



Enthusiasm

I have recently been thoroughly enjoying a five-year-old's curiosity and enthusiasm produced by exploring the topic of our solar system. He has delved into anything he comes into contact with associated with the subject. A trip to the children's library has him bringing home books on each planet. (Which he enlists any

willing adult to read and reread multiple times in order to absorb the information!) He watches cartoon instructional YouTube videos, the subject delivered in song; and tirelessly completes workbooks, refining his printing, math, and other basic skills for young learners. He does not hesitate to tell anyone the order of the planets' placement from our Sun, what makes up the rings of Saturn and Uranus, the existence of five dwarf planets, and on and on.

When was the last time you were this enthusiastic about a subject? Does enjoying the investigation, lasting endless hours of reading anything you can get your hands on the related subject becoming the highlight of your day? Or have you thought that you have lost all spark of enthusiasm? Let's explore how we can reignite that spark.

Enthusiasm's spark is being curious. Before we become enthusiastically involved, we need to ask the question which is located at the beginning of our journey. But how do we know what to ask? Here is where that handy notebook comes in. Always keep a small notebook within reach (this has been made easier to do by the built-in smart phone "notes"). Whether you use a phone or physical notebook the idea is to use it.

Throughout the day we come across bits and pieces of information and observations constantly asking ourselves simple questions that crave more of what we don't know or don't understand. The human brain constantly is in search of the unknown, if you have any doubt, think about children—they are constantly asking the questions what, how, and why. So are we. We just forget to be persistent in asking the question. That is why writing down what we are curious about in the moment helps us to explore for answers

when we have time. True some questions may be answered easily but others may get us started in searching for more facts.

Once we have our questions we can begin on our discovery phase. Searching reliable sources consisting of articles from professional or hobbyist journals and magazines, lecture presentations, articles, watching documentaries, or reading books written by experts in the area will help us answer our questions. A funny thing happens though, while we are conducting this discovery we are most likely jotting down more questions as they pop into our heads.

When our questions have been answered we come to a crossroads in our investigation: are we satisfied with what we have found or is there more we want to know? If your answer produces wanting more, it's time to continue deeper searches into more sources of information and, if applicable, gathering supplies to create something, participate in a hobby, and/or attend lectures or join a club.

Congratulations all around, we have entered enthusiasm. We are feeling very happy doing what we're doing and wanted to continue. Now, how do we stay enthusiastic?

No worries, here are some tips to keep the enthusiasm flowing:

1. In the beginning being patient gives enthusiasm time to grow. Experts don't become experts overnight and neither do enthusiasts!
2. Sit with the results of what is now known and think. Live in the moment. It keeps you positive and raises your appreciation.
3. Have conversations about it with groups, friends, and family. It keeps the enthusiasm juices flowing.
4. Try to think "outside the box" and create something related to the subject. This can be fun, pleasurable, and adds to the enthusiasm quotient.
5. We never stop evolving. There is a level of passion inside of enthusiasm. If the passion of enthusiasm fades it is okay to say its' time has come and gone and give it the boot. (There is always something new around the corner!)

With Gratitude,

Kai