

# Anything You Want Summary

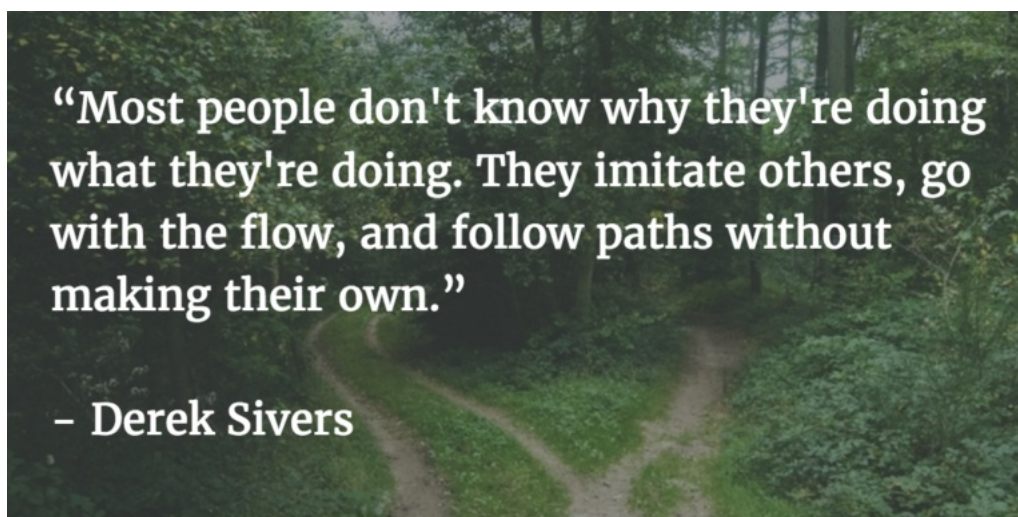
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 [fourminutebooks.com/anything-you-want-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/anything-you-want-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Anything You Want teaches you how to build a business that's based on who you are, and can become anything you want it to be, rather than following the traditional paths of startup or corporate culture.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



On Tim Ferriss's homepage there's a testimonial from The New York Times calling him "A cross between Jack Welch and a Buddhist monk."

If that's true, then Derek Sivers is a cross between yet another Buddhist monk and Tim Ferriss, with the same creative approach to life and experimental entrepreneur mindset, but another two levels quieter.

I first bumped into Derek via Appsumo when they shared his little video course "Uncommon Sense". I was stunned by his super calm, witty, intuitive and dead simple suggestions. *Anything You Want* is his book with 40 gems of advice to entrepreneurs, based on his success in creating, growing, and eventually giving away (!) CD Baby in exchange for a \$22 million check going into a charity for music education.

Here are 3 great lessons from him to start a business that can be anything you want:

1. Improve your ideas until you can't *not* turn one into a business.
2. Start without funding or VC money.
3. Delegate, but not too much.

Ready to rock'n'roll? Here we go!

## Lesson 1: Improve your ideas until you can't *not* turn one into a business.

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Derek never intended to build a million dollar business. In fact he'd had it before, after starting a bunch of businesses that failed. But he **never stopped improving his ideas** and practicing his creative muscles. The only way to hit an idea that will not only take you, but a lot of other people by storm, is to keep improving them.

A great indicator that you're on to something is when you get a lot of good feedback on your idea, instantly. For example, when Derek put his own CD up for sale on his website, his friends thought it was such a great idea, that **they asked him to put theirs up too**.

When lots of people want to get in on your idea early on, that's a good sign you have a winner. Derek was almost forced to start CD Baby, because so many people asked him to help with selling their CDs. Only when your idea gets such great feedback that you almost can't *not* start it, then it's time to think about building a business.

## Lesson 2: You don't need funding, start without it.

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It's hard to imagine that there was a time before venture capital and angel investing. Nowadays every 8th-grader with a half-assed idea for the next bubble gum wants a million dollars before even setting up shop. But money isn't what'll help your idea grow.

**When your idea helps people, and they love it so much they'll tell all their friends, that's when you grow.**

Having zero money to begin with can thus become a huge advantage, because it keeps you focused on giving your customers the best experience, and doing everything you can to serve them. Start with the resources you have, and be creative in solving problems.

For example, while I don't have the money to buy 365 books a year, nor the time to read one entire book a day, I am able to afford a Blinkist membership, read a summary every day, and publish what I learn on here. It's about making do instead of excuses.

## Lesson 3: Do delegate, but don't overdo it.

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I'm so guilty of this one. Especially when you're running solo and starting a microbusiness, it's super hard to give up control. You think you're the only one capable of doing things the right way, but you have so much to do that it's almost impossible to keep up with everything.

Not delegating can have a severe consequence though: **burning out**. You take on more than you can handle and eventually end up collapsing from all the stress (check). In order to know what to delegate and when, **keep a list of all recurring problems**.

That way you can come up with instruction manuals on how to solve them (video tutorials are great) and then hand them over to people you trust with the task, whether they are your employees or virtual assistants.

However, you can also delegate too much, especially when there's not enough trust or control. Derek loved delegating, and so he gave people a great deal of freedom. Until he received a call from his accountant, saying an employee had just put a profit sharing plan in place, where all company profits are split among the staff – without Derek even knowing about it. That's when he knew he'd slightly over-delegated.

A solid middle ground is to entrust processes you can afford to let go with people you trust, and let them know you have faith in them, while simultaneously establishing a control mechanism, like a monthly check-in, to make sure things don't spin out of control.

## Anything You Want Review

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I'm really grateful I got even more insights from Derek thanks to Blinkist, the man is an endless well of wisdom, some of my favorites are how to start a movement, uncommon sense and his podcasts with Tim Ferriss. Given that *Anything You Want* is fairly short (88) pages, I'm sure it's one of the next ones I can fit into my tight schedule once I downloaded it for my Kindle.

I 100% recommend following everything Derek does, which of course includes his blog and this book.

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- How to keep your idea simple with very few numbers involved
- Why it's important to cater to a specific audience and not please everyone
- How to make important business decisions, without having to decide
- When to not start a business
- Why a business is always personal

## Who would I recommend the Anything You Want summary to?

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The 17 year old with big eyes from reading startup world news, the 47 year old with a passion for coding helpful apps, but who feels overwhelmed by all the marketing and business advice out there, and anyone who wants to start a business as an introvert.

