

131-four-stages-curiosity-productivitycast

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SPEAKERS

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Voiceover Artist 00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place. ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things productivity, here are your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith, and a Gousto pronoun with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. I'm Francis Wade. And I'm Art Gelwicks. Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode of ProductivityCast. This week, we're going to be talking about what we're calling the four stages of curiosity. And it actually came out from an article that Francis Wade had come across. And so Francis, do you want to kind of open us up in terms of this topic today. And then we'll get into a little bit of our agenda.



Francis Wade 00:46

Sure, it has to do with knowledge acquisition or learning, the idea is pretty straightforward that you move from initially taking directions from someone who is an expert, someone who knows a lot more than you do. And you graduate from the bottom level to the point where you need to essentially create your own knowledge in order to make progress. Because there's lots of areas that we want to know something a lot about. If you get stuck at any one level, it'll the idea of the article is that if you get stuck at any one level, then it will actually for your development. So the idea is to notice when it's time to move to the next level, and then use the techniques that are appropriate for that low in order to keep making progress in the chosen area of interest. The concept that was provided was done in the in the form of a diagram, and we're gonna go over that, but it's a pyramid. And so that pyramid diagram starts with with four levels, in essence, hence, the four stages of curiosity. And as we make our way through today, you will hear us talking about those four levels. And we will explain those very shortly. And so today, what we're going to do is we're going to talk about the four stages. And just to give some

preface here, the four stages are in Francis's terms here, process starting at the base of the level content, that is the next here, upper stage two, stage three is known transfer, and then stage four unknown future, let's get into the defining of the four stages. And then we'll talk about each of the stages in order. For instance, do you want to give us a little bit of background in terms of the items here that you've noted regarding procedural knowledge, self knowledge, and curiosity, let's, let's talk about these components that you talk about curiosity. And then we can define the four stages proper, when you don't know anything about the topic. And it involves actually doing something, not just knowledge acquisition, the best way to learn it in the very beginning is to borrow the schema from somebody who knows something. So you want to be them to be very prescriptive. And to tell you the details of what you need to learn what they've learned, pretty much tell you what they have done. If you have no background in the item, you've never done it before the actual you haven't done it before, it's brand new to you, the best place to go learn is from someone who's willing to translate what expertise looks like. So they lay it out to you. So that's the first level. The second level, which I call the content level, is that you gain some interest. And by the way, this is borrowed from an article on, I just want to make sure I give the kudos where they're due on teach thought that calm the four stages of curiosity. The concept isn't is new, not new to me. But it's one the four levels that they laid out are what we're basing this conversation on. So firstly, that in the show notes are great, great. The first level again, is that you just follow what someone else tells you to do. The second level is that you start to gain some interest in the topic. So you've already been able to do what they told you to do. And now you're asking questions like, Oh, why this step? Why not that step. And you start to read around what it is that they're telling you to do. And you miss go deeper into their thought system. That's typically the next step is okay. When I read the Cliff Notes version, let me actually read the book. Let me read the listen to the videos, let me hear the podcast. Let me pick up some other people who are talking about how great this idea is, other people who are expanding on it. So you're learning pretty much the same schema, but you're learning more information about the schema. And then at the third level, you know, say, I know what I know and I know what I do, how do I apply what I'm learning to what I've done in the past or what I'm doing right now. So you're know looking to make things fit and this is where most people have a bit of difficulty because there's no schema that in any field. You know, if you're learning bowling and someone teaches you the basics, is going to come up point where the basics don't really apply anymore. But what you try to do is to keep applying what you've learned to what you're doing. And as you gain more expertise, you keep trying to do that. And as you apply, you start to fail, you apply, you start to fail, you start to get to the point where you start to question what you've learned. Because it was simple. It served you at this first step. But no, at this step, you've gained some expertise, you got some hours, you've been to the bowling, I was gonna say, bowling rink, no, you've been to the bowling alley a few 100 times. And you started to see nuances and you now need to move to the next level. So the fourth level is one in which you are you understand that you need to develop your own way of doing things and your own way of thinking about what you do. You need to think about analyzing what you're doing so that you can make improvements in the future. Because as you look to the future, you see what do I when I start to enter the World Series of bowling or the World Championships, obviously, what I learned that level one won't work for me, I need a coach to point out the areas where I need improvement or if I can't afford a coach, then I'll need to examine what I'm doing so that I can analyze it for further improvements. And also to anticipate that when I get to the Olympics of bowling in the Olympics, when I get to the Olympics of bowling at that very, very high, the highest of the highest levels, then I'm going to need to keep improving. So I No need to build a bit meta and say how do I keep improving my bowling so that when I eventually get to the Olympic level, it's not just a matter of being stuck in the way I do things. But I'm able to flex and unable to adjust and be able to still continue to make progress. And we



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:53

can see that in thinking about any of our ability to be productive. We're always in some stage of learning something in our world. And I think it's really interesting to have these conversations around what learning is because for most of us, we actually never learned to learn. And we just were taught things. In that passive approach, we end up not building the skills to learn how to learn. And so I really find discussions around learning how to learn just fascinating generally, because the more we learn how to learn and learn how learning happens, we're better capable of manifesting new learnings faster and more efficiently and really more effectively. So that we're capable of drawing on these to be able to move and develop faster. So let's drive in to each of these stages. Let's start with stage one, where we are basically at the beginning stages of I don't know what I don't know, I suppose. How can people build scaffolding for purposes of learning at that stage of the game?

