

A CURIOUS MIND

The SECRET to a BIGGER LIFE



BRIAN GRAZER

CHARLES FISHMAN

*Brian Grazer's
Curiosity Conversations: A List*

Since the late 1970s, Brian Grazer has been meeting with people from diverse backgrounds to have open-ended conversations about their lives and work. Below, in alphabetical order, is a list of many of the people Brian has had curiosity conversations with. It is as comprehensive as memory and records permit; please forgive any omissions. Brian has spoken to so many people over thirty-five years and explored so many topics that it would be impossible to have included accounts of all of them. But each of the conversations provided the inspiration for the discussions of creativity and storytelling in this book, and in Brian's work.

50 Cent: musician, actor, entrepreneur

Joan Abrahamson: president of the research and education non-profit Jefferson Institute, MacArthur Fellowship recipient

Paul Neal "Red" Adair: oil-well firefighter, innovator in extinguishing oil-well blowouts in Kuwait

Roger Ailes: president of Fox News Channel

Doug Aitken: multimedia artist

Muhammad Ali: professional heavyweight boxer, three-time World Heavyweight Champion

John Allman: neuroscientist, expert on human cognition

Gloria Allred: civil rights attorney

Brad Anderson: former CEO of Best Buy

Chris Anderson: curator of TED conferences

Philip Anschutz: entrepreneur, cofounder of Major League Soccer, investor in multiple professional sports teams

David Ansen: former senior entertainment editor at *Newsweek*

Rose Apodaca: pop culture, fashion, and style journalist

Bernard Arnault: chairman and CEO of LVMH

Rebecca Ascher-Walsh: journalist, author

Isaac Asimov: science fiction author

Reza Aslan: scholar of religious studies, author

Tony Attwood: psychologist, author of books on Asperger's syndrome

Lesley Bahner: responsible for advertising and motivational research for the Reagan-Bush 1984 presidential campaign

F. Lee Bailey: legendary defense attorney who represented Patricia Hearst and Sam Sheppard

Evan Bailyn: expert on search-engine optimization, author of *Outsmarting Google*

Letitia Baldrige: etiquette expert, Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary

Bob Ballard: oceanographer, explorer, underwater archeologist who discovered the *Titanic*

David Baltimore: biologist, Nobel laureate

Richard Bangs: explorer, author, TV personality

Tyra Banks: model, TV host

Barry Barish: experimental physicist, expert on gravitational waves

Colette Baron-Reid: expert on intuition

John C. Beck: business expert in mobile communications, author

Yves Béhar: industrial designer, entrepreneur, sustainability advocate

Harold Benjamin: director of the Wellness Community centers for cancer patients

Steve Berra: professional skateboarder, cofounder of popular skateboarding website The Berrics

Jeff Bewkes: CEO and chairman of Time Warner

Jeff Bezos: founder and CEO of Amazon.com, owner of the *Washington Post*

Jason Binn: founder of *DuJour* magazine, chief advisor to Gilt Groupe, editor of Getty WireImage

Ian Birch: director of editorial development and special projects at Hearst Magazines, former editor of *US* magazine

Peter Biskind: cultural critic, film historian, author, former executive editor of *Premiere* magazine

Edwin Black: historian and journalist focusing on human rights and corporate abuse

Keith Black: chairman of neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, specializing in the treatment of brain tumors

David Blaine: magician, illusionist, endurance artist

Keith Blanchard: founding editor of *Maxim*

Alex Ben Block: journalist, former senior editor of the *Hollywood Reporter*

Sherman Block: sheriff of Los Angeles County, 1982–1998

Michael Bloomberg: mayor of New York City, 2002–2013, founder of Bloomberg financial information service

Tim Blum: cofounder of contemporary commercial art gallery Blum & Poe

Adam Bly: creator of *Seed* magazine, which focused on the intersection of science and society

Alex Bogusky: designer, advertising executive, marketer, author

David Boies: attorney who represented U.S. Justice Department in *U.S. v. Microsoft* and Al Gore in *Bush v. Gore*

Mark Borovitz: rabbi, ex-convict who runs a residential treatment center for ex-convicts and drug addicts

Anthony Bozza: music journalist and author, writer for *Rolling Stone*

William Bratton: police commissioner of New York City

Eli Broad: philanthropist, entrepreneur, art collector

John Brockman: literary agent, author, founder of the Edge Foundation

Bradford Brown: translator of *The Book of Five Rings*, a book written by a Japanese samurai on the art of confrontation and victory

Roy Brown: musician, composer

Tim Brown: CEO and president of design firm IDEO

Willie Brown: former mayor of San Francisco who served fifteen years as Speaker of the California State Assembly

Tiffany Bryan: contestant on reality TV show *Fear Factor*

Jane Buckingham: expert on forecasting trends

Ted Buffington: expert on performance under pressure and on decision making in critical situations

Vincent Bugliosi: deputy Los Angeles district attorney who prosecuted Charles Manson, cowrote *Helter Skelter*

