



THE IMPACT OF MUSEUMS

The Curiosity – Knowledge – Empathy Connection



Wilkening Consulting

audience research | knowledge curation

Susie Wilkening © 2019 Wilkening Consulting, LLC



His Holiness the Dalai Lama spoke
about how knowledge leads to
compassion ...

... but what motivates people to pursue knowledge in the first place?

The Curiosity -> Knowledge -> Empathy connection



Curious people:



Curious people:

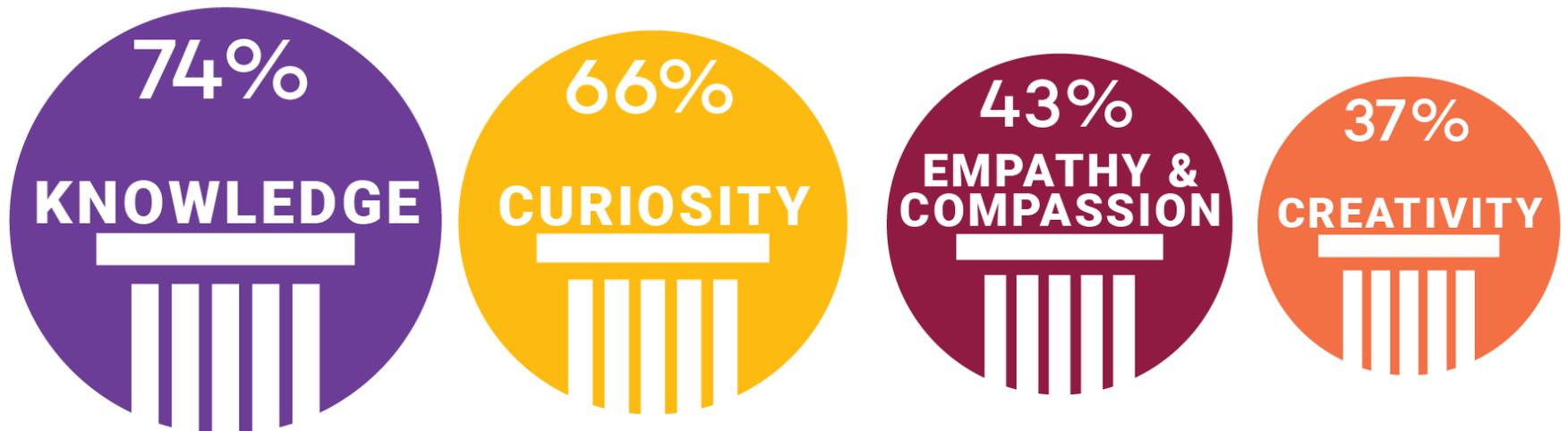


**Have greater
compassion,
understanding,
empathy**

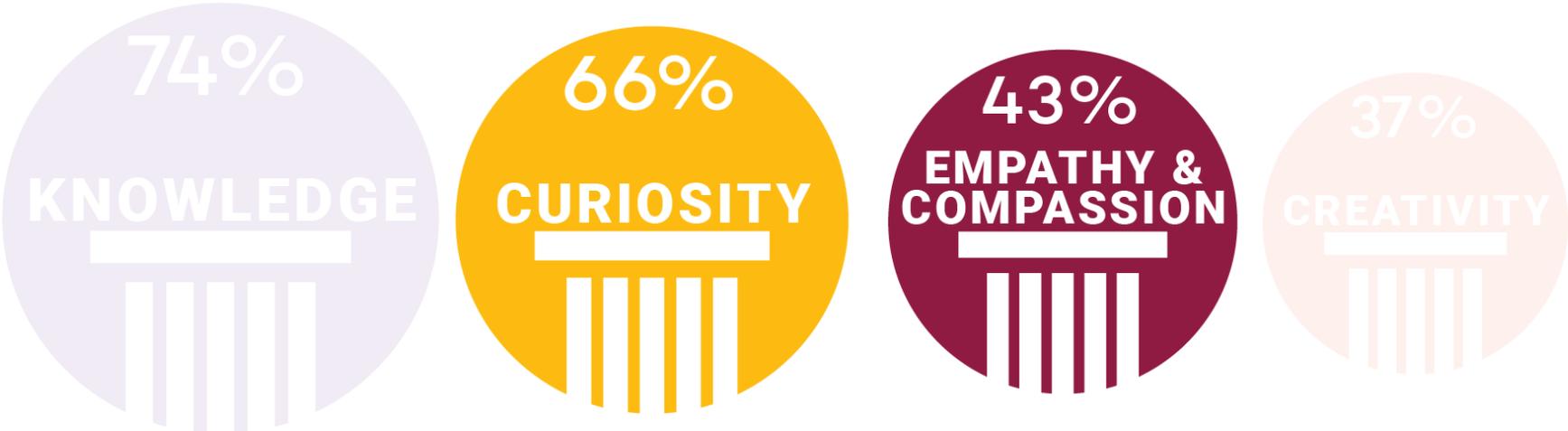
But how do we know curiosity and empathy are connected?

And what *do* we know about the impact of visiting museums over a lifetime?

The Top Four Impacts of Museums



The Top Four Impacts of Museums



Sources: 2018 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, Wilkening Consulting



Museum-Goers and Curiosity

“When we visit a museum, we open ourselves to ideas, images, experiences that are new to us ... museums re-ignite our desire to learn. We all become children at museums; looking around, being amazed, being curious. Over time adults can lose that spark that leads to a burning desire to learn. Museums give that back to us.”

- *Respondent, 2017 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers*



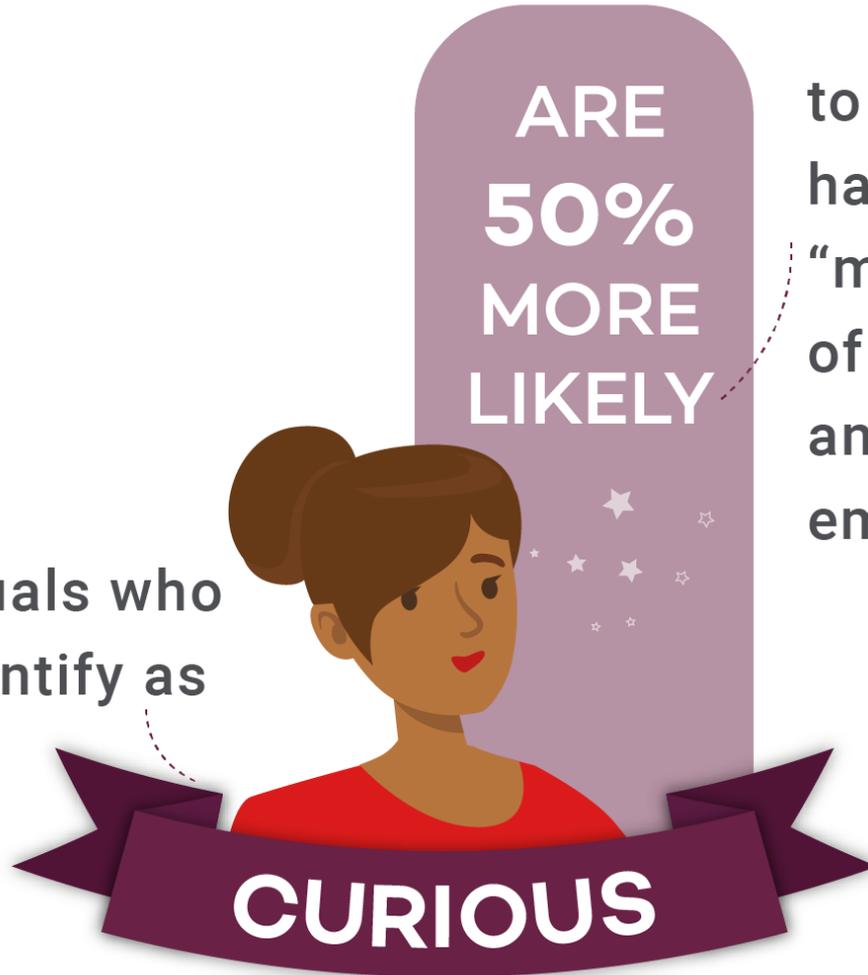
Museum-Goers and Empathy

“Ideally, museums take you out of yourself and into a form of communion with other minds, other cultures, other times. In some ways the ‘learning’ that goes with this is almost beside the point. Empathy is a great gift.”

- *Respondent, 2017 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers*

But how does the data connect
curiosity and empathy?

Individuals who self-identify as



ARE
50%
MORE
LIKELY

to say museums have made them “more understanding of other viewpoints and/or greater empathy”

Curious Individuals Are Also:

4X more likely to
“strongly support” removal
of Confederate monuments
from public spaces and to
rename offensive names
from athletic teams’

2X more likely to want
a history of community
racism shared

2X more likely to want
biases of historical accounts
of the past addressed

5X more likely to
identify “revisionist history”
as a complaint of those who
want to discredit more
inclusive history

Curious minds are also
cross-disciplinary ...



History Museum-Goers ... on Science

“I believe that many people who are concerned with ‘revisionist history’ cling to some misguided idea that history is somehow an objective and ‘truthful’ record of the past. I think they also often have a comfort level with particular viewpoints that support their personal moral convictions and, when presented with alternative interpretations, interpret that as a personal attack. It's not dissimilar to the phenomenon of science denial, especially when it's a matter of newly discovered facts that change historical interpretations or that refute commonly-held positions.”

- *Respondent, 2018 Inclusive History in America Study*

The Curiosity -> Knowledge -> Empathy connection



Curious people:



**Have greater
compassion,
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“I am very fortunate. Throughout my childhood, we traveled extensively ... and each trip was a combination of recreation and education ... This was then my m.o. with my own daughter ... these trips and visits bring historical perspective to the world around us and the places we live. They offer a point of view that allows us deeper relationships with our neighbors, particularly those who may not have our same ethnographic characteristics. They help us expand our own views and generate a natural curiosity ... ultimately allowing us to create deeper and stronger relationships with those we meet. Ultimately, I believe museums, travel, and experiencing things outside our own small microcosms make us better people. Period.”

Respondent – 2018 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

WILKENING CONSULTING RESEARCH

- 2018 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers
- 2018 Broader population sampling
 - “Museums and Public Opinion” – with American Alliance of Museums
- 2017 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers
- 2016 Broader population sampling
- Ongoing and completed client research

ANNUAL
SURVEY
OF
MUSEUM-GOERS

ANNUAL
BROADER
POPULATION
SAMPLING

“MUSEUMS
AND PUBLIC
OPINION”
(WITH
AMERICAN
ALLIANCE
OF MUSEUMS)

ONGOING AND
COMPLETED
CLIENT
RESEARCH

Four Ways to Learn More:



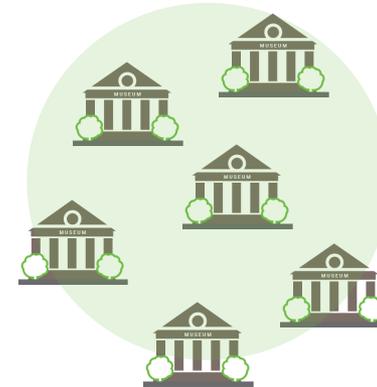
All can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com

2019 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers



Benefits to your museum include:

- Benchmarking of current audience, and their perceptions of your museum
 - And tracking of change over time in upcoming years
- Compare your results to peers
- Better understanding of your visitors, who they are, their behaviors, and their values
- Up to two custom questions targeted at just your respondents
- Results reports via slide deck and spreadsheet
- Personal discussion of results with Susie Wilkening in one-hour phone call



Benefits to the field:

- Provides the latest national research on museum-goers to the entire museum field
- Underwrites broader population sampling for contextual understanding
- Research results disseminated widely, including:
 - *The Data Museum*, wilkeningconsulting.com/datamuseum
 - Wilkening Consulting Research Releases and Data Stories, wilkeningconsulting.com/resources
 - Articles, presentations, guest posts, etc.

2019 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

To participate:

1. Visit **wilkeningconsulting.com** for an informational PDF
2. Fill out the enrollment form (link at **wilkeningconsulting.com**)
3. Once enrolled:
 1. December-January: finalization of your custom question(s)
 2. January – February: you will receive a survey link and sample text for you to disseminate to your lists
 3. May – June: You'll receive your custom spreadsheet, slide deck, and personal call from Susie Wilkening

2019 Participation Fee: \$1,000

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