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Art Gelwicks 08:01

The first two levels of this seem to be the most basically intuitive. I mean, that seems to be where we just operate as people, that you have your innate curiosity about something a new topic comes past you. And you're like, where do I start? Where do I start digging into when you think about frameworks? This is something that I think you have to do across the board is to establish where are your credible sources going to come from whatever topic you're looking at, you should be, you should put in an effort to establish credible sources First, figure out who knows the answers to these questions you're about to ask. I think that's one of the biggest mistakes that people make is they start taking whatever they can find. And unfortunately, as we all know, with the internet being one of the primary sources of information, more than 60 to 70%, of what's on the internet is complete garbage. So we have to have a little bit of time to establish the rails around what we're going to start researching and determine you know, if somebody tells me this, or if this place tells me this, should I trust that information that, to me is the first stage. The second one, this becomes this one, too, is actually a back and forth process in my mind. And to be honest, this entire thing, to me isn't a pyramid. It's more of a cycle. But if we think about one and two, back and forth, you learn something, and then you realize, Wait, I want to learn more about that thing. Or maybe I don't want to learn more about that thing. I want to learn something else about a derivative or an offshoot of that particular thing. And being able to capture into your system. We always talk about these knowledge systems, being able to capture that information into your knowledge system and allow it to grow and branch and take you in the direction is that you want to learn becomes a critical part of this for two reasons. One, because it maintains your interest, but to, if you're utilizing a system, you can see if your learnings are starting to become lopsided. And I've and I've seen myself do this a lot, where you start down a path, you go down a rabbit hole, and you go further and further down that rabbit hole, and you lose perspective as to the entire nature of this thing that you were starting to research. So if you think about something like, I want to research a car, you know, maybe I'm going to I want to learn more about this particular type, let's say electric cars, you can wind up going down this rabbit hole on a particular area that maybe it really interests you. But what it does is it creates a skewed set of knowledge for you around the holistic topic of electric vehicles. So utilizing a system and a structure where you can not only gather the information, but encapsulate it, capture it, process it and visualize it. And this is one of the things I think you guys will agree that mind mapping can be really helpful

with this type of structure approach. This is that back and forth stage one and two, being able to go through and say, okay, am I getting a truly accurate perspective of this entire topic, based on my sources. So the



Raymond Sidney-Smith 11:21

thing that comes to mind immediately for me is, and again, just for folks who are listening, and we're looking at a diagram, so I want to make sure that you're aware, you know, the pyramid is at the foundation level, tell me what to do, basically, the very early stages, and then that very early stage, I tend to think about the questions that I have about that thing, I relate this to how I read. So as I'm reading any material, I am in dialogue with the author of that material, the writer, I make myself believe is there for purposes of asking questions. And so whenever I approach some kind of learning opportunity, I'm immediately thinking about what don't I know about this circumstance? What are the things that I would want to know? What are ideas that are generated? And what are the questions that naturally come about at that stage? And I think it's really helpful that as you approach any new learning environment, that you start asking those questions, it's good to be inquisitive. And it's not necessarily about challenging the status quo. But there is a little bit of that as well. What you can you can challenge. Why is this purposeful? Why are we doing it this way, and those can actually be useful and fruitful. And if you have a good instructor, they will be able to explain to you why they are teaching you in a particular way. For example, I use very strict principles in my own teaching, for purposes of helping people learn better, that sometimes frustrates people, because learning in that particular way that I teach, does require you to be challenged, and to be tossed around to different topics at the beginning. And people say, Well, I'm really confused in the beginning. But then they realize that once we get to the end, they are they're much better off because they understand all the disparate parts. And it's very difficult for people to understand, I'm going to confuse you upfront, so that you can learn by the end. And so challenging me and asking me that actually is helpful, because then I can say, Oh, by the way, we're going to go through material pretty quickly. And I'm going to jump around a bit, and it's all going to feel jumbled. And then all of a sudden, Insight is going to happen from that maybe halfway to two thirds of our way through all of this. Don't worry, just buckle up and get ready. The goal here is to really be inquisitive, and think through what are the various questions you have. And then start to see whether your answers get filled in to those questions, which will then help you understand whether or not you're learning as you make your way through, I find it helpful to like, outline my questions. And then as I go through whatever it is, like could be a LinkedIn learning video course, it could be a real time course that I'm taking it to be a webinar. I'm always in that mindset of what are my questions and taking down the answers.

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Art Gelwicks 14:11

One of the thing that I found that I, I've gotten more in the habit of doing the older I've gotten is figuring out when I don't have enough information to understand an answer I was given. So for example, if I'm looking through content, and I'm researching a topic, and I get an answer, and it's clearly the answer to the question I was having. Often I'll look at that and go Well Wait, do I understand all the parts of that answer clearly, and that becomes that branching that that depth into the topic itself? To give you a really bad analogy, if I was trying to attach two pieces of wood to grab together, do I understand what a nail and a hammer because if I don't understand what those two things are the process that that has been taught to me of how to

attach those two pieces of wood together. It doesn't make any sense, I don't have the basic context necessary. And that becomes this established, establishment piece of this learning process. And curiosity often doesn't give us that chance to establish that base structure. We want to know something. So we dive right in, and we don't learn how to tread water and put on our swim, ease and ease into the shallow end, often, we just go headfirst into the deep end and wind up getting overwhelmed.

