

# Episode 281: How Curiosity Can Help Managers Build Better Teams with Scott Shigeoka

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**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 00:00

In the fast-paced world of work, sometimes we forget to push pause and take time to just be curious. But curiosity is an essential part of building relationships and solving problems. So how can we tap into our natural curiosity? Well, I hope you're curious. A warm welcome to Shannon W to The Modern Manager, Podcast Plus community.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 00:21

Today's guest is Scott Shigeoka. Scott is an internationally recognized curiosity expert, speaker and author. He is known for translating research into strategies that promote positive well being and connected relationships around the globe, including at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, and their his popular courses at the University of Texas at Austin. Scott implements his curiosity practices in the public sector, fortune 500 companies, Hollywood media organizations, education institutions and small businesses. Scott and I talk about all things curiosity, why curiosity is important, how to be curious through his dive model, different types of curiosity, and so much more. Now, here's the conversation.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 01:01

Are you a manager, boss, or team leader who aspires to level up and unleash your team's full potential? You're listening to The Modern Manager podcast, and I'm your host, Mamie Kanfer Stewart. Each week, I explore effective strategies and provide actionable insights that supercharge your management abilities, optimize team performance, and foster a healthy workplace culture. Become a rockstar manager and help your team thrive at [themodernmanager.com/more](https://themodernmanager.com/more).

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 01:26

Thank you so much for joining me today, Scott. I'm really grateful that you are here with me. And we are going to talk about curiosity, which is a great topic and something I've never discussed on this show before so, welcome.

**Scott Shigeoka** 01:40

Lucky us, lucky listeners, lucky community. It's my favorite topic. It's my favorite topic to talk about.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 01:46

So favorite even wrote a book about it, which you know, is that means you must be really passionate.

**Scott Shigeoka** 01:52

You got to all my people that have written books out there, you all know you've got to be passionate about your topic, if you want to write a book because it's so hard. So yeah, you have to be intrinsically motivated, you know, so and I love curiosity. Love it so much.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 02:04

Alright, so what is curiosity? Like, how do you define it?

**Scott Shigeoka** 02:08

Yeah, like, what is this thing that I love? Yeah. So curiosity, is defined as the search for understanding. And it's basically, you know, something that we've heard tossed around, you know, in, you know, workplaces at home or reading books, I like to nuance that a little bit by saying curiosity is on a spectrum. So there's shallow curiosity on one side, and deep curiosity on the other. So shallow curiosity, is the kind of search for understanding that gives you you know, bits of data points, you know, it's something you might use for pub trivia, you know, or when you're meeting someone for the first time, you're like, what's your name? Where do you live? What do you do for work? That's shallow curiosity. Deep curiosity, which is really what my work is about. And what my book is about is going beneath the surface. So I define that as a search for understanding that is connective and transformative in some way. So instead of asking, What's your name, you might ask, what's the story of your name? Who named you tell me about

them? Instead of asking, Where do you live? You might say, What does home mean to you? How do you flourish best in a home? Instead of saying, what do you do for work, you might ask, where do you like to spend your time and your energy in a day? Why is that so it just goes a little bit deeper, helps you to understand the stories of values and who someone is. And it helps someone to feel like they really matter, which is what my work is all about. How do we make people feel like they matter? Because they do. That's, that's the whole promise of deep curiosity is to deepen those connections with others and also yourself.

### **Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 03:39

Yeah, well, I have to tell you, after reading your book, I started trying some of these deep curiosity questions with folks. I mean, it was, it was really easy. Right after summer, we're on vacation and seeing even just friends and and folks, my community and asking them, oh, how was your summer? Which is the shallow side? Yes. And following it up with a, what was one of your most precious moments? Or what was one of the highlights? And it? It's, I mean, it's super true. Like you suddenly get insight into someone. And so many people actually said to me, after I asked, thank you so much for asking. I was like, Whoa, I mean, all I did was ask you a simple question. But instantly, it changed the dynamic in our in our relationship in that moment.