Ed Bunker: career criminal and author of crime fiction

Tory Burch: fashion designer

James Burke: CEO of Johnson & Johnson during the 1982 Tylenol crisis

Cara-Beth Burnside: pioneer of women's skateboarding and snowboarding

Chandler Burr: journalist, author, curator of olfactory art at the Museum of Art and Design in New York City

Eugenia Butler, Sr.: art dealer and collector

James T. Butts, Jr.: mayor of Inglewood, former police chief of Santa Monica

David Byrne: musician, founding member of the band Talking Heads

Naomi Campbell: actress, supermodel

Adam Carolla: podcaster, former host of syndicated radio call-in program *Loveline*

John Carroll: journalist, former editor of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Baltimore Sun*

Sean B. Carroll: evolutionary development biologist, geneticist

Mr. Cartoon: tattoo and graffiti artist

Carlos Castaneda: anthropologist, author of books describing his shamanism training

Celerino Castillo III: DEA agent who revealed the CIA-backed arms-for-drugs trade in Nicaragua

Brian Chesky: cofounder and CEO of Airbnb

Deepak Chopra: author, physician, alternative medicine advocate

Michael Chow: restaurateur

Chuck D: musician, music producer, former leader of Public Enemy

Steve Clayton: research futurist for Microsoft

Eldridge Cleaver: leader of the Black Panther Party, author of *Soul on Ice*

Johnnie Cochran: defense attorney who represented O.J. Simpson

Jared Cohen: director of Google Ideas

Joel Cohen: population specialist, mathematical biologist

Kat Cohen: university admissions counselor, author of *The Truth About Getting In*

William Colby: CIA director, 1973–1976

Elizabeth Baron Cole: nutritionist

Jim Collins: management consultant, expert on business and management, author of *Good to Great*

Robert Collins: neurologist, former chairman of neurology at UCLA School of Medicine

Sean Combs: musician, music producer, fashion designer, entrepreneur

Richard Conniff: author who specializes in human and animal behavior

Tim Cook: CEO of Apple, Inc.

Tatiana Cooley-Marquardt: repeat winner of USA Memory Championship

Anderson Cooper: journalist, author, TV personality, anchor of CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360*

Norman Cousins: medical guru, author of *Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*

Jacques Cousteau: oceanographer, pioneered marine conservation

Chris W. Cox: chief lobbyist for the National Rifle Association

Steve Coz: former editor of *National Enquirer*

Donald Cram: professor of chemistry at UCLA, Nobel laureate in chemistry

Jim Cramer: investor, author, TV personality, host of CNBC's *Mad Money*

Clyde Cronkhite: criminal justice expert, former police chief of Santa Ana, former deputy police chief of Los Angeles

Mark Cuban: investor, owner of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks

Heidi Siegmund Cuda: journalist, former music critic for the *Los Angeles Times*

Thomas Cummings: leading expert in designing high-performing organizations and strategic change at USC Marshall School of Business

Fred Cuny: disaster relief specialist

Mario Cuomo: governor of New York, 1983–1994

Alan Dershowitz: attorney, constitutional scholar, professor emeritus at Harvard Law School

Donny Deutsch: advertising executive, TV personality

Jared Diamond: evolutionary biologist, author, professor at UCLA, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Alfred "Fred" DiSipio: record promoter investigated during payola scandal

DMX: musician, actor

Thomas R. Donovan: former CEO of the Chicago Board of Trade

Jack Dorsey: cofounder of Twitter, founder and CEO of Square Inc.

Steve Drezner: specialist in systems analysis and military projects for RAND Corporation

Ann Druyan: author and producer specializing in cosmology and popular science

Marian Wright Edelman: founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund

Betty Edwards: author of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*

Peter Eisenhardt: astronomer, physicist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Paul Ekman: psychologist, pioneer in the study of emotions and their relation to facial expressions

Anita Elberse: professor of business administration at Harvard Business School

Eminem: musician, music producer, actor

Selwyn Enzer: futurist, former director of USC Center for Futures Research

Susan Estrich: lawyer, author, first female campaign manager of a major presidential campaign (for Michael Dukakis)

Harold Evans: journalist, author, former editor of the *Sunday Times*, founded *Condé Nast Traveler*

Ron W. Fagan: sociologist, former professor at Pepperdine University

Barbara Fairchild: editor of *Bon Appétit*, 2000–2010

Shepard Fairey: artist, graphic designer, illustrator

Linda Fairstein: author, former chief prosecutor of the sex crimes unit for the Manhattan district attorney's office

John Fiedler: director of communications research for the 1984 Reagan-Bush presidential campaign

Louis C. Finch: former deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness for the U.S. Department of Defense

Henry Finder: editorial director of the *New Yorker*

Ted Fishman: journalist, author of *China, Inc.: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World*

John Flicker: former president and CEO of the National Audubon Society

William Ford, Jr.: chairman and former CEO of the Ford Motor Company and great-grandson of Henry Ford

Matthew Freud: head of Freud Communications and great-grandson of Sigmund Freud

Glen Friedman: photographer who does a lot of work with skateboarders and musicians, artist, author of *Fuck You Heroes*