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Francis Wade 15:31

I think the place we're coming from so far in our conversation is one of self generated curiosity, which is being intrinsically motivated. The exception was Ray mentioning that, as a trainer, you've got to find ways to maintain people's curiosity from the beginning to the end, it has to make me think of what happens in schools. When kids are start off being hyper curious. And as I'm reading, as I'm reading the pyramid, I'm thinking, you know, when they're in first grade, second grade, third grade, their, their curiosity is off the chain, and they'll soak up anything that they're given. And then somewhere on, I don't know, fifth or sixth grade, it starts to win. And by the time you get to the end, it's gone. And they're going through the motions, and doing things for grades for the most part. And I wondered why that happened. And I wondered if it's because curiosity is not nurtured during in the in schools. If you know, we I think all of us are probably smarty pants type smart answers. We all had that moment when we were really curious, the teacher taught us the basics. We went and did our own research. And we came back with a whole bunch of questions. We raised our hand in school and said, Mrs. Mrs. Smith, how about the and we quoted something that was like, she didn't she didn't understand it, she didn't know. And in that moment, often what happens is that Mrs. Smith, shuts us down. I see this, that what is getting out of control. She's like, forget about that. Don't worry about that. You'll learn that later. And she goes back to trying to assert control. And I'm wondering if what's happened, what happens is that people naturally want to get to the second level. But the school system as designed is kind of a power play to keep you at first.

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Art Gelwicks 17:40

I'm not going to agree with that in the least. And here's why I say this. Because just what I said a few minutes ago, when let's say, kid has a fascination with mathematics. Great, fantastic. And one of the Fascinations they have is with geometry, well, that's fine. And there, they could be incredibly passionate and curious about it. But if they don't have the basic mathematical capabilities to understand how geometry works, that curiosity almost becomes a frustration. And curiosity is really tied to desire to know. And when you look at an AMA academic structure, the later you get in school, the older you get, there is more content there than honest that honestly, you have less of a desire to know. But it is content that is necessary. And I think that's one of the challenges if we try to arbitrarily say that education is tied to curiosity, that's a problem. If we also say that education does not foster curiosity, that's also a problem. It has to provide the opportunities to be curious, but you can't encourage you can't make someone curious about a topic, all you can do is provide the opportunity for that spark to land in that fire to ignite. Now, I agree in many educational structures, there are problems with driving to a you know, you got to get this test measure, you got to get this grade, you got to get this thing button, just as many of those instances, there are opportunities for curiosity to expand and drive. The problem that I see often is that the areas of curiosity, often aren't aligned with the popular common goals of what education should achieve. When we talk about the old liberal

arts degrees and the well rounded person will often that set up somebody to say, hey, you know, I'm really fascinated by this whole Greek stoic mindset. You know, let me dig into that. You're not going to get a degree in that unless that happens to be your field of study. If you're a biology major, but you're really interested in stoicism that's on you. You've got to go dig it. You've got to go find it out. So I don't want us to come across damning the education system that it's not fostering curiosity. It's really caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to this, you can encourage as much curiosity as you want. But you still actually have to accomplish certain things.

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Francis Wade 20:13

I think, I think in a way, aren't you're you're agreeing with Francis.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 20:17

And I agree with Francis in that sense, because, you know, I was I was one of those children, I wasn't particularly a problem in any classroom. But I was the one who would ask many questions of teachers, and then ultimately get shut down. Because I was going beyond where the teachers lesson plan went, you know, they wrote the rest of the lesson plan for today. And, and I was, I was already beyond that. And so it became frustrating for the educator who was in a prescriptive environment. And so I think, I think it's not necessarily the education systems problem. It's just an education environment. And I come across that now, as someone who, you know, I'm teaching adults, not children, I'm in an environment where I have an agenda. And if they go off agenda, I have to, I have to make a choice whether to spend time educating them about something that is not on the agenda, or going down that rabbit hole.

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Art Gelwicks 21:15

So I'm going to challenge you though, and this is a hot button for me. If it were you and one instructor, do you think they would have been hesitant? If you were one on one with an instructor and you ask those questions beyond the lesson plan would do you honestly believe they would not have allowed you to run with that thought process, and chase ahead. But if you have 25 students in a classroom, and you know that one or two of those smarty pants in there are going to press your lesson plan, but there's eight kids in there, they're going to be totally left behind if you if you can't bring everybody together, they are stuck, they would love to I mean, I come from a family of teachers, and I got teachers out the ying yang, when it comes to friends, and they all have the same thing. They would love to turn these kids loose, they absolutely love. But it's like a marching band, you have to have them all marching together to get to the same endpoint. And it's so frustrating for them. For the kids, the teachers, everybody,