### **Scott Shigeoka** 04:21

And it's like an ocean. That's what I write about in the book, right? So you have the shallow side of an ocean, and the deep end of an ocean and one isn't better than the other. I always tell folks, you know, you don't prioritize deep over shallow you know, there are a lot of circumstances where you actually need to start in the shallow end before you creep into the deep. You know, I wouldn't recommend for everyone to go to a conference and say, you know, like, what's the deepest childhood trauma you've ever had in your life or something like that, you know what I mean? Like that's like really can be inappropriate for that relationship. It's really interesting and deep but you might not be ready for it or they might not be ready to share or details about that, because they don't know us like that. So I think just like an ocean, the shallow end is just an entryway into the deep. And it's really fluid, you know, just in a conversation in a relationship, you can move from the shallow end to the deep end of curiosity. At any point, it's really beautiful to remember that because you don't always have to put the pressure on yourself to go deep every time. And you can be brave and courageous. Like you were in those interactions by saying like, what if I tried like a little deeper? Of a question? What if I got a little bit more from this person that I'm talking to out of genuine interests? And you'll find that people will say exactly what you said, which is, oh, my gosh, thank you for asking me that. Like, I feel so seen. I feel like you care about me. I feel like I get to share these beautiful precious moments that I've had out with the world. And isn't that what we all want?

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart 05:50**

So maybe let's take a step back here and talk a little bit about what keeps us from being curious in the first place? Like, why don't why are we already moving through the world? Or what is hard about moving to the world in a way that actually expresses curiosity?

**Scott Shigeoka 06:06**

Yeah, I think that, you know, there's a couple of things that stand in our way. The first thing is fear. I think that's one of the biggest things that keep us from being curious. But ironically, Curiosity can actually reduce our fear in many situations. So I've definitely heard working with clients, let's say leaders of large organizations, for instance, they've told me that, you know, they feel fearful of creating a space of curiosity, because what might that lead to for their workforce? What might they start to get interested in? What jobs might they see on the other side of the pond, you know, but what actually happens is when folks are curious, they are more, they're happier, they're more creative, they're more innovative, that problem solving, they feel more connected to others that are around them, just like you express in your example. And so that actually drives persons or workers feeling towards the place that they work at. And, you know, there's these fears that are an are sort of just imagined, that hold us back from our curiosity. But there's also very real fear that hold us back from curiosity, I think one of the biggest fears that I can think of for me is the fear of death, right, or the fear of an end or the fear of loss. And when I talk to palliative care, physicians and end of life, doulos for the book, they actually told me that when someone has an of life anxiety, for instance, and they are afraid of what's to come, that's coming for all of us, which is our end or death, they actually get them to be curious about their lives, the life that they lead, you know, who did they meet? What what relationships are meaningful for them? What is the legacy that they're leaving behind? What is the impact that they've made on others? Getting curious about the end? What does this mean for them? What, you know, how would they like to die with dignity, and by confronting and being curious about the things that we are most afraid of, we actually reduce our anxiety and we can actually face those things and end of life doulos say that when they witness and accompany people at the end of their lives, they actually do see that transformation, just by them being curious. And there might be a reason why then things like psychedelics are so helpful in the healing space, or around, you know, palliative care or around trauma, because what it does is it allows us to move through these defenses, like fear and actually get curious about the things around us are inside of us. So fear is a big one. And I would say the other is, is time, you know, a lot of folks come to me and they say, We don't have time to be curious, I've all these other things that I have going on. Like I have, you know, my work, I have all these responsibilities. I have this massive team or this massive department, I have a life outside of work, my family, my children, my aging parents, whatever it is, right, we're all every single person on this planet is dealing with so much is holding so much. And it can feel like not the priority, right? But when you actually look into deep curiosity and the benefits that it has for us and the people around us, it makes us happier. Again, it makes us more creative and makes us feel more connected. That helps us with personal growth, it can actually give us more of our time back it can help us to understand

what's actually important to us in our lives. When we get curious about that it can help us to focus in on the things that matter to us because we're not just in rote automation all the time, we're actually getting curious about where our time is going. So I think time is a barrier but again, ironically, using curiosity can actually liberate you from you know, what might be holding you back.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 09:41

I love this idea of being curious about ourselves, right and like starting from a place of what is important to me what is holding me back where you know, where What experiences have I had that have shaped me or whatever it might be as a way to almost practice curiosity as you're going being more comfortable going out into the world and being curious.

