



The Creative Family Manifesto: Encouraging Imagination and Nurturing Family Connections

Amanda Blake Soule

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Spark and nurture your family's creativity--a guide for making creativity an intentional part of everyday life.

When you learn to awaken your family's creativity, wonderful things will happen: you'll make meaningful connections with your children in large and small ways; your children will more often engage in their own creative discoveries; and your family will embrace new ways to relax, play, and grow together. With just the simple tools around you--your imagination, basic art supplies, household objects, and natural materials--you can transform your family life, and have so much more fun! This book embraces a whole new way of living that will engage your children's imagination, celebrate their achievements, and help you to express love and gratitude for each other as a family.

The Creative Family Manifesto: Encouraging Imagination and Nurturing Family Connections Details

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Robin says

The Creative Family Manifesto, by Amanda Blake Soule, gives us as a family inspiration to be creative by using our minds and hands. It contains many projects such as knitting, gardening, playing instruments and much more. It is a refreshing book for the uniting of families again as in the past of making and sharing together their creativity. Technology is taking away the family closeness. This book gives us a push in the right direction of having healthy and fun family interaction through creativity. The author reminds us to just look at what and how our children create. It is a beautiful thing to see the wonders of our children's minds. A must have for every family, school, and library.

Alissa Wied says

Another slight departure from my usual genre, The Creative Family Manifesto caught my eye by its title and description:

Spark and nurture your family's creativity--a guide for making creativity an intentional part of everyday life. When you learn to awaken your family's creativity, wonderful things will happen: you'll make meaningful connections with your children in large and small ways; your children will more often engage in their own creative discoveries; and your family will embrace new ways to relax, play, and grow together. With just the simple tools around you--your imagination, basic art supplies, household objects, and natural materials--you can transform your family life, and have so much more fun!

I was truly excited to get into this book and see what kind of suggestions it had as we are a pretty creative family and for years have embraced a "family night" in which we take turns coming up with activities/games or a themed evening of activities which have to be cheap or free. My girls are teens, so I knew some of it might not apply as much of their childhood has passed, but I was still hopeful for a few new ideas. Unfortunately it didn't really meet any expectations I had going into it.

It's an interesting and well-written book, and if you're just starting out as a new family that has a tendency or interest in doing life similar to the Amish, then I'm sure you'd be thrilled with this book. Even if you're a family that is completely plugged-in and tech heavy, it would be a good read to remind you that getting off devices and purposely taking time to "create" is so beneficial to the mind's development.

I think I was hoping for something with some photos, or instructions or, I'm not really sure, but I should've taken a cue from the simple hand-drawn cover that this would be a "back-to-our-roots" kind of book. Again, not bad, just not what I was looking for. It was also fairly short, but that would be due to the fact that it's mostly just a bunch of suggestions for ways to be creative, but not much instruction.

A few of the ideas that caught my eye:

Building Fairy Houses (in a park, backyard, just out in nature)

Individual Children's Albums

Adult Art Night - not a competition, just fun creating and enjoying each others' company

I'm sure the author realizes this book isn't for everyone and is just trying to inspire others to at least start. Start small and then add one more thing, then one more and pretty soon, you'll be amazed at what your children are capable of creating/imagining and you might surprise yourself!

As a Christian, I had a hard time with the emphasis on celebrating seasons and nature, rather than God and His magnificent creativity, but most of these ideas would be easily adaptable to your own family's beliefs and celebrations.

Diana Bogan says

I already do a lot of similar things with my kids, so overall the book was a little disappointing because I didn't find the level of inspiration and new ideas that I was looking for, however, if you are new to this style of parenting then it's a great book with simple, easy ways to spend time together as a family.

Artemisia Hunt says

Much is written about creativity and creative process today. We seem to have elevated creativity to the same stature previously given mostly to reason and science in our lives and in our culture. I can't help but believe that this is a good thing that can have far reaching benefits for our future happiness and effectiveness as a species. Amanda Blake Soule is a mom, and writer about creativity who feels much the same way. In The Creative Family Manifesto, she provides instruction, inspiration and guidance for bringing creativity into every aspect of family life as she demonstrates beautifully and delightfully how this makes for a happier, more connected family as well.

Callista says

I love "Soulemama" and have followed her online for years. I was so excited that she wrote another book. I'm sad to say I found it disappointing: it was a lot of good ideas surrounded by a lot of fluff. I was also disappointed there are no photos included or any real step by step ideas. More just "this is what we do, but do whatever you want" type writing. This book had huge potential and for me, it just didn't live up. It felt cobbled together in a rush.

Hannah Carr-Murphy says

I read this book as a childless young woman with a MA degree in community arts. I was interested in how it would intersect with my own education in promoting creativity in all people, as well as my experience as a person with an encouraging, but traditional family.

The ideas that Soule writes about to promote the creativity of children and the parents in a creative family are original, and her writing is wonderfully personal and warm. I liked especially the way that Soule includes ways activities can be adapted to any family's spiritual traditions. There are so many parenting type books that are so very Christian, and that's not what I'm looking for--and not what many of the people in my

generation are looking for. Her idea to mark seasons and solstices to give children a sense of connection to the cyclic nature of life is top-notch, and one I plan on implementing in my own life. She also has many practical solutions for keeping order in one's creative life and physical order in creative materials in the home.

The only reason I have taken off one star is that Soule's book would be harder to adapt for homes where both parents work full-time jobs. On one hand, her strategies for family creativity are very adaptable for different levels of disposable income, with suggestions of thrifting and remaking things already in the house. And she also talks about making creative work an important thing, an essential part of the day's work, which I agree with and respect. But this book does come from a place of privilege, and I fear that many who read it may be pressing theirs faces up against the glass of a creative family they have scarce time and energy to make.

