

Live and Lead with Curiosity

Description

“It takes courage to listen deeply- to risk being changed by what we hear.” • Parker Palmer

At the end of this month, I’ll be speaking at a conference on the topic of two incredibly important leadership competencies that I’ve observed time and again in high-performing teams. And I believe they are both absolutely essential for building strong, connected teams: **perspective-taking** and **cultural curiosity**.

In my years coaching executives and senior leaders, I’ve noticed something. The teams that truly thrive, (not just hit their goals but, they trust each other, they are innovative, they collaborate well, and navigate hard things together), they are led by people who are willing to do one key thing: stay curious. And curiosity seems to be foundational for every member on those teams.

It might sound simple, but it’s not always easy. We care deeply about our values and belief systems, our expertise, or the mission that we’re driving forward, and it’s natural to get laser-focused. But sometimes, that same passion can make it tough to hear different perspectives or stay open to ideas that challenge our own. If you’ve worked with me you’ve likely heard me say *even our strengths can become blind spots* (passion, when held too tightly, for example.) We can become so certain of our viewpoint that we stop truly listening, and in turn, we lose the opportunity to expand our thinking.

That’s where perspective-taking comes in. It’s about hitting pause on your own point of view and being open to explore: *what might this look like from someone else’s seat at the table? What’s shaping their reaction, opinion, or decision?*

Perspective-taking is the ability to consider how another person might see a situation- what they might feel, need, or fear. It requires humility and empathy.

And cultural curiosity goes one level deeper: being genuinely interested in what shaped a person’s experiences, beliefs, or communication style; their background, upbringing, generational markers, or working style. It’s about being open to learn and grow.

So whether you’re a leader, or an aspiring one, here are a few questions I’d invite you to reflect upon:

- *Where might your passion be crowding out someone else’s perspective?*
- *What assumptions are you making about how others should show up or communicate?*
- *When was the last time you got genuinely curious about a teammate’s background or shared experience just to learn & understand?*

These may sound like small things, but they matter more than you think. Because the strongest teams aren’t built on similarities, they’re built on differences. And the willingness to lean into it with

respectful curiosity, not judgment, is what makes those teams soar!

That's why I love coaching leaders to develop these muscles. Because when curiosity becomes a habit, everything shifts—team dynamics, trust, creativity, and resilience, productivity, (etc.).

Let's be the kind of leaders and teammate who choose curiosity over certainty. Again and again.

Category

1. Career
2. Leadership
3. Life
4. Mindset

Tags

1. cultural curiosity
2. curiosity over judgement
3. growth mindset
4. mindset
5. open minded
6. perspective-taking

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