

**Sample Conversational Curiosity Questions (not to be used as a script).**

Unless obvious, start with, "I notice \_\_\_\_\_." (Whatever the challenge)

What happened?

Then what happened?

What were you trying to accomplish?

How do you feel about what happened?

What do you think caused it to happen?

What did you learn from this experience?

What ideas do you have to fix what happened?

What solutions will help you experience a different outcome in the future?

### **Example No. 1 of Curiosity Questions**

One of my (Jane Nelsen) favorite examples is the time my daughter shared with me her intention to get drunk at a party.

I gulped and said, "Tell me more. Why are you thinking of doing that?"

She said, "Lots of kids do it and it looks like they are having fun."

I stifled my temptation to lecture and asked, "What do your friends say about you now that you don't drink?"

She thought about this and said, "They tell me how much they admire me."

I continued, "What do you think they'll think or say after you get drunk?"

Again, I could watch her think (one of the clues that the child believes you are really curious and not judgmental) before she said, "They'll probably be disappointed in me."

I followed with, "How do you think you'll feel about yourself?"

I could tell this question made her think a little more. She paused and said, "I'll probably feel like a loser." This was soon followed by, "I don't think I will."

If I hadn't known about curiosity questions, I would have been tempted to impose a punitive consequence, such as grounding her. Chances are that this would have inspired her to get sneaky instead of trusting that she could discuss things with me. The biggest loss would have been that she would not have had the opportunity to explore for herself the consequences of her choices and what she really wanted in her life.

### Example No. 2 of Curiosity Questions

When he was 16-years-old, my son hated school. I engaged in classic power struggles every morning trying to get him out of bed and off to school on time. Then I remembered Curiosity Questions:

Me: Why don't you want to go to school?

Son: It is stupid?

Me: I can see why you would think that. And, I no longer want to have power struggles with you about going. You are now old enough to drop out if you want to get a job and pay rent here until you are 18. Before you decide, I have a few questions?

Son: (Glare.)

Me: Have you thought about what will happen if you don't get a high school education?

Son: Lot's of people, even millionaires, have dropped out of school.

Me: I know that is true. Do you know anyone who has dropped out of school and how they are doing?

Son: No. (He didn't want to talk about the friend who was in jail or the one working in a fast food restaurant.)

Me: What kind of job will you be able to get if you don't have a high school diploma?

Son: I could be a contractor.

Me: Yes, and that is an honorable occupation, and I'm sure you could do that. What have you thought about doing that you wouldn't be able to do without a diploma?

Son, reluctantly: I couldn't be an engineer or a pilot. (This is where I could see his thinking wheels turning before he blurted out this conclusion:) Okay, I'll go, but I'm not going to like it.

Me: That is brilliant thinking. Many successful people know they have to do what they don't like now so they can do what they want in the future.

I stayed out of future power struggles and Mark went to school. The interesting part is how much he loved college. No one lectured him about what to do, so he had to take responsibility for what was required for him to reach his goal to be a graduate.