

The Power of Asking the Right Questions

Introduction

"Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers." – Tony Robbins

Every person is born with a deep and unique purpose, intricately connected to creation itself. The essence of creation is to sustain life, foster progress, and bring joy and love to humanity. However, as we grow, our purpose often gets distorted by societal influences—education systems, parental expectations, societal norms, and religious conditioning. To rediscover our true purpose, we must ask the right questions.

John Maxwell, in *Leaders Ask Great Questions*, states, "Good questions inform, but great questions transform." When we cultivate the ability to ask transformational questions, we unlock new perspectives, reshape our beliefs, and realign ourselves with our deeper purpose.

The Connection Between Creation and Purpose

Stepping away from our daily hustle—whether in Colombo or any major city—and immersing ourselves in nature allows us to reconnect with creation. The mountains, rivers, birds, and

waterfalls all speak to something deeper within us. This connection to creation refreshes our minds and hearts, making us yearn for more time in nature.

I personally experienced this when my late wife was diagnosed with cancer. Our dream was to move to the mountains, build a small hut, and slow down to connect with creation. Though life took a different turn, the realization remained: creation holds a profound purpose for us, and that purpose is ingrained in us from birth.

Discovering Purpose Through the Power of Questions

In my years as a mental performance coach, I have never encountered two people with the same purpose. Every individual has a unique journey, and when they uncover their true purpose, their beliefs transform, aligning with new perspectives that bring joy, peace, and fulfillment.

Take the example of a young Sri Lankan cricketer I worked with. Initially, his goals were to own a Ferrari and have his face on billboards. These aspirations were shaped by external influences—the lifestyles of famous cricketers. However, once he uncovered his deeper purpose, his entire outlook changed. His new goal became legendary status in cricket while using his success to uplift underprivileged children. This profound shift was initiated through powerful questioning.

Maxwell states, "The greatest leadership is self-leadership, and self-leadership begins with asking yourself the right questions." By questioning his motivations, the young cricketer realigned with a purpose far greater than personal material success.

The Power of Language and Self-Talk

"The words you say to yourself shape your reality."
– Brian O'Connor, *Self-Hypnosis for Athletes*

Each person has a unique internal language, a combination of thoughts, images, sounds, feelings, and self-talk. This language has the power to shape our perception of reality. Unfortunately, we often use this language externally—communicating with others—while neglecting internal dialogue.

One athlete I coached had an extraordinary innings, and when I asked what he had done differently, he revealed that he had been talking to himself before every ball. This level of self-talk is not just about affirmations; it is a form of self-hypnosis that programs the mind for success.

HeartMath research shows that positive self-talk, when aligned with heart coherence, enhances performance, decision-making, and emotional stability. It is not enough to have knowledge of these techniques; one must practice them with urgency and intention.

Congruency: The Key to Meaningful Change

"When values, thoughts, feelings, and actions are in alignment, a person becomes focused and powerful." – HeartMath Institute

Congruency between heart and mind is essential in seeking answers. If a person lacks the passion and desire to seek truth, the mind will not prioritize finding meaningful solutions. Many people fail to uncover solutions because they do not value their own internal dialogue.

To penetrate the filters that block self-awareness, one must use the right language, tone, breathing patterns, and timing. Meditation, listening to sermons, engaging with music, and deep reflection all help bypass these mental barriers and bring clarity. When a leader or athlete taps into this state of self-awareness, they unlock incredible potential.

Mastering the Art of Asking Questions

Hierarchy of Ideas from NLP: The Three Levels of Questioning

- 1. Meta-Level Questions (Big Picture Thinking)**
 - What is the ultimate purpose behind my actions?
 - What is the bigger vision I am aligning with?
 - What are the broader consequences of my decisions?
- 2. Chunking Up and Down (Conceptual and Specific Inquiry)**
 - **Chunking Up:** What is this a part of? What is the greater purpose of this goal?
 - **Chunking Down:** What are the specific steps needed to achieve this? What precise actions can I take today?
- 3. Cartesian Questions (Challenging Perspectives)**
 - What would happen if I implement this new strategy?
 - What would happen if I did not implement this new strategy?
 - What won't happen if I make this decision?
 - What are the potential negative consequences of this action?

Coaching Through Deep Inquiry

When working with clients, I use specific questions to drive breakthroughs:

- What is the specific outcome of this situation?
- What is the purpose behind this goal?
- What are the deeper intentions behind my desires?
- What are other examples in my life where I have succeeded in similar situations?

John Maxwell emphasizes, "Great leaders don't have all the answers, but they do know how to ask

the right questions.” Learning to ask empowering questions transforms not just leadership, but personal growth and performance.

Real-Life Applications

Leaders, athletes, and individuals who master the art of questioning unlock tremendous personal growth. In a coaching session with a country manager, I promised that by the end of the session, he would find the answers himself. Through guided questioning and meditation, he uncovered his own solutions—an outcome more powerful than any external advice.

Athletes, too, can become their own best coaches. This does not mean they do not need guidance, but it does mean they take responsibility for their growth. One athlete, after a year of poor performance, developed a new strategy for success through deep questioning and meditation. His breakthrough came not from external advice but from within.

Conclusion

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing." – Albert Einstein

Remember, you have a purpose, and it is deeply connected to your heart and mind. The art of asking great questions minimizes confusion and complexity, making life more fulfilling. Whether in leadership, sports, or personal development, powerful questions lead to powerful answers.

References

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