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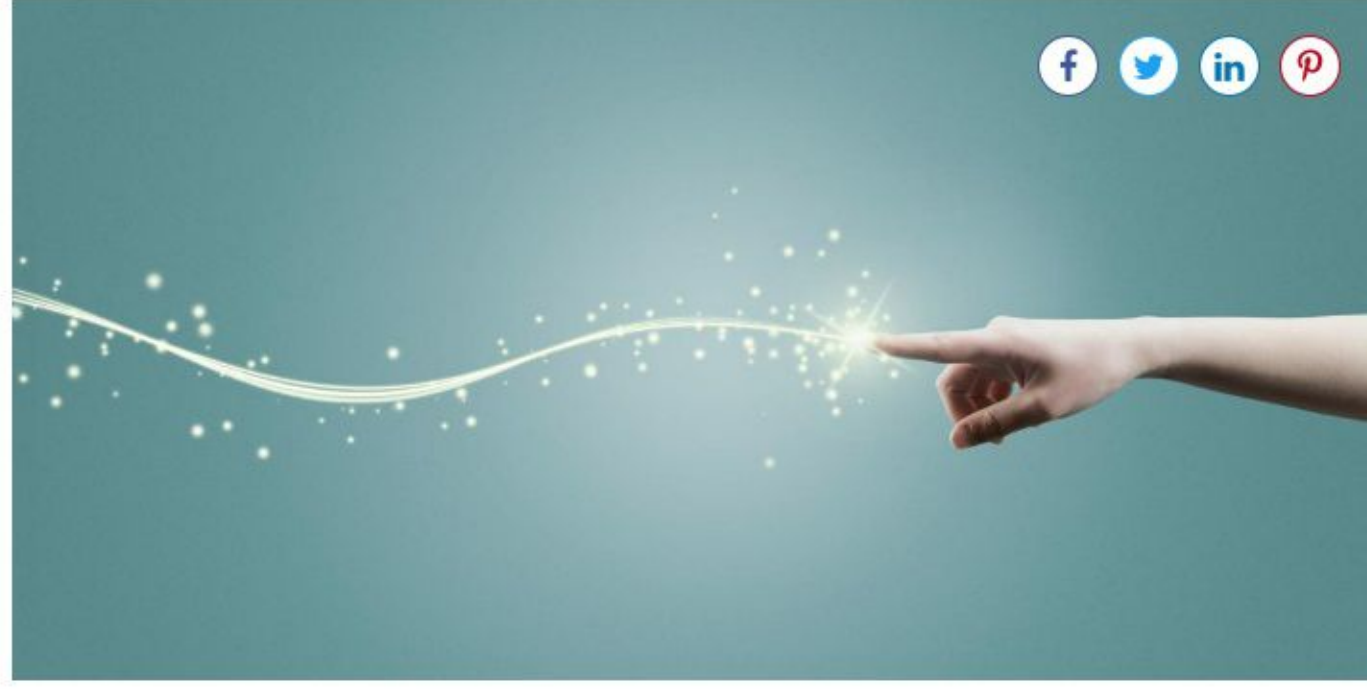
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Explore: Ignite Your Curiosity To Create Opportunities

Let your imagination off the leash, and it can open you to exciting paths—business opportunities, a new career or any other life change.



Yagi Studio/Getty Images.

by RICH FELLER

What is it about curiosity that makes everybody so nervous? “Curiosity killed the cat”—says who? What you really should fear is the loss you suffer if you don't ask questions, dig deeper and think creatively and explore.

You don't *really* want to be a kid again, yet there is something so intriguing about a child's uninhibited urge to explore and imagine, to be carefree and do or be anything.

Here's the real question: How can you remove the “I should,” “I need to,” and “I must” messages that hijack your ability to reimagine, explore and remain curious? The great thing about being an adult is that *you* get to decide.

Imagine using a different lens, seeing things that you've never seen before, experiencing something in a way that you've never done before. What fun! And a bit scary. What would it look like to put aside your fears and take the short leap to just imagine something new, something different, something outside your habits? And then try it on, see how it fits?

