

## Curiosity Revives the Cat

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From the moment we are born we are curious. After that initial scream of fear from leaving the womb your mind begins to wander and from here on in it's about touch, smells, sight, hearing, seeing, connection and knowledge. Many scientists believe that curiosity is an emotion and should not be confused with instinct because it's fundamental to survival. I also believe it's an intrinsic need to 'experience' which is the source of all learning and to why we are all here.

When I was very much younger at family gatherings, I remember listening to parents boasting about their children's curious ability to do things like; take the phone apart and put it back in one piece, spelling lengthy words, building Lego bricks into amazing things, painting and drawing with vivid colours, talking and socialising and last but not least sports. Now look at that list again and liken it to a possible career, how many do you see? I see mechanics, scientists, writers, teachers, engineers, lawyers, actors, sports people and many more. Do you think it is possible that their curiosities lead them there?

As you grow the need to experience is so overwhelming that your initial fears of the 'doing' are overcome so easily, and before you know it you are walking, talking and 'doing'. During that time you give little thought to getting it wrong and have no hold ups about what people think. In fact, getting it wrong is the gift of finally being able to conquer it. This process in the brain has been referred to as the curiosity drive-model whereby when faced with something new at first you feel a sense of unpleasantness and uncertainty, then your curiosity has such power that the need to explore and observe takes over.

Why is it then as the years pass the worry of getting it wrong, not succeeding or what people think freeze your natural abilities? In honesty we all have different reasons for these fears because that's what they are. Perhaps looking like a fool, peer pressure, losing face, losing money or not making someone proud etc... etc... our freezing reasons all vary. For many however it happened, you now have the need to superficially please or impress and those emotions suppress your natural curiosity and immediately you suffer something I refer to as 'inactive ambition' whereby what you really want to do, but never do, will fester and leave regrets. Then other behaviours begin to set in, lack of focus, negative beliefs, procrastination, mediocrity, lack of trust, self-degradation, finger pointing and in fact anything that brings you down and holds you back.



**Boom!** - that's the sound of you hitting your learning barrier and you will do it over and over again until you use your curiosity to overcome those fears.

Being curious yields so many skills that you can master through life and become talented at, using these skills over and over again reap healthy benefits that initiate change. Here are a few words linked to exercising your curiosity; activation, active, improved memory, motivated, positivity, resilience, creativity, innovation, confidence, knowledge, exhilaration, diversity and adventurous. Even the sounds of these wonderful words can revitalise your curiosity and make you feel energised.

So let's get to the crux of this curiosity thing. How do you revive your natural abilities to be curious and reap all those wonderful benefits? Can you see the answer in that last sentence? Oh and this one. Yes? No? There it is again. It's something many call the interrogation point that simple little 'sickle' shape finished off with a point which sits at the end of zillions of sentences, the trusted question mark.

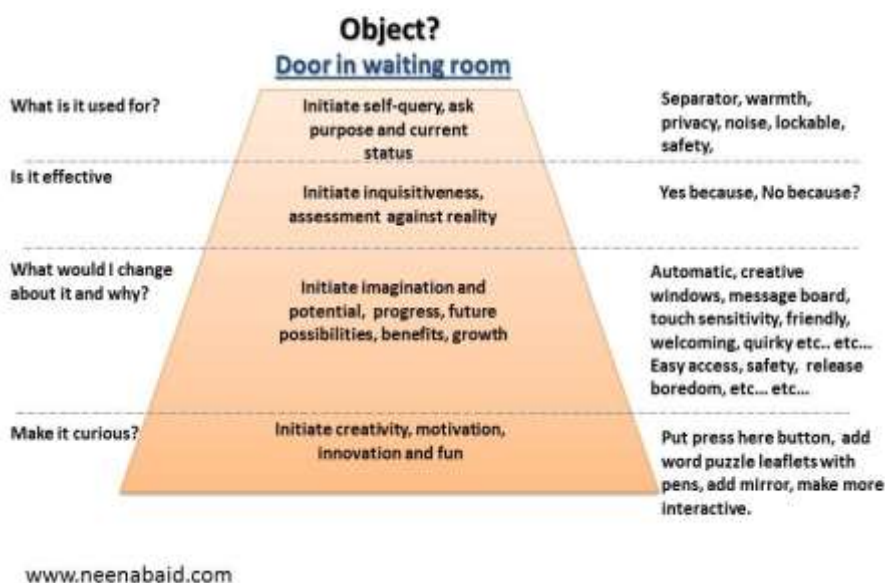


Yes it really is as simple as that! Asking questions stimulate cognitive behaviour, enables reasoning techniques, allows you to rationalise what you are doing and brings you to a conclusion before you act or make a decision. It all started when we were children we learnt to exercise 'self-query' which leads us to achieve or succeed in our tasks. Self-query then allows our decision making abilities to evolve, mature and flourish (as long as we keep activating it). Curiosity and asking questions go hand in hand.

There are lots of fun things you can do to exercise your curiosity without anyone ever knowing and in turn it will begin to manifest itself into your daily lives and routines. We can ask these questions in the privacy of our own minds. In here no one can question, corrupt or disagree with our beliefs or opinions because it's a fact 'no one' can truthfully read your mind.

The most important thing to do is to start activating your curiosity in what I call 'down time'. Down time is time that we use when we are either waiting for something or nothing much else is happening. For example, let's say I am in a waiting room, I pick an object in the room and observe it, then I ask four simple questions 1) What is it used for? 2) Is it effective? 3) What would I change about it and why? 4) How would I make this curious to someone else?

### Experimental Downtime Curiosity Model



As you can see from the model to the left, I have listed the four questions and answered them briefly on the right. The centre of the model indicates how you can exercise your curiosity to expand your questioning skills and methods. At the top of the model they will be basic questions related to the current state of the object, let's face it, it is what it is. As you travel down the model it opens up into a realm of possibilities allowing space for development and advancement. The questioning here becomes more creative and experimental. By the end of the exercise you have transformed the object which can lead you to a world of opportunities.

Try this exercise with almost anything not just objects and you will find that you begin to generate new ways of asking questions, new ideas, new products, new systems, new ways of working, new ways of approaching situations, new opinions and new ways of looking at the whole world. It is then that curiosity turns into a whole new way of life which will lead to what you want to be doing. Try it, turn your curiosities into a talent.

**Coming soon a book by Neena Baid – The Art of Being Truly Wicked (Will, Inspiration, Curiosity, Knowledge, Enthusiasm and Dedication) – and how to use it to create your own reality.**