Bonnie Fuller: journalist, media executive, editor of HollywoodLife.com

Bob Garcia: baseball card collector and expert

Howard Gardner: developmental psychologist, developed theory of multiple intelligences

Daryl F. Gates: police chief of Los Angeles, 1978–1992

Vince Gerardis: entrepreneur

David Gibson: philosopher, scholar of ancient Greek philosopher Plato

Françoise Gilot: painter, author of *Life with Picasso*

Malcolm Gladwell: author, journalist, staff writer at the *New Yorker*

Rebecca Glashow: digital media executive involved in launching first video-on-demand system

Sheldon Glashow: theoretical physicist, professor emeritus at Harvard University, Nobel laureate in physics

Bernard Glassman: Zen teacher and cofounder of the Zen Peacemaker Order

Barry Glassner: president of Lewis & Clark College, former executive vice provost at the University of Southern California

John Goddard: adventurer, author, first man to kayak the entire Nile River

Russell Goldsmith: CEO of City National Bank

Adam Gopnik: staff writer for the *New Yorker* and author of *Paris to the Moon*

Andrew Gowers: former editor of the *Financial Times*

Robert Graham: sculptor

Brian Greene: theoretical physicist, professor at Columbia University, specialist in string theory

Robert Greene: author and speaker known for books on strategy, power, and seduction

Linda Greenhouse: journalist, former U.S. Supreme Court reporter for the *New York Times*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Lisa Gula: former scientist, working on missile defense systems at XonTech

Sanjay Gupta: neurosurgeon, chief medical correspondent for CNN

Ramón A. Gutiérrez: professor of history at the University of Chicago, specializing in U.S. race and ethnic relations

Joseph T. Hallinan: journalist, author, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting

Dean Hamer: geneticist, scientist emeritus at the National Cancer Institute, specializing in how genes affect human behavior

Dian Hanson: editor of pornographic magazines, editor for Taschen art books

Tom Hargrove: agricultural scientist who was kidnapped in Colombia by FARC narco-guerrillas, inspired the movie *Proof of Life*

Mark Harris: journalist, former executive editor of *Entertainment Weekly*

Sam Harris: neuroscientist, author of *The End of Faith*

Bill Harrison: vision specialist focusing on sports vision training to maximize eye-mind-body reflexes

Reed Hastings: cofounder and CEO of Netflix

Laura Hathaway: national coordinator for American Mensa International, Gifted Children Resource Programs

Zahi Hawass: archaeologist, Egyptologist, former minister of state for antiquities affairs in Egypt

John Hay: Freemason

Lutfallah Hay: former member of parliament in prerevolutionary Iran, Freemason

Susan Headden: former reporter and editor at *U.S. News & World Report*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting

Jack Healey: human rights activist, former executive director of Amnesty International USA

Thomas Heaton: seismologist, professor at California Institute of Technology, contributed to the development of earthquake early warning systems

Peter Herbst: journalist, former editor of *Premiere* and *New York* magazines

Danette Herman: talent executive for Academy Awards

Seymour Hersh: investigative reporter, author, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for uncovering the My Lai massacre and its cover-up during the Vietnam War

Dave Hickey: art and cultural critic who has written for *Harper's*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Vanity Fair*

Jim Hightower: progressive political activist, radio talk-show host

Tommy Hilfiger: fashion designer, founder of lifestyle brand

Christopher Hitchens: journalist and author who was a critic of politics and religion

David Hockney: artist and major contributor to the Pop art movement in the 1960s

Nancy Irwin: hypnotherapist

Chris Isaak: musician, actor

Michael Jackson: singer, songwriter, his 1982 album *Thriller* is the bestselling album of all time

LeBron James: NBA basketball player

Mort Janklow: literary agent, founder and chairman of the literary agency Janklow & Nesbit Associates

Jay Z: musician, music producer, fashion designer, entrepreneur

Wyclef Jean: musician, actor

James Jebbia: CEO of the Supreme clothing brand

Harry J. Jerison: paleoneurologist, professor emeritus at UCLA

Steve Jobs: cofounder and former CEO of Apple Inc., cofounder and former CEO of Pixar

Betsey Johnson: fashion designer

Jamie Johnson: documentary filmmaker who directed *Born Rich*, heir to Johnson & Johnson fortune

Larry C. Johnson: former analyst for the CIA, security and terrorism consultant

Robert L. Johnson: businessman, media magnate, cofounder and former chairman of BET

Sheila Johnson: cofounder of BET, first African American woman to be an owner/partner in three professional sports teams

Steve Johnson: media theorist, popular science author, cocreated online magazine *FEED*

Jackie Joyner-Kersey: Olympic gold medalist, track star

Paul Kagame: president of Rwanda

Michiko Kakutani: book critic for the *New York Times*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for criticism

Sam Hall Kaplan: former architecture critic for the *Los Angeles Times*

Masoud Karkehabadi: wunderkind who graduated from college at age thirteen

Patrick Keefe: author, staff writer for the *New Yorker*

Gershon Kekst: founder of the corporate communications company Kekst and Co.

