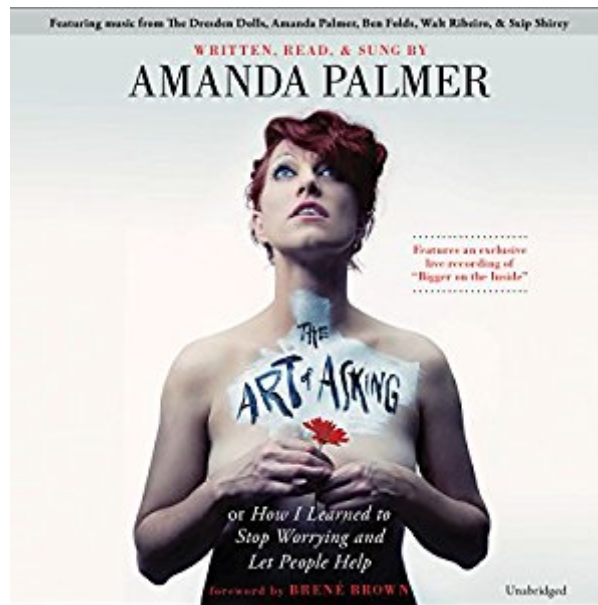


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The Art Of Asking: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Let People Help



Synopsis

"When we really see each other, we want to help each other." —Amanda Palmer Imagine standing on a box in the middle of a busy city, dressed as a white-faced bride, and silently using your eyes to ask people for money. Or touring Europe in a punk cabaret band and finding a place to sleep each night by reaching out to strangers on Twitter. For Amanda Palmer, actions like these have gone beyond satisfying her basic needs for food and shelter - they've taught her how to turn strangers into friends, build communities, and discover her own giving impulses. And because she had learned how to ask, she was able to go to the world to ask for the money to make a new album and tour with it, and to raise over a million dollars in a month. In *The Art of Asking*, Palmer expands upon her popular TED talk to reveal how ordinary people, those of us without thousands of Twitter followers and adoring fans, can use these same principles in our own lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amanda Palmer -- indie musician/artist/blogger/frequent exhibitionist/formerly half of the punk cabaret band The Dresden Dolls -- is a polarizing figure. Her army of adoring fans follow her every move; her detractors are ready to pounce on her every public misstep, which she provides via the simple expedient of rarely filtering anything she thinks, says or does. If you have an opinion about Amanda Palmer, reading her new book *The Art of Asking* will very likely reinforce it, many times over. *The Art of Asking* (subtitle: *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Let People Help*) is an expansion of the popular TED talk she gave in 2013 of the same name, in which she described her early days working as a "living statue" street performer and how her lifelong

business model developed out of the relationships she built with fans. When your work means something to someone, she found, that person will want to pay you for it. I think people have been obsessed with the wrong question, which is "How do we make people pay for music?" she said then. "What if we started asking, 'How do we let people pay for music?'" Over three million people have since watched that video. Her book takes it farther, delving even deeper into the value she found that people place on art when it speaks to them and the transactional nature of human connection. Just as importantly, it's a master class on how an artist can build, maintain and grow an audience in a new social media environment where record labels rarely promote anyone these days whose name isn't Beyonce or Taylor Swift. "How do we create a world in which people don't think of art just as a product, but as a relationship?" she asks. And she answers, in detail.

Amanda Palmer is a pretty polarizing person. Some love her crazy theatre-girl ways and commitment to a bohemian lifestyle of art at any costs. Some think she's a poseur, a sell-out, a scammer. I'm somewhere in the middle, curious about what she does, interested in her artistic output, but not particularly keen on following in her footsteps. When I heard she had a book coming out, I definitely wanted to read it. So I grabbed a copy, and tore through it in a couple of days. It was one of those books people like to refer to as "unreadable" (though I really hate that word) or maybe "gripping" -- as in I was gripping the covers, refusing to let anyone pull it out of my hands. I really enjoyed the book, as it gave me a lot of insight into Amanda's mind and personality, two things that fans will definitely have a lot of insider information on already. But guess what? The stuff she does won't work if she's not at the center of it all. She's found her tribe, and she's pulled each member in close by being real with them, one on one. Whether that was at live shows, in the signing line, via email (back when email was new and weird), on Twitter, or through "ninja" shows that she throws together at a moment's notice or by crashing at their house with her band, her success has clearly come from connecting with her people -- the people that get what she's doing and support it. And all of that is intensely interesting, as she details how she did all of this and why. Some reviewers have noted that this is a book that will give you a lot of info about how things work for Amanda, but not for anybody else, and I would agree with that to some extent.

Just like in her blog, her social streams including @AmandaPalmer on Twitter, and in her live shows, Amanda really puts herself out there in the book. She's not afraid to show emotion and to be honest. Much like her TED talk of the same name, Amanda's vulnerability is a large part of

her charm. Almost every important human encounter boils down to the act, and the art, of asking, Amanda says. She asked as she wrote the book, such as this ask of her fans on her blog Moar book help, it's question time again! "SO... the questions... what do you think men have a hard time asking for? -and- what do you think women have a hard time asking for? think deeply about this. it's a trick question. and... GO! discuss." When I checked there were over 100 comments and many answers. I've been a fan for more than five years, first writing about Amanda on my blog. While the book's title The Art of Asking implies a how-to book (and there are elements of how to ask in it), The Art of Asking is really a memoir. We learn a great deal about how Amanda, using only her eyes, asked for human connection (and money) while remaining motionless standing on a box in the middle of a busy city dressed as a white-faced bride. While we learn about asking, the stories from this period in her life are about human nature. What makes a person stop and make eye contact with a street performer? Why are some people compelled to kick in a dollar or two? How do these ideas lead to a music career based on fan interaction? After reading about Amanda's work as "The Bride", I'll never look at street performers the same way again. If the performer is interesting I stop. I'll catch the eye. I'll drop in some cash. I'll forge a momentary human connection.

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