

Curiosita'

Have you ever wondered what triggers you to ask the questions you ask, read the books you read, think the thoughts you think? Do you ever wonder how you ended up living where you live, working where you work, being married (or not) to whomever you are married to? Do you look up in the sky and wonder where did that cloud come from? Why is the sky blue? How do airplanes really stay up in the air? What about bugs? What are they all about? And have you ever questioned thunder and lightening? What is that noise, really? What is the purpose of life?

If you have wondered or questioned these things and many others than you are like Leonardo da Vinci, one of our world's greatest thinkers. Michael Gelb, author of "How to think like Leonardo da Vinci", identifies 7 Da Vincian Principles. His number one principle is 'Curiosita'. He says daVinci had an insatiably curious approach to life and an unrelenting quest for continuous learning. So, asking all these questions and many more is a good thing.

We do come in to the world very curious. It is natural. Somewhere along the way, though, we do stop asking questions and lose our sense of wonder. Who knows why, but we can get it back. We can act like Da Vinci and be inquisitive continuing to ask and search. It is often first through a question that many good things happen. Right here in Big Rapids ground is being moved to develop a Riverwalk because someone was sitting in another town on a Riverwalk and said, "Well why can't we have one of these in our town?"

At Hewlett Packard Laboratories a director wondered why they were not identified as the best research lab in the world. The he went about asking questions about what it meant to be the world's best research lab. They brought people together for several months to really look at this and then another, bigger question evolved. The next question was, "What would it mean for HP Labs to be the best for the world?" This one question shifted everything. (for more information read, "The Dance of Change" by Peter Senge)

Gelb's offers some tips on how to develop your curiosita'. Keep a journal to record your observations and your insights. Your first exercise in your journal would be to write 100 questions that are important to you. They could be personal, "What makes me really happy?" to professional, "What one change in our work environment could really make a difference in our work?" to general, "Why do dogs bark?". He says to write all your questions in one setting and then take a break. When you go back to your questions look for patterns and themes, find your top 10 questions. Then take your top 10 questions and play with them further. Another tip from Gelb is to take time for reflection. Take one of your questions, post it in front of you and just sit with your question, allow it to incubate. Powerful insights can occur.

"It is a sign of strength, not of weakness, to admit that you don't know all the answers." This quote is from John P. Loughrane. Not sure who John is, but I do know that this strength is the beginning to what we need to do. We need to ask the questions. Who? What? Where? When? How? What if? Why? Why? Why? And keep asking the questions. They can and have changed our world.