**Scott Shigeoka** 10:04

Yep. And getting curious about our body, we just took three breaths before this conversation as a way to center ourselves, right? We how do we get curious about what's coming up with our, you know, in our bodies, when we're feeling something, where in our bodies are we feeling it? I think that kind of curiosity is so important. And I call that inward curiosity, what we're talking about right now, how do we get curious about our life, our experiences, what matters to us, our values, our body. It's what therapists will help you to do. And they're guiding you through the process of learning about yourself and your past history and how that might be informing behaviors today. So that's all inward curiosity. But there's two other directions to curiosity too. I call them the cardinal direction. So there's inward, but there's also outward curiosity, which is how to get curious about other people, systems cultures, if you're in an organization, let's say, as a manager, you know, we how to get curious about how how people are feeling the context that they're in power dynamics. And then there's the beyond, which is what's not in the physical realm. So that might be for some of us, the divine God, consciousness, but it also might just be seven generations from now those who aren't yet born or ancestors, those who are no longer with us, we can learn so much by getting curious about the beyond. So those are the three directions of deep curiosity inward, outward and beyond.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 11:21

Let's dive into the outward space for a minute and talk about being curious at work. What does that look like to you? And if we were going to lay out opportunities to be curious, in the workplace, where do you see some of those places where we could be more curious?

**Scott Shigeoka** 11:36

Well, first of all, I love what you were saying about starting from the inward because I think that has to happen, you have to be curious towards yourself, if you're going to expect it to be successful going outward into the world, right, you would need to practice, you know, understanding your own emotions, to start spotting it in others right really accurately. And to have that empathic accuracy. You need to be curious about what work means to you and your own life to have insights and to understand what it might mean for others. But really, when you start to go outward, it's to understand that you are your own individual, and so is everyone else around you, right, so what might be true for you don't assume it's true for everyone else. And that's why I have a practice in my book called back that assu were asked is short for assumptions. It's like back that assumption of the back that assu because it's so much more memorable and fun. And I love that juvenile song. But back that also is this idea that, you know, we all have our different approaches to anything in life, let's say work as an example, right? The way that you think about work and what it means for you what it gives to you, for instance, this is about you. You know, expressing leadership and finding an impact in the world might be very different to someone that you're managing, you know, maybe they're just collecting a paycheck for their family, maybe they're really interested in skills building, maybe creativity is actually what they're really looking for in the space of their working each week. So how do you come in by detaching from your assumptions as best as possible, and coming in with a true genuine curiosity to understand this person that is standing in front of you, or sitting in front of you? What is it that they want? What is it that they care about? What did they value and have nuance right? And an age where we are moving away from nuance, and we are making everything simplified, and we're flattening people's identities, and we're saying, I know everything about you, because you voted this way, or you did this thing at work, or you look this way, we have to stop that. And we have to move towards more complexity, more nuance, critical thinking, by asking questions and not assuming that we know everything about the person we're setting in front of, even if that's someone that we've worked with for four years, or someone we've been married to, for 10 years, people are always changing, and we have to continue to be relentlessly curious about them.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 13:51

It's so true. And I love when I have moments of curiosity, which I admit I also need to get better at. But where I am sitting in a meeting, and I'm thinking one thing, and I'm assuming that someone else is thinking the same thing. And then someone asks maybe me someone else in the meeting. And suddenly it's very clear that we all actually are thinking very different things. Right? It really is true that we are all coming at any conversation for our own perspective.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 14:17

Is there another practice that you want to highlight that you just one of your favorites? Because you have a bunch of the books so I'm one of you have another favorite you want to share?

