5 Reasons Everyone Should Learn To Code

Years ago, I sat in front of a computer typing for a week–for summer camp. Most summers, I stayed at a 4H camp on the lake, brimming with trees and nature and occasionally a couple of bears meandering through the campsite (there was an alert dog for that). This was a different sort of camp. We didn't stay in bunk beds or sing songs around a campfire. Instead, we learned how to *code*.

We created programs that ran a small desktop fan, controlled fighting robots, and racing cars, and even accidentally set off a small fire in the elementary school's chemistry lab. I didn't regret forgoing a traditional summer camp for this one. I felt proud to learn even just the basics of a new skill set, whether or not I'd apply it to my profession in the future. It proved useful, but not always for the reasons you might think.

1. Learning to code isn't only useful, it's *fun*

The program was intended to normalize and encourage coding and other STEM programs for girls, but regardless of gender, it wasn't ever boring. There's a reason I enjoyed coding camp even more than a regular summer camp. We were imbued with a sense of purpose and unique skill, creating and innovating, and utilizing tools that we'd never heard of.

It was a brief but interesting introduction to a field that often overlooks women, especially very young ones, and that rarely attempts to court our interest in it, at least at the time. Still, even so, we found out that it wasn't "just for boys" and had fun with it.

We were learning not only how to program functions on the computer (at the very least, through a direct command screen) but how to manipulate the world around us through code. Realizing that we could create the next *Myspace* or *Neopets* (this was the early 2000s, after all) just by learning was also pretty cool.

2. Learning to code can lead to opportunities to *teach* it

Two of our camp counselors were science and math elementary teachers whose goal was to help teach programming languages to the future generation. Coding doesn't always seem all that interesting or cool, but there are numerous activities that help make learning how to code fun and engaging.

It's imperative to continue teaching kids how to code for the future, inside and outside of the classroom. The power of information can change and form our lives each and every day. It's

more important now than ever that we learn not only to use social media platforms to pioneer positive change but that we know how to build, modify and innovate them.

3. Learning the lingo opens new avenues of communication

The world of coding language is [always changing](#) and [ever-fluctuating](#), so no one will ever be completely "literate" in one dialect of code per se, but having just a basic understanding and fluency will help you communicate with software developers and engineers.

Whether you're going into freelancing looking into hiring developers for company projects, or maybe even just dabbling into code as a hobby, having some experience with basic coding language is useful knowledge for developing a unique skill set for any industry.

Surprisingly or not, knowing how to structure and organize data is important for [non-tech positions](#), and will likely continue to increase in import over the years. While there are programs that help with building a website, knowing how to code it can be helpful in developing something unique to your company and can save time and money on hiring outside help. Digital artists, designers, researchers, analysts, and even civil engineers may want to pick up some skills in coding, even if it's just to better understand how analytical programs work or be able to recognize glitches in important professional projects, it's never too late to learn.

4. Learning to code is great for freelancers

You could start as a hobbyist, maybe creating a website or a basic app or GIFs, and learn basic coding, then move into freelancing, taking on paid gigs until you realize that, *wow*, I can make this a full-time thing and then look for a job as a coder. Or start taking classes, get a certificate or degree, and look for employment. The possibilities, and [opportunities](#), are just about endless.

Unlike traditional jobs in coding and programming, freelancing gives you the same freedom as learning to code as a hobby in your free time, but with the bonus of getting *paid* for your effort! While it takes [self-discipline, grit, and determination](#) (and maybe even programming your time management software), setting your schedule and project goals is a perk of being your boss, even if it's just a side hustle while working a regular 9-to-5.

5. Learning to code can lead to a new career change

Coders and programmers are spoiled by choice. There's so many different options for coding that it's almost overwhelming. You could type in "entry-level programmer" or "experienced software developer" in Indeed, select the "Remote" option if you're like me and are looking for work-at-home opportunities. The [amount of job listings](#) could make your head spin.

Overall, learning to code can be just a new hobby. You could delve into the online community easily, scouring through forums with helpful coders of all skill levels, from hobbyists, freelancers, experienced researchers, and experts in the field -- a variety is there eager to talk and help. You

could take a course at the community college, maybe earn a certificate online, study in the field and earn a degree.

Start as a freelancer on Indeed or LinkedIn, try a few projects out, and see how it goes. You could make it your full-time gig or as an occasionally lucrative side gig. Either way, it's a useful and fun skill to have and will probably become more helpful to add to a resume (even a non-tech one) as time goes on. You won't regret it!

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