
THE POWER OF WHY



AMANDA LANG

"The Power of Why changes the way you think. . . . This is a truly great book."
—David Chilton, author of *The Wealthy Barber Returns*

The Power Of Why: Simple Questions That Lead to Success

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The Power Of Why: Simple Questions That Lead to Success Amanda Lang

The urge to question is natural for small children—just ask any parent. But few of us are aware that it is also one of the most vital tools for success. In *The Power of Why*, Amanda Lang shows how curiosity and the ability to ask the right questions fuels innovation and can drive change not just in business but also in our personal lives.

Weaving together the latest research with in-depth profiles of innovators from around the world, Lang explores how to harness and develop the power of curiosity. She reveals how a major retailer set out to discover what really makes men happy—and was stunned by the results. She finds out why, at one particular hospital, nurses think it's better if they don't wash their hands. She learns why the most common methods of brainstorming don't actually work and discovers a new soccer ball that could change the world.

A book that challenges conventional wisdom and offers practical, inspiring advice, *The Power of Why* shows how it's possible to reignite your innate curiosity and overcome long-standing barriers—leaving you more creative, productive and fulfilled in your job and happier in your relationships.

The Power Of Why: Simple Questions That Lead to Success Details

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Alexander Kelley says

Some amazing stories to back up the power of why.

Clay Nichols says

Good insights. Too many anecdotes for me

It's s standard formula these day: give an insight and then a supporting anecdote . The anecdotes were good but I didn't need them and they were 90% if the book.

ATHAR says

GOOD BOOK

Patrik says

I really enjoyed the first 80, or so, pages of this book - after that it became to business-y for me. I totally understand this transition as Lang is a business correspondent. However, for me as an educator and a parent the opening third was fascinating.

The educational thinking echoes that now famous through people like Sir Ken Robinson about today's school being yesterday's and not the school of the future. It was particularly interesting to follow her argument about how our Ivy league schools are losing their quality because of the type of students they attract. Students who are taught to master the game of "intellectual hide-and-seek" (trying to find the answer their teacher is looking for rather than think for themselves) gain great grades and attend Ivy league schools. At these schools they attend lectures where one professor holds all the knowledge and releases pieces of it to 300 students at a time in giant lectures. This does not create innovative, risk-taking, future-focused individuals. Consequently as a parent we may be better off choosing a lower-tiered university.

Theresa says

This is a easy to read short book on the importance of business innovation and how it is driven by curiosity and hard work. The Canadian slant is a nice change since it offers a refreshing variety of anecdotes that likely haven't appeared in other books on this topic.

The importance of curiosity, the need to identify and challenge your assumptions as well as the status quo are all addressed in this book. I especially enjoyed the end section on Quest University in British Columbia

where the teaching style is designed to curiosity instead of memorization. It would be interesting if these students are tracked and see if they have an impact on the work they do in the future.

Andrew says

Ever just *had* to know? Does your child end every conversation with “why?” *The Power of Why* by CBC correspondent Amanda Lang explores the connections between curiosity and innovation. From shrimp farmers to Canadian Tire, Lang explains how curiosity-driven enterprises find success. Lang opens with a gripping story of an inventor who couldn’t resist testing his invention before she embarks on a whirlwind tour of contemporary innovators, including some great Canadian success stories like Lululemon, Roots, and the Four Seasons. There's so much in here that the book reads like a wide-ranging conversation with an enthusiast for curiosity. No doubt Lang's day-job working with businessmen and entrepreneurs contributes to her own curiosity, but she does a great job of sharing her enthusiasm and pushing her readers to question their work and lives. Check out this book. I think it's going to become a Canadian classic.

I'm on Twitter: @Dr_A_Taubman

Madelle Morgan says

This is an accessible book that describes how several companies successfully incorporated innovation into their corporate cultures, and describes what happened to those that were complacent. The author names names.

The key takeaway for me was Amanda Lang's proposition that creative thinking is suppressed from a young age due to the focus on grades in our schools and universities. Those kids grow up to be compliant employees who are reluctant to take the risk of "being wrong", question rigid corporate processes, or speak out against the general consensus of their peers and management.

All is not lost for the person who has gone through the Canadian education system, however. Amanda says that people can develop divergent thinking by living in another country for a period of time. Apparently travel to foreign climes is not sufficient - one has to be immersed in the culture. My proposition to Canadian business students: no need to go overseas. Study in Quebec for a semester or two!

Managers in businesses that are still owned by Canadians need to read this book, if only to avoid being one of Amanda's case studies of failure in her next book.

People who invest their hard-earned money in company stocks need to read this book. Innovative companies are survivors in a world that's constantly changing.