**Scott Shigeoka** 14:25

Well, I first just want to speak to thank you for naming that. You know, we're all on this journey of improving our own curiosity, right? And I think you know, I, my partner he is so into weightlifting and going to the gym, if you can see me on the screen like I'm new to that arena but I'm doing this as a connective moment. You know, we do other things together. But this is one thing that I'm also trying on and it's you know, what I realized is that curiosity is like a muscle a muscle in our body. And you know, just as I'm just doing the bar when I'm like bench pressing and you know, my partner's saying like all these huge weight so one other side, you know, we can't expect people to all be at the same level with their curiosity, right? Like, I would never, you know, tell someone who is newer on the journey or is still, you know, growing in their curiosity muscles to, you know, go to a rally of the opposing political party, which is something that I've done right, I went to Trump rallies, I went to mega churches, I went and met with people who are part of organizations that are anti LGBTQ, as a progressive, queer, Asian American, that is like lifting, you know, lots and lots of weight. So you can injure yourself or others, you know, if you step beyond the bounds of what you're able to do. So I just want to name that really clearly. So when I'm talking about these practices, and exercises, you know, make sure that you're being really mindful and really curious about where your limits are and your boundaries, and what feels doable to you and know that it's a journey, and know that we're all born with curiosity, which is so great, that means you have the superpower inside of you, thanks to evolution, because without curiosity, our ancestors wouldn't have found, you know, water or food sources that were just around the riverbend. Right. So we needed that, you know, ability to be curious, and also to be socially curious, so that we could build relationships with people and have a better chance for survival. So thank God for ancestors, like we have curiosity to in our DNA, and it feels good to, you know, which I'll go into later. But yeah, I think another skill that's really, really important for me, and it's probably coming up because I had a morning, y'all, I just everything was just crashing down to me. And I know many people listening in may have had a similar morning or day. So I really like to practice something I call quicksand. And quicksand is in the chapter that's about how to you welcome in the hard times in your life. Because we all go through hard times in our life, we're going through separations, we're moving, which I just did on Tuesday, we are, you know, moving our families into different environments, you know, we are having relational strife or relationships on the brink and our families are beyond. We all go through hard times, health scares, you know, health issues, you know, so quicksand is all about giving you the capacity to move through those hard times using the power of your curiosity. And the way you do that is you remember that when you're in physical quicksand, you don't flail, you don't lash out, because that'll actually sink you further and faster into the quicksand. So just like when you feel like you're in the quicksand of life, don't flail. Instead, you want to get buoyant, you want to take deep breaths, and deep breaths out, you want to take mindful breaths, you want to be really attuned and curious about what your body is feeling. And then you want to introduce slow and attentional movement, somewhere into your body, whether that's taking a

slow and very slow, very mindful walk around the block, or whether that's just moving your body in a certain way to your favorite song, you know, which is something I do I call it body journaling, whatever that way is, that actually is shown by research to, you know, with the mindful breathing with that movement, to create a sense of calm to help with decision making, and to also reduce some of those negative emotions you might be filling, and also to reduce your anxiety. So you know, I think slowing down sometimes feels like the opposite of what we want to do. We want to fight fire with fire. But that actually isn't what's going to serve us in these moments that feel so urgent, we actually want to slow things down.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 18:20

As you said, we started our conversation with a couple of deep breaths, and it was very grounding and centering and look how much great energy we have now. So fun.

**Scott Shigeoka** 18:28

Yes. And you did so well. You, you slow down you quicksand in conversations, like the way in which you respond to things you repeat back, you say what, you know, I just said, There's something I've heard you say with other guests, you know, that slows down the conversation, which allows more to bubble up because we all just like I said, are individuals and we all take time to, you know, think and to express vocally and so you slowing down the conversation is just going to make it so much richer. So you're using your own curiosity to open up the floor for something new.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 18:58

All right, let's shift gears a little bit and talk about the DIVE model that you discuss in your book about how we can be more curious and kind of the different components to creating an effective I don't know if you can say that effective curiosity, how would you describe it? What is the DIVE model? What does it help us do?

**Scott Shigeoka** 19:15

Yeah, so just like I was saying, let's use the weightlifting metaphor while we're on it. So, you know, for me, it's helpful to have some kind of playbook right like I want to have, what are the exercises I need to do? And what are the different parts of my body that that's exercising. So the same is true for deep curiosity. Deep curiosity, just like lifting weights and creating a regimen there. There are four muscles for deep curiosity. And, you know, thankfully, the four muscles



start with D I V E. So it's about diving into deep curiosity. So it's D, D is detach, which is to let go of your ABCs, your assumptions, your biases and certainty. I is intend, which is to create the mindset and a setting for curiosity. V is to value which is to see the dignity of those who are being curious with, which also includes yourself. So see your own dignity value yourself. And then E is to embrace which I was just speaking about, which is to welcome the hard times in life. So you have detach, intend, value, embrace. And in the book *Seek* that I've just wrote, I have a bunch of different practices like back that assu up and quick sanding that are underneath each of those exercises. So you can almost follow it like a regimen, I find it really fun. And I've wanted to, you know, create really playful ways to be curious, because I think that's what I was looking for it I was like, how do I make this engaging and fun for me and the people around me, and not just like, just sitting down and writing lists or writing things down? Right? Like, I wanted a more expensive way of practicing it. So it's all about like, using your body and doing things in relationship with others and getting out in nature and, you know, things that you can do with your mind. And yeah, so it's, it's, it's all really fun, you know, for me, and, you know, many of the readers that have read it so far. So I, I like that about the practices, too, is curiosity is inherently playful.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart 21:08**

I enjoyed so many of the examples and the practices that you mentioned, I wonder if we can talk again, specifically about in in the workplace, and how we might bring some of those practices. And I'm thinking about like, question storming as a way to get ourselves out of being so solution oriented and trying to kind of get back to a place of inquiry. Are there other kinds of examples or stories that you've used in shaping your own business? Or that you've worked with clients of of how we can bring curiosity into the conversations that we're having at work?