Jill Kelleher: professional matchmaker and founder and CEO of Kelleher & Associates

Robin D. G. Kelley: historian and professor at UCLA, specializing in African American studies

Sheila Kelley: actress and dancer, founder of S Factor pole dancing workout

Philip Kellman: cognitive psychologist and professor at UCLA, specializing in perceptual learning and adaptive learning

Joseph Kennedy II: businessman, Democratic politician, founder of Citizens Energy Corp., son of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Ethel Kennedy

Gayle King: editor-at-large for *O, The Oprah Magazine*, coanchor of *CBS This Morning*

Alex Kipman: technical fellow at Microsoft, coinventor of Kinect for Xbox

Robert Kirby: kinesiologist who studies the science of muscular medicine

Henry Kissinger: former U.S. secretary of state, diplomat, Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Calvin Klein: fashion designer

Elsa Klensch: journalist, fashion critic, former host of CNN's *Style with Elsa Klensch*

Phil Knight: cofounder, chairman, and former CEO of Nike Inc.

Beyoncé Knowles: musician, actress

Christof Koch: neuroscientist and professor at California Institute of Technology, specializing in human consciousness

Clea Koff: forensic anthropologist who worked with United Nations to reveal genocide in Rwanda

Stephen Kolodny: attorney; practices family law

Rem Koolhaas: architect, architectural theorist, professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design

Jeff Koons: artist

Jesse Kornbluth: journalist, editor of a cultural concierge service

Richard Koshalek: former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Mark Kostabi: artist, composer

Anna Kournikova: former professional tennis player

Lawrence Krauss: theoretical physicist, cosmologist, professor at Arizona State University

Steve Kroft: journalist, correspondent for CBS's *60 Minutes*

William LaFleur: author, professor at the University of Pennsylvania, specializing in Japanese culture

Steven Lamy: professor of international relations at the University of Southern California

Lawrence Lawler: former special agent in charge of the Los Angeles field office of the FBI

Nigella Lawson: journalist, author, food writer, TV host

Sugar Ray Leonard: professional boxer who won world titles in five weight divisions

Maria Lepowsky: anthropologist, professor at University of Wisconsin–Madison, lived with the indigenous people of a Papua New Guinea island

Lawrence Lessig: activist for Internet freedom and Net neutrality, professor at Harvard Law School

Cliff Lett: professional race car driver, designer of radio-controlled cars

Robert A. Levine: former economist at RAND Corporation

Ariel Levy: journalist, staff writer at *New York* magazine

Dany Levy: founder of DailyCandy email newsletter

Roy Lichtenstein: Pop artist

John Liebeskind: former professor at UCLA, leading researcher in the study of pain and its relation to health

Alan Lipkin: former special agent for the criminal investigation division of the IRS

Margaret Livingstone: neurobiologist specializing in vision, professor at Harvard Medical School

Tone Lōc: musician, actor

Elizabeth Loftus: cognitive psychologist and expert on human memory, professor at the University of California, Irvine

Lisa Love: West Coast director for *Vogue* and *Teen Vogue*

Jim Lovell: Apollo-era astronaut, commander of the crippled Apollo 13 mission

Thomas Lovejoy: ecologist, professor at George Mason University, former assistant secretary for environmental and external affairs at the Smithsonian Institution, expert in tropical deforestation

Malcolm Lucas: chief justice of the California Supreme Court, 1987–1996

Oliver Lockett: founder and CEO of social media content company theAudience

Frank Luntz: political consultant and pollster

Peter Maass: author and journalist who covers international affairs, war, and conflict

Norman Mailer: author, playwright, filmmaker, journalist, co-founder of the *Village Voice*

Sir John Major: prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1990–1997

Michael Malin: astronomer, designer, developer of cameras used to explore Mars

P. J. Mara: former Irish senator and political adviser to Irish prime minister Charles Haughey

Lou Marinoff: philosopher who works with decision theory and political philosophy, professor at the City College of New York

Thom Mayne: architect, cofounder of architecture firm Morphosis

John McCain: U.S. senator from Arizona, Republican nominee for president in 2008

Terry McAuliffe: governor of Virginia, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee

Kevin McCabe: economic theorist, neuroeconomist, professor at George Mason University

Susan McCarthy: former city manager for Santa Monica

Susan McClary: musicologist who combines musicology with feminist music criticism, professor at Case Western Reserve University

Terry McDonell: editor, media executive, former editor in chief of *Esquire*

Paul McGuinness: former manager of the band U2

Robert McKee: creative writing instructor, former professor at the University of Southern California

Daniel McLean: classics scholar and lecturer at UCLA

Bruce McNall: sports executive, former owner of the National Hockey League's Los Angeles Kings

Leonard Mehlmauer: naturopath, researcher who created the term "eyology"

Sonny Mehta: chairman and editor in chief of Alfred A. Knopf publishing company

Steven Meisel: fashion photographer

Susan Meiselas: documentary photographer

Suzy Menkes: British journalist, author, former fashion reporter and editor for the *International Herald Tribune*

Millard "Mickey" Drexler: CEO and chairman of J. Crew, former president and CEO of the Gap

Jack Miles: editor, author, Pulitzer Prize winner, MacArthur Fellowship recipient