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Augusto Pinaud 22:16

I think the challenge comes into that is what is the setting an incredible teacher, okay, we'll be able to get this kid and then give them the tool so he can run farther and after, okay, and the same way he will be able to he or she will be able to give the tools to the ones getting behind

the problem is when you have now a set of kids into that that you need to try to move together, you come in back to theory of constraints. Again, you need to figure it out who is your hurry, who is your bottleneck, and then set the pace at that speed. That is painful for the student who is way ahead of the curve, because the classes are terribly slow and boring, because he's seven steps ahead. I get that when you go into the one on one is different. As a coach, I can tell you there are two things, when the training that I'm going to do to you, it's instructor and you try to go ahead. My goal is to identify why you are trying to get ahead. Are you trying to get ahead? Because you are you suffer from shiny syndrome and we are going to lose the opportunity of the training that we have to schedule or are you going to get ahead and really gain more than the training we have. And the problem is that is a really fine line. And I think it happened the same in education, as it happened in coaching. If I start talking to you, and we are talking about asana and we are talking about how can you use a new feature of Asana, how you can send videos to your team. So do a synchronous communication. Okay, and you start asking me questions about the video. Where is that line in which that new information? It's really useful for the what we're trying to accomplish? And where is that fine line, where now we're eking out and kind of spend the next seven hours we can out, but not moving forward? And I think that's the challenge in these things is to be able to identify that thin line because I don't think there is any possibility of a formula to say okay, if you do it for 10 minutes is useful. But if you do it now for 12 It's a waste of time. I don't know. See an adult education is one of those tough things. Because kids have that built in. They have not had curiosity beaten out of adults. Yeah. All right. I'm here. I'm collecting a paycheck. You're sending me to a training class. I'm going to go through the motions and all and I think related to your pyramid Francis, this really ties into the third step in your pyramid.

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Art Gelwicks 25:00

it more than anything else, how can I apply this to what I know? That becomes that motivator to say, does it make sense for me to learn this stuff? Does that spark my curiosity enough? Because there's a value there, you know, what's in it for me. And I hate to say it that way, because curiosity we always think about it has its own natural, you know, it's just an inherent good to know things. But often, there has to be a value placed on that incoming knowledge, before there's a desire to go through the process of learning that incoming and I almost wonder if that's not even curiosity anymore, that

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Francis Wade 25:38

it's something close to it, I to look back at my own my own experience as an eight year old, I remember I was in I had a, another person in my class, her name was Nikki. And the two of us were kind of like the bright sparks, or whatever. And the teacher said, You guys are getting moving fast. Go ahead and do the lessons in the back and they were in a credenza. And these were self paced lessons, we got through 90% of the lessons back there, in the credenza in no time, and came back to the teacher. And she happened to glance at what we're doing, what do you guys do? Oh, we're almost I wish we had gone through, I think five years or whatever, in a matter of months. She was like, no, no, no, she banned us from the credenza, because we were going through too fast. And she said, and I remember it, because there was no reason for her to do that. We were still learning, we were just learning and at our own pace together, and we're going so much faster than everyone else that we were, we were essentially breaking the curve making it difficult that she couldn't really focus on us. You know, we were we weren't being the

ones in the marching band. But it makes me think about college, where I remember learning hypothesis testing as an engineer, and thinking of interesting idea. It I never really actually got curious about it, until about a decade later, when I started to need to use it. And I always thought, was there a way for the instructor to create the right kind of curiosity? In the beginning? This is kind of what Ray says that he does. How do you create the right kind of curiosity? I mean, back then, you know, you just want to pass the exam, right? So you're, you're learning at that level. But, you know, I learned that I forgot, pretty much because I passed the exam, and I moved on to nice an idea and moved on to other things. It didn't seem to have any application in my lifetime that I could imagine. And no, I use it all the time on every single project that I'm on. But I never had the curiosity in the beginning. And I may have faulting the instructor that it wasn't presented in a way that would say, curious, I think was what you're saying art curiosity first, then when you hit a certain plateau of curiosity, then you can say, alright, well, here's the standard way of doing it. And you go, Oh, because of the curiosity isn't there, or if you assume it's there, or if you're motivated by something else, like trying to get my degree and get a job and earn some money, then you're not really learning

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Art Gelwicks 28:22

it, I think we have to look at it. From the perspective though there's two sides of this equation. There's learning when you're curious about something. And then there's learning when you're not. And college is a perfect example of that you think so often about the people who any freshman in college, unless they've already predetermined what they want to do as a career, that freshman sophomore year is brutal, because I don't know what I need to know I'm going to take some required courses, I'm going to have some other courses. But honestly, I don't want to do any of this stuff. That becomes an incredibly difficult hurdle to cross mentally. And then on top of it, you have to learn this stuff. If you're curious about a topic, learning is easy. The problem is learning the right things in the right ways and getting the breadth of knowledge necessary that to make it useful. But if you're not curious, that learning exercise requires an entirely different level of commitment. And it requires an entirely different motivational architecture and structure and support system. And talking about your professor there. I had in college, I had a psychology course and I liked psychology. But I had an 8am Psychology course with its with a professor who's spoken a slow southern monotone. Okay, I used to call him Dr. Valium. And it was brutal. I had curiosity. But man that was a hard class to get through. And I can only imagine if somebody wasn't interested in that, how difficult that would be and how demoralizing it would be. Because they're like wait, I Don't want to learn this, I have to learn it. So you know, they're not going to get much out of it. And wait, they're going to come away from it unhappy and dissatisfied, and carry that to the next thing. So it really becomes a challenge. But it is a different skill set to learn. And I think we all have seen in professional settings, that people who never learned how to learn the things that they don't want to know what they have to know. And this is



