



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Go Ahead ... Ask

As we begin another year, many of us will resolve to make certain positive life changes. We will make an honest effort (at least for awhile) to do something, stop doing something, gain something, or release something. Some of us will stick to our goals until they are accomplished; others of us won't. So much depends on our motivation, our resolve, and our state of mind.

Given the impact of these factors, we might well consider a different approach to making resolutions. Rather than seeking to change what we do, let's focus on improving who we are. Let's upgrade our approach to life, and allow that change to reveal itself through new behaviors.

Over the next three months, we'll consider three practical upgrades we can make to how we approach our life. We'll look at embracing life with:

1. questions, rather than answers
2. love, rather than self-centeredness
3. freedom, rather than fear.

First, let's explore what it means to approach life with questions, rather than quick answers. In our fast-paced western culture, questions are frequently viewed as unnecessary impediments to progress. Movement is often valued

over discretion, and answers valued over solutions. Questions annoy us because they make us think, both to ask a meaningful question and to insightfully answer it. They take time and slow us down. Yet, in the process, they ground us, making us more consciously aware and deliberate, rather than free-floating and reactive.

While questions can be used for several different purposes, let's consider just three.

1. Ask ... to reveal truth. The skillful use of questions is an effective, non-threatening way to stimulate thinking in others that can lead to a change in perspective or an altered belief. In contrast to criticizing or debating, which arouses defenses, questions gently open the door to illumination, insight, and truth.

2. Ask ... to grow as a person. All of us are limited by what we don't know. Asking questions is a great way to attain knowledge, expand our perspective, and gain understanding.

3. Ask ... to grow in relationship. One of the greatest compliments we can pay to another person is our humble interest in who they are. Respectful, appropriate questions that

step beyond social niceties convey value and significance to the other person, which, in turn, stimulates trust and a stronger connection.

So what does it take to ask questions? First, we must care about truth and be humble enough to realize that we are not the sole source of it.

Second, we must develop a stable sense of worth and significance apart from our being "right" or knowledgeable about all things. This allows us to be vulnerable and risk being incorrect or uninformed without feeling weak, inadequate, or irrelevant.

Third, we must truly care about others and desire to empower them, rather than conquer or use them for our own advantage.

Fourth, we must be willing to invest the time and effort needed to organize our thoughts and formulate useful questions, rather than blurting out reactions or imposing directions.

Indeed, asking questions is a skill, but one that we all can learn. Using this skill, we can approach life with curiosity and an honest desire to personally grow and empower others as we explore the truth around and within us.

So go ahead ... ask!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Questions

Spirituality and questions typically walk hand