. I choose to live in the present with my virtues. I trust my imagination and skills."

PLOT TWISTER ACTIVITIES

Control of Emotion	Playing Along	Defining Contentment	Eliminating Waste	Intentional Growth
Chore Score	People Score	Time Score	Plate Score	Hand Score
Feelings Designer	The Nut	Lemon Score	Make A Plate	Adjective Ad-Lib
	The Moron	Lemonade Mixer	Two Birds One Stone	Party Guest
	The Stylist	Decision Bar		Favorites
	The Critic	Responsibilities and Needs		Cookie Trail
	Five Second Futures	Pause Button Score		Role Models
	Hand Score	Make A Plate		
	Cookie Trail			

* Influences include Aristotle, Rumi, Confucius, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Don Miguel Ruiz. Placed sequentially based on the frameworks' experiences and personal interviews. Narrative research here is a work in progress.

The *Homework* PLOT TWISTER

Your Name

Today's Date

Event, Project, or Assignment Title

Plot Weight   Twister Weight

How much time did this take? | **Time Score**
A moment. Hours. Days. Weeks. Months. Years.
0   1   2   3   4   5
From 0 to 5

How many people did you work with directly? | **People Score**
None. A few. Under 10. 10-15. 15-30. Over 30.
0   1   2   3   4   5
From 0 to 5

Did this feel like an annoying chore? | **Chore Score**
Yes. A little. Glad it's done. No. Not at all!
0   2   4   6   8   10
From 0 to 5

How'd it turn out? | **Lemon Score**
Very sour. Bad. Not sweet. Alright. Good. Sweet!
0   2   4   6   8   10
From 0 to 10

How often did you play each role? Shade up to the line.

The whole time!
Pretty often.
A few times.
Once.
Never.

The Roles

The Nut — You came up with or tried new ideas.
The Moron — You put ideas into action.
The Stylist — You perfected the ideas.
The Critic — You noticed some flaws.

How many boxes did you shade in total?
From 0 to 16

Multiply by 2.

Creative Score
From 0 to 32

How busy was your life? Circle a plate.

ALL DONE!

Your plate wasn't full. This was a priority. **+12**
You were busy, but gave your best effort. **+6**
Plate wasn't full, but you didn't focus on this. **+0**
Pretty full plate. It was hard to focus on this. **+3**

Check the boxes by the fingers you can answer yes to.

Was this a topic you cared about?
Did this challenge you?
Is this something you chose to do?
Are you different because of this?
Do you care about this topic now?
Is younger you proud?
Did you enjoy doing this?
Would you do this again?
Does this direct to a bigger goal?
Would older you be proud?

Past Hand   *Future Hand*

How many Past Hand boxes did you check?	Future Hand?	Multiply the Future Hand number by 2.	Add up the Past and Future. Multiply by 2.	Hand Score
From 0 to 5	From 0 to 5	From 0 to 10		From 0 to 30

Take some Brownie Points if...

This was a brand new experience for you. **+2**
This positively affected someone other than you. **+2**
You enjoyed doing this Plot Twister. **+1**
You think you'll look at this Plot Twister again. **+1**

PLOT WEIGHT

___ + ___ = [   ]
Time Score   People Score

TWISTER WEIGHT

___ + ___ + ___ + ___ + ___ + ___ = [   ]
Chore Score Lemon Score Creative Score Hand Score Plate Score Brownie Points

---

Your Homework Plot Twister! Inbox ×

Plot Twisters <hey@plottwisters.org>
8:00am (0 minutes ago)
to me

A message for Jenny and the Thoughtful Mirror of Patience:

Nice work on the Presidents Project, seriously.

