

Why Adults Lose the 'Beginner's Mind'

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Here's a sobering thought: The older we get, the harder it is for us to learn, to question, to reimagine. This isn't just habit hardening into dogma. It's encoded into the way our brains change as we age. And it's worsened by an intellectual and economic culture that prizes efficiency and dismisses play.

Alison Gopnik is a professor of psychology and philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, where she runs the Cognitive Development and Learning Lab; she's also the author of over 100 papers and half a dozen books, including [“The Gardener and the Carpenter”](#) and [“The Philosophical Baby.”](#)

What I love about her work is she takes the minds of children seriously. The child's mind is tuned to learn. They are, she writes, the R. & D. departments of the human race. But a mind tuned to learn works differently from a mind trying to exploit what it already knows.

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