

EPISODE **65**

# How to Best Use and Support Your Library

Guest: Amy Commers

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## Meet Amy Commers



Amy is youth services librarian in the Twin Cities Metro area who has been working at public libraries since 2008. She is passionate about connecting families with books and helping to grow lifelong readers.

## In This Episode

Amy and Sarah discuss the best ways use your local library and how to support it too!

They talk hold systems, interlibrary loans and why we shouldn't be intimidated to just jump right in and chat with library staff.

They also discuss resources for finding books for teens and how to make sure your favorite books stay in the library system.

## The Listening Guide

**Use this guide to skip to parts that most interest you, or listen to the entire podcast.**

- 2:39 Meet Amy
- 8:45 'What do I read next?'
- 10:20 Don't be intimidated
- 12:09 Library language
- 13:05 Using the hold system
- 16:39 Teaching kids how to use the library
- 20:37 How kids acquire taste in books
- 23:10 Navigating YA
- 26:52 How books are divided by age groups
- 29:10 Supporting your library
- 34:43 Keeping favorite books in the system
- 37:55 Let the kids speak

A lot of people will say, "I don't know if you know the answer..." and I always want to say, "Yeah, I probably don't." But here's the thing about being librarians- that's what we're trained to do - find answers. - Amy Commers



## Quotes and Questions

### \* Cultivating a personal library.

“But even to this day my home library – people are surprisingly shocked by how small it is – because I’m so particular. If I’m going to buy a book and keep it in my collection it is going to be a book that I will have read 50 times or just has a lot of special personal meaning to me.”

What are your standards for a book making it into your library? Is it time to look through your collection and see if there are a few books to donate? Maybe give them to your local library!

### \* Taste is acquired over time.

“What I’ve seen in my own home with my 13 and 15 year old daughters, for example, it did not damage them to be reading *Babysitters Club* or *Cupcake Diaries* or the Fairy books. It didn’t damage them to bring home *Dora* picture books. If anything it helped them see that I value their relationship with books and then because we read so many really, really good books together, out loud, and because I was also offering those to my kids, they were able to tell the difference, and they can tell the difference.”

### \* Finding books for teens.

“My best suggestion, really, is to find either a friend, a teacher, a librarian, a blog even, someone on Twitter, find someone who reads YA, who seems to have similar values as you or at least is someone you could communicate with and say, “Hey, can you tell me more about [this]? I’m curious about what happens in [this] romantic relationship? What is [this] school environment like?”

Another idea is to listen Heather Woodie’s master class about how to engage your teens with books!

### \* Show your library some love!

“I think a lot of times we just need to speak up because the people who are working the libraries in your area they want to make the service work for you, they want to help you, that’s why they’re there.”

If you love your library, brainstorm some ideas with your kids about how you could best support your favorite branch. Could you write letters of support or appreciation? Could you donate some books or do a fundraiser like Amy talked about? Or maybe you could volunteer as a family!

## Show Notes

### Books from today's episode:

- [The Book Whisperer](#)
- [Reading in the Wild](#)
- [Honey for a Teen's Heart](#)

### Other links from today's show:

- [commonsensemedia.org](#)
- [Multnomah County Library System](#)
- [Chicago Public Library](#)
- [New York Public Library](#)
- [Blog She Wrote](#)
- [Beautiful Feet Books](#)

To find more resources to help you build your family culture around books, visit [ReadAloudRevival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com).