Individual project | Social studies | Presentation | Report

Took a few days | Busy plate | Enjoyable | New experience | Creative ideas

Five Axes of Plot Twists

Emotions: 6	**Wise Words For You**
Play: 16	Based on your Five Axes combination!
Values: 8	*"You alone are painting your own canvas, thought by thought, choice by choice."*
Time: 6	— Oprah Winfrey
Futures: 15	**Truths You Might Resonate With**
	Confidence is key
	Let the work speak for itself
	Hard work pays off

Dear Jenny,

I'm glad you got creative with your work. Do you like social studies compared to other subjects? Seems like you had fun learning something brand new. I know it was a busy few days for you, but thank you for giving this your best effort.

A PDF of your Plot Twister is attached!

You're doing great. Proud of you.

Ms. Christenson & Jenny from Plot Twisters

Plot Twisters are creating the language for personal feedback.

TRACKING TAKEAWAYS

After each Plot Twister, students and their teachers are updated with an analysis of their reflection, which serves as a time capsule for how they contextualize that activity in their life. The Homework Plot Twister, for example, is specifically is meant to replace the "one-page reflections" students might submit to finalize a project or assignment.
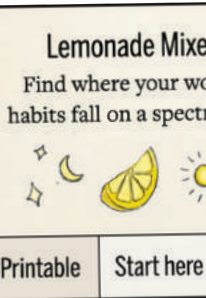
"Reflect on your work for a project, assignment, or event."

THE HOMEWORK PLOT TWISTER

Designed to do as homework after the submission of a project or assignment, this activity hits all five axes. It asks big questions and little details to inspire reflection about the work done.

"Make a pattern that matches how you feel."

FEELINGS DESIGNER

This activity uses color and all its qualities (hue, saturation, lightness), pattern shape and density, and physical textures as mnemonics to represent different aspects of an emotion. As a visual method for identifying and articulating a feeling, it is best used as a decompression tool. At the end of the activity, the user can choose whether to turn the designed feeling into a fabric to wear and share, or to hang up in a wardrobe, in private. This practice is not only calming and reflective, but also teaches emotional control, which is the first axis.

"You wake up in a new life. What do you do?"

FIVE SECOND FUTURES

A timed brainstorm activity that combines the axes of emotion, play, and defining contentment, it transports the user to an alternate future where they have a randomly generated career or to-do list. They must gauge 1) how they would react to that life; 2) what skills are required and what personal experiences prepare them; and 3) how happy they would be in those circumstances. The randomization forces creative reaction—often, we know better what we like when we know what we dislike.

"Find where your work habits fall on a spectrum."

LEMONADE MIXER

The user toggles a series of sliders pertaining to work preferences, styles, and habits. The placement values of each query (topics like outdoor vs. indoor work, morning vs. night person) make a combination—a mix—unique to each person. By encouraging a justification on a spectrum, the user can be aware of their values and contentment, the third axis.

"Practice managing your priorities."

BUSY BEE EXERCISES

These exercises teach mnemonics for the third axis, to eliminate waste and clean up a user's attitude toward work-life balance. Ranging from metaphors like "Make A Plate," in which a user organizes their to-do list as a plate of food, and "Two Birds One Stone," where a user can categorize multiple to-do list items in the same category, the goal is to remind the user that they have agency over a busy schedule.

"What's your story? Where's it going?"

PROTAGONIST PAGES

The most abstract of all the activities, these Plot Twisters focus on the fifth axis of intentional growth. They present prompts for users to ad-lib the adjectives they believe represent them best; allow documentation of their favorite things at that moment; play make-believe about the kind of "Party Guest" they want to be; and describe their role models. These exercises teach the user to understand and have control of their thoughts, behaviors, actions, and impressions.
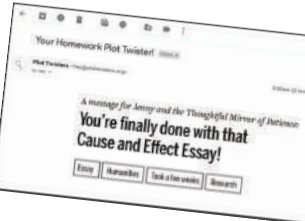
GRANTED: Access to Your Cookie Trail Files Inbox ×