Raymond Sidney-Smith 30:29

why I think curiosity is so important here, because from my perspective, that first stage for me about learning anything, is that it fills in gaps between things that I do want to know, even when the topic itself is something that I don't particularly care about. So if you if you tell me about, I don't know something about mechanical engineering that I have to all of a sudden learn, or electronics engineering, it may not be of interest to me, but it will fill in a gap for

something in some other area of my world that will make me want to learn about it. And that initial stage really does help me then when I step up to stage two, and now I'm doing that content, you know, ingestion. And so consumption becomes a much more curious space for me, because I'm looking for the pieces that will solve the problems in my mind in other domains. And that ability to connect patterns is really, really useful for me, but it also engages me in the process. And so, again, I just, I think that we all have to use these heuristics to be able to help us become curious about topics along the way. And so if you do get challenged in finding curiosity, I just really fully fundamentally believe in that concept of, if you learn something, then you can most likely apply it to something else in your world. And that will probably, if it's not a problem, if it's not the problem being solved, it's leading you closer toward solving a problem in the future. There are things as Francis noted earlier, you know, I learned about hypothesis testing, you know, 10 years before I ever used it, you know, like, there are problems that I solved a decade or two decades ago, but didn't actually implement the solving of that problem until I related it to some new learning, that was kind of percolating in the back of my mind. And it was like, oh, you know what, when we use this thing, in this particular domain, we can solve that problem with this band aid in this domain. And now it's a new insight, it's a new thing. And it's this unique, interesting piece that I've learned. But I needed to connect the dots in the background. And I think that's really, really powerful. And that

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Francis Wade 32:48

takes us back to what you said about us not being taught how to learn, that's a way of developing your own schema, that in part by basically storing stuff up, that you may not necessarily need, but you can trust that when the time comes, I'm really happy that I learned hypothesis testing at the level that I did, you know, as an operations researcher, so this was like, a big deal. And I'm glad I did, because I can now use it at the level that I needed to advance all kinds of things that I do in my work. If I hadn't learned it that deeply, I wouldn't be able to use it. No. But we're not taught that exactly what you said, if that, that you may not catch the initial importance of it, you may not be able to your curiosity may run dry long before Professor valium gets to the end of the first lecture. But if you can be if you can, if you can somehow learn how to learn, then know that as you're accumulating these pieces of information, they will come. They become more fruitful later on. If you can trust the process, if you can see the process and kind of trust it.

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Art Gelwicks 34:02

This, again, goes back to that core structure that we have, the older we get. And I don't want to tie this to age. But the further along in our educational career, let me put it that way. In continuing education, the greater the likelihood we're going to be encountering content that we are not voluntarily learning. So especially in like professional development, we have to take courses, we've got to take updates, we've got to take, you know, anti harassment training and workplace collaboration techniques and a lot of that stuff, we couldn't care less, but we have to go through that drill. So often what we do is we rely on whatever structure is being provided to deliver that content. Well, the odds are pretty good. That doesn't match the way we learn. Taking the time to develop our system, our own personal system to say look, I'm going to struggle with this. I know I'm going to struggle with it. So I need to be able to take the notes on it. Reference back against the notes. And finally, as these answers out later on, once you do that, and once you're able to accomplish that, you're setting yourself up for the rest of your life.

I always use when I used to teach classes for adults, one of the markers I used to identify of people who struggle with things like curiosity, is how well they deal with analogies. Because analogies require a breadth of understanding of various topics. So if I make an analogy, when delivering a piece of content, and they kind of look at me like deer in headlights, I'm like, oh, that didn't land. And if I try a different one, and that one doesn't land, and I try a different one after that, and that one doesn't land. Now, I have to start to question okay. Is this person operating from a breadth of information? Are they disconnected from this topic? Is this a total lack of curiosity, it's not a causality. But to me, it gives me it gives me an indicator, as to, I get it. Okay, I kind of see where you're struggling with this. But it's also a marker for me. One of the things I used to do all the time when teaching is I would go around the room and immediately ask everybody in the prep before the class, what's one thing you're really interested in? Not this topic, not what we're talking about it? What's something that if I could talk about it all day long, what would you want to know? That gives me the ability to say, okay, I can use analogies with you on this topic. But that also requires I understand those topics. If they say that their favorite thing is cricket. I'm stuck. I know nothing about cricket, I'm use a cricket, I'm thinking a little chirpy bugs. So that's a problem. And to me, now I've got a curiosity trigger. Because I'm like, Wait, I didn't know anything about that. I guess I gotta go find something out about it, and go look up cricket and learn some basic mechanics. So this is one of the things that we can do personally, as well as professionally with each other. But this is a very self investing process. I mean, we've talked so far about doing it for others, we have to do this for ourselves.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:08

And when I find myself in a place where I am not interested, I also use a technique. We talked about scenario or situation based learning in this particular case, scenario based learning is creating a scenario and having people walk through that particular scenario in order to learn. And it's basically storytelling, if you want to think about it from that perspective, I like to take myself and put myself into those stories. So for example, using art six example of anti harassment training, I'm not going to be going around harassing anyone. But if I put myself into the circumstance, it's kind of like, why do you why do you exercise for your overall health, right, you don't get a pat on the back for the heart attack, you don't have, you don't get those benefits for the for things not happening. And so walking yourself through the scenario, where you actually are in circumstance, and you help a coworker, you know, through something, you are in a situation where you could potentially have said the wrong thing. But because of this training, you are capable of keeping your mouth shut. One is probably a good thing, too, is just adjusting your language so that you have a better interaction, and you haven't made someone feel uncomfortable in that circumstance, which means you've deepened a relationship, and you've been able to actually effectively get your work done faster, better quality, you name it. And when whenever I'm in that place, I think to myself, I may not think that I can get something out of this. But let me put myself into a scenario where I could get something out of this. And naturally, my, my inquisitive nature kind of rises. And so I hope that helps folks who who may be in a situation where they feel like, gosh, I'm in this requisite training environment, once you are in that space, just like fully commit to it. Like if you're going to do something, even if it's required, like, just get into it. And sometimes scenario based learning can can can be helpful, I happen to be in an environment where everybody self selects into the training that they're coming to. I'm not I'm not teaching in an environment where people are forced to be there, usually. And so the motivation for being there is self interested to begin with. So I see people in a different mindset. And that is kind of the point which is that different mindset begets different levels of curiosity in those circumstances. Let's talk about our next stages in the pyramid. Three is of course, now the person has really reached some level of momentum with the