Marvin Mitchelson: celebrity divorce attorney, pioneered the concept of palimony

Isaac Mizrahi: fashion designer

Tim Montgomery: Olympic runner stripped of his world record after being found guilty of using performance-enhancing drugs

Robert Morgenthau: lawyer, longest-serving district attorney of Manhattan

Patrick B. Moscaritolo: CEO of Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

Kate Moss: supermodel, fashion designer

Lawrence Moulter: former chairman and CEO of the New Boston Garden Corporation

Bill Moyers: journalist, political commentator, former White House press secretary

Robert Mrazek: author, former congressman

Patrick J. Mullany: former special agent for the FBI, pioneered FBI's offender profiling

Kary Mullis: biochemist, Nobel laureate in chemistry for his work with DNA

Takashi Murakami: artist, painter, sculptor

Blake Mycoskie: entrepreneur, philanthropist, founder and chief shoe giver of TOMS shoes

Nathan Myhrvold: former chief technology officer at Microsoft

Ed Needham: former managing editor of *Rolling Stone* and editor in chief of *Maxim*

Sara Nelson: cofounder of the public interest law firm Christic Institute

Benjamin Netanyahu: prime minister of Israel

Jack Newfield: journalist, author, former columnist for the *Village Voice*

Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa: chef and restaurateur

Peggy Noonan: speechwriter and special assistant to President Ronald Reagan, author, columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*

Anthony Norvell: expert on metaphysics, author

Barack Obama: president of the United States, former U.S. senator from Illinois

ODB: musician, music producer, founding member of Wu-Tang Clan

Richard Oldenburg: former director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen: actresses, fashion designers

Olu Dara & Jim Dickinson: musicians, record producers

Estevan Oriol: photographer whose work often depicts Los Angeles urban and gang culture

Lawrence Osborne: journalist, author of *American Normal: The Hidden World of Asperger Syndrome*

Manny Pacquiao: professional boxer, first eight-division world champion

David Pagel: art critic, author, curator, professor of art history at Claremont College specializing in contemporary art

Anthony Pellicano: high-profile private investigator in Los Angeles

Robert Pelton: conflict-zone journalist, author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places* books

Andy Pemberton: former editor in chief of *Blender* magazine

David Petraeus: director of the CIA, 2011–2012, retired four-star U.S. Army general

Mariana Pfaelzer: United States federal circuit court judge, opposed California's Proposition 187

Jay Phelan: evolutionary biologist, professor at UCLA

Ann Philbin: director of the Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles

Mark Plotkin: ethnobotanist, author, expert on rainforest ecosystems

Christopher “moot” Poole: Internet entrepreneur, created 4chan and Canvas websites

Peggy Post: director of the Emily Post Institute, author and consultant on etiquette

Virginia Postrel: political and cultural journalist, author

Colin Powell: U.S. secretary of state, 2001–2005, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, former national security advisor, retired four-star U.S. Army general

Ned Preble: former executive, Synectics creative problem-solving methodology

Ilya Prigogine: chemist, professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Nobel laureate in chemistry, author of *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos, and the New Laws of Nature*

Prince: musician, music producer, actor

Wolfgang Puck: chef, restaurateur, entrepreneur

Pussy Riot: Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, the two members of the Russian feminist punk rock group who served time in prison

Steven Quartz: philosopher, professor at California Institute of Technology, specializing in the brain’s value systems and how they interact with culture

James Quinlivan: analyst at the RAND Corporation, specializing in introducing change and technology into large organizations

William C. Rader: psychiatrist, administers stem cell injections for a variety of illnesses

Jason Randal: magician, mentalist

Ronald Reagan: president of the United States, 1981–1989

Sumner Redstone: media magnate, businessman, chairman of CBS, chairman of Viacom

Judith Regan: editor, book publisher

Eddie Rehfeldt: executive creative director for the communications firm Waggener Edstrom

David Remnick: journalist, author, editor of the *New Yorker*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

David Rhodes: president of CBS News, former vice president of news for Fox News

Matthieu Ricard: Buddhist monk, photographer, author of *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill*

Condoleezza Rice: U.S. secretary of state, 2005–2009, former U.S. national security advisor, former provost at Stanford University, professor of political economy at the Stanford Graduate School of Business

Frank Rich: journalist, author, former columnist for the *New York Times*, editor at large for *New York* magazine

Michael Rinder: activist and former senior executive for the Church of Scientology International

Richard Riordan: mayor of Los Angeles, 1993–2001, businessman

Tony Robbins: life coach, author, motivational speaker

Robert Wilson and Richard Hutton: criminal defense attorneys

Brian L. Roberts: chairman and CEO of Comcast Corporation

Burton B. Roberts: chief administrative judge, New York Supreme Court in the Bronx, model for a character in Tom Wolfe's novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*

Michael Roberts: fashion journalist, fashion and style director at *Vanity Fair*, former fashion director at the *New Yorker*

Joe Robinson: speaker and trainer on work-life balance and productivity

Gerry Roche: senior chairman of Heidrick & Struggles, a business executive recruiting firm