Overall though, I will be recommending this book and some of its strategies to my friends who are beginning their own families. I enjoyed it and think it has very valuable ideas.

Benjamin Bookman says

I wanted to love this but it just wasn't deep enough. There are so many ideas in here, but touched on so lightly and quickly. I would have liked either more information or focus on the ideas themselves, or more concrete examples in depth. I like the concept of the book and, yes, creativity shouldn't need lots of instruction, but there just wasn't enough substance to feel like I was really learning anything or taking something away. I also struggled with some of the repetitive or clearly taken-from-a-blog sections that just weren't quite edited together as well as could have been. But again, I did find the overall message really nice and could probably use some pieces of this book as inspiration.

Mairead says

Giving this an an extra star for the one pager manifesto that is my jam. I wish there was more depth to this—going to check out her blog to see if it fills in some of that. Loved many of the ideas (listed below)—just wanted more examples/details (as always).

Takeaways:

- * successful art with children: access, exposure, encouragement (vs instruction)
- * art on the go bags (moleskine, colored pencils, pencil sharpener, markers, drawing pencils, pens, field guides)
- * art box, art books, art wires
- * our spots
- * flower/herb box outside kitchen window/on porch
- * fairy houses
- * thank you cards with drawing and dictation
- * family drawing time and special notebooks
- * sewing basket and knitting basket
- * nature table (!!?)
- * seasons tree
- * child's own camera

* treasure boxes

Jenn says

I won a copy of this book.

This was a fun book that talks about how one can craft and create with children in their family. Soule has some wonderful suggestion for collecting and storing crafting items. Basically, if you'd like to become a more creating person or want to install a bit of artistic talent in your kids, go get this book. Also, a great present for new and soon-to-be parents.

Kit Feral says

this was a bit disappointing as I've read the creative family already and while the title are close I didn't expect it to be word for word repetitive at times. there wasn't a ton of new content. however this is still a good book. all these ideas still ring true for me and are presented in a totally attainable manner. I love this family, living like they do is definitely my life's goal. very inspiring. I loved the manifesto in the front and photocopied and decorated it to display prominently in our home.

Ginni says

I'm trying not to let my preconceived ideas about *The Creative Family Manifesto* color my judgment of it. Going by the title, I expected practical, nuts-and-bolts ways to integrate creativity/arts/craftiness into family life. And there is some of that...but there's also a LOT of philosophy, thoughts on going green and getting in touch of nature, and so on. I'm pro-philosophy and pro-environment, don't get me wrong, but the packaging could have been more transparent. Think acorns and moss instead of pipe cleaners and Sculpey clay.

Regardless, it's still a good take on bringing up well-rounded, whole-brained kids who are rooted in good (if ambiguously sourced) values. Much of the advice in this book is not for me--it kind of sounds like a ticket to Hoarder's Paradise, honestly--but it made me think and gave me ideas. That's what creativity is about, right?

(I received this book for free through a Goodreads giveaway.)

Cara says

I will basically read anything by Amanda Blake Soule because I find her real-life stories of incorporating creativity into the everyday simply encouraging and magical. However, I wasn't a huge fan of this book simply because it feels like the readers digest version of her other (AMAZING) books, and there were no photos, which as a very visual person, I found so inspiring from her other books.

I look forward to reading more from her as her kids grow older, as the creative skills will inevitably shift as

her kids mature and this is helpful for moms like me that are several years behind her.

Deborah says

The Creative Family Manifesto, by Amanda Blake Soule, shares the creative life and aims of a family inspired by doing and making, and growing their talents from the ground up. It is rather reminiscent of Little Women in a modern setting, or perhaps Montessori grown up and gone wild as the family from the youngest through the adults express themselves in every creative and innovative way possible. Knitting hats, whittling wood, gardening, playing instruments, expressing love in real and tangible yet creative ways. It is idyllically idealism, making the best things out of life through simple things. It is what has been lost in life through our drowning in technology and digital landscapes that fill our brains and imaginations. Living in a virtual world is never a replacement for the lost art of living. Put down your electronic gadgets and pick up a pen, a paintbrush, an instrument. Do something and let your creative heart and being soar. The author reminds us "Stop and watch your children often. Really stop and watch, and you'll see them using such creativity in everything they do..."

This is not so much a "How to " book, as it brings reason as to why to do and make and live. There are ideas to try, and reasons why, inspirations to find and inspiration to give, games to play, and so much more. This book is perfect for public libraries, especially for your parenting or homeschool collections, and for gift giving.

Thanks to NetGalley for providing an uncorrected proof for review. Looking forward to seeing this on the shelves at the store. It will make a great gift for my home schooling friends.

Nissa says

This book is full of ideas for living a fulfillingly creative life as a family, incorporating creative, artistic, and connecting rituals and activities into the daily and annual family rhythm. Soule's gentle language hearkens back to a simpler time, but her suggestions are firmly rooted in today's realities. Her obvious joy in her family is infectious, and the ways in which she celebrates the creativity of her children without shortchanging her own creative impulses is inspiring. This book will resonate with many modern parents and grandparents, and is an excellent addition to most public library collections.

Carrie Ekeroth says

I enjoyed many of the ideas in this book. The focus is around connecting with one another through creative activities and reflection. It includes small tips and steps anyone can do to incorporate more creativity into their lives and families.

Many of the tips are things we already do in our family, but others were fun sounding new ideas we look forward to trying.

I appreciated that this book includes activities which are seasonal without being religious.