**Scott Shigeoka 21:40**

Yeah, absolutely. So in D, detach, you know, I talked about letting go the ABCs, assumptions, biases, uncertainty, I think certainty is a really big one in work culture. We love to cling on to certainty because it's, it's, you know, what Elaine Fox called, sometimes it's a safety behavior that allows us to feel like we are less anxious about this uncertain world we live in. But unfortunately, y'all like we live in a very uncertain world, and uncertain time, work is no different. You know, we don't really know what's going to happen in a year, let alone three years. I'd like to see the people that could have imagined in 2017, what would happen in 2020, right, things are constantly changing. And so really, what curiosity is about is developing that muscle to, you know, sit with the discomfort and also to use uncertainty as actually a superpower rather than something that we need to fear right? Again, be curious about the things that we fear. So one of the practices in that section is about be an inventor. And what I mean by an inventor is to share when you're wrong, or share when you don't know something, right. We live in this culture, especially in work, where knowingness is revered, those who talk the loudest are often

promoted, those who show that they know something are often valorized. But when you actually look at the research, it is the folks who are most humble and most curious are actually the most likeable and most effective as leaders. And they're going to be the ones that are going to navigate uncertainty much better, because they're coming in with questions. And they're coming in with a mindset that looks very different than I know all the answers, I know exactly what's going to happen in three years. And then surprise, it doesn't fold the way that you thought it did.

### **Scott Shigeoka** 23:29

So being inventor, there's, you know, three different steps. One is to use a three phrase or three word phrase, which is really easy to remember, which is tell me more. So if you're, if someone that you're managing on your team, maybe is coming to you with a grievance, or maybe they are, they have a great idea, no matter what you think, in that moment, you might have all of these assumptions about what they're telling you, you know, pause for a second and ask them tell me more, tell me more about that I you know, really value what this person is telling you, you know, they're a part of your team. At the end of the day, you want to make sure that they feel like they matter because they do and you can do that by actually valuing what they're sharing with you no matter what level you think they're coming in. The second piece is to model that your your admit or status so if your social media profiles and and your team meetings that you're leading are all here's everything that I know and you've never once said, I don't know or I've that's a really good point. Let's look into that or I have questions about that, like XYZ, you're not going to be modeling in your team culture. You know, a value around question asking a value around searching and discovery for what else might be out there and for looking for inspiration and finding you answers to problems rather than the ones that we've used time and time again. So that is really critical. You got to model it as a manager You're expecting others to do the same. And fortunately for us, the research says that curiosity is contagious. So when you practice curiosity, it's more likely that others will, too. It's not a causation. But it does lead to an environment where people are more willing to be curious too. So a great for parents, and great for those who are going back to family dinners, and they're like, oh, gosh, I'm gonna see that so and so who has a very different political view than me? Well, you can start with your own curiosity towards them, asking them questions about their values, or view sets. And you know, it won't always work. Sometimes it takes a journey a couple of months for, you know, a shift to actually happen, just like when I came out to certain family members, at the beginning, they don't understand it. But if you hold on to the relationship, and you honor it, and you take the time that's really required, you know, many people will go towards, you know, an arc of justice, of understanding of belonging, that's what we all want. And then the last piece is, you know, another phrase, which is also thankfully, three words, which is I don't know. And so tell me more, I don't know, I don't know, is especially great for managers, especially first time managers that I work with, they're very afraid. And sometimes for really good reasons of using that word, because they want to be seen as competent. They feel that there might be, let's say, age discrimination, or other forms of power differentials in the organization. And saying that they don't know things to them feels like they are reducing the perception of competency that others have of them. But what I argue back to them, is that use saying that I don't know. And following

up with a way in which you will soon try to discover that is very different than I don't know, I'm putting it away, and then moving on, right? So curiosity is not just something that lives in our mind. And I talked about this in the book, it is action oriented. That's why every exercise I do, it's about being in the world, being in relationship, really uncovering things about yourself, you got to have the ACT action. It's not just about contemplation. And so, you know, I always say saying, you don't know, does that mean that you're one of inaction. And you have to be really, really clear about that. So tell me more, model it yourself and I don't know.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 27:10