Aaron Rose: film director, art-show curator, writer

Charlie Rose: journalist, TV interviewer, host of PBS's *Charlie Rose*

Maer Roshan: writer, editor, entrepreneur who launched *Radar* magazine and radaronline.com

Pasquale Rotella: founder of Insomniac Events, which produces music festival Electric Daisy Carnival

Karl Rove: Republican political consultant, chief strategist for George W. Bush presidential campaign, senior advisor and deputy chief of staff during the George W. Bush administration

Rick Rubin: record producer, founder of Def Jam Records

Ed Ruscha: pop artist

Salman Rushdie: novelist, author of *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*, winner of the Booker Prize

RZA: leader of Wu-Tang Clan, musician, actor, music producer

Charles Saatchi: cofounder of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, cofounder of the advertising agency M&C Saatchi

Jeffrey Sachs: economist, professor at Columbia University, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

Oliver Sacks: neurologist, author, professor at New York University School of Medicine

Carl Sagan: astronomer, astrophysicist, cosmologist, author, professor at Cornell University, narrated and cowrote the PBS TV series *Cosmos*

Jonas Salk: scientist, developer of the first polio vaccine, founder of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies

Jerry Saltz: art critic for *New York* magazine

James Sanders: scholar of the Old Testament and one of the editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Shawn Sanford: director of lifestyle marketing at Microsoft

Robert Sapolsky: neuroendocrinologist, professor at Stanford School of Medicine

John Sarno: professor of rehabilitation medicine at New York University School of Medicine

Michael Scheuer: former CIA intelligence officer, former chief of the Osama bin Laden tracking unit in the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, author

Paul Schimmel: former chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Julian Schnabel: artist, filmmaker

Howard Schultz: chairman and CEO of Starbucks

John H. Schwarz: theoretical physicist, professor at California Institute of Technology, one of the fathers of string theory

David Scott: Apollo-era astronaut, first person to drive on the moon

Mary Lynn Scovazzo: orthopedic surgeon, specialist in sports medicine

Terrence Sejnowski: professor, directs the Computational Neurobiology Laboratory at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies

Marshall Sella: journalist for *GQ*, *New York* magazine, and the *New York Times Magazine*

Al Sharpton: Baptist minister, civil rights activist, talk-show host

Daniel Sheehan: constitutional and public interest lawyer, cofounder of the Christic Institute and founder of the Romero Institute

Mike Sheehan: New York City police officer who became a news reporter

Yoshio Shimomura: consultant on Japanese culture

Ronald K. Siegel: psychopharmacologist, author

Michael Sigman: former president and publisher of *LA Weekly*

Sanford Sigoloff: businessman, corporate turnaround expert

Ben Silberman: entrepreneur, cofounder and CEO of Pinterest

Simon Sinek: former advertising executive, motivational speaker, author of *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*

Mike Skinner: musician, music producer, leader of English hip-hop project the Streets

Slick Rick: musician, music producer

Anthony Slide: journalist, author, expert on the history of popular entertainment

Carlos Slim: Mexican businessman, investor, philanthropist

Gary Small: professor of psychiatry at UCLA Medical School, director of UCLA Center on Aging

Fred Smith: founder, chairman, and CEO of FedEx Corp.

Rick Smolan: cocreator of the Day in the Life book series, former photographer for *National Geographic*, *Time* and *Life* magazines

Frank Snepp: journalist, former CIA agent and analyst during the Vietnam War

Scott Snyder: comic book and short-story writer

Scott Andrew Snyder and Tracy Forman-Snyder: design and art direction, Arkitip

Johnny Spain: one of the “San Quentin Six,” who attempted to escape from San Quentin State Prison in 1971

Gerry Spence: famed trial lawyer, never lost a criminal case as a prosecutor or a defense attorney

Art Spiegelman: cartoonist, illustrator, author of *Maus*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Eliot Spitzer: governor of New York, 2007–2008, former attorney general of New York

Peter Stan: analyst and economic theorist at RAND Corporation

Gwen Stefani: musician, fashion designer

Howard Stern: radio and TV personality

Cyndi Stivers: journalist, former editor in chief of *Time Out New York*

Biz Stone: cofounder of Twitter

Neil Strauss: author of *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists*

Yancey Strickler: cofounder and CEO of Kickstarter

James Surowiecki: journalist, business and financial columnist for the *New Yorker*

Eric Sussman: senior lecturer at UCLA School of Management, president of Amber Capital

t.A.T.u.: Russian music duo

André Leon Talley: contributor and former editor at large for *Vogue*

Amy Tan: author of *The Joy Luck Club*

Gerald Tarlow: clinical psychologist and therapist

Ron Teeguarden: herbalist, explores Asian healing techniques

Edward Teller: theoretical physicist, father of the hydrogen bomb

Ed Templeton: professional skateboarder, founder of skateboard company Toy Machine

Margaret Thatcher: prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1979–1990

Lynn Tilton: investor, businesswoman, founder and CEO of Patriarch Partners

Justin Timberlake: musician, actor

Jeffrey Toobin: journalist, author, lawyer, staff writer for the *New Yorker*, senior legal analyst for CNN

