

A Curious Mind (Brian Grazer)

- "I have **no special talents**. I am only passionately curious." — Albert Einstein"
- "Life isn't about finding the answers; it's about **asking the questions**."
- "I've discovered that **even when you're in charge**, you are often much more effective asking questions than giving orders."
- "**More than** intelligence or persistence or connections, curiosity has allowed me to live the life I wanted."
- "Curiosity is **the tool** that sparks creativity. Curiosity is **the technique** that gets to innovation."
- "**You're born curious**, and no matter how much battering your curiosity has taken, it's standing by, ready to be awakened."
- Curiosity comes in **different** shades and different intensities for different purposes. The technique is the same -- asking questions -- regardless of the subject, but the mission, the motivation, and the tone vary.
- Even if your curiosity is suppressed, you can't lose it. It's always on, always **waiting to be unleashed**.
- Curiosity **seems so simple**. Innocent, even...But curiosity has a potent behind-the-scenes power that we mostly overlook.
- Curiosity nourishes all our best human relationships. It starts with asking a simple question -- "How was your day?" or "How are you feeling?" -- then listen to the answer and **ask the next question**.
- If you're bored with your career, curiosity can **rescue you**. If you're feeling uncreative or unmotivated, curiosity can be **the cure**. It can help you use anger or frustration constructively.
- For curiosity to be effective, curiosity has to be **harnessed to at least two other key traits**:
 - First, the **ability to pay attention** to the answers to your questions--you have to actually absorb whatever it is you're being curious about.
 - Second, **the willingness to act, the determination to overcome obstacles** along the way.
- Curiosity can give you **courage**. It can add **zest** to your life, and it can take your way beyond zest--it can **enrich** your whole sense of **security, confidence, and well-being**.
- Curiosity starts out as **an impulse, an urge**, but it pops out into the world as something more active, more searching: **a question**.
- Curiosity isn't just a great tool for improving your own life and happiness, your ability to win a great job or a great spouse. It is **the key to the things we say we value most** in the modern world: **independence, self-determination, self-government, self-improvement**. Curiosity is the path to **freedom itself**.
- The ability to ask any question embodies two things: the freedom to **go chase the answer**, and the ability to **challenge authority**, to ask, "How come you're in charge?"
- Curiosity is itself **a form of power**, and also **a form of courage**.
- Over time, I discovered that I'm curious in a particular sort of way. My strongest sense of curiosity is what I call **emotional curiosity**: I want to understand what makes people tick; I want to see if I can **connect a person's attitude and personality with their work**, with their challenges and accomplishments.
- Curiosity does something else for me: it helps me **cut through the routine anxiety** of work and life...I use curiosity to **pop the bubble, to keep complacency at bay**.
- I use curiosity **when I'm worried about something**. If you understand what kind of speech someone wants you to give, if you understand how cops think, you'll either see your **fear dissipate**, or you'll be able to handle it.
- I use curiosity as **a management tool**. I use it to **help me be outgoing**. I use curiosity to **power my self-confidence**. I use it to **avoid getting into a rut**, and I use it to **manage my own worries**. But the most important way I use curiosity is to **tell stories**.
- **I keep asking questions until something interesting happens**. My talent is to know enough to ask the questions, and to know when something interesting happens.
- What I think is so exciting about curiosity is that **it doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what your job is, or what your passion is**. Curiosity works the same way for all of us--if we use it well.
- One of the most important ways I use curiosity every day is to **see the world through other people's eyes**, to see the world in ways I might otherwise miss. It's totally refreshing to be reminded, over and over, **how different the world looks to other people**.
- Questions create **a mind-set of innovation** and creativity.
- Creativity presumes that **there might be something new out there**, something outside our own experience out there.
- We can teach people to **ask** good questions, **listen** to the answers, and then use the answers to **ask the next question**.
- Your curiosity can be used to **help people tell you their story**. You don't need a formal appointment. When someone new joins your company, when you're standing on the sidelines at your son's soccer game alongside the other parents, when you're on an airplane seated next to a stranger, or attending a big industry conference, all these people around you have tales to tell. It's worth **giving yourself the chance to be surprised**.
- Curiosity can **help you become good at your job**.
 - **A good financial planner** needs to know the markets and the way to arrange money for retirement, but he also should be curious.
 - **A good real estate agent** needs to know the market, the houses available, the houses that might become available, but should also be curious about her clients.
 - **A city planner** needs to be curious, and an advertising executive, a housekeeper, a fitness trainer, a car mechanic, a good hairstylist all need to be curious as well.
- Curiosity will **conquer fear** even more than bravery will.
- Curiosity can help **spark a great idea**, and help you **refine it**. Determination can help you **push the idea forward** in the face of skepticism from others.
- **When I have a fear of something**, I try to get curious about it--I try to set the fear aside long enough to **start asking questions**. The questions do two things:

- They distract me from the queasy feeling, and
- I learn something about what I'm worried about.
- I am afraid of public speaking and here are **the questions I ask before every speech**:
 - What's the talk supposed to be about?
 - What's the best possible version of the talk?
 - What do the people coming to this event expect to hear?
 - What do they want to hear, in general?
 - What do they want to hear from me, specifically?
 - And who is the audience?
- Asking questions always seems, superficially, like **an admission of ignorance**. How can admitting your ignorance be the path to confidence? That's one of the many wonderful dualities of curiosity. Curiosity **helps you dispel ignorance and confusion**, curiosity **evaporates fogginess and uncertainty**, it **clears up disagreement**.
- Curiosity can **give you confidence**. And the confidence can **give you determination**. And the confidence and determination can **give you ambition**. That's how you get beyond the "no," whether it's coming from other people, or from inside your own mind.
- If you **harness curiosity to your dreams**, it can **help power them along to reality**.
- **A taxonomy** of thinking about, classifying, and using curiosity:
 - as a tool for discovery, as a kind of secret weapon to understand what other people don't.
 - as a spark for creativity and inspiration.
 - as a way of motivating yourself.
 - as a tool for independence and self-confidence.
 - as the key to storytelling.
 - as a form of courage.
 - **as a way of creating human connections**.
- True love requires curiosity, and sustaining that love requires sustaining your curiosity. **Real intimacy requires curiosity**. I use curiosity **to keep my relationship vital and fresh, to keep connected**.
- Curiosity equips us with the skills for **openhearted, open-minded exploration**.
- Curiosity also gives us the skills to **zero in on the answer to a question**.
- And curiosity gives us the skills to **better relate to people**, and to better manage and work with them in professional settings.
- I ask questions. **The questions spark interesting ideas**.
 - The questions **build collaborative relationships**.
 - The questions **create all kinds of connections--connections among unlikely topics, among unlikely collaborators**.
 - And the interesting ideas, the collaborative relationships, and the web of connections work together to **build trust**.
- Curiosity is different from intelligence or creativity or even from leadership. Not everyone has those qualities, but everyone can be as curious as they want to be, and it doesn't matter when you start. Furthermore, your curiosity can **help you be smarter and more creative**, it can help you be **more effective** and also help you be a **better person**.
- Curiosity is an instinct with many dualities:
 - You can be curious about things to which you **may never know the answer**, learning more and more, yet **never getting a definite answer**.
 - Curiosity can **easily become a habit**--the more you use it, the more naturally it will come to you.
 - Curiosity **seems to be "deconstructive"**--taking things apart question by question--but, in fact, it's **synthetic**, helping you to **fit the pieces of the world together**.
 - Curiosity helps **create collaboration**, but it also helps **give you autonomy**--independence of thought.
 - We live at a moment in time that **should be a "golden age of curiosity"**. Yet curiosity **remains wildly undervalued today**. It often just gets lip service.
 - We can encourage curiosity in others by:
 - **answering every question** our own children ask, and
 - **helping our children find answers** when we don't know them.
 - asking our colleagues questions and **treating questions** from our colleagues **with respect and seriousness**.
 - **welcoming questions** from our customers and clients and seeing those questions as **opportunities, not interruptions**.
 - In the Internet age, does having all of human knowledge available in the palm of our hands **make us more curious, or less curious**? We need to be careful, individually, that the Internet doesn't anesthetize us instead of inspire us.
 - There are **two things you can't find on the Internet**:
 - you can't search for the **answer to questions that haven't been asked yet**.
 - you can't Google a **new idea**. The Internet can only tell us what we already know.
 - You **cannot live by curiosity alone** and have a satisfying life. You also have to have discipline and determination.
 - You have to **apply your own imagination to what you learn**.
 - You have to **treat the people around you with respect and with grace**, and curiosity can help you do that.
 - To me, the most valuable kind of curiosity is the kind where there **isn't a specific question** I'm trying to get the answer to. The most valuable kind is **the truly open-hearted question**.
 - I have come to realize over time that **you archive curiosity**--that is, you archive the results of your curiosity, **you save up the insights and the energy it gives you**.
 - Open-ended curiosity conversations **produce a mutual fund**--a long-term investment in dozens of different people, personalities, specialties, themes.
 - Curiosity is a **state of mind**. More specifically, it's **the state of having an open mind**. Curiosity is a **kind of receptivity**. You just have to, **ask one good question a day and listen to the answer**.
 - Curiosity is a **more exciting way to live in the world**. It is, truly, **the secret to living a bigger life**.