I love those so much. And especially that I don't know, right like that is, is so important. And it's so hard for so many of us to actually admit that we don't know something when we think we should. But it is so powerful, especially when you have that. And here's what we're going to do to find out.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 27:24

Alright, so last question. Before we have to wrap up. We've been talking a lot about how we can be more curious and how we can do that in the workplace. But what if we are struggling with a team member who seems to be holding very tight to their ABCs? And we're really trying to cultivate someone else to be more curious, any tips on how we can beyond role modeling, which you obviously just shared as a really powerful approach. Are there other things that we can do to support our colleagues to be more curious themselves?

**Scott Shigeoka** 27:55

Well, I'm curious, I'm going to I want to flip this back to you. And then I'll answer I'm really curious, based on you, you know, reading the book and sort of thinking about your own curiosity and acknowledging sort of where you are on your journey, you know, what do you think might be a good way to do that? From your point of view? And then I'll build on you.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 28:11

Ah, oh, no. Okay, so I'm gonna start with B. I don't know. And, and I'll say two things that partially from reading your book, and and also just life experience. One is that it's definitely true. When you ask someone a question, so much of the time, they will ask you a question back. It's this kind of give and take, and if you're aware of it, it's kind of amazing how that happens. And so it seems to me that one approach is to just ask questions of your colleague and open space

for them to ask questions back. So that's kind of one thing that that I've been thinking about. And the second is, I use a lot and people sometimes criticize this approach. But I do a lot of I wonder such and such, I wonder what it would look like if we tried this. And I wonder what would happen if we did this, and I try to create a space where I get other folks to also wonder with me, and think about what's possible, or what might be, and, and, uh, generally seems to work that when I talk about what I'm wondering about, it opens up the door for other people to wonder themselves.

### **Scott Shigeoka 29:23**

I love it. I love both of those. You know, and this is like I'm saying, you know, we all have curiosity within ourselves. We all have life experiences, where we can start to practice this now. To your first point, the give and take spiro which, you know, colleague, Todd Kashdan has really coined around curiosity when you open yourself up to curiosity with someone else, like they tend to open it up towards you and then it becomes this give and take spiro. That is so true. And I've definitely seen that in my own conversations and pretty much every environment I've been in even ones where someone might be in conflict with me, or someone might be at agonistic towards my, my identities or my possessions. And so it's a really effective strategy. The second piece around wondering, you know, just to build on that I think about where are the places where we wonder or find a sense of all. And that's why when I lead, you know, let's say executive leadership programs, or you know, train social entrepreneurs, which I've done with the University of Pennsylvania, or even with my students at UT Austin, you know, I always incorporate elements of nature, you know, let's go and feel nature with our actual bodies, you know, let's use our senses to, you know, be in nature and not in just this, you know, hippie be one with trees, although like, they might be onto something, you know, also, in this way of, let's be inspired in the places we already know we are, are inspired, right, and let's then use that as fuel for our own creativity, and to solve our own problems with whether those are at work in our families, or in our own spiritual lives. As examples. What I would also say, you know, for folks who are, you know, trying to think this through is to value all of the voices that are not just in a room in your team, but also within yourself. So they're, you know, I was working with Pixar at one point, and they have this really great example where when they review movies together, they bring everyone in, it doesn't matter if you're a writer or an animator, you could be an accountant, you could be, you know, working in operations, but everyone does the early reviews of these movies, and provides feedback. And some of the best ideas don't come from the writers and animators, they come from accounting Joe, you know, you know, just loves movies. And, you know, just so happens to have a hard skill of accounting, you know, so how do we start to create environments where we're really valuing all of the voices in a room, which might be your youngest, which might be someone in a role that's not traditionally elevated in your organization, it sometimes comes from the most unlikely places. And that's what really helps to level up your team from zero to one. The other thing I would say is about valuing all the voices inside of yourself. And I think that's why modalities like internal family systems, or any, you know, other form of healing, where you actually turn towards the parts of yourself, versus trying to push them away, is so extremely valuable for you to just show up as a better manager, but

also a better person, and your own life with your own relationships, because you start to see and be more self compassionate towards, let's say, my bossy side, or my anxious side of just as much as I validate my joyful and my optimistic and curious sides, right. And when you start to see the fullness of someone, you start to see yourself in that really compassionate way you can start to extend that to others. And that allows you to stay in that mode of curiosity without, you know, feeling like you're overcoming obstacles, or connecting with someone whom, you know, you now have negative views towards because of XYZ. So So I think I would add those two. I mean, there's so many more that I would love to go to. I know we're short on time, but you know, I would just say listeners out there, you probably have a bunch of practices and ideas yourself. So be inwardly curious and think about your own context, your own team, and the own skills that have been given to you, by your grandparents, by your friends, by past mentors, by past managers and use that as tools to move forward to, you know. It's not all. The answers aren't all in my book, you know, they're also inside of you.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart 33:20**