Abdullah Toukan: CEO of Strategic Analysis and Global Risk Assessment (SAGRA) Center, Jordan

Robert Trivers: evolutionary biologist, professor at Rutgers University

Richard Turco: atmospheric scientist, professor emeritus at UCLA, MacArthur Fellowship recipient

Ted Turner: media mogul, founder of CNN

Richard Tyler: fashion designer

Tim Uyeki: epidemiologist at U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Craig Venter: biochemist, geneticist, entrepreneur, one of the first to sequence the human genome

René-Thierry Magon de la Villehuchet: French aristocrat, money manager, one of the founders of Access International Advisors, which was caught in the Madoff investment scandal

Bill Viola: video artist whose work explores stages of consciousness

Jefferson Wagner: former Malibu councilman, owner of Zuma Jay Surfboards

Rufus Wainwright: musician

John Walsh: art historian, curator, former director of the J. Paul Getty Museum

Andy Warhol: Pop artist

Robert Watkins: businessman, chairman of the U.S. Rugby Foundation

Kenneth Watman: analyst at RAND Corporation specializing in strategic defense and nuclear deterrence

James Watson: molecular biologist, geneticist, zoologist, codiscoverer of the structure of DNA, Nobel laureate in medicine

Andrew Weil: physician, naturopath, teacher, writer on holistic health

Jann Wenner: cofounder and publisher of *Rolling Stone*, owner of *Men's Journal* and *US Weekly*

Kanye West: musician, music producer, fashion designer

Michael West: gerontologist, entrepreneur, stem cell researcher, works on regenerative medicine

Floyd Red Crow Westerman: musician, political activist for Native American causes

Vivienne Westwood: fashion designer who developed modern punk and new wave fashions

Peter Whybrow: psychiatrist, endocrinologist, researches hormones and manic-depression

Hugh Wilhere: spokesman for the Church of Scientology

Pharrell Williams: musician, music producer, fashion designer

Serena Williams: professional tennis player

Willie L. Williams: former police chief of Los Angeles

Marianne Williamson: spiritual teacher, New Age guru

Ian Wilmut: embryologist, led the team of researchers who first successfully cloned a mammal (a sheep named Dolly)

E. O. Wilson: biologist, author, professor emeritus at Harvard University, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Oprah Winfrey: founder and chairwoman of the Oprah Winfrey Network, actress, author

George C. Wolfe: playwright, theater director, two-time winner of the Tony Award

Steve Wozniak: cofounder of Apple Inc., designer of Apple I and Apple II computers, inventor

John D. Wren: president and CEO of marketing and communications company Omnicom

Will Wright: game designer, creator of Sim City and The Sims

Steve Wynn: businessman, Las Vegas casino magnate

Gideon Yago: writer, former correspondent for *MTV News*

Eitan Yardeni: teacher and spiritual counselor at the Kabbalah Centre

Daniel Yergin: economist, author of *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Dan York: chief content officer at DirecTV, former president of content and advertising sales, AT&T

Michael W. Young: geneticist, professor at The Rockefeller University, specializing in the biological clock and circadian rhythms

Shinzen Young: meditation teacher

Eran Zaidel: neuropsychologist, professor at UCLA, expert in hemispheric interaction in the human brain

Howard Zinn: historian, political scientist, professor at Boston University, author of *A People's History of the United States*

Appendix: How to Have a Curiosity Conversation

We've talked throughout *A Curious Mind* about how to use questions, how to use curiosity, to make your daily life better. But maybe you want to try what I did: Maybe you want to have some curiosity conversations, to sit down with a few really interesting people and try to understand how they see the world differently than you do.

Curiosity conversations can help give you a bigger life. They can do for you what they have done for me—they can help you step out of your own world, they can widen your perspective, they can give you a taste of experiences you won't have on your own.

Starter Conversations

Everyone has their own style, but I'd recommend starting close to home. That's what I did, in fact. Think about your immediate circle of relatives, friends, acquaintances, work-related colleagues. Maybe there are a few people with intriguing jobs or

very different experiences—of education, upbringing, culture, or people who work in your business but in a different arena.

That’s a great place to start, a good place to get a feel for how a curiosity conversation works. Pick someone, and ask if they’ll make a date to talk to you for twenty minutes or so—and specify what you want to talk about.

“I’ve always been curious about your work, I’m trying to broaden my sense of that world, and I was wondering if you’d be willing to spend twenty minutes talking to me about what you do, what the challenges and the satisfactions are.”

Or . . .

“I’ve always been curious about how you ended up as [whatever their profession is], and I was wondering if you’d be willing to spend twenty minutes talking to me about what it took to get where you are—what the key turning points in your career have been.”

Here are a few tips for when someone agrees to talk to you—whether they are a family member, an acquaintance, or a friend of a friend:

- Be clear that you want to hear their story. You’re not looking for a job, you’re not looking for advice about your own situation or any challenges you’re facing. You’re curious about them.
- Even if the person you’re talking to is someone you know well, be respectful—treat the occasion with just a tinge of formality, because you want to talk about things you don’t

normally; dress well; be on time; be appreciative of their time even as you sit down to begin.

