

The Real Purpose of Libraries

If libraries are for readers only, then gyms must be for athletes only and kitchens must be for chefs only. Specific places for specific people; it's quite an antiquated way of thinking. Such a culture of exclusivity yields a dull colorless microcosm of specialists. Mixing and mingling, now that's the way to generate some heat.

"Readers", a boring grade-school word often cultivating the wrong image, endorses the long held stereotype in which academics, scholars, and intellectuals are the only beings meant to step foot in a library. The problem with this belief is its failure to recognize the multi-faceted, multi-functional purpose of today's modern library.

Libraries are for everyone! Ordinary people have access to all knowledge in a public library. They can learn to paint an inspiring piece of art or learn to build a Fortune 500 company. Anyone can walk into a library and learn a new language or obtain a new skill.

Libraries are for people who know that *anything* is possible. Libraries are sources of inspiration, information, and motivation. They provide opportunities for everyday people to blast off into their own personal uncharted territories.

Walking into a library provides such a feeling of excitement and optimism. There is so much packed into those walls and those shelves. To say 'so much' is an understatement. Everything in our entire world is condensed into one place. Every aisle, every shelf is buzzing energetic with new views and eye-opening enlightening information to broaden our horizons and lift us out of our short-sighted beliefs about what is possible.

The exhilarating feeling of liberation extends even beyond the bookshelves. Modern day libraries enable patrons to access information outside of the confines of a book. Information learned in books can now be supplemented, dissected, and questioned with a host of amenities offered by the library.

Computers, along with Internet access, really and truly do provide the gateway to all knowledge. Classes (in multiple languages!) teaching users basic computer operations give equal opportunity to all knowledge-seekers. Universal access to this real-time aptly named "Information Super Highway" is a great asset to those wanting to explore the world around them.

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Book clubs and story telling offer yet another outlet for the excitement generated by knowledge and ideas. Within these groups, patrons share their thoughts and opinions, further developing and expanding on the original idea of the author.

Local artists exhibit their work on the library walls, as it serves as an impromptu gallery. Wandering eyes draw inspiration or at the very least critical contemplation about an artist's representation of an image.

Modern day libraries evoke something of the past in terms of their democracy and love of knowledge. In a sort of Renaissance spirit, libraries provide the total experience for those looking for personal growth. The library is an underused powerhouse of possibility; its humble walls comprise the community's workshop for its own advancement and evolution. Culturally, socially, and intellectually the library serves to heighten the quality of life not only for "readers", but for all its patrons.