Jeff Smyth says

Amanda is one who think in the outer limits. She is a trailblazer and this book is a good reminder to remain focused on the big picture while accomplishing the minute details/tasks of the goals. Some what preachy but

overall a fun read.

Chantal Boudreau says

I was fortunate enough to receive a copy of this book because Ms. Lang was a keynote speaker at this year's CMA conference in Nova Scotia. The book discusses the importance of innovative thinking, which includes trying to recapture the type of curiosity we had as a young child before the industrial-era-developed school systems we still have place in our innovation-era world killed that curiosity. It touches on the need for divergent thought, the ability to explore many answers rather than just focussing on the one "right" answer and the freedom to fail in order to be able to create.

I love the concepts in this book as well as the case studies of a variety of innovators and examples where divergent thinking and a willingness to move beyond accepted norms allowed for new inventions that did change or may change entire industries.

My only minor complaints is that I did find the book a little repetitive in places (possibly for the sake of reinforcing important points) and I didn't like the emphasis on competitiveness over cooperation - I guess because I have "too Canadian" a mentality.

-A very good read for someone studying business, interested in innovation or just looking for some inspirational and positive stories.

Andraena Tilgner says

Someone should hit me over the head with this one when I get too goal focused. A nice reminder, not just for business, to slow down and look around a bit. I find the style a bit preachy but the subject matter is great and that more than compensates.

Daniel says

Interesting book. Curiosity is key to creativity and innovation. Lots of interesting anecdotes although some of them don't quite fit. It seemed like the editing could have been better. Curiosity needs to be used to take action.

It reminds me of the freakeconomics book chapter around thinking like a child. Asking why and seeing the world with the curiosity of a child but the abilities of an adult to take action is one theme.

It also touches on a number of innovation research in an approachable way. For example, it talks about the pioneer vs builder innovation questionnaire. Do you prefer to create something new or improve something that already exists?

Overall, it's been helpful in encouraging me to continue to be curious and clarifies that creativity and innovation comes in different flavours.

Niko Hyppönen says

Miksi uteliaisuus on hyödyllistä? Siihen tämä kirja pyrkii vastaamaan ja samalla ravistelemaan keksimiseen liittyviä myyttejä. Vaikka joku asia olisi aina tehty tietyllä tavalla, sille ei välttämättä ole perusteita. Toisaalta pelkkä muutos ei ole hyväksi. Vain muutos parempaan on hyväksi.

Lisa Marie says

When do we lose that sense of curiosity and wonder that we had when we were children? You know, that constant questioning of "why?" and the ability to fail without fear?

Amanda Lang explains, "Curiosity declines from one grade to the next ... The reason is that, by and large, the education system (aided and abetted by many parents and governments) doesn't celebrate, much less tap into, children's hunger to explore, inquire and discover. The system simply isn't set up to do that. School were designed at the turn of the nineteenth century to meet the needs of a completely different economy, which required workers who'd been equipped with a reliable, standardized package of knowledge."

In today's world of very fast paced changes and technology, there's a huge need for creative innovation, for questioning the way things work and coming up with something new. It's time to look outside the box.

But, if our children are having their natural curiosity trained out of them, then how can we encourage it to continue?

This book is packed with example after example of free-thinking innovators and their experiences in creativity, grabbing at you and keeping you turning page after page, as they are painted by Amanda's pen in full-colour. You get to hear about people/companies like Canadian Tire, a man determined to make saws safe, a shrimp farmer, elevator experts and more - all who developed and redeveloped new ideas and ways to do things. The stories are captivating, interesting, inspiring, and leave you trying to think of how you can follow their example in your own life.

"...[A]llow yourself to dream big, forgive yourself when you don't quite get there and then try another path."

This book has given me pause as a homeschooling parent to make sure that I encourage the questions, feed their curiosity, support their efforts for finding solutions, and remind them that failure doesn't mean the end.

I think this quote from the movie Meet The Robinsons is exactly what this book is encouraging us to do:

"Around here, however, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths. - Walt Disney"

Vikki VanSickle says

I saw Amanda Lang speak and was immediately charmed by her. I am so pleased that her book is just as

inviting as Lang is as a person. The book has a conversational, friendly tone and is full of interesting anecdotes about innovation in business that Lang then applies to everyday life. I don't read a ton of business books, and while business types will enjoy this book, THE POWER OF WHY fits more in the Malcolm Gladwell niche of narrative non-fiction with mass appeal. I found myself jotting down notes and things I want to apply as a writer and in my job. A breezy, interesting and insightful read for anyone who is curious about innovation and creativity.

Shannon says

Thought provoking, insightful, inspiring.
