

Conversation 8 – Building Curiosity

Purpose: Curiosity can help you make discoveries, identify paths when the way is unclear, and lead to learning. These are major predictors of success.

The Discussion: *What are you curious about?* Some folks will respond to this question with an immediate answer: “Everything!” Others may ask what you mean. Whether at one end of the spectrum or somewhere in the middle, how you respond to this question will help you consider how developing your curiosity can lead to long-term success.

In brief, curiosity is one of the most important traits and a high predictor for success identified by researchers at Korn Ferry, an international business consulting firm. In CEO Gary Burnison’s Special Edition, *The Fall Whisper*, he says most people think of growth, strategy, and vision as key traits for leaders. But curiosity has recently become recognized as an absolutely critical piece.

Since the pandemic of 2020, Burnison says our world has experienced “nonstop ambiguity” which requires leaders to look at the world with an open mind. Whatever your organization (for profit, non-profit, education, government, etc.), today’s rapid changes can only be met if we are aware of emerging trends and subsequently ready ourselves for action to meet the opportunities (or the risks) presented. We can meet this challenge by increasing our curiosity.

Here are three questions that can help increase curiosity:

1. What are you curious about right now?

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2. How might you increase your curiosity (in more areas of your work and life)?

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3. Might listening be a strategy for increasing your curiosity? (Think about that one for a few moments.)

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To help with the questions above, think about context. Burnison says context is best friends with curiosity. By considering context, almost any event, trend, or observation can be handled or reframed to help visualize a path forward. By pairing curiosity with context and perspective, we can determine action. That is an invaluable skill.

Summary: In cultivating your curiosity, don't forget to expand your knowledge (and possible options) further by remembering to listen well. The saying that "experts don't listen because they already know the answer" rings true here. Imagine what might be missed if we are not open and curious to hear and learn about the other opportunities out there.

Final Challenge:

Where are some places or situations where you could practice listening this week (where you could consciously focus on being curious)?

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Additional Reading: Burnison, Gary (October 9, 2022). *The Fall Whisper*. Korn Ferry special edition publication.

General Reflections:

One thing that struck me about this topic was: _____

I'm still pondering (*and may seek more information on*): _____

As a result of this reflection, I plan to: _____
