

# Gever Tulley

**Author** of Fifty Dangerous Things (you should let your children do)

**Founder** of Tinkering School

**Speaker** at TED, Big Ideas Fest, and other conferences and events



**Fifty Dangerous Things (you should let your children do)**

This is not a kids book, this is a book that kids will love.

Filled with easy to follow instructions, fun facts, and challenging undertakings that will engage and inspire whole households.



**Tinkering School**

Real tools, real materials, real projects.

Where others see problems, Tinkerers see puzzles. Kids develop an intuitive understanding of the physical world by using their hands to make things.



**Gever Tulley**

There are many ways to understand something.

Take knots for example: we can read about tying knots in books, we can Google for the best knot for a specific problem, and we can learn about different kinds of rope, poring over the specifications. But until we actually start tying knots, we'll never really understand how or why a piece of rope "likes" this knot and doesn't like that one.

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## Bio



Gever Tulley was fortunate to grow up in a world full of **possibilities** and adventures. Gever's famous rule while babysitting, "If you're going to **play with fire**, we're going to have to go outside."

A self-taught computer scientist who holds multiple technology patents, Gever's **expertise** is really in... thinking. With a history of tackling large, complex problems, he is (almost pathologically) drawn to projects that require him to learn or invent **something new**. His career has been shaped by what he calls "failure-positive" exploration: the notion that trying to do something, even if it fails, is better than doing nothing at all.



Gever has taught workshops and made **presentations** to both kids and adults, in a variety of settings, including Maker Faire, Stanford University, Google, and TED. His explorations of the integration of play into work are **compelling** to corporations, while his playful hands-on projects are irresistible to participants of all ages.



NPR and The New York Times have both reported on what Gever has been up to at Tinkering School. MAKE Magazine has covered multiple projects of Gever's, both on their blog and in print. **Tinkering School** and Gever's talks at TED (the Technology, Entertainment, Design conference) have generated thousands of blog postings.

The presentation Gever made at the 2007 TED pre-conference has been viewed online by over two million people and is still being discovered and commented on, making it one of the **most popular** videos to ever come out of a TED conference. In 2009 Gever spoke again, this time on the main stage – to all attendees – and his **message** is being heard by more people than ever before.



Personable, and comfortable with audiences of all sizes, Gever is a **confident** and charming speaker. He has the ability to engage with both children and adults in almost any context.

For more information or to **book Gever** for a speaking engagement, hands-on workshop, interview or book event, please contact:

Julie Spiegler, Tinkering Unlimited  
PO Box 370721, Montara, CA 94037-0721  
[julie@tinkering-unlimited.com](mailto:julie@tinkering-unlimited.com)  
415-218-3237

**tinkeringunlimited**  
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# What is Fifty Dangerous Things...?



There are many "dangerous" things that are interesting, eye-opening, **enlightening** or just plain fun! And while there are aspects of danger in virtually everything we do, the trick is to learn how **mastery** actually minimizes danger. Walking is dangerous when we start as babies, but we persevere and it becomes safe. Next we learn to negotiate stairs. Why stop there? Why not practice and become proficient at walking on the roof or walking on a tightrope? These are just a few of the Fifty Dangerous Things that you are invited to try.

Parents, and their children, need to hear an experienced, **trustworthy** voice that fosters exploration and creativity. With so many barriers and dire warnings being put up every day, we need a movement back to competence and personal responsibility.

## What is Tinkering School?



Started in 2005, Tinkering School is a place where kids aged 8 to 17 can pick up real tools and be **trusted**: trusted not to hurt themselves, trusted not to hurt others. The goal is to ensure that the kids leave with a better sense of how to make things than they had when they arrived, with the realization that they can learn by fooling around, and ultimately with a general sense of **competence**.



It's not that all the things they build turn out as planned. Lots of projects go awry. But when kids are involved in the initial design **challenge** – rather than building from a kit with a set of instructions – they experience the **thrill** of trying something that may never have been tried before and might not even work. Kids learn from trying to **solve problems**: from the failures as well as the successes.

Children need to spend time making and unmaking things. From a purely clinical standpoint, there are neurological developments that can only happen when children are given the opportunity to use their hands to make things. This is how they develop an **intuitive understanding** of the physical world.

Kids who build tree-houses, bridges, and flights of fancy, will **remember** the feeling of standing up there in the tree house, walking across that bridge, or seeing their **imaginings** rendered in real life - not the occasional bruised elbow or conked noggin.

**Think, Make, Tinker.**

## Speaking Engagements & Workshops



Gever has successfully reached individual kids at Tinkering School, Maker Faire and other workshops. He has inspired large audiences at TED, conferences and online. He has engaged adults in hands-on activities at corporations and conferences.