- Think in advance about what you'd most hope to get out of the conversation, and think of a handful of open-ended questions that will get the person talking about what you're most interested in: "What was your first professional success?" "Why did you decide to do [whatever their job is]?" "Tell me about a couple of big challenges you had to overcome." "What has been your biggest surprise?" "How did you end up living in [their city]?" "What's the part of what you do that outsiders don't appreciate?"
- Don't be a slave to your prepared questions. Be just the opposite: Listen closely, and be a good conversationalist. Pick up on what the person you're talking to is saying, and ask questions that expand on the stories they tell or the points they make.
- Don't share your own story or your own observations. Listen. Ask questions. The goal is for you to learn as much about the person you're talking to as you can in the time you have. If you're talking, you're not learning about the other person.
- Be respectful of the person's time, without unnecessarily cutting off a great conversation. If they agree to give you twenty minutes, keep track of the time. Even if things are going well, when the allotted time has passed, it's okay to say something like, "I don't want to take too much of your

time and it's been twenty minutes" or "It's been twenty minutes, perhaps I should let you go." People will often say, "I'm enjoying this, I can give you a few more minutes."

- Be grateful. Don't just say thank you, give the best compliment for a conversation like this: "That was so interesting." And send a very brief follow-up email thank you, perhaps highlighting one story or point they made that you particularly enjoyed, or that was particularly eye-opening for you. That thank-you email shouldn't ask for anything more—it should be written so the person who gave you his or her time doesn't even need to reply.

Curiosity Conversations Farther Afield

Conversations with people outside your own circle or with strangers are harder to arrange, but they can be fascinating, even thrilling.

Who should you approach? Think about your own interests—whether it's college football or astrophysics or cooking, your community almost surely has local experts. When you read the paper or watch the local news, pay attention to people who make an impression on you. Search out experts at your local university.

Setting up curiosity conversations with people outside your own circle requires a little more planning and discretion:

- First, once you've identified someone you'd like to sit and talk to for twenty minutes, consider whether you might

know someone who knows that person. Get in touch with the person you know, explain who you want to talk to, and ask if you can use your acquaintance's name. An email that begins, "I'm writing at the suggestion of [name of mutual acquaintance]," establishes immediate credibility.

- If you are trying to meet someone who is totally outside of your circle, use your own credentials and strong interest up front. "I'm a vice president at the local hospital, and I have a lifelong interest in astronomy. I was wondering if you'd be willing to spend twenty minutes talking to me about your own work and the current state of the field. I appreciate that you don't know me, but I'm writing out of genuine curiosity—I don't want anything more than a twenty-minute conversation, at your convenience."
- You may hear back from an assistant asking for a little more information—and some people may find the request a little unusual. Explain what you're hoping for. Be clear that you're not seeking a job, or advice, or a career change—you are simply trying to understand a little about someone with real achievements in a field you care about.
- If you get an appointment, make sure to do as much reading as possible about the person you're going to see, as well as their field. That can help you ask good questions about their career track or their avocations. But it's a fine line: be respectful of people's privacy.

- Pay attention not just to what the person you're talking to says, but how they say it. Often there is as much information in people's tone, in the way they tell a story or respond to a question, as in the answer itself.
- The tips about starter conversations apply—along with your own experience of having those starter conversations. Have questions in advance, but let the conversation flow based on what you learn; make your side of the conversation questions—not your own thoughts; be respectful of the clock; be grateful in person and in a very brief follow-up email. If an assistant helps set up a curiosity conversation, be sure to include that person in your thank-you note.

Curiosity Takeaways

What you'll discover is that people love talking about themselves—about their work, about their challenges, about the story of how they arrived where they are.

The hardest part is the very beginning.

In a formal curiosity conversation, I would recommend not taking notes—the goal is a good conversation. Taking notes might just make someone uncomfortable.

But when you've left a person's office, it's valuable to spend just a few minutes thinking about what the most surprising thing you learned was; what the person's tone and personality was like, compared to what you might have imagined; what choices they've made that were different than you might have made in the same circumstances.

And you don't need to have curiosity conversations in formal settings that you set up. You meet people all the time. The person next to you on the airplane or at the wedding quite likely has a fascinating story and comes from a world different from yours—and all you have to do in that setting is turn, smile, and introduce yourself to start a conversation. “Hi, I'm Brian, I work in the movie business—what do you do?”

Remember that if you're trying to learn something, you should be asking questions and listening to the answers rather than talking about yourself.

Curiosity Conversation 2.0: The Curiosity Dinner Party

You can take the principles above and extend them into a group atmosphere by hosting a gathering. Think of two or three interesting friends or acquaintances—they can be people who know one another or do not—preferably from different lines of work and different backgrounds.

Invite those people, and ask each of them to invite two or three of their most interesting friends or acquaintances. The result will be a group of selected people who are interconnected but (hopefully) very different from one another.

The dinner party can be as formal or informal as you like, but it should be in a place that is conducive to mingling. Use the suggestions above to kick off the dinner conversation and encourage each person to follow their own curiosity, ask questions, listen, and learn about one another.