



CURIOSITY PAYS OFF GENEROUS DIVIDENDS

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Curiosity is what has made people go exploring the unknown and discover things which we now know. The potential to find new things and experience new events is readily addressed thanks to curiosity. If people who came before us didn't have the courage or compulsion to ask questions, we wouldn't have been able to amass the huge repository of knowledge, information and technological advancements we now enjoy. Curiosity paves the road to answers, and having answers is a great progression that transcends ignorance. Although ignorance is bliss at times, it is never a cause to celebrate too much of it.

Curiosity opens a spectrum of possibilities for people to see just where their questions can take them.

If German physicist Wilhelm Rontgen had not investigated the various types of vacuum tube equipment created by Nikola Tesla, Heinrich Hertz, Johann Hittorf, William Crookes and Philipp von Lenard, he wouldn't have been able to discover the X-ray. If he had simply stopped observing and just pursued his life in the normal fashion he always had, he wouldn't have discovered the novel type of radiation that makes diagnostic radiology a science in itself. Diagnosing diseases using X-Ray equipment wouldn't have been made possible if Rontgen had not probed further to get answers to all his questions. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_R%C3%B6ntgen)

If Dutch naturalist and microscopist Anton van Leeuwenhoek did not have such insatiable curiosity, he would not have been able to discern fact from speculation and thus produce the world's first simple "microscopes". A lens grinder in his spare time, his curiosity was piqued when upon looking through a set of magnifying lenses he had put together, he saw strange-looking organisms in pond water. He later went on to examine everything he could with his "microscopes", which were more magnifying glasses than real microbiological equipment. (<http://www.bookrags.com/biography/anton-van-leeuwenhoek/>)

It was Robert Hooke however, who dared go further and built the first compound microscope and its illumination system, the iris diaphragm. Thanks to his study of slices of cork, we now have a system of microscopy that enables us to see cells, which Hooke had patiently examined, observed and described in his book *Micrographia*, which was published in 1665. His compound microscope was one of the best such instruments at the time and has formed the basis for today's more advanced instruments for microscopic observation. (<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/hooke.html>)

Indeed, many scientists and inventors of yesteryears and even of today have contributed so much to the advancement of knowledge in all aspects of living. Perhaps we wouldn't have been able to enjoy the things we enjoy now had it not been for those who have dared asked why and how, instead of stopping at what, who and where. Truly, curiosity opens the way to progress.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Read up on famous scientists and how they stumbled across their discoveries. Be able to give a summary of their journey to discovery in class.
2. What do you think of the present crop of scientists in the modern world? Are they relatively better than their counterparts in the past? Why or why not?
3. What modern experiments, in your opinion, are the most significant for today's era? Why do you consider them significant?
4. If you were a scientist, what would you like to contribute to the world? Why do you consider your proposed contribution a necessity?
5. In your opinion, which particular field of study besides Science has given a lot of contributions to today's world? Elaborate on your answer.