

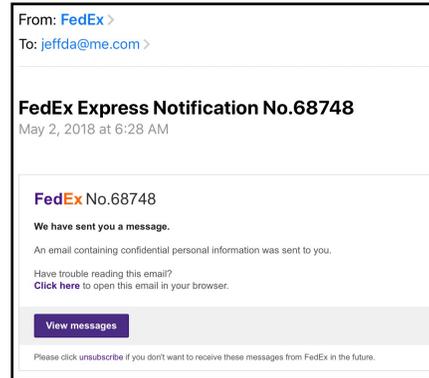
By Jeff Anderson
Saturday May 19, 2018

Curiosity: As Pleasurable as Ice Cream!

Have you received authentic looking e-mails asking you to respond? Today I received several e-mails from FedEx saying a message containing confidential information has been sent to me and providing a view-messages button to read the confidential info. Immediately, my curiosity was tweaked and I wanted to follow the directions to open the message. Miriam Webster Dictionary defines my reaction as intellectual curiosity: 'an interest leading to inquiry.'

FedEx is a highly respected brand and my impulse was to immediately hit the open command. Yet, I have been trying to discipline myself to demonstrate responsibility by being proactive in today's world of cyber security concerns. So instead of hitting View Messages I went to the top of the e-mail where it says From: FedEx and tapped FedEx> to expand the address and see the sender's e-mail address. Voila, the sender's address appeared as 'faqawi@cradleykawasaki.co.uk.' Well, holy guacamole, despite the e-mails visual appearance of authenticity it was not factually from FedEx.

In January, the former Director of Air Force Cyber Command Tom Dean presented a Dynamic Learning Class, 'Be Safe and Secure Online'. A big takeaway from the DLI class was to take personal responsibility to protect yourself in everything you encounter online. Thanks to Tom for his stimulating class insights



which made us each aware of our personal cyber security responsibilities.

Because of these insights, I likely will never know what Faqawi had in-store for me if I had hit View-messages. Yet, my curiosity still wishes that I understood what this phishing exercise was all about. All this leads me to recognize that curiosity like other valuable attributes is a double edged sword requiring balance to be utilized to its greatest advantage.

Research from University College in London indicates that nurturing our curiosity helps us to learn more easily. Their research suggests that curiosity is a powerful personality trait that can take you far in life. Saying "Curiosity increases interest in new ideas, increases creativity and flexibility, increases job satisfaction and protects you from burnout."

Are you naturally curious? Neurological studies have shown that curiosity makes our brains more receptive for learning, and that as we learn, we enjoy the

sensation of learning. It appears that curiosity prepares our brains for learning. If you are naturally curious, you have likely enjoyed the sensation of learning about a subject that your mind was piqued to explore by curiosity.

Dr. Matthias Gruber and researchers from the University of California Davis conducted a series of experiments to discover what exactly goes on in the brain when our curiosity is aroused. He explains that “curiosity puts the brain in a state that allows it to learn and retain any kind of information, like a vortex that sucks in what you are motivated to learn, and also everything around it.”

Marianne Stenger, an Education writer with Open Colleges, offers these insights. “Curiosity makes subsequent learning more rewarding. Aside from preparing the brain for learning, curiosity can also make learning a more rewarding experience. The researchers found that when the participants' curiosity had been sparked, there was not only increased activity in the hippocampus, which is the region of the brain involved in the creation of memories, but also in the brain circuit that is related to reward and pleasure. This circuit is the same one that lights up when we get something we really like, such as candy or money, and it relies on dopamine, a “feel-good” chemical that relays messages between neurons and gives us a sort of high.

“So not only will arousing curiosity help you remember lessons that might otherwise go in one ear and out the other, but it can also make the learning experience as pleasurable as ice cream. Of course, most teachers already instinctively know the importance of fostering inquisitive minds, but to have

science back it up is undeniably satisfying. Curiosity makes subsequent learning more rewarding.”

I personally experienced this curiosity conundrum during the Spring semester of Dynamic Learning. While I was curious to participate in many DLI Classes, my busy schedule made active class participation appear unlikely. In addition some Class topics were naturally more interesting to me than others. Yet, as I began attending the classes, to help get DLI rolling, I found the experience of learning so satisfying that my desire to attend the next Class increased. As a result, I attended twenty-one DLI learning experiences and found them as pleasurable as my favorite Butterfinger Blizzard from Dairy Queen and much less fattening as well.

So put your curiosity into action this week knowing that “Learning is a treasure which accompanies its owner everywhere!”

About Anderson - DLI Chairman Jeff Anderson is servant pastor of SERV Kerrville, a nonprofit collaborating with community partners to empower lifelong learning.

Dynamic Learning Institute - The Fall Semester of DLI will return after Labor Day with an exciting roster of Classes featuring Hill Country neighbors with interesting lifetime experiences to share with you.