

## What are you curious about?

How much time do you spend seeking new information? How much time do you spend consuming information? When I was growing up, I heard the phrase, “curiosity killed the cat” often from my parents as a warning to stay out of trouble. Their curiosity warnings did not deter me from my many escapades growing up in a small town because I thought, “great, cats have nine lives, so why not.” Thankfully I developed intellectual and social curiosity in school to add to my adventure curiosity.

With the internet at our finger tips and convenience supplying most of our basic needs, most of us spend an enormous amount of time seeking and consuming information. When was the last time you audited that information to see if was just filling time or moving you closer to living out your values?

I think internal questioning about your use of time, to gain self-awareness, is the first step towards personal and professional change. So many of us walk through life repeating ineffective patterns and behaviors. Sometimes just having someone ask; “How’s that working for you?” or “Are you filling your time with mindless information?” can wake you up to more conscious living. Understanding where you are stuck in ineffective patterns and where you are growing is the first step towards change.

Todd Kashdan, author of [Curious? Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life](#), says curiosity is, “an engine of growth.” He says it is from our openness, not closedness, that we find purpose and meaning in life. Curiosity is about experimentation, trial and error, exploration, dreaming, and discovery. To be well rounded, you need curiosity in all areas of your life and relationships. Write down your list of values. Think about the relationships that are most important to you. Think about how you spend your leisure time, how you seek to

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develop yourself, how you take care of your health. Ask yourself if your use of time reflects those values. Be curious and ask what obstacles are preventing you from living a life that aligns with your values.

Lifelong learning requires curiosity at every stage of life. Too often I see business leaders focus too much on intellectual learning in business and think there will be time for other areas of their life later. Now that I am getting closer to retirement age, I see people that are struggling because they did not cultivate curiosity in all areas of their lives. Everyone needs to have hobbies and other interest outside of work. A person with a growth mindset is also curious about relationships and what drives other people. I think even if curiosity killed the cat, I would rather go out learning than standing still.

### Where is curiosity in business

Francesca Gino writes in the Harvard Business Review article, “The Business Case for Curiosity” that, “the most effective leaders look for ways to nurture their employees’ curiosity to fuel learning and discovery.” I agree that triggering curiosity can lead to fewer decision-making errors because you generate alternatives.

The article says the following behaviors are reduced when you are curious:

- Confirmation bias – tending to look for or favor information that confirms preexisting beliefs
- Stereotyping – over-generalizing or making broad judgments about an individual because they are part of a group
- Defensive reactions to stress – feeling like the demands you face exceed your resources to respond

- Aggressive reactions to provocation - perceiving everything as an attack
- Group conflict – having an ‘I’m right/you’re wrong’ positioning instead of accepting different ideas

In Kashdan’s book, he explains why curiosity reduces those behaviors. He says that curiosity is a counterbalance to certainty. He says that when you are closed and confident, you narrow possibilities, deplete energy and create defensive stances. Conversely, curiosity creates space for exploration, discovery, possibilities and open relationships. Curiosity keeps the door open for information throughout the process which keeps you flexible and open to change.

Albert Einstein said: “I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious” and “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence.” Curiosity starts with questions and quality of your questions will influence the quality of the answer you get. Remember that listening to the answer and being open to others’ opinions is why you are asking the question in the first place. Here are some good questions to ask when faced with decision or want to foster curiosity in others:

- What are other potential solutions to the issue?
- Is there a status quo that is holding you back?
- Are you evaluating the issue based on past experiences or the current reality?
- How would someone else frame the situation?
- Is there a different question you should be asking?
- What additional information do you need to make the decision?
- How might you think of the problem differently?
- What if you tried something new?
- What’s causing you to think that way?
- What new experiences do you want to be exposed to?

To me curiosity is about continually adjusting my understanding of the world. That understanding happens when I have success and when I face failure. Coaching affords me the opportunity to work with new people on a

regular basis. My curiosity is fueled by those connections and increases my empathy. With practice, I have learned to listen for the possibility and stay curious without passing judgement. A key part of listening is paying attention to nonverbal communication. I am curious about what their facial expressions, tone of voice, and body movement are telling me. I approach situations with questions and am open to following where the answers lead me. I find that I am most curious when I stay open to what is emerging in life and not focusing on the past. When are you most curious?

Curiosity is at the base of breaking down barriers. One of the areas I have built my business around is breaking down barriers. Once we understand your business model, Harmony helps you identify obstacles to human resource effectiveness. This allows us to design and implement Human Resource Programs, Professional Development Training, Personal/Executive Coaching and Assessments that are tailored to your specific needs and goals. As a coach, we facilitate classes to add coaching skills to your leadership and communication toolbox and as an executive coach, we can help you maximize the human talent present in your company regardless of where they work. The next Coaching Clinic workshop is March xx. Sign up for Coaching Clinic If you’re interested in exploring any of these services contact Bill Burtch at Harmony for a consultation at 901-272-7390 or [bburtch@harmonycc.net](mailto:bburtch@harmonycc.net)



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## *Schedule of Public Courses*

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>For More Information/Registration</b>
<a href="#"><i>The Coaching Clinic</i></a>	<a href="#"><i>Oct 16 &amp; 17</i></a>	<a href="#"><i>8:30 am – 5:00 pm</i></a>	

