

QUOTES (and comments) ABOUT QUESTIONS

"QUESTIONATE TO INNOVATE" (Gerald Haman)

I. Questions first, better answers eventually.

A. Fast answers, undiscovered questions.

1. There is an easy solution to every human problem...neat, plausible and - wrong.
H.L. Mencken
2. The pressure to compete, the fear somebody else will make the splash first, creates a frenzied environment in which a blizzard of information is presented and serious questions may not be raised. Carl Bernstein
3. Information can tell us everything. It has all the answers. But they are answers to questions we have not asked, and which doubtless don't even arise. Jean Baudrillard
4. It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers. James Thurber
5. You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions. Naguib Mahfouz

B. Some famous, fast answers.

1. I think there is a world market for maybe 5 computers.
Thomas Watson, CEO of IBM in 1943
2. The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible. (A Yale University economics professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. The paper was the first draft of Smith's business plan to start Federal Express Corp.)

C. Ask the questions first, and then often live with them for awhile.

1. It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question. Decouvertes
2. The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge.
Thomas Berger
3. I approach these questions unwillingly, as they are sore subjects, but no cure can be effected without touching upon and handling them. Titus Livius
4. You have to be willing to ask questions that almost no one else would ask.
Samantha Bee
5. Live your questions now, and perhaps even without knowing it, you will live along some distant day into your answers.
Rainer Maria Rilke (The tough questions don't have easy answers, but they change what we then see, discuss and think until answers start to emerge.)

6. It is the nature, and the advantage, of strong people that they can bring out the crucial questions and form a clear opinion about them. The weak always have to decide between alternatives that are not their own. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

II. In what spirit should we ask the questions?

- A. We have grown up in a climate of competition between people, teams, departments, divisions, pupils, schools, universities. We have been taught by economists that competition will solve our problems. Actually, competition, we see now, can be destructive. It would be better if everyone would work together as a system, with the aim for everybody to win. What we need is cooperation and transformation to a new style of management.
Edwards Deming (1993)
- B. The physicist, David Bohm,...noticed that incredible breakthroughs took place through simple, open and honest conversation...Einstein and his colleagues...discussed ideas without trying to change the others' mind and without bitter argument. They felt free to propose whatever was on their minds...This freedom to discuss without risk led to the breakthroughs that physicists today take for granted. Michael Michalko in Cracking Creativity, p.255
- C. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science. Albert Einstein
- D. Practice "dialogue" not debate. See our exhibit 6 at this link:
http://www.merrifield.com/exhibits/Dialogue_Exhibit.pdf.
- E. Question everything. Learn something. Answer nothing. Engineer's Motto
- F. Every clarification breeds new questions. Arthur Bloch
- G. The key to wisdom is knowing all the right questions. John A. Simone, Jr.
- H. If you do not ask the right questions, you do not get the right answers. A question asked in the right way often points to its own answer. Asking questions is the A-B-C of diagnosis. Only the inquiring mind solves problems. Edward Hodnett
- I. To find the exact answer, one must first ask the exact question. S. Tobin Webster
- J. A prudent question is one-half of wisdom. Francis Bacon

III. Types of Questions to Ask?

A. Methods

1. Mind map a topic, then ask questions about all of the sub-topics.
2. Create a system diagram of all of the inter-dependent variables; ask 5(+) whys to find causes that underlie a dynamic-equilibrium symptom; ask questions about all of the parts.
3. Have diverse people ask questions about the questions to create a "question bank" and/or "question map" about a new innovative frontier, edge or space.

B. Questions to ask in the dreaming-visioning stage

1. You see things; and you say, "Why"; But I dream things that never were; and I say, "Why not?"
George Bernard Shaw
2. For true success ask yourself these four questions: Why? Why not? Why not me? Why not now?
James Allen
3. What would you do if you knew that you couldn't fail? Author unknown
4. All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions: 1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope?
Immanuel Kant
5. Before you start some work, always ask yourself three questions - Why am I doing it? What the results might be? And, will I be successful? Only when you think deeply and find satisfactory answers to these questions, go ahead.
Chanakya
6. I believe the best test of a model is how well can the modeler answer the questions: what do you know now that you did not know before? And, how can you find out if it is true?
Jim Bower

C. **In the initial action stage ask:** how can we test an idea cheaply, quickly and smartly so that we can fail (and learn) forward faster and better?

1. Questions focus our thinking. Ask empowering questions like: What's good about this? What's not perfect about it yet? What am I going to do next time? How can I do this and have fun doing it?
Charles Connolly
2. Practice "appreciative inquiry" for more on this topic see my exhibit at this link:
http://www.merrifield.com/exhibits/Appreciative_Inquiry_Exhibit.pdf.

IV. **Questions and our lives**

1. Quality questions create a quality life. Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers.
Anthony Robbins
2. As soon as questions of will or decision or reason or choice of action arise, human science is at a loss.
Noam Chomsky
3. The usual approach of science of constructing a mathematical model cannot answer the questions of why there should be a universe for the model to describe. Why does the universe go to all the bother of existing?
Stephen Hawking
4. Love is the answer, but while you're waiting for the answer, sex raises some pretty interesting questions.
Woody Allen