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# 5 Tips To Stay Curious From People Who Do It For A Living

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The Huffington Post



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Employers tend to emphasize a lot of the same traits when considering potential employees. Experience is a big one, as are honesty, persistence, creativity and intelligence. But another, sometimes overlooked quality is curiosity -- and research has shown it is absolutely critical to on-the-job success.

A person's so-called "curiosity quotient" or "CQ" is all about whether he or she has a hungry mind, explains [Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic on the Harvard Business Review's blog](#). "People with higher CQ are more inquisitive and open to new experiences. They find novelty exciting and are quickly bored with routine. They tend to generate many original ideas and are counter-conformist."

According to [Psychology Today](#), a 2011 study found that curiosity and conscientiousness trumped intelligence when it came to predicting a person's success.

There are certain careers in which curiosity is a muscle that must be regularly flexed. Here, five masters in their fields share their thoughts on the qualities that help curious people remain curious, year after year.

### **They look outside their industry.**



[Dogfish Head](#) is regularly held up as one of the world's most innovative, boundary-breaking breweries (a 2008 [New Yorker profile](#) called it the "mascot" for the "unruly" craft brewery movement), and curiosity is at its core, says Sam Calagione, founder and president.

"Our company's whole raison d'etre is this mission to explore and work outside of stylistic guidelines in an industry dominated by militantly defined categories -- German lagers, English pale ales," he told The Huffington Post. "We always try and approach every new recipe by saying, 'Let's do something that hasn't been done before.'"

One way Calagione has been able to maintain a sense of curiosity throughout a brewing career that has spanned two decades is looking beyond the world of beer. "I take inspiration from other industries and art forms that I care about that have *nothing* to do with beer," he said. "Getting outside of your industry and outside of thinking about what your competitors are doing is the best

opportunity to innovate." Calagione is an avid reader, for example, but he eschews beer publications in favor of art, architecture, music and news magazines; he looks to the worlds of music, painting and sculpture for inspiration, or even artisanal cheese making and coffee roasting, he said.

### **They dive deep into their passions.**



People who study information and library sciences go on to work in libraries, historical archives and museums -- fields and institutions that are founded upon and devoted to satiating intellectual curiosity. Craig MacDonald, an assistant professor at Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science believes an innate sense of inquisitiveness is what drives many students into the field in the first place, but there *are* strategies that help foster it.

"The common denominator seems to be finding things you're passionate about and doing a 'deep dive' into them until you think you've learned all you can possibly learn," he said. "That process can take a variety of forms -- reading, searching, traveling, talking to people, etc. -- but it always comes down to trying to satisfy a personal desire to learn something."

Much of what the program (and broader fields of library and information sciences) do is give students permission to indulge their passions for seemingly obscure topics, and encourages them to learn as much as they possibly can. That, in turn, whets their curiosity to explore even more.

### **They sharpen their critical thinking skills, every day.**



Sanjay Goel -- director of research at the NYS Center for Information Forensics and Assurance and an expert in digital forensics who regularly focuses on issues like privacy, security and cybercrime -- likens the field to detective work, "digging deeper and deeper into data to be able to figure things out," he said.

"I think a lot of curiosity can be inculcated with problem solving," he explained. The programs Goel oversees often include critical thinking bootcamps, in which students are loaded up with problems and puzzles to solve, as well as cases to discuss and analyze in order to learn how to think about issues independently, systematically and analytically.

But anyone seeking to cultivate curiosity can do so by focusing on critical thinking skills, which can be honed through puzzles and games, Goel said.

"There are so many puzzles on the Internet; try crosswords," he said. "These are things which stretch the mind in different ways [and] that make you think critically."

**They change their angle ... literally.**



The question of how a three-dimensional subject will look when rendered in two-dimensional form is the question that drives many photographers to do what they do, and also what moves them to look at the world around them from different perspectives, explained Steve Bliss, dean for the School of Fine Arts at the Savannah College of Art and Design and a photographer himself.

"I'm curious to see how something looks photographed, but I'm also trying to be as original and creative as possible in terms of how I'm looking at things," he said of his own process. Changing one's angle and wondering how different the same thing will look when viewed in different light and through different lenses is rooted in a sense curiosity, and also helps to foster it.

But Bliss' strategy can be taken less literally as well. Feeling stuck or uninspired at work? Force yourself to look at the issue from totally different angles and see what happens. Bliss tends to be a project-oriented photographer who throws himself into a body of work for a period of time (say, landscapes), then moves onto something else, he said. Changing his genre, like changing the angle of his camera, helps him stay fresh, curious and inspired.

**They are comfortable being uncomfortable.**



"Curiosity, I would argue, is the principle drive for many of us in this field ... [it] is critical for what we do day-to-day as explorers," said Jekan Thanga, an assistant professor in space systems with ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration. It is essential in science and engineering, he added, and the force behind innovation, new research and development.

A key to maintaining a sense of curiosity is constantly learning new things, though the pursuit of knowledge does not guarantee one will find an answer, Thanga warned, let alone *the* answer. "A challenge for many is having to deal with a lot of unanswered questions," he said. "Many, I would say, get frustrated and don't bother to persist onwards. [But] I would argue that persistence is critical, against overwhelming odds."

Curious people, in other words, don't need all of the answers now. Instead, they learn how to live with, and even relish, the uncertainty that accompanies intellectual exploration.

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