Plot Twisters <hey@plottwisters.org>   8:00am (0 minutes ago)
to me ▾

A message for Jenny and the Thoughtful Mirror of Patience:


```
Dear Agent "Thoughtful Mirror of Patience":

You are invited to join the Cookie Trail Cohort of summer
2019. This high honor is extended only four times per year.

You may be wondering how we discovered you. The truth is
that your teachers over the years, along with our insider
contacts at Plot Twisters, have kept a watchful eye on you
and your work. In the last few weeks, we have determined you
are ready for your next step as a Cookie Trail agent.

Your strong emotional control, ability to both follow and
break rules, courageous personal values and priorities, and
self-awareness are assets we look for. You are a force of
good in our changing world.

You now have access to your Cookie Trail Files, which will
be the dashboard for your training. In the coming months,
you will explore your skills as an agent and prepare for
possible missions.

Expect a pairing with a mentor and a small group within your
Cookie Trail cohort shortly.

We are excited for you to join our ranks. The honor is ours.

One of a ton,
Agent "Curious Butterfly of Courage"
```

```
              INSTRUCTIONS
     Now that your account is activated, you
     may proceed by entering your Cookie
     Trail Code and Plot Twister Password.

          CLICK HERE TO ACCESS
         YOUR COOKIE TRAIL FILES
```

Cookie Trails is the dashboard for personal memoir-building.

HINDSIGHT, VISUALIZED

After user responds to enough Plot Twisters over time, they gain access to the visual documentation of every time they completed a Plot Twister. These instances make up the plot points on a user's cookie trail. Stored in a new dashboard called the "Cookie Trail Files," the user is invited to explore to

hindsight as a confidential, personal experience. An invited student is treated like a secret agent, a context that frames school as training and foreshadows Earth's To-Do List. They use the dashboard to prepare for the next steps in their educational or career missions.
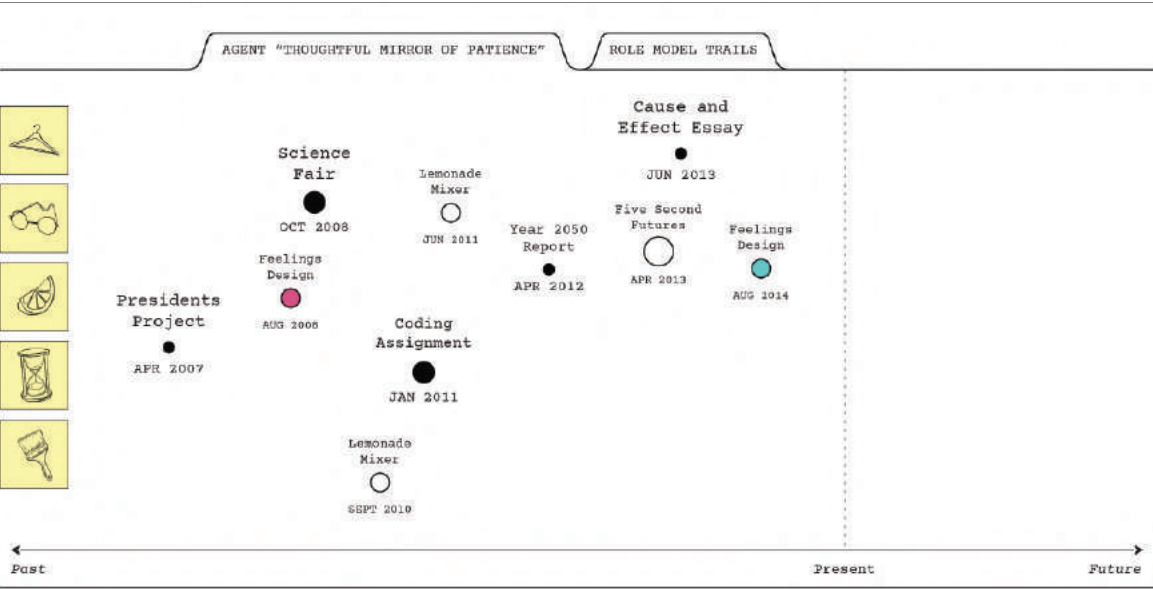
AVOIDING A PRESCRIPTION

