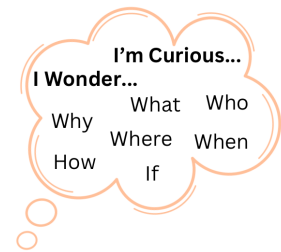


RENEWNEWS

*RENEW Brings good health
to those who give good health*



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I'm Curious... Are You...? Linda Hawes Clever, MD, MACP

I have it on good authority that curiosity did *not* kill the cat. In any event, the original expression by Ben Jonson in 1598 was “*Care* killed the cat”, “care” meaning “worry.” I buy that, accepting that humans and cats share some features and we all can get worn down by worry. “Care” became “Curiosity killed the cat” for reasons unknown precisely three centuries later in a Texas newspaper.

Curiosity itself is worthy of comment and study. It carries a negative valence for some observers such as Saint Augustine, who wrote that God “fashioned hell for the inquisitive.” In an entirely other vein, we have found over the years that *loss* of curiosity (or, by the way, loss of creativity) can be a sign of being overwhelmed, a suggestion that a person may need to renew.

A strong desire to learn or to know is curiosity’s fuel. The goal may be specific or expansive. A wish to spread family, friend or neighborhood news may light a gossip’s fire. A pointed, determined drive to locate all the words of a favorite song or a team’s win-loss record may start a hunt. Or you want to delve into family history about that black sheep uncle. Or have a fascination with the Etruscans. For those with a wider perspective, designing a new program or understanding reasons for others’ viewpoints may kick off a quest. Regardless of the focus of your curiosity, it signifies that you are *open*. Indeed, simply by asking questions, you show your willingness to stretch. Curiosity also shows that you are able to learn and, therefore, have at least a touch of humility. Being curious means that you are *not* overloaded or overwhelmed. You have the energy to add your fund of knowledge and to consider change.

In addition to learning and knowing, what does having curiosity do for you? Being curious leads to discovery. The “Ah HA!” of discovery feels good and has survival value. People do better in school and work when they keep-on-keeping-on to find answers for which they are satisfied and rewarded. This generates a cycle of greater participation and accomplishment.

Curiosity also helps you understand people who have different lives, cultures, beliefs, and practices. Empathy increases and, one hopes, friction lessens. This may lead to solutions. Curiosity can mitigate those two great burdens of our current world, loneliness and isolation. When you show genuine curiosity about others, they feel seen, respected and valued— and they may be curious in return. This can lead to one of our basic needs: connecting.

When you think about it, NOT being curious may kill the cat – or you!

How can you exercise your curiosity? Refresh your values and set about finding others’ values. Let go of your assumptions and biases. Be open. Ask “I wonder...” or “I’m curious...” Then stop talking and listen.

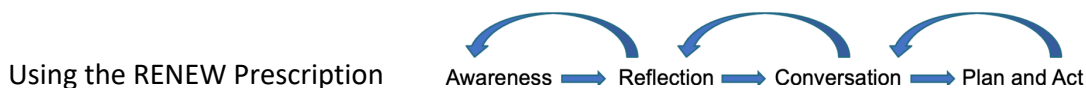
Stanford's Distinguished Career Institute (DCI)

Stanford's **Distinguished Career Institute (DCI)** "inspires accomplished individuals to thrive in their next chapter by providing opportunities to discover, connect, and contribute through engagement within Stanford's diverse academic community". Ten DCI alumni spent 1 ½ hours one afternoon in May munching on snacks and chewing over the elements of a fulfilling life and the challenges of achieving them. For example, how do we decide how to spend our time? (and all we have is time). One good way is to get together and exchange ideas and stories. That is exactly what RENEW's Conversation Groups offer-- and some DCI alumni wanted a demo.

Hence the gathering in May.



Step one after intros was to acknowledge that people can get exhausted, doing good or trying to achieve. And calendars can get full-- of *busy*. (A nurse once said to me, "I want to be better than busy."). Something must change. How can we find anchors to ground our decisions and wings to fly to new places? Knowing our own values—and the values of dear ones and colleagues-- provides one method, for starters.



members of the group generated this list of values—which mirrors many other groups:

DCI Values

Better version of self
Kindness
Wisdom
Gratitude
Joy
Positivity
Health
Contribution
Nurturing
Honesty

Beauty
Appreciation
Power
Intellectual engagement
Connection
Humility
Fairness
Peace
Significance
Love

Courage
Community
Integrity
Family
Growth
Learning
Creativity
Authentic
Responsibility

You might want to compare and contrast. Think on this list yourself. Bring up the topic during coffee or tea or dinner or dessert. Or when you are by yourself, leaning against a tree in summer's dappled shade. The idea is to narrow your list to 5 or 6 values because you can't concentrate on 20 values. That selection process will take some thought.

There's work ahead. Good work. One early RENEW collaborator said, "It's simple but it isn't easy." Now is a good time to start.