8<sup>th</sup> Annual Science & Math Teachers Conference, 2010 Keynote

TED 2009, [Life Lessons Through Tinkering](#)

Maker Faire 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009: Hands-on Experiences

Google, Apps UX Team Ars Robotica 2009

Big Ideas Fest 2009, Speaker

Stanford University, d.school Plerkshop 2008, Organizer & Speaker

Pop!Tech 2008, Making Fun: Working with Wire (workshop)

Maker Faire 2008, Speaker

Adobe Systems, 2008 Tech Summit, Speaker

Adobe Systems, 2008 Design/Build Prize (workshop)

TED 2007, [5 Dangerous Things \(you should let your children do\)](#)

Adobe Systems, UX Team Tinker Challenge 2007



## Published Works

"I encourage everyone, young and old, to try everything in this book." – Mike Petrich, Exploratorium

[Fifty Dangerous Things \(you should let your children do\)](#)  
(December 11, 2009, ISBN 978-0984296101, 130 pp)

MAKE Magazine, [Kid Safety Labels We Want to See](#) (Volume 7)

MAKE Magazine, [Ready, Set, Make!](#) (Volume 14)

MAKE Magazine, [The Lost Art of Lashing!](#) (Volume 20)



## What People Are Saying

"Tinkering is beyond nerdiness. It's a whole outlook on life."

"Tinkering School is the ultimate big brother every kid dreams of: you get encouragement, smarts, tools, and devoted time to help you make cool stuff. It's the perfect compliment (or antidote) to sitting in front of a computer screen. The operating principles seem to be: **Try stuff, be safe, and amaze yourself.** Tinkering is beyond nerdiness. It's a whole outlook on life. Do-it-yourself is the beginning of self-knowledge, appreciation of the art and craft of others, a big way to get things done, and the best way to learn." - Kevin Kelly, Dad of Twyen (Tinkering School 2006, 2007), Senior Maverick for Wired (formerly Executive Editor), Publisher of Cool Tools, Board of The Long Now Foundation, <http://www.kk.org>

"Do you want cotton-wool kids?"

"When considering children at your school or kindergarten... your children at home... it might be prudent to ask yourself... Do you want cotton-wool kids? Then why not let them use power tools, sharpen knives, break copyright laws, play with fire? Gever Tulley is founder of the Tinkering School, and this is his TED talk about 5 Dangerous **things you SHOULD let your children do.**" – Beverly (Treehouse Dwellers), a New Zealand Kindergarten teacher, in [ICT in Early Education](#)

"Tinkering School is all about discovery and exploration."

"The Tinkering School: Helping Kids Discover Danger – The Tinkering School is all about discovery and exploration. It sounds like **the best possible environment for learning**.... Gever Tulley has become a bit of a hero to me." – Richard Nantel, CEO of Brandon Hall Research in [Analyzing Learning](#)

"Tulley has a good philosophy about how to teach our children independence."

"Gever Tulley has been on my short mental list of candidates for **Hero of The Week** and a post over at [Geekdad](#) reminded me of that. Gever is one of the founders of the Tinkering School, a camp that my boys will definitely go to... hell I would go to it myself. The following speech from Gever helps reaffirm my parenting philosophy in the face of criticism from the helicopter parents." – DK, a Stay at Home Dad in St. Paul, MN in [TapirsPoop](#)

"Kids Need To Take Risks In Order To Learn – I freely admit to not being (wo)man enough to allow my two-year-old son to play with items 2 and 6 on the list of things Gever Tulley of the Tinkering School says we should let our kids play with. I do, however, absolutely agree with what he says about **letting our kids explore their world** and that risk-taking is an important part of the learning process.... Tulley has a good philosophy about how to teach our children independence and awareness of themselves and of their surroundings. Watching his talk is pretty convincing; afterwards I was ready to teach my six-year-old to build stuff using something more powerful than a hammer and nails." – Alexa Harrington in [Educated Nation](#)

# Press Clippings

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## Book Reviews (subset):

**"Part IV in a series** of exploring the book, 50 Dangerous Things (you should let your children do)." – Deborah Nies, Examiner.com, January 6, 2010

Babble, [Droolicious Blog](#) (January 16, 2010)

The Dr. Dean Edell Show (January 14, 2010)

[Boing Boing](#) (January 14, 2010)

San Francisco Chronicle, [The Mommy Files](#) (January 13, 2010)

Examiner.com, [Madison Parenting Tweens Examiner](#) (December 14, 2009)

## Newspaper Coverage:

Examiner.com, [Madison Parenting Tweens Examiner](#) (Dec. 30, Jan. 4, Jan. 6, 2010)

Wyoming Star-Tribune, [Review and Interview](#) (January 1, 2010)

Svenska Dagbladet, [Metro](#) (September 2, 2008)

New York Times, Sunday Business Section, [Ping](#) (August 16, 2008)

## Radio Interviews:

Radio New Zealand (National) – Afternoons with Jim Mora (January 25, 2010)

700-WLW, Eddie & Tracy Show (January 19, 2010)

News Talk 1010, Ryan Doyle Show (January 15, 2010)

Radio New Zealand (National) – [Nine to Noon with Kathryn Ryan](#) (August 6, 2009)

NPR, [All Things Considered](#) (August 4, 2008)

## Television Appearances:

K2-TV, Good Morning Wyoming (January 7, 2010)

"Digital Designers Rediscover Their Hands" – New York Times, August 16, 2008

"Camp Offers Kids A Chance To Play With Fire" – All Things Considered, August 4, 2008