It's a beautiful place for us to wrap up. Scott, can you tell us about a great manager that you worked for? And what made this person such a fantastic boss,

**Scott Shigeoka 33:26**

I want to shout out Jess. Jess was a manager. We're honored. My first day of working for this education, nonprofit, I actually sat down with every single member of the team, it was a smaller team, about 10 people. And I spent basically 45 minutes with every team member, and we just shared the beginnings of a conversation of our stories. You know, what led us to this work? Who are we? Why are we driven to this? What am I excited about in this position? I never done that before in an organization where a day was set aside for me to have deep human conversations with every person on my team that was so incredible, and just started off the journey of us having such strong team cohesion, building such deep trust, I learned things about people's lives that I then brought into conversation later on, we were much more motivated and more connected working with each other. It was just it was such an easy thing to do. I mean, it does, you know, again, we're battling that, you know, urgency around all these responsibilities. But the long term benefits of doing something like that are so felt and I saw that in my own work and my contributions. And then the I would actually cheat a little bit and also shout out. Jason, who's one of my more recent managers, who has just really reminded me that there's always something that we can learn and there's always something that we can develop within ourselves. You know, I have always been really passionate about the social sciences, and he you know, works in an organization that basically translates social science. into a language we can all understand at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. And just working with him actually gave me the motivation to write this book, because my story of my voice was actually valued. And I felt like I mattered. And I felt like there weren't a lot of people like me, who had my

kinds of stories or voices, sharing what, you know, the social science and traditional, you know, communities and, you know, other forms of wisdom have to offer. And so I just want to, you know, I think that I'm bringing that into every relationship I have, how do I make sure that people see the value that they have, and the gifts that they have an elevate and highlight that so that they can do those big daring, scary things that then hopefully, you know, make an impact on the people around them.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 35:45

So absolutely. Love it. Love it, love it?

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 35:47

And where can people learn more about you and get a copy of your book Seek?

**Scott Shigeoka** 35:51

Oh, my gosh, yes, please get a copy of the book, [seekthebook.com](https://seekthebook.com). You can get it anywhere. There are books that are being sold in your community, support local indies, you know all about that. I'm just so excited to hear from you. I'm serious. When I say slip into the DMS, I say this on a lot of podcasts. And I actually respond to people and folks are like, Oh my gosh, I can't believe you're responding to me. And it's like, no, I'm welcoming conversation. It's that my favorite thing to do. It's why I wanted to do this kind of work is to have real connections with real people. So when you read the book, tell me how you've been using it. I want to have a conversation with you on zoom, in the DMS, whatever you're comfortable with. I want to learn about how you're using curiosity and what that means for you. So find me online, Scott Shigeoka. Go [Instagram](#), you know, I have contact forms on my website, just like you know, reach out.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart** 36:43

Awesome. Well, thank you again, really, really, really fun. Getting to chat with you today.

**Scott Shigeoka** 36:48

Thank you. This is so fun. Yes, so exciting.

**Mamie Kanfer Stewart 36:51**

In lieu of a guest bonus this week, I'm providing members with my Divergent Convergent Inquiry cheat sheet. This PDF will help you ask better questions based on your goals and situation. It also includes suggested resources to further your understanding of curiosity and question asking. Don't miss the extended interview where I ask Scott about how to navigate when someone asks you a question that pushes up against your boundaries. He also shares tips on reacting to difficult questions, and important reminders that your questions can be well received. The bonus PDF and extended interview are available to members of The Modern Manager Podcast Plus community. To join, go to [themodernmanager.com/more](https://themodernmanager.com/more). All the links are in the show notes and they can be delivered to your inbox when you subscribe to my newsletter. Find that at [themodernmanager.com](https://themodernmanager.com). Thanks again for listening. Until next time.