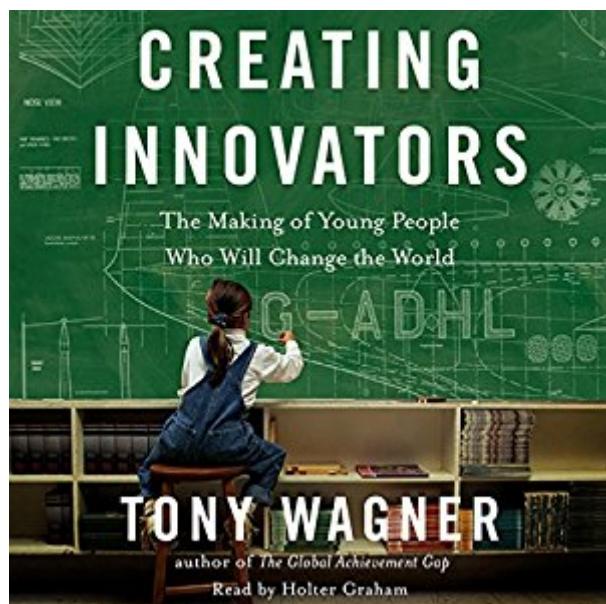


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# Creating Innovators: The Making Of Young People Who Will Change The World



## Synopsis

In this groundbreaking book, education expert Tony Wagner provides a powerful rationale for developing an innovation-driven economy. He explores what parents, teachers, and employers must do to develop the capacities of young people to become innovators. In profiling compelling young American innovators - such as Kirk Phelps, product manager for Apple's first iPhone, and Jodie Wu, who founded a company that builds bicycle-powered maize shellers in Tanzania - Wagner reveals how the adults in their lives nurtured their creativity and sparked their imaginations, while teaching them to learn from failures and persevere. Wagner identifies a pattern: a childhood of creative play leads to deep-seated interests, which in adolescence and adulthood blossom into a deeper purpose for career and life goals. Play, passion, and purpose: These are the forces that drive young innovators. Wagner explains how we can apply this knowledge as educators and what parents can do to compensate for poor schooling. He takes listeners into the most forward-thinking schools, colleges, and workplaces in the country, where teachers and employers are developing cultures of innovation based on collaboration, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and intrinsic motivation. The result is a timely, provocative, and inspiring manifesto that will change how we look at our schools and workplaces, and provide us with a road map for creating the change-makers of tomorrow.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wagner's book makes a lot of sense. Let me first give him full credit for that. The critique he offers of our schools - K-16 - seems fair to me. The standardized test movement is plague that we need to eradicate from the country. We do need more creative thinking, and critical thinking, and most schools do not seem to be in that business. And I agree that it comes back to high-quality leadership - in schools, families, corporations, community organizations. But the book has shortcomings from my perspective. He distills lessons from a body of interviews and draws sound generalizations ... from those interviews. I believe that he ought to let us know, however, that he is not talking about the vast majority of people. Rather he wants to make innovators out of the gifted minority. That's okay. But this is not innovation for everyman. I believe he also confuses innovation with creativity as concepts. I learned (at my Fortune 100 company) that innovation involves turning knowledge into money - that is, it isn't valuable unless someone values it enough to pay for it. It might be creative, therefore, but not innovative. Further, creativity has two formats (see Michael Kirton) - and one variety does indeed lead to innovation. The other leads to adaptation. Thus you can be creative in more than one way, and Wagner does not seem to acknowledge that. He also employs misleading dichotomies, such as making a difference versus making money. This is not an either/or phenomenon. I think you can do good while doing well.

Innovation is a topic I've been heavily researching the past few months and this book has helped me immensely. The author has added tons of sources which are all put perfectly into context including statistics and personal stories. The stories of different innovators and how they got to where they are today are more than inspiring and deserve to be heard by students around the globe. The argument made that schools are hindering creativity are heavily backed up by not only the author but direct quotes from successful people, some of whom have dropped out. What was the most inspiring is seeing these different people all talk about their pasts and seeing how similar they all are, not only to each other but to my own past. Those who don't feel that similarity are not left out either, as the book teaches you what you need to do to be more creative. One of the best lessons I have personally taken out of this book is that creativity is not a talent that some people have and others don't, but a skill that can be improved given the right opportunities.

Creating Innovators offers an expose on what it takes to foster creative and entrepreneurial skills in students and adults alike - being an 'innovator' is not a destination, but a lifelong learning process. Tony Wagner provides a collection of interviews with a few students, parents, and their teachers,

and tries to isolate the common threads: parenting styles, impact and role of mentors and teachers, and the role of the various educational institutions on their development. Given the small (and biased: US, middle-upper class, etc) sample size, it's hard to draw general results, but nonetheless, there are interesting patterns that emerge. No surprise, parenting style matters: you have to let the kids explore, make mistakes, and not stifle them with own ideas (or ambitions). Similarly, teachers and mentors have an enormous impact: knowledge is one thing, ability to relate that knowledge via practical projects and exploration is another - creating innovators requires (a lot) more than just rote fact acquisition (aka, passing standardized tests). How do you create environments that support this kind of development at home, at school, and at work? It's not an exact science, but this book highlights some interesting experiments and experiences.

I cannot thank Mr. Wagner enough for writing this book. This is exactly what every school teacher and principal (and administrator) should read this summer and start applying in their schools this Fall. Creating Innovators is a quick read that gives parents, teachers, anyone the encouragement needed to support creativity in their children. Bottom line: Give children and young adults more unstructured free time to play, let children follow their passions and support their passions no matter how crazy you think they are at the moment. After you read the various kid's stories presented in Creating Innovators, who come from a variety of social-economic backgrounds, you will be SO inspired that anything is possible. My ebook downloaded seamlessly through my Kindle app on my iPad. Watched all the great video snippets of the kids and teachers highlighted in the book. The ideas presented in this book should be the starting point of education reform in this country! We don't need more testing, we need more innovating!

Wagner uses not so conventional research methods, but very efficient (repeated interviews, case studies with one person, but deeply conducted), establishing vivid relation with his study "objects", aiming at finding common traces of innovators. Results are striking, since nurturing in family, through high school and college, till worklife, not only in relation to studied cases, but also in relation to tutors found in schools and colleges "some were typical outsiders, couldn't have tenure, because they weren't "researchers" in canonical shape, but were fantastic "educators" and "innovators". Our educational institutions are not good places for learning anymore, because they pertain to a gone era and cannot change themselves. They don't perceive that, to transform society

and economy (knowledge economy), they need first transform themselves. It is possible to create innovators, but only innovators do create innovators. Very nice and innovative book.

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