

# Why We Make Things and Why It Matters: The Education of a Craftsman

*Peter Korn*

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## WHY WE MAKE THINGS AND WHY IT MATTERS

*The Education of a Craftsman*

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#54504 in Books Ingramcontent 2015-03-31Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.90 x .60 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 1567925464176 pagesWhy We Make Things and Why It Matters The Education of a Craftsman | File size: 79.Mb

**Peter Korn : Why We Make Things and Why It Matters: The Education of a Craftsman** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why We Make Things and Why It Matters: The Education of a Craftsman:

19 of 21 people found the following review helpful. memoir and theoryBy science readerI enjoyed the memoir part of

this book in which the author describes his improbable discovery of furniture making and his growth into competent craftsman and designer. I didn't appreciate the half or more of the book in which Korn elucidates, or tries to, his theory about why we make things. I won't be a spoiler and tell you what the theory is but I will reveal that I was unpersuaded by it, though it may explain why Korn made things, also why he quit making and started teaching. I read the whole book but I never got why its author thinks it matters that we hand make elements of our world. Fortunately, there are many good reasons that are set forth tellingly, poignantly, in other books. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Philosophy and experience, not a "how-to" book. By Bradley Uppercrust III Excellent perspective from an experienced craftsman. This is not a "how-to" book, but rather a book on the philosophy of craft. If you love craft for the art and philosophy, then you'll enjoy this. It is obviously a biography, but has a lot of wisdom within it for people going into the woodworking trade/art. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great discourse on the creative life. By D. Sanford A thoughtful and interesting account of his personal journey as a craftsman and the humanistic underpinnings of that process. He relates it to personal transformation which I think many makers experience. He is also honest about the pitfalls. If you are a maker, it is an insight into what perhaps drives you. I related to it because I am a maker and have often wondered why I went to such lengths to learn to do things in glass and fiber.

In this moving account (endorsed by America's most famous woodworker, Nick Offerman, who calls it "Generous and touching . . . [An] excellent book"), Peter Korn explores the nature and rewards of creative practice. We follow his search for meaning as an Ivy-educated child of the middle class who finds employment as a novice carpenter on Nantucket, transitions to self-employment as a designer/maker of fine furniture, takes a turn at teaching and administration at Colorado's Anderson Ranch Arts Center, and finally founds a school in Maine: the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, an internationally respected, non-profit institution. Through this beautiful exploration, Korn works to get at the "why" of craft, in particular, and at the satisfactions of creative work, in general - to understand their essential nature. How does the making of objects both reflect and refine our own identities? What is it about craft and creative work that makes them so rewarding? What are the natures of those rewards? How do the products of creative work inform society? In short, what does the process of making things reveal about ourselves? Korn draws on forty years of hands-on experience to answer these questions eloquently in this personal and revealing inquiry. Peter Korn writes that his work as a furniture-maker tries to accomplish three goals: integrity, simplicity, and grace. Fortunately, these qualities are also what distinguish his writing. In this book, he gives the reader an almost tangible sense of what it takes to be a creative craftsman, a homo faber, a maker of things, which is one of the central elements of the human condition. But he does much more than that: he explores what the search for self and for belonging entails in our rapidly changing times. --Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Peter Korn's brilliant new book resonates with me as a visual artist in a profound way. I share his passion for craft and admire his ability to take a plank of wood and fashion anything he sets his mind to. Throughout the centuries, furniture makers and painters have shared a set of belief systems centered on craft. The pleasure and calm that I get as a painter fashioning a complicated work from colored dirt on canvas is, I believe, the same pleasure and peace that Peter Korn and his students get as craftsmen. -- Chuck Close

From Booklist Drawing on his decades of experience handcrafting fine furniture, Korn's previous books have primarily focused on teaching woodworking to neophytes, including the best-selling *Woodworking Basics* (2003). In this inspired departure from such how-to guides, Korn explores the fundamental reasons why he and other artistically inclined hobbyists and professionals passionately devote themselves to their craft, often for little recognition or monetary gain. Against the backdrop of a consumer marketplace saturated with machine-manufactured goods, Korn asks readers to consider what makes creative work so rewarding, what the nature of those rewards actually are, and what making things can reveal about our deeper nature. In answering these questions, Korn describes his own life as a crucible of self-discovery, recounting how his middle-class Philadelphia upbringing led to carpentry work, then designing furniture, then teaching woodworking, and finally to founding a furniture-making school in Maine. Written with as much attention to polished prose as the author gives to his woodworking, Korn's book is a stirring testimonial for self-fulfillment through craftsmanship, whatever form it takes. --Carl Hays What a superb book this is. The measure of its excellence is such that, the central premise being so clearly intelligent, so engagingly correct, it would still prove a worthwhile read even if its execution had been a letdown. As it is, the perfectly planned prose and stylish design could elevate Peter Korn's account of his life and career, as a craftsman (a furniture maker) to the status of a modern classic. This is one cool piece of work. --The Times (UK) Drawing on his decades of experience handcrafting fine furniture, Korn's previous books have primarily focused on teaching woodworking to neophytes, including the best-selling *Woodworking Basics* (2003). In this inspired departure from such how-to guides, Korn explores the fundamental reasons why he and other artistically inclined hobbyists and professionals passionately devote themselves to their craft, often for little recognition or monetary gain. Against the backdrop of a consumer marketplace saturated with machine-manufactured goods, Korn asks readers to consider what makes creative work so rewarding, what the nature of those rewards actually are, and what making things can reveal about our deeper nature. In answering these

questions, Korn describes his own life as a crucible of self-discovery, recounting how his middle-class Philadelphia upbringing led to carpentry work, then designing furniture, then teaching woodworking, and finally to founding a furniture-making school in Maine. Written with as much attention to polished prose as the author gives to his woodworking, Korn's book is a stirring testimonial for self-fulfillment through craftsmanship, whatever form it takes. --Carl Hays --BooklistHere, furniture maker Korn shifts from how-to guides to a more philosophical approach to woodcraft. [...] This book documents Korn's personal philosophy, interweaves art and existence, and is based on a strong belief in his work.[...] An uplifting title for artisans, novice or skilled, who will benefit from the ideas of a kindred spirit. --Library Journal

About the Author Peter Korn is the founder and Executive Director of the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, a non-profit school in Rockport, Maine. A furniture maker since 1974, he is also the author of several how-to books, including the bestselling *Woodworking Basics: Mastering the Essentials of Craftsmanship* (Taunton Press, 2003). His furniture has been exhibited nationally in galleries and museums.