

THE *curious* edit

♦ January 2026



Editor, Maryann Fernandez, in Pokuase, Ghana

In each issue of The Curious Edit, we will explore the work, the relationships, and the journeys that shape a curious life....*because life expands when you're curious.*

I have become a believer that curiosity is one of the most underrated forces in a well-lived life. It's what nudges us to look twice, ask better questions, and step a little further beyond what's familiar. The Curious Edit grew out of that belief.

Purpose. People. Place.

These three ideas sit at the heart of The Curious Edit: how we direct our resources and energy, how we relate to ourselves and one another, and how the places we go shape who we become. This will frame our content.

Purpose: Where intention meets impact—work in the world that reflects what we value and how we choose to show up.

People: The inner and interpersonal lives we're shaping - family, growth, leadership, and the ongoing work of becoming.

Place: Journeys that shape us - travel not just as movement, but as perspective, presence, and possibility.

I'm glad you're here. If anything particularly resonates with you, I'd love to hear about it.

Maryann



In this newsletter:

PURPOSE

"Curiosity + The Donor Mindset" - A conversation with Dr. Paul Schervish

PEOPLE

"Parent Care Begins with a Compassionate Conversation" by Lauren Bujosa, Kindred Advising

PLACE

"The Camino de Santiago - Where the Path Softens the Noise" by Maryann Fernandez

PURPOSE

Curiosity + The Donor Mindset

In my conversation with Dr. Paul Schervish, one idea rose above the rest: curiosity is not a distraction from purpose, it's how we discover it. In philanthropy, as in life, curiosity gives us permission to ask more honest questions about what matters to us and why.

Dr. Schervish reminds us that there is no single "right" way to give. Philanthropy isn't about keeping up with others or responding to a sense of obligation. It begins by paying attention to what resonates—what inspires us, brings joy, and naturally connects to the needs of others. At its best, giving nourishes both the beneficiary and the giver, and participation is defined by intention, not scale.

In a world that rewards quick answers, this conversation invites a slower, more reflective approach. Seek your inspiration without apology. Start with the issues that are part of your own story - the experiences you can identify with. That

sense of connection is often what leads to generosity that feels meaningful, sustaining, and true.

This two-part Curious Conversation is an invitation to let curiosity lead and to see what kind of impact follows.

Access parts 1 and 2 of the recorded interview and downloadable article package on the Curious Conversations webpage (scroll down to middle):

<https://thecuriousphilanthropist.com/curious-conversations>

DR. PAUL G. SCHERVISH

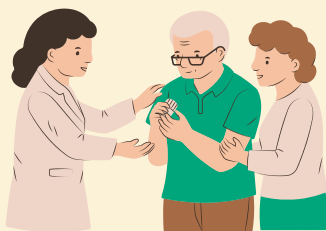


*Professor Emeritus,
Boston College*

*Founded and Director, Center on
Wealth and Philanthropy
Research on Money, Meaning,
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Biographical discernment of
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PEOPLE

Parent Care Begins with a Compassionate Conversation



Initiating the talk with aging parents - about finances, health, or safety - often feels daunting, but timing and tone matter more than perfection. These conversations land best when everyone is relatively calm and grounded, not in the heat of a crisis.

One helpful approach is using "I" statements: language that speaks from your own experience rather than assigning blame or making demands. Saying "I'm feeling worried about how often you've been falling," or "I'd feel more at ease if we could talk about a plan together," keeps the focus on care, not control. Used early—before urgency takes over—this tone invites collaboration and helps preserve dignity and autonomy, which are often at the heart of a parent's resistance. When

protectiveness or defensiveness surfaces, it's worth pausing to recognize what's underneath: fear, uncertainty, and a deep wish to remain in charge of one's own life.

Sibling dynamics can quietly complicate caregiving long before a crisis makes them unavoidable. If there are unresolved tensions or uneven responsibilities, addressing them early—while emotional intelligence is still intact—can prevent resentment later. Acknowledging each sibling's reality matters: proximity, work and family obligations, financial capacity, and emotional readiness all shape what someone can offer. Seeing these differences clearly often shifts the story from "won't help" to "can't help right now," opening the door to more constructive collaboration.

When parents resist help or minimize their limitations, empathy tends to go further than logic. Validating feelings first—especially grief, fear, or

or pride - creates space for trust. Arguing facts can feel patronizing, even when they're true; emotional connection, on the other hand, helps parents feel seen rather than managed. In some cases, loosening the need to control outcomes may actually reduce resistance, allowing support to unfold more naturally over time.

