

## 25 Questions: Alyssa Lai

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**Alyssa Lai: Outreach Co-ordinator (Information Hamilton), Marketing & Development Associate (Hamilton Children's Choir), Vice Chair (Hamilton HIVE)**

### 1. What business or leadership book would you most recommend?

"The Start-Up of You" by Reid Hoffman, co-founder and chair of LinkedIn, and Ben Casnocha. It helps define my approach to work and shape my professional and personal life.

### 2. What advice have you received that has helped you the most?

Life begins at the end of your comfort zone. That's where magic happens and when you can reach new heights.

### 3. What would you do if you felt no fear?

Walk on thin ice on the lake at the Harbour. (I'd bundle up and wear a life-jacket.)

### 4. What makes you laugh?

All the time? That'll have to be my dad's jokes.

### 5. Where have you visited that you would like to return?

The Urubamba Valley in Peru. The mountains and sceneries are breathtaking, with stars twinkling brightly across the skies. Since the valley is a high-altitude area, it feels as though I could reach to the stars and grab them with my bare hands.

### 6. What is your favourite spot in Hamilton?

The intersection between York Boulevard and James Street North. I like how the two streets connect.

### 7. What is your guilty pleasure?

Video game guidebooks. I have spent quite a fortune on them.

### 8. What did you learn from your first job?

To manage my boss. I learned what it takes to be an accountable employee by observing and asking questions to understand my supervisor's communication and management style.

### 9. What is your favourite hobby?

I have been known to spend hours playing video games. Oftentimes, I devote more than 100 hours per game.

### 10. What do you do to wind down from work?

I hit the gym. It's therapeutic.

### 11. What's your favourite meal to make or eat at a restaurant?



Alyssa Lai

Anything Asian. Rice and noodles are always good.

**12. What makes you nervous?**

Networking situations. It's not my natural milieu, but I get better at meeting and interacting with people each time.

**13. How do you motivate people?**

By setting clear goals, expectations and then allowing individuals to take responsibilities, propose ideas and implement them. This gives people a sense of ownership, which in turn encourages them to be creative and execute their own ideas.

**14. What is your biggest pet peeve?**

The incorrect spelling of the time. It's 11 a.m. not 11 "am." My mentor has corrected me enough in order for that grammar rule to stick in my head. Now, I can never miss it when I see it spelled wrongly.

**15. What are you good at?**

Staying focused at goals and tasks in hand.

**16. What do you want to work on?**

Having the courage to ask for what you want, whether it is for professional or personal reasons. As one friend wisely commented, "A closed mouth never gets fed."

**17. What is Hamilton's most valuable asset?**

Its diversity — and I mean it in every possible way.

**18. How do you balance your life?**

By learning that life's happiness depends on work-life fluidity rather than the equal proportion of time and energy spent on work and personal life. I don't see a problem working 50-60 hours a week, so long that you are cognizant of your own well-being and the people you care about. When your body and mind tell you to take a break, you do so. Learn to recognize those cues.

**19. Who is the leader you look up to the most?**

The everyday hero. Yes, you.

**20. What do you like to do for entertainment? TV? Movies? Books? Videos?**

I enjoy going to the cinema for action movies and live theatre shows.

**21. What makes a good employee?**

Three values: tenacity, curiosity and diligence.

**22. What do you think people would be surprised to know about you?**

I've been in Canada for less than ten years. I was born and raised in Malaysia and moved to Canada in 2008 for school.

**23. What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs?**

It would be to invest. To quote Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha in "The Start-Up of You," "Invest in yourself, invest in your network and invest in society. When you invest in all three, you have the best shot at reaching your highest potential."

**24. What is the main thing you do to stay healthy?**

I have a regular fitness routine, which involves the gym and swimming. Plus, it helps that I bike everywhere.

**25. What is your favourite expression?**

Blistering barnacles and thundering typhoons (quoting Captain Haddock in the Tintin series). I don't use it in everyday conversation, but it gives me a sense of thrill whenever I say it out loud.

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