

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ASKING

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I remember a time when my son was about 5-6 years old that we were traveling together, and he asked questions constantly. I'm talking one question immediately after another, about random things that he saw or thought. After about two hours of this I remember saying "Jed, Daddy's ears are full. We need to be quiet for a while and let them rest." He had questions because he was curious and he wanted to learn. He saw nothing wrong with asking questions, because it was a perfectly reasonable thing to do.

Sometimes I think we would all be better if we kept that attitude. Often, however, we are embarrassed to ask questions about things we don't know or don't understand, because we are worried about looking dumb. It happens to me all the time. Someone will be talking about a topic that I know little about, but instead of asking questions I stay quiet and hope the subject changes.

Why are we like that? Why do we really care what people think, or assume asking questions makes us look dumb? In reality, asking questions to learn is a sign of intelligence, since you want to improve. I wish all of us could take that lesson to heart.

When it comes to agriculture, there are always new developments that are coming along. It might be a new herbicide, forage species, or a production implement that we don't know about. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Just remember, the person you are talking to didn't know about it at some point as well. They had to learn too.

Being curious and trying to learn aren't signs of weakness, they are signs of strength. If someone is trying to learn, they are trying to improve themselves. Give me someone that wants to get better every day, and that is someone I want to be around. It doesn't matter if it is at work, home, church, or on the ballfield. That characteristic will breed success.

If there is something you see happening on your farm you don't understand, ask about it. It might be to a neighbor, or maybe your local Extension agent. It might even be in an email to me. But be curious and try to improve. Stay informed about the latest technologies in agriculture. One of those might be the thing that completely changes your bottom line.

I need to have the attitude of my son back then, and be curious about things and try to learn. Of course, now it is ten years later and I'm the one asking him all the questions. But that's a story for another column.