Finally, caregiving without boundaries is a fast path to burnout. Those doing the most - often one sibling - need care, too. Seeking personal support early, whether through therapy or a trusted group, helps process the grief that is already present and still to come. Non-negotiable breaks, shared coverage (even brief), and consistent self-care aren't indulgences - they're

essential. Putting on your own oxygen mask first isn't selfish; it's what makes sustained compassion possible.

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Business Advising and Family
Wealth Advising.*

PLACE

The Camino de Santiago – Where the Path Softens the Noise



Photo taken on the path from Orisson, France to Roncesvalles, Spain, Sept. 2025

Have you ever imagined walking one of the ancient paths to Santiago de Compostela—then talked yourself out of it? Too much planning. Not sure where to start. Not eager to do it entirely on your own. I understand that hesitation well.

For centuries, people have walked the Camino for religious reasons, but today the paths are filled with people of every corner of the world, every background, and belief system. Some come for reflection, others for clarity, others simply for the experience of walking day after day through beautiful landscapes and small villages. While it has physical demands, I once heard a travel writer describe the Camino as a walking meditation. That felt exactly right to me.

My introduction was the Camino Francés, the most well-known route - about 550 miles end to

end. That number alone was intimidating, so I started small: a week, five stages, with friends. We walked from Pamplona to Navarrete, skipping the Pyrenees that first time. As a non-hiker, that felt ambitious enough.

What surprised me wasn't just the walking, it was the rhythm. Wake up. Step onto the path. Walk. Eat. Rest. Repeat. Completely open to what the day would bring. The simplicity has a way of quieting the noise of everyday life. I expected sore legs; I didn't expect the sense of clarity I brought home with me. On tougher stretches, when fatigue set in and the end felt uncertain, I learned to narrow my focus: one more step, take a break, keep going. It's a mindset I still draw on when life feels crowded or demanding.

The experience stayed with me. So much so that the



following year (2025) I returned - this time on my own - to walk the Pyrenees, starting in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, France, three and a half days, about 42 miles. I stayed in albergues - the simple pilgrim hostels - and met people from all over the world. Some walked alongside me for an hour or two. Others I re-connected with sporadically to share a coffee. Some didn't even speak English, yet we had a connection, smiled and waved along the path. A few became lasting friends. It felt remarkably like life itself: paths intersecting, then gently diverging, yet leaving an imprint.

Since then, I've heard the same refrain again and again: "I've always wanted to do that" "I wouldn't know where to start." "I've never done anything like that before." "No one wants to come with me."

So I decided to make it easier for others to say "Yes!".

As my offering, in gratitude for a meaningful experience, I'm inviting people to **walk the Portuguese Camino** - whether for the full route or the final 100 kilometers into Santiago - in late May.

Think of it as an "un-group" experience: walk the same stages, start the day as early as you like, join pilgrims' meals, easy companionship, and complete freedom to engage on your own terms. If you've ever thought, I'd love to do that someday, this may be the moment to take the first step.



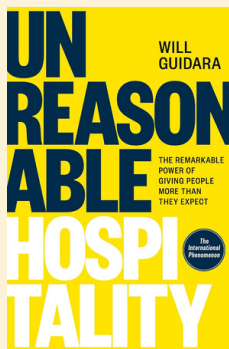
Let's walk something amazing!

Intrigued? Reach out for more information through the Contact Us page.



ALONG THE WAY....

A few things that caught my attention this month.



What I'm Reading: UNREASONABLE HOSPITALITY

I'm so intrigued, and I'm about to start reading! Unreasonable Hospitality, by Will Guidara (of Eleven Madison Park in NYC), has been resonating far beyond the dining world. At its heart is a simple but radical idea: excellence isn't just about what you deliver, it's about how people feel. Guidara's stories remind us that generosity, attention, and care are strategic choices, not extras. Whether in philanthropy, family life, advisory work, or travel, the book invites a useful question: What would it look like to go just a little further than expected - and mean it? Often, that's where trust, loyalty, and real connection begin.

COLLECTORS AND COLLEAGUES HEAD TO MEXICO CITY FEBRUARY 1-8 FOR A VIBRANT ART FAIR!

Mexico City Art Week draws collectors and art lovers alike, combining long-running fairs like Zona Maco with experimental galleries and private collections. The city itself becomes part of the experience, offering a mix of rigor, creativity, and immersion that keeps visitors coming back. It's made my list for a future trip.

