



Geared for Success

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Why a Curious Mindset Matters

Being curious is having an interest in new, novel things and constantly seeking the answers to questions. It is an important quality for exploring, enriching and building our knowledge base. Having a curious mindset helps you understand others point of view, problem solve in different ways and create trust with others. With the stresses of life, adults sometimes lose the wonder of curiosity. It is a skill that needs to be practiced to maintain.

Why is curiosity so important in the workplace culture? Research shows that there are strong benefits to demonstrating curiosity.

Asking questions often spurs on unexpected tangents to thinking and problem solving. It helps teams and individuals look for answers in broader, more creative ways.

When curiosity exists, team members tend to take interest in other's ideas not just in their own. They are less likely to only look for answers that support their own beliefs, rather than information that proves them wrong (e.g. confirmation bias). This collaborative way of working together reduces group conflict and ultimately provides a better result for the problem at hand.

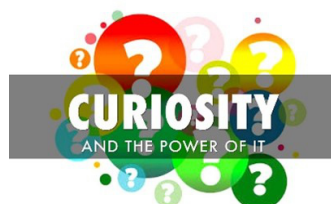
Curiosity takes practice. In the article, "The Importance of Being Curious", by Dalia Molokhia, the author highlights ways to develop your curiosity.

- **Be inquisitive** – Ask others their opinions and perspectives. Curious people often start with "how", "what", "when" and "why"–open questions asked with a truly genuine intent.

- **Be fully present** – Focus on what is being said to you. Stay fully engaged to grasp the true meaning of what is being said.

- **Listen without judgment** – Approach with an open heart and no hidden agenda.

- **Apply a beginner's mind** – Look beyond what is currently done. Retrace things back to see what has



been missed and what else could be done instead.

- **Move out of your comfort zone on a regular basis** – Try new activities and visit new places. These experiences open your mind to novel ways of thinking and doing.

- **Build a wide network with different types of people** – Seek perspectives from different ages, job levels, job types, etc. to broaden your ability to be curious.

- **Get comfortable with the fact that you may be wrong** – Don't be afraid to challenge your own assumptions. Be willing to change your mind. Ask yourself – "What else might work?"

Curiosity can create strong personal

connections with others. Asking genuine questions and being sincerely interested in the answers helps to nurture relationships. It builds trust and respect.

Open communication is the result of those who apply a curious approach to a conversation. Show that you are eager to learn by listening, sharing information, and are invested in a collaborative outcome. Your curiosity will assist in building a team that works better together and ultimately achieves optimal results.

"I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."

Albert Einstein



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Training Werks Turns 22!



A special thank you to the clients, class participants, coachees, newsletter readers, colleagues, friends and my husband who have supported me with kind words and encouragement over the last 22 years of business. I have had the opportunity to work in 33 states with a diverse group of clients. My deepest gratitude is to you who have made my dream of having my own business a reality. I look forward to continuing to work with you!

Heard, But Not Listened To

You're busy, right? Information is coming at you from every direction and time is a serious commodity. You need to concentrate without interruptions. So, how much time do you really spend listening? Not just hearing – actually listening?

Listening enables leaders and managers to value their employees. It helps people get the most out of conversations. True listening promotes cooperation. It assumes the other person has worth, dignity and something to offer. When people reflect on their best boss a frequent response is that the person was a great listener.

So, what are the implications of not listening to your team members? Turns out—there are many. When people are not listened to they may stop being candid, disconnect, feel discounted and lose self-esteem. They may turn to others who actually will listen to them—taking you out of the information pipeline. Other impacts may be feeling contempt and disdain (e.g. “Why should I listen to them, if they don’t listen to me?”) and lack of respect.

Listening is a challenging capability. It is easy to say “I need to be a better listener”, but much harder to take the steps to do so. If you have a deficit in this area, it will take a toll on your leadership. Try the following suggestions to build your listening muscle:

- **Learn to want to listen** – You must have the desire and interest in becoming a better listener. It takes serious self-

discipline and commitment. You have to closely monitor your behaviors.

- **Be present** – Distractions abound! Watch for your tendency to daydream. Focus on what is being said and not said by the speaker.
- **Take notes** – Notes aid in retention and tell the speaker that you care about what they are saying.



- **Learn to keep the conversation going** – Use phrases such as “I see” “I understand”. These phrases demonstrate your focused attention.

