

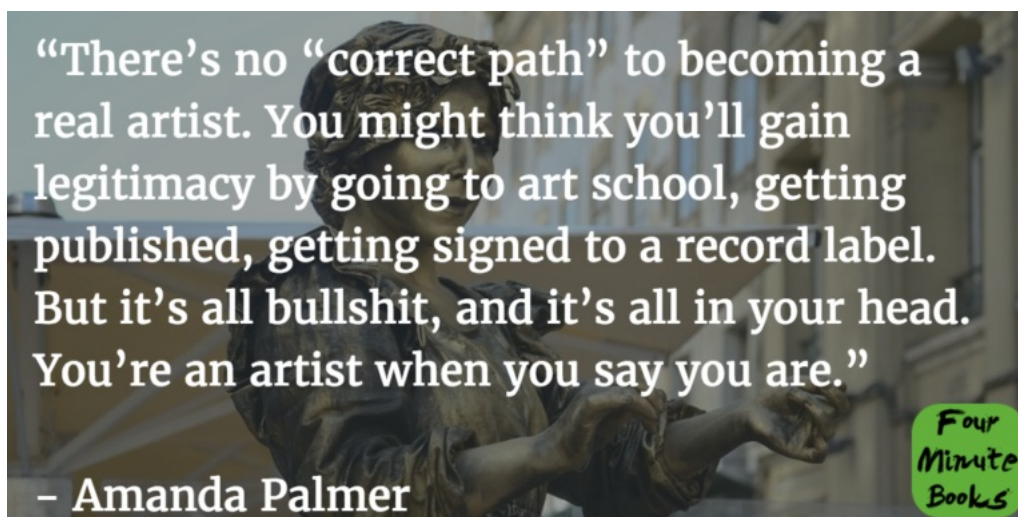
The Art Of Asking Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-art-of-asking-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Art Of Asking teaches you to finally accept the help of others, stop trying to do everything on your own, and show you how you can build a closely knit family of friends and supporters by being honest, generous and not afraid to ask.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



A lot of people have gotten to know Amanda Palmer without ever exchanging a single word with her. Before starting her career as a musician, she stood very, very still for hours on end – as a street performer. You know, the ones who act like living statues? She'd paint her face white, put on a wedding dress and a black wig, and start to “act” at different locations in Boston, where she was raised.

Now she's a singer-songwriter, author, half of the musical duo “The Dresden Dolls” and many other things, which don't fit into any particular box – like Amanda herself. This book is about her struggle with asking for help, which initially held her career back a lot. Once she became accepting of the support her fans, family and friends offered her, everything changed.

Here are 3 lessons from her book, *The Art Of Asking*, to help you become comfortable asking for things and accepting help when it's offered:

1. Accepting someone's help doesn't just help you, it might help the giver too.
2. Asking is a two-way street – there's always the possibility of a no.
3. Make friends, not customers.

Have struggle asking for and accepting help? Not after these lessons you won't!

Lesson 1: If you accept someone else's help, it might be good for them too.

If you're like me, you hate both asking for and accepting other people's help. Amanda Palmer says that's stupid. And she's right. When we're deliberating whether to take help or not, we often think "I'll be a burden to that person," "what if I disappoint them?" or are just too proud to say yes.

Amanda's long-time friend and neighbor, Anthony, helped her a lot over the years, giving her moral support when she was a teenager and later when she started touring. More than she could have ever repaid.

But eventually, she realized: **letting Anthony help her was also helping Anthony**. He doesn't like talking about his problems, because he had an abusive childhood, but helping others talk through their issues allows him to process his own.

On the outside, it seemed like an imbalanced relationship, but on the inside, it was a win-win. This is more often the case than we realize, so when you're reluctant to take help, ask yourself: "How might this help the other person?"

Lesson 2: An ask is, unlike begging, always a two-way street, so be open to getting a no.

Amanda has a strong desire to connect with people. So when she was performing her act "The Eight Foot Bride," she always came up with little gifts to give to her audience, eventually settling on flowers. But not everyone wanted a flower. Some people would reject her gifts.

This eventually led her to realizing that **both giving and asking are always collaborative efforts**. There are always two parties, one asking or giving, and the other who has to say "yes" or "no." Giving somebody a gift is an ask in itself! You're asking them to accept your gift. But it can only be a true gift if you give the other party the option to decline it.

Begging is different. It tries to force a give from the other party, without offering anything in return. It's a one-way street. A no isn't really an option – it's a crushing defeat. A true ask is different. You can only learn to be really comfortable with asking once you start making all of your asks unconditional. No has to be a viable option at all times.

Lesson 3: Focus on making friends, not customers, and you'll build a huge support network over time.

If you're familiar with online marketing even just a little bit, you'll definitely have come across email marketing in one way or the other. Since email was the first mass communication tool, marketers who rode the earliest wave of it back in the late 90s could use it to make millions.

When social media turned up in the early 2000s, email was quickly forgotten and left by the wayside. But it's still one of the best ways to stay in touch with your audience.

When Amanda and her "The Dresden Dolls" partner Brian Viglione started touring in 2000, she took care of networking and management – and decided to use email as her main means of communication. Building an email list in 2000 was almost unheard of, so Amanda Palmer was an online marketing pioneer at the time.

However, unlike most marketers today, she didn't use the list too strategically – she just used it for *everything*.

Because she was trying to make friends, not get customers, she saw sending an email to thousands of people as messaging lots of pen pals at once. More than just a fanbase, she built a family. And it's natural to share everything with your family, so Amanda asked people if she could crash on their couch, announced new gigs, found supporters for other musician's shows and share personal stories.

The only thing she never did is sell out her friends. After getting signed by a record label, her managers wanted to make her communication more efficient, but she refused to hand over her list, knowing that they'd just end up spamming people and commercialize it.

Focus on making as many friends online as you can, and you'll have a big support network long before you need it.

The Art Of Asking Review

The Art Of Asking is a book for artists and creatives, but it also feels like a business book a bit – which is great! None of the usual, annoying, guru-esque: do this, then that, take step 1, 2, 3 and then you'll be successful, just a human being sharing her story from which you can learn. Artist or not, I'd recommend this to anyone who feels uncomfortable asking for help, even when they know they need it.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why you should always give gifts to those that help you
- How Amanda realized what her real gift was
- Why women have a tougher time accepting generosity than men
- How to ask the right people at the right time
- What things you can crowdsource (answer: everything, but how?)

- The only way to really build a loyal family with the people you want to connect to

Who would I recommend The Art Of Asking summary to?

The 18 year old actor, who's bussing tables to live from one gig to the next, the 37 year old housewife, who has trouble accepting her husband's money to help her start a painting career, and anyone who's building an online business.