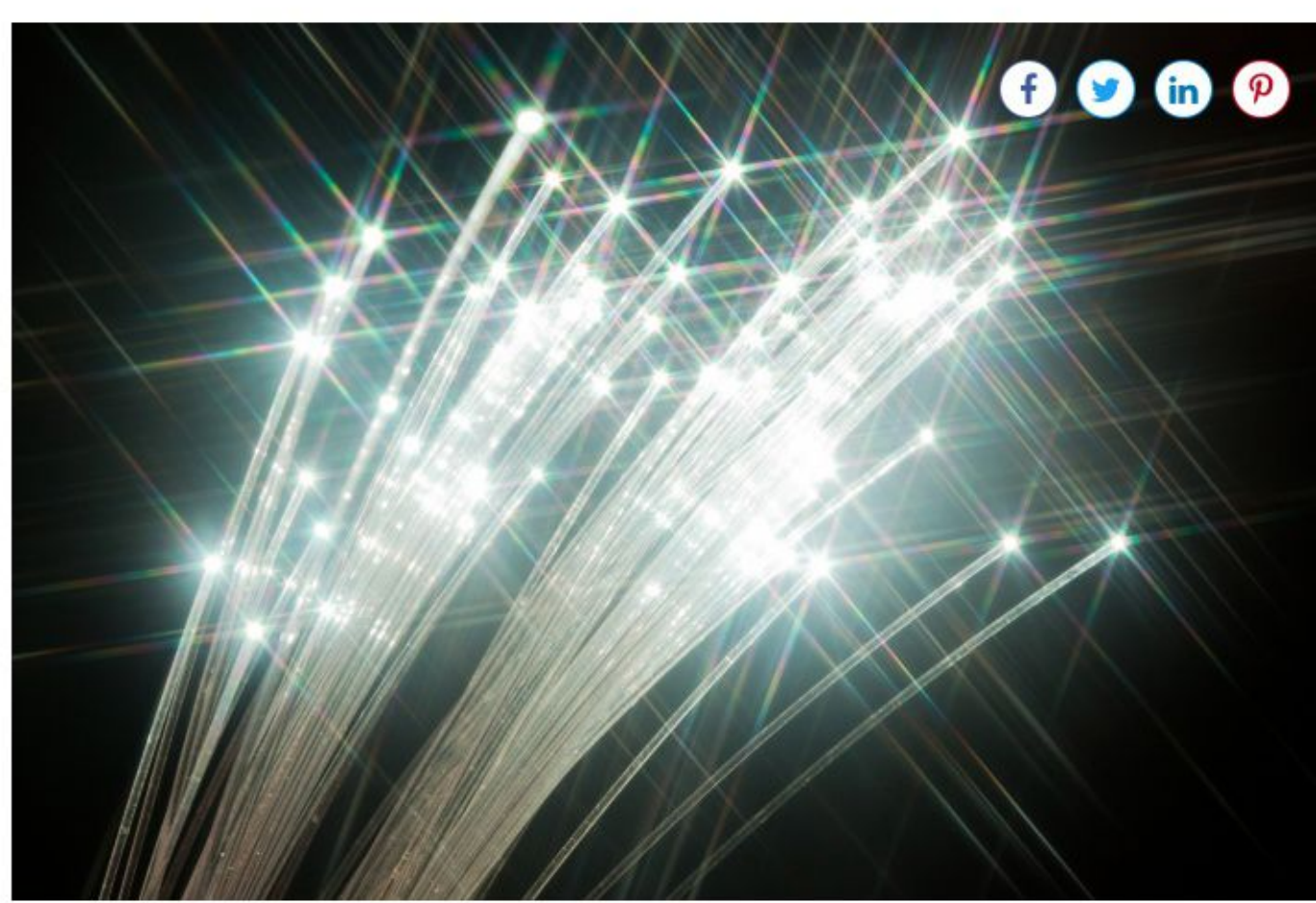
What have you always wanted to do? Maybe you yearn to run a marathon (or a 5K), learn (or teach) something new—how to sail, play cards or guitar, or volunteer for a cause that excites you. Go ahead. Move on to a new career. Go sky-diving or pick up a bike again.

Say “yes” rather than “but.”

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and let your mind wander. What do you see? Is it the same old, same old? Close your eyes just a bit tighter. Take another breath. Any hint of something new creeping in? Can you see something fresh, exciting, even risky? Let go. It's OK to stick a toe in the water.

Just because you imagine something and explore it doesn't mean you have to do it. Take time to imagine the possibilities, then gather information and consult with your [connections](#). When you're ready, take a small step that fits you.

Just because we imagine something and explore it doesn't mean that we have to do it. It's okay to stick your toe in the water.



How Two Coworkers Became Explorers Together

Angelina and Teresa both craved something new but were too nervous or busy to try. So these coworkers agreed to serve as each other's accountability partner and explore new options. Over their lunch break, they took turns listing 10 things that they had always wanted to do. Soon they were laughing and getting excited. They let their ideas soak in overnight, then talked through the possibilities the next day, asking each other what they needed to find out to go forward. Angelina and Teresa decided to each pick one new activity to try over the weekend, and report back on Monday.

Angelina, who's 48, tried a Body Pump fitness class at her neighborhood gym and Teresa, who's 55, attended a free Adobe Photoshop course held at the local community college. On Monday, the two women met over lunch to share their adventures. Quickly, they began to imagine more ways to explore. Though it was a bit nerve-racking at first, exploring was quite fun.

Once you get over any hesitancy, you too will be energized by exploring. Curiosity is a lens you can focus on all dimensions of your life. Unsure where to start? Consider these six areas:

Work and career: What configuration fits your personality and needs best: salaried work, contract and consulting arrangements, or entrepreneurial ventures? How can you expand the overlap between your passions and income needs? What emerging opportunities haven't you yet researched?

Financial decisions: What investment avenues align with your short and long-term goals? Where can you cut expenses and elevate income? Do your priorities match your expenditures?

Spirituality and faith: How can you best express this part of yourself? Where do you want to deepen your [reflection](#) and practice?

Relationships and community: Who knows you well? What would expand the intimacy that you enjoy in your life? Whom do you want to know better?

Health and recreation: How can you increase your vitality? What can you do to improve your sleep, nutrition and activity? Where do you find people you enjoy having fun?

Home and living environment: What makes your living space feel homier to you? What service opportunities are you hoping to explore? Where do you want to have an impact in your community?

Allowing yourself to explore can take you out of your comfort zone into the unknown and new! What's most inconceivable and challenging at first often ends up being your most rewarding experiences.

So, the question is: Who would you be if you weren't too busy being who you've always been? Or, what would you explore if you knew you couldn't fail? What would it take to say, “I can try that!” And, even more, “I will do that!”

Life Reimagined thought leader Rich Feller, Ph.D. teaches at Colorado State University. He is a licensed counselor and certified coach with scores of publications in academic journals and awards.

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