Plot Twisters culminates in this second product in the ecosystem. Cookie Trails equips the student with the visual language of the cookie trail as a memoir-building experience, presenting education and work as simply settings for their stories. This is not prescriptive like Myers-Briggs or Enneagram tests, but rather enforces the idea of agency: they can choose what patterns pay attention to and explain. For example, a student might have many

memorable cookies that were all group projects, so perhaps they recognize teamwork as a strength. Another student might see how all their favorite "cookies" on their trail happened to be related to their science classes, which might encourage them to pursue science-oriented projects. In both cases, they can choose to identify with that aspect of their educational journey.

Next: Earth's To-Do List

Plot Twisters and Cookie Trails contribute to the third product in this ecosystem, Earth's To-Do List. This database of projects blurs the line between service work and career opportunities, with the goal of showing how all paths play some role on humanity's list of errands, and how any path can be incorporated into one's personal journey. This product will fuse the concepts journey learning, world-building, and projects-based learning into one environment, making them canon in education together.

Currently, both Cookie Trails and Earth's To-Do Lists are still concepts-in-progress.

This will take time.

These beginnings of the vision have been presented in lo-fi mockups but will eventually exist as an interconnected ecosystem of websites and online dashboards. Currently, I am paying attention to details by re-listening to some of the 67 interviews; testing worksheets with teachers and students in middle schools, high schools, and colleges (USC, Foshay Learning Center, Colorado School of Mines, and Brentwood High School to name a few); and doing my due diligence by reading about mental health; social-affective psychology; educational policy; and the relationship between youth and their digital interfaces. I am attentive to how words may translate on the worksheets and activities into other languages; I care to make even the foods on the plates in the "How full is your plate?" exercise culturally inclusive and relatable. These details take time and research to flesh out, and this granularity is an asset I bring uniquely to this project. Because these frameworks are highly personal, my goal is to make them as accessible as possible.

In the context of EdTech, there are few products that tackle the belief systems that children are raised in. From my own experiences at Adobe working in the K-12 digital space, I am aware that most EdTech companies focus on the technology dissemination of their products, yet none tackle the thought processes that connect education with the nature of work. This product ecosystem turns my own coping mechanisms into accessible activities for these thought processes. Making them has been like designing a gift for my inner child—even the most existential queries regarding purpose and intuition can be explained via metaphor. There are no similar products that exist because these ideas come straight from my own mental frameworks.

My vision for journey learning extends beyond the imagination of some activities online—I see a digital world with its own ubiquitous history, members, and language where students and teachers alike can harness their power with intentionality. I will be documenting my own journey as an entrepreneur on my website, www.jenny.world.

Welcome to the World of
JENNY LIU ZHANG

Plot Twisters
Reflection activities to open your life story.
PLOTTWISTERS.ORG

Cookie Trails
Visualizing hindsight in your life story.
COMING SOON

Earth's To-Do List
Career projects for human flourishing.
COMING LATER

Water
A life reflection interface.
COMING EVENTUALLY

Dear visitor,

I'm so glad you stopped by! My name is Jenny. On this website, I keep a public, running dissertation of my research and goals as an entrepreneur in education.

Every day I think about the future of learning and work. Seeking and applying knowledge should be a step in satisfying our curiosities about the world, but that's not exactly what "getting an education" looks like today. Play and imagination are missing because of social and systemic barriers.

I propose the concept of *journey learning*, which basically means we should be learning things for a reason, and those reasons come from understanding our personal journeys. My product ecosystem — Plot Twisters, Cookie Trails, Earth's To-Do List, and Water — helps us all become journey learners.

Here is where I compile research on emotions, culture, tech, and creativity with my own insights as a designer, student, and teacher. You can keep up with my business vision as I develop it. Welcome to my world!

Jenny