material what do we find for people who are who have reached this stage three curiosity of being in a place where they are in known transfer stage Francis's language and basically the the transfer stage what what is what is known transfer for us, Francis for folks to kind of get an idea around this. And what can we do in the stage to be better learner?

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Francis Wade 40:09

So at this at this point, this is a real life. So this is not just for mental or personal edification? No, it's actually using what they learn in some real situation. And that, if you're someone who's a teacher or an instructor, this is where he saw the need to let go the reins, because you're looking for the person to try to do what they're doing. Use what you've taught them and fail. Because now they need to explore the outer edges of kind of the prescriptive answer that you gave them. Which if you're a good learner, teach us our, you'll know that, you know, you taught it taught them something basic, they will only work in few situations, but it's a place for them to start, you know, it's not the ultimate solution, they need to actually explore how to use what you taught them and have it not work. And then say, How come it's not working. And if you're around, you could say, well, it's really meant for this level, or it's meant for this situation, or it's meant for this level of expertise, you now need to start to explore your own bank, keep on in applying what you learn, and then going past it, if you can't do what you're dealing with right now. And that's, you know, it takes it takes another ego as a teacher to be able to back off and say, I'm going to help you to find it for yourself. But no, the locus the focus of growth is no you, it's not about me anymore, I may have given you something but no, I need to back off. And for sure, I don't remember receiving any teaching in how to navigate this third level, the second level, not even. But the third level even even worse, because here is where something like hypothesis testing is useful. If you know how to do experiments, you can try this, try that try the elbow, because you're really customizing what you learned before for your real life. And that's pure trial and error. I certainly wasn't thought of,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 42:16

yeah, I think this is the most important part of the framework here. Because I think that experimentation, we are all basically scientists have our own productive lives. And if we're not capable of experimenting, and learning from those experiments, and learning that we don't really have failure more than we have just learning what doesn't work, we have the sense of of putting up walls around ourselves when we do an experiment, and it doesn't work the way in which we thought it would, or you set an hypothesis, a hypothesis, and then you go ahead and run an experiment, and it doesn't work out the way in which you thought the hypothesis was going to, then you feel somehow that that there's shame or guilt associated with it not working. And what we really have to do is set aside that emotion in some way, shape, or form, have it kind of, it's okay to have emotions, but the to have it stop you from doing more experimentation until you find the thing that works is so often the thing that's going to lead you down through to break through or lead you to break through. And yeah, so I love the concept of the Montessori education, where children are given an opportunity to do this self directed exploration. And teachers are there in an environment to create a space for them to experiment. And so they're learning in that environment. And so if you if you don't know anything about Montessori education, I'll put a link to it in the show notes. But it is it is for me kind of the archetype for this particular stage three, transfer, it's a good time to go look for other schemas, or the solutions that also take people through level one. And to compare

compare what other people say I remember as a 16, year old 17, somewhere in there, I was learning physics, and there was a single textbook, the Nikon textbook or something like that everyone needed to learn from and it was the standard textbook that everybody studied. And I remember running into another textbook in the bookstore and then buying the book. And then comparing passages. And this was mind blowing to me because they both were developed to pass the same exam. So they're, they're honing in on getting you to pass this exam by teaching you certain levels of certain principles of physics. But it was so clear to me after reading the tool, that there's things in the Nikon book that were totally obscure, and you could study the Nikon book to you are blue in the face you some and you had friends who could quote, The Nikon book. I mean, they were like the Bible. They were so I was like, God, I know

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Francis Wade 45:00

Were near that level of knowledge. But that's not the knowledge that was ultimately helpful. Because Nikon wrote things in some ways that were obscure, was an old textbook, and it had never been properly updated was written in all English. And so even though they could quote it, did they really understand it? I didn't think so. Because when I read the other textbook, which was new, I realized that hang on, that's not what this guy says. And then I will read it again, three, four pages, and they say, well, it is what he's trying to say. But he said it so badly, there's no way you could actually learn it. So when I discovered that there are other schemas, I think this third level is where you no need to really get into the depths of what's being taught, look to different teachers, cross compare them, because as you said, this, this, this business of experimenting is really not taught. Neither is the business of seeking different schools of thought, and then bringing them and testing them in real time, not now that the level one of oh, look, the two, the two books disagree, something's wrong, no, at the level of the third level, where you're saying, this works here, that one works there, and this one doesn't work over here. So it's more applied. And it is really about this gathering not.

