

The Journey of Not Knowing

Discussion Questions

The following are questions to ask yourself or discuss in a group about your relationship with the unknown, pursuing new possibilities, and getting past your resistance to change.

Part 1 What Amazon Taught Me About Leadership and the Unknown

1. *"...company strategy traveled at the speed of bits and bytes and real estate travels at the speed of bricks."* (Page 2)

-Have you ever found yourself out of sync with the environment around you? How did it feel?

2. *"Not knowing was scary, and scary was okay."* (Page 3)

-How are you with "scary"? What does the word evoke for you?

3. *"I am here to learn."* (Page 27)

-When you find yourself in a situation where you don't understand what is going on, how do you normally respond? Does that response work for you? If not, what might work better?

4. *"Where there is high speed, high stakes, and high ambiguity, anxiety rules the day."* (page 31)

-What is your experience with rapid change and how do you deal (or not deal) with it? What have you learned from your experience that has helped you to manage rapid change?

5. *"As a leader, you have to know who you are and for what you stand. You have to know your values, personal history, and dreams for the future."* (Page 36)

-What navigation lights guide you as a leader or in your personal life? In times of stress, what shows you the way?

Part 2: Leadership and the Unknown

6. *“The primary function of a leader is to pursue new strategic ideas or ‘bigger bets.’”* (Page 49)

-Think of someone you know either at work or in your personal life who is good at creating bigger bets. What do you notice about the person you admire? What can you learn from that person?

7. *“... successful leaders push forward”* (Page 50)

-What happens to you after experiencing a difficult situation? Do you move on, obsess, check out, analyze it for lessons, discuss it with a friend or colleague . . . ?

8. *“The road to success is paved with failures.”* (Page 51)

-What is your relationship with failure? Think of a time when something you did failed. How did you respond to it? Looking back at that time now, what did you learn that you carry into your current life?

9. *“We have to deal with the world the way it is, not as we would like it to be.”* (Page 58)

-How accurately do you believe you see situations? What makes you believe that? What would others say about how accurately you perceive situations? What affects how you see and remember experiences, particularly difficult ones?

Part 3: Arrow, Inc.: One Day in March

10. At the beginning of the story, how would you describe the Arrow team? If you had been hired as an executive coach for the team at the beginning of the story, what would have been your initial assessment? How would you describe the team at the end of the story?

11. As you followed the characters around the halls of Arrow, did their conversations or actions evoke anything in your current work environment or personal life? Did you find yourself cringing at any point? When and why?

12. Is there any resemblance between the Arrow team and your team or group? If so, what?

13. Did any of Arrow characters seem familiar to you? Who and why? Did you see yourself in any of those characters?

14. What are some examples of hooks that appeared in the story? What hooks do you see yourself using?

15. What did you learn from some of the main characters' background stories that helped you understand what motivated them and what held them back?

16. What are some examples of drivers the main characters used to push past their reluctance to deal with the Zinc firing?

Part 4: The Journey of Not Knowing Model

Bigger bets:

“Strategic new ideas that lie in the unknown and propel you to create a stronger, more successful organization.”

-What dreams do you have to make something better for your organization, team, community, or personal life?

The risks of the unknown.

“The risks you encounter when you move into the unfamiliar world of the unknown to pursue bigger bets.”

-Think of an idea you have wanted to try out but felt uncomfortable pursuing. What thoughts and feelings get in your way?

Hooks

“Defensive behaviors that give you short-term relief from the discomfort of the risks of the unknown, but will prevent you from reaching your bigger bets.”

-What defensive behaviors do you tend to use? How well do they work for you?

-Look at the chart on page 215 and the descriptions of hooks on pages 211 to 214. Do you recognize any of the hooks?

Which ones? Think of an experience when you behaved defensively and were “hooked.” What started it, and how did it end?

Drivers

“Your personal motivators that provide fuel to move you through the discomfort from the risks of the unknown toward achieving bigger bets.”

-Think of a difficult time you experienced and overcame at work or in your personal life. What driver helped you to get through it?