- **Ask questions instead of making statements** – For example: Don’t say “Lisa, don’t forget the department report is due on Monday.” Instead say, “How is the department report coming along?” By starting this dialogue, you will receive much more information.

As you work to achieve self-awareness of your listening abilities, you will soon discover that it brings great interpersonal power. Benefits include: building cohesive teams of people, developing individuals to be better contributors, making solid decisions, knowing how to connect with others and creating an atmosphere of reduced stress. Listening helps us make the most of communication by honoring those who entrust us with their messages.

Resource: “What Happens If We Aren’t Listened To?”,
by Jill Chivers

“The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention.”

Richard Moss

What to Ask Your High Performers

As leaders, we want to create the optimum environment where high performing employees feel motivated, encouraged and committed to staying. The following questions will help you evaluate the satisfaction level of your current environment and see how it is aligned with what your employee needs/wants.

- What have you done in the last six months that you are most proud of?
- What is challenging about your work? Which challenges do you like best?
- From what sources do you get a sense of job satisfaction?

- What motivates you to work hard?
- What other aspects of our department would you like more exposure?

During this conversation, emphasize your own commitment to the work this employee does. Remind the employee that his/her success really matters to the big picture and vision of the organization. Thank this person for their contribution. Remember a high performing environment is one where the focus is clear, the work is challenging, people feel appreciated, barriers to accomplishing work are at a minimum, resources are available, and people help and support one another.

Resource: Successful Manager’s Handbook,
by Personnel Decisions, Inc.

W.A.I.T. – Why Am I Talking?

Several years ago, one of my coachees had a talking problem. In fact, she revealed to me that her boss actually told her to think of the word W.A.I.T. (Why Am I Talking?) while in meetings where she tended to be long winded and say way too much. Interestingly enough, some people believe that wordiness is a sign of knowledge or power. When in fact it can obscure the meaning of key points and distract the listener.

Why do some people have the tendency to be verbose especially when it can hurt them both personally and professionally? According to the Negative Trait Thesaurus, there are a number of possible causes. Here are the most frequent reasons: desiring to prove oneself as academic, insecurity, arrogance, desiring to impress others, nervousness, not understanding give and take in a conversation, being a natural story teller and being passionate about a particular topic. Your speaking style impacts your ability to be heard.

If you have received feedback about being too verbose or you notice this trait within yourself, here are some suggestions for being more aware.

- Ask a trusted coworker or your manager to give you feedback. Did you wander off the topic? Keep repeating



the same points? Create a pre-determined signal that can be given to you to stop talking.

- Look and learn about body language. Are people zoning out? What does your audience look like?
- Are you engaging others with questions? Or, is the conversation in one direction – yours? Ask: “Have I answered your question?” “Do you need more?”
- Get a mindset of W.A.I.T. Remind yourself regularly.
- Create a parking lot for off topic questions so you do not get sidetracked.
- Create an outline of key points and stick to it. Do not allow yourself to get off on tangents.

How we present ourselves is critical to how others will accept our messages. Evaluate your techniques for meetings, one-on-one conversations and other workplace formats where information is exchanged. Your consciousness of how much and what you are saying can make a difference in how much people will actually hear.

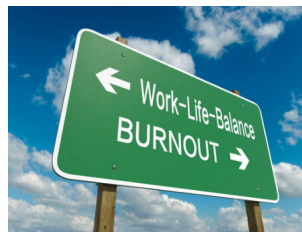
Resource: [Successful Manager's Handbook](#), by Personnel Decisions, Inc.

“Good judgment comes from experience. And where does experience come from? Experience comes from bad judgment.”

Mark Twain

Navigating Work/Life Balance

Working at home has been a great opportunity for many to be with their families without a long commute. However, as a result of homebased work, studies increasingly show a blurring of boundaries. This blurring can bring unhealthy levels of stress, unhappiness and reduced productivity. Some people report feeling unidimensional and out of balance. So how can you find a reasonable balance to manage your time? In the article, “Tips for Getting Closer to Work-Life Balance”, by Dawn Dugan, the author outlines ways to restore balance so you can enjoy both work and home.



- **Set boundaries and Adhere to Them** – Create some rituals to signal when your workday is done. Set an alarm if necessary, play music, end your day with a next day’s “to do” list. Whatever it takes–signal to yourself–this workday is done.
- **Learn to say “no”** – Know when you need to let go. Understand what is important to you to accomplish. Know that not every task you do is essential for that day. Are you letting your perfectionist tendencies influence

your work load?

- **Understand your Priorities** – If workload issues have you unbalanced, talk with your boss to determine what is most important, second most, etc. Model your workday based on what your boss’s expectations are.
- **Evaluate your Personal Habits and General Lifestyle** – Are you getting enough sleep? Eating nutritional foods? Exercising? When you give up these basics you counteract other efforts for boundaries.
- **Schedule One Thing to Look Forward to Every Day** – Even if it is only for 15 minutes. This can serve as an excellent “reset”.
- **Write in a Gratitude Journal Regularly** – What are you most thankful for? What brings you joy? Doing this simple task can help to keep you centered.
- **Take Tips from Others** – Observe others who seem to be better at balancing their lives. Ask how they are making it happen–listen, learn and apply.

Remember balance is not about 50/50 in how your time is spent. It is about how we choose to spend our time. Once your balance is defined you have to work at it – and evaluate it regularly. We are creatures of habit and can easily end up where we started. Getting the balance right will help you be your best self–now and in the future.

In Person Training is BACK!

Are you and your team members ready to Gear Up again? Is it time to upskill? Build your team's professional competencies and capabilities? Think outside the virtual meeting box?

Training Werks is now offering in person, interactive training classes. Here is a sampling of what is available:

- [Emotional Intelligence Training](#)
- [Myers-Briggs Personality Training](#)
- [Communication & Influencing Training](#)
- [Change Training](#)
- [Stress & Resilience Training](#)
- [Team Simulation Training](#)

Contact Jan Hovrud (jhovrud@training-werks.com or 435-647-0516) for more information about how training can make a difference with your team.

It's time to CONNECT, COLLABORATE and WORK TOGETHER in person!



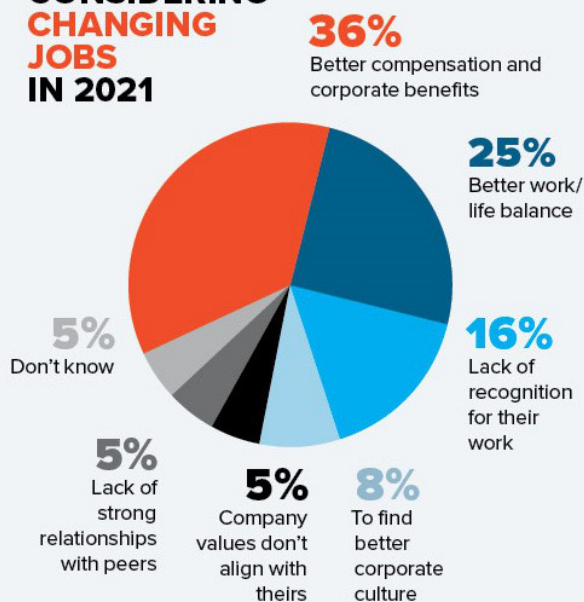
Keeping Your Best People

Are you feeling the pinch in your organization for hiring professionals and keeping them? Retention is more important than ever as the economy continues to improve. Researchers Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham have identified factors that make a difference in job satisfaction and retaining your best people.

- **Providing Skill Variety** - A desired mix of skills and activities is needed to carry out the work.
- **Enabling Task Completion** - The job is undertaken as a whole, allowing the employee to complete an identifiable piece of work from beginning to end with a visible outcome.
- **Demonstrating Task Significance** - The position has a recognizable impact on the overall mission or on other people inside or outside the organization.
- **Allowing for Autonomy** - The job should offer substantial freedom, independence, and discretion in how the work is carried out.
- **Knowing that Employee Concerns will be Addressed** - Listening and taking action as necessary.
- **Having Strong Onboarding, Mentoring and Advancement Opportunities** - Keeping professionals engaged from the moment they walk in the door and showing them a path to using their talents and abilities.
- **Offering Accommodations** - Realizing that one-size does not always fit all. Ensure that flexibility is part of the culture.

Resource: [The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave](#), by Leigh Branham

WHY EMPLOYEES ARE CONSIDERING CHANGING JOBS IN 2021



Source: *Engagement and Retention Report*, Achievers Workforce Institute, February 2021.

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