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Art Gelwicks 46:13

And that goes back to what we talked about originally about finding good sources. I mean, you're talking about multiple sources, same topic there and in education, driving to a common test at that point. But yet, it's a totally different path that you're taking to that get to that end result, I'm going to constantly make that jump over into the professional and Adult Education, space and continuing education, it becomes that much harder to find those targeted sources. Because if you take something like, if we talk anti harassment training, you're going to take whatever you're given by your organization, company, whatever, you're going to take that you're going to complete whatever quizzes at the end, you're gonna get your little digital certificates as I did that. But that doesn't mean that you've gotten the entire picture around that particular topic, you've gotten one facet of that overall conversation. And as a continuous learner, and I and I almost want to start using that in the context with this curiosity thing. Knowing things because you have to know them, is entirely entirely different exercise between just knowing things, because they're things knowing, just learning to learn to gather to broaden the understanding. And the comprehension is something that if we go all the way back to the beginning back to your you're sitting back in the cubicle, that's what has to be fostered that desire to go and learn things. It's difficult to provide the structures, it's difficult to provide the methodologies. But it's not difficult to say, Hey, you want to know about it, go dig it up. One of the one of the most wonderful things I ever learned, one of the best lessons I ever got, was

from a librarian who taught me how to use the Dewey Decimal System at shows you how old I am, because we had card catalogs. But the day I learned how to do that, I was just it just boggled my mind. Because you mean, all these books, I can go find what I want. And I can find other things on that same topic and branch through it. That just blew my mind completely. And it opened up such a massive door, we have the same thing with the internet, the ability to go through and explore and searchable problem with that is often it's spoon fed to us. We don't develop the skills and and we don't develop critical analysis of the content. But the three and the four steps on this, yeah, absolutely. What are we going to do with the information? Often that's gonna be, I'm not going to do anything else besides you know, and the one time I know something, and all of a sudden it comes out of the blue, hey, that it was worth it.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 49:03

Something that relates to this, kind of, and relates back to what I was saying earlier, which is thinking outside of one's domain. I think what Francis was talking about with regard to looking at schemas, and looking at comparative schemas, I think about how in kind of stage three, I look at how methods or or pathways outside of my own domain parallel, what I'm doing in the existing domain in which I'm learning. And so a good example is in in training. One of the things I've learned is that a positive behavioral training approach is more effective for me, I'm not a stick based trainer, I'm not going to punish you. I'm not going to, you know, dangle, some kind of negative reinforcement type training. I'm not a loss aversion person. It just doesn't work for me. And it doesn't work for me as an individual doesn't work for me as a trainer and What I found is that there's this entire catalogue of work in dog training. Dog Training has positive behavioral training, and it works really, really well for dogs. And I realized in learning how to be and do the work that I do that if I apply these positive behavioral approaches, they actually work in human psychology as much as they work in dog psychology. And so, you know, humans best friend has become my best friend in in my positive behavioral training approach. And the goal here is not to be like, Oh, you're as dumb as a dog, right? It's actually help us understand that we evolved in in parallel, and we have the same levels of levers when it comes to dopamine production. You know, if we are engaged in a positive behavioral perspective, we will learn better, I'm much more likely to persuade you to learn something, and to stay curious about something, if I approach it from a positive behavioral perspective. And it wasn't until I saw the techniques being utilized. Now, they're not the same techniques, I don't, you know, use a clicker and give you a treat, right. But But in, in adult learning, if I use the same mechanisms for being able to see when insight strikes you, and you learn that insight, and I can reward you give you recognition, give you positive reinforcement in that environment, you're much more likely to learn, when I see you struggling, and you're struggling, well, then my job is not to be able to get in your way, it's to immediately get out of your way, so you can continue to struggle through it. And once you struggle through and learn, that is far better learning, than if I just gave you the answer. And my inclination was always if I see someone struggling, I, I'm empathetic. So I'm, I'm, I'm empathetic, well, so I will immediately want to answer the question for them, oh, no, you're doing it wrong. There goes the right way. Right, my learning there was that actually, what I'm supposed to do is shut my mouth and let you struggle. Because if you if you get to a point, and you absolutely do make the error, and you it's no going back at that point, then I correct and you will learn better for that as well. But if I keep getting in your way, and telling you the right way to go, you're going to inevitably learn worse, because you're going to feel like Well, Ray will always be there to to correct it. When in reality, I'm not going to be there in a few hours, a few days, a few weeks from now, you're going to be on your own, and you need to learn how to correct and adjust and, and learn through the process of whatever you're learning. And so I've learned so much from looking at another domain and saying, okay,

not everything is applicable here. But the foundation really works. And that is a level of curiosity that I think really helps at this stage three is looking at other domains, and how they've applied maybe pastry baking, or something like that can apply to your world. You know, like, you know, like, there's so many different ways in which you can look at different interests. One of the areas or domains that I think is really important in what I call my fitnesses is rejuvenation and rejuvenation is doing something for the sake of it or you're expending energy, although there's no immediate tangible result in your world. And so like, for you art, I know you're a woodworker, your woodworking because you love woodworking, and you love the development of stuff, right? The it's not work to you, although it's labor, right? And I'm sure that many of the times you analogize woodworking when we're talking is because you're seeing those parallels between things. And I and I just I really recommend to everybody, I call you all to the idea of finding things that you're interested in and doing those things because you will find so many ways in which a quilting or knitting hobby will all of a sudden oh yeah, latticework of this makes a lot of sense when I'm thinking about latticework in a different environment. Now that becomes a framework in the company. Like there's so many ways in which these disparate ideas then start to overlay and become fodder for methodologies. So those are my thoughts.

