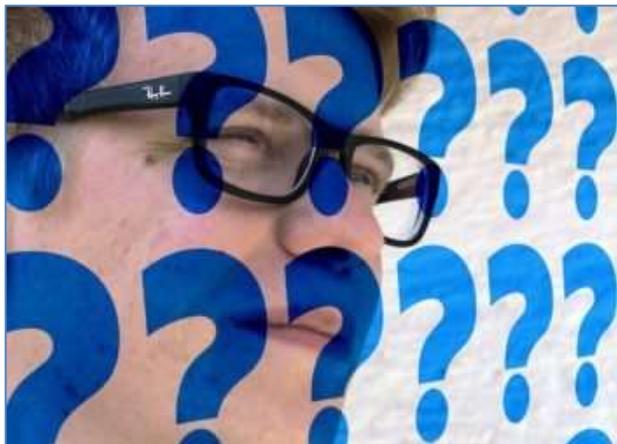


Want a Happier Life? Ask Better Questions

David Young
September 10, 2016



“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.” -Albert Einstein

Questions are everything. They determine what you focus on in life, at work, or in relationships. Effective questions can open up and deepen a relationship while lousy questions can create barriers. Even your thinking is simply a process of asking and answering questions in your head. Like, “How am I going to make it on time?” or

“Why is this person so annoying?”, or “Why am I so fat?!” In a relationship, questions can alter the direction of a conversation.

If you change the consistent questions you ask yourself you can begin to consistently change how you feel, how you think, and who you become. In fact, one of the main differences between you and other people are the questions you consistently ask yourself. Your questions create your reality because they ultimately guide your focus, attention, words, and actions.

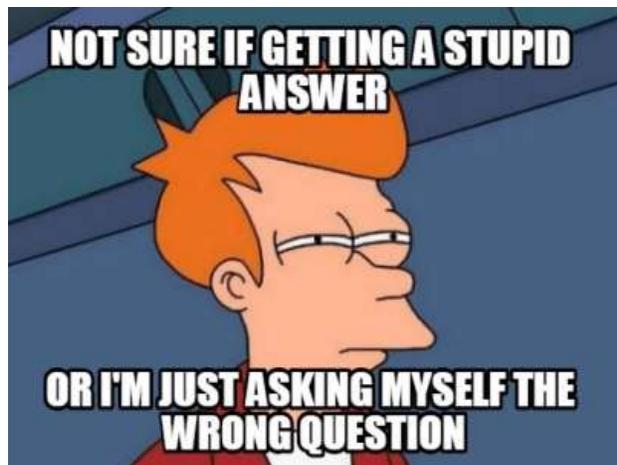
SO if you want a better reality you might need to begin asking better questions.

List Questions You’re Already Asking Yourself

I remember speaking with a woman who was starting a business, recently divorced, and quite unhappy. Here are some of the disempowering questions she said out loud about her work and herself within about three minutes:

- Is this saleable?
- What does it matter anyway?
- Why can’t I just retire?
- How long do I have to wait for someone to rescue me?
- Do I have any experience doing this?
- Am I sabotaging myself?
- Why is he so annoying?
- Why can’t I be married to a wealthy person?
- Why do I make myself so unhappy?
- How come I can never work things out?

Can you imagine what it would be like to consistently ask these kind of questions? It’s a miserable, disempowering place to be.



The questions you consistently ask yourself we will get an answer—whether it’s true or not. For example, if you keep asking “How come I can never work things out?”, your brain will begin to give you answers like “because you’re hopeless!” or “because you’re an idiot!”. The mind will always answer your consistent questions regardless of its accuracy or even relevancy.

Consider, if you ask yourself a questions like, “why is my life such a blessing?” Your brain will begin to show you the blessings in our life. If you consistently ask yourself, “how can I enjoy my day?”, you will begin to see opportunities to find joy throughout the day. Your life becomes the questions you consistently ask.

The first step to asking better questions is to start listening to the questions you already ask yourself, and *write them down*. Try taking two to five minutes to write down the questions that commonly run

through your head about your life, your relationships, or your occupation. Look and see if those questions are helping you or hurting you. Choose to let go of the questions that hurt you. Then re-write more empowering questions for yourself. I've taken a few questions from the example of the woman above and written more empowering questions next to them:

- ~~Why do I make myself so unhappy?~~ → How can I create joy for myself and others right now?
- ~~Do I have any experience doing this?~~ → What positive purpose can I serve by doing this new thing?
- ~~How come I can never work things out?~~ → What can I learn here?
- ~~Why is he so annoying?~~ → Why is he a blessing in my life?

Letting go of the disempowering questions you ask yourself can drastically improve your experience of life. By letting go of the questions that hold you back you open yourself to new possibilities in life.

Three Questions To Ask Yourself More Often

There are many ways to ask more empowering questions to yourself. These are questions that help clarify your vision, make you more grateful, or let go of fear. Here are three powerful questions to adopt on a daily basis to improve the quality of your life with greater clarity, love, and productivity.

Question #1: What's my outcome?

Clarity is power. The more clear we are in life, the more power we have to create what our hearts yearn to see in the world.

However, a lot of us are focused on what we do *not* want in life. It's like having tunnel vision on what you hate. It's the only thing that's on TV nowadays.



Most people rarely ask themselves what outcome they want in the moment. Instead we tend to focus on stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, hopelessness, etc. In some ways, it can appear as if we are pretty much addicted to what we don't want because we keep asking about it. It's almost like we wake up asking ourselves "What can I be stressed about today?"

Asking, "what's my outcome?" is like re-orienting yourself back to creating your life instead of reacting to life. When you don't ask what your heart truly wants to receive and contribute in a given situation, you end up being driven by

circumstance. And circumstance only calls for survival—survival of the body and our ego.

So try it out. In any given situation, simply ask "what's my outcome?". It may drastically alter what actions occur for you to take. Here's an example:

Imagine two people arguing.

In fact, imagine arguing with someone you care about. The kind of argument where you've gotten so mad that you no longer remember what you're even arguing about, but for some reason you know *you have to win*.

What would it be like to stop in the middle of an argument and ask yourself, "what's my outcome?". In most cases, the answer would not be to continue verbally smiting your loved one.

What shows up when we ask ourselves "what's my outcome?" is the reason we are in a relationship in the first place. We remember that we actually want to create connection, love, teamwork, and understanding in a relationship. We may even remember that the outcome we truly want in the moment isn't to verbally destroy the other person and make them realize how horribly wrong they are.

Maybe the outcome is to understand and be understood. Maybe the outcome is simply to be able to give love to that person and have it be received. In any case, reorienting to your outcome will guide you in a more positive, productive, and empowering direction.

Question #2: Why is my life so amazing?

I know, I know. This might sound a little too positive or cliché. But it works.

Most people live with a huge deficit of gratitude and joy. Nowadays the only excuse you need for feeling bad is just getting out of bed. For example, here's a simplified version of a conversation I saw the other day:

"How're you feeling?"

"Like crap."

"What happened?"

"I woke up."

"I totally understand."

I'm not advocating for ignoring what's not working in your life. Nor am I saying you should go out to your garden and, in the words of Tony Robbins, repeat to yourself, "There's no weeds! There's no weeds! There's no weeds!". This is not a positive thinking exercise. It's simply a better question to ask.

Consider this: What's wrong is *always* available.

You don't have to look very far for what's wrong with life. Everyone is a trained critical thinker, particularly in Western society. It's easy to ask (and find!) what's wrong with your jobs, your spouse, your friends, your body, and your lives. It's not new or impressive to find new things to criticize on a regular basis—everybody does that. It's been done.

When I ask most people to ask themselves "why is my life so amazing?", I can almost see their brain straining with discomfort. It's like they're working a muscle they've barely used before and it's sweating like crazy to churn out answers. It's not an ego boost. It's hard to open up to the wonder and awe of life.

It takes true wisdom to find the gems in life. It takes even more wisdom to find gratitude in what's currently available instead of waiting for the current reality to change so that you can be happy. And let's be honest: most of us aren't so good at that.

However, just like any other question you consistently ask yourself, your mind will begin to give you answers. Those answers invite gratitude and teach how to receive love in your life. You cannot be in a state of gratitude and in a state of fear at the same time. It doesn't work. Flooding yourself with gratitude eliminates fear. Gratitude produces positive hormones in your body. Gratitude relaxes your mind and promotes higher levels of creativity, clarity, and insight.

So try it out. Why is your life so amazing?

Question #3: How can I change someone's life for the better today?

"The love we give away is the only love we keep." -Elbert Hubbard

Whenever you have the greatest experiences in life there are two things involved:

1. Some form of growth within yourself
2. Some form of contribution beyond yourself

In my work I have the opportunity to speak to many people about what's really important to them. Whenever I ask somebody about the most amazing experiences of their life, I always hear a story about when they faced a fear, overcame something, became more than they thought they could, *and* they were able to make a difference for somebody. They were able to contribute to something outside themselves, to benefit their family, to serve their Creator, to be apart of something bigger. It's about growth *and* contribution.

Now, whenever I ask somebody about the worst experience of their life they will tell me something—and it's all about them. I see their body shrink inwards and their eyes shift into a glazed tunnel vision. Even if a person achieved massive success but still felt unfulfilled it was because even though there was growth, deep down it was all about them without any connection to something beyond themselves.

When people suffer it's usually because they're self-obsessed about something. They're obsessing because something happened and now they have *less*. Or something happened and now they *lost* something. Or because something happened and now they're *nevergoing* to have something. Less, loss, and never are the killers of happiness and fulfillment, and the source of suffering. If we want to get beyond suffering we have to grow within ourselves and contribute beyond ourselves.

Asking the question, “how can I change someone’s life for the better today?” immediately stops us from obsessing about ourselves. As corny as it sounds, the secret to living is giving.

We experience ultimate joy when we feel that we have contributed to something bigger than ourselves. It also calls for something greater in ourselves to contribute on a higher level. It triggers growth, freedom, love, significance, joy, and gratitude in ourselves.

If I find myself in a state of suffering, asking this question has been one of the quickest ways to get out of that state. Often what I’ll do is just call someone that I care about and thank them for being in my life. I’ll tell them who they really are for me, and acknowledge them for what they’ve done for me. Even giving those kind words and focusing on the gift they are for me makes their life better. *And* it connects me to something beyond myself and beyond suffering.

Use Your Questions Wisely

So here are those three questions again. Use them well. See what new things you discover.

1. What’s my outcome?
2. Why is my life so amazing?
3. How can I change someone’s life for the better today?