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Francis Wade 54:15

This has never been a better time to pursue because the avenues that are available to pursue any interest are just mind boggling compared to when we had to go to the encyclopedia. Guys remember that? I agree with you about picking up learning, learning how to learn by pursuing an interest in an area that's not directly analogous are not the same as I as a cricket player are and as also a triathlete. I learned a hell of a lot on how to develop skills and better skill. I never became very good, but I at least knew. Okay, if I didn't have the talent and the time I could pursue this particular particular path. But it works out this way in my books and in my way of seeing the world. And I, at the same time, I do remember having friends who colleague family members who had an interest. And it seemed as if the interest was discouraged at such an early age that they kind of went to all interest. Like they they lost the zest for pursuing an interest because they weren't allowed to produce their pursue their interests. And boy talk about killing someone's curiosity and killing also their the opportunity for them to learn how to learn, okay, but

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Augusto Pinaud 55:45

there are two things into that and agree ing with you, okay. And as a parent, it gets into something important for me to focus, how can I help my kids to keep that curiosity or even better to increase it, and, and as a parent is a really challenging thing, because require, you break through your own barriers, fears and limitations, okay? When your kid come and say, Oh, I really what I want to do is, you know, doing art or painting, or painting or drawing on the iPad, okay, your brain as a parent is, okay, how you're going to make money out of that, again, you need to break that. So your kids have the curiosity. That said, there is also the other part when you come now as an adult, and that was your experience. And you need to work backwards, to understand where the fears of those adults, people who were teaching you that were leaving you, what were their fears, and what are there on your own. Because if you don't identify those two segments, it's almost impossible to get back to creativity. And as you said, it's a really sad life. In my humble opinion, it is probably the reason why everyone should have a therapist

because parents really just imbue their children in their own fears. And many times those become, unfortunately, maladaptive behaviors and just really, unfortunately, unproductive outcomes for everybody. So if you if you feel like fear is holding you back from developing in that way, I highly recommend finding a good therapist and working through that. And there are just so many good resources in the mental health space, that it just really, it really makes a lot of sense for us to be not shaming and blaming people, especially family members, who did the best they could with what they had when they had it. And then going beyond that and saying, Okay, now, the responsibility is in my camp, let me go find the help to go make that correction. And that means a better life. You know, you as far as I know, we only get one of these. And so it's good to let's get to take advantage of it. And that means doing some corrective work in that category. As we make our way to the end of our conversation today. Gentlemen, what are our final thoughts? where can folks go to what can folks do to advance their learning and, and seek out curiosity in that learning? You mentioned the word fear in it, and it strikes me as the one point that I think we need to take away from this is most fear is generated from the unknown. So the more you know, the less you have to be fearful of creating those structures to empower yourself with that knowledge gives you strength within your world, within your life within your environment, it's probably the most worthwhile investment you can make. In time in productivity, in effort across the board, you will develop value of this, no matter whether you're eight or add the opportunity for us all, everyone is that you get to level four, which is that you're preparing yourself for this unknown future. And if you if you know if you kind of believe that you can learn yourself out of any problem. And I don't know if I do, but I kind of do get optimistic that as long as I really, really want to learn, then I can figure it out. Maybe I used to when I was younger, but at least I am confident that if I have a way of learning that can help me in a majority of situations that come up in the future. And having that sort of ability, at least, you know, kind of unconsciously makes me

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Francis Wade 59:42

less fearful. And in terms of the areas in which I do have an interest. I'm really interested in picking up new schemas and trying new schemas and that I don't need to do necessarily but that I will need in the future. And I think that's really empowering. I think that's really what Education ultimately should be about delivering a distinct that we get thwarted at lower levels, and then we never, never sort of get to that point. And with that,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:00:10

we're gonna close out our portion of the conversation. Thank you, gentlemen. And I would like to say to our listeners that this is not the end of the conversation. And while this is the end of our recording of it, we do have a myriad of ways that you can continue the conversation, you can head over to productivitycast.net to the episode page, and you can leave a comment or a question there. We also do have a community inside personal productivity Club, where you can engage in the conversation. So if you go to [www dot personal productivity dot club](http://www.dot.personalproductivity.club), join it and find us in the ProductivityCast channel. And feel free to engage us in this topic, because I think it's there many, many other ways in which we can discuss this, how we can improve upon these four stages of curiosity, where you might find curiosity in any one of these stages, feel free to engage with us in those spaces. Also on productivitycast.net. On each episode page, you'll find show notes, which will be links to anything that we discussed here. You know, I collect these at the end of every episode and put them into the show notes. But we also contain in the show

notes, a text track transcript, it's machine generated, but it's good enough for you to be able to track along. And so you can actually read it directly on the page by clicking the Read More link, or you can download it as a PDF to read offline or annotate in your favorite annotation app of choice. And also, if this is your first time with us, feel free to follow us, you can go over to the subscribe tab or the follow tab on ProductivityCast dotnet. You'll see instructions to be able to follow us or subscribe to the podcast episodes you'll just get them downloaded for free. Whenever a new episode comes out. I want to express my thanks to Augusto Pinaud Francis Wade, and art Gelwicks for joining me here on ProductivityCast this and every week, you can learn more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net Also, you'll find the about page for them there and all the links to them on that page. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith and on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast Here's to productive life.



Voiceover Artist 1:02:13

That's it for this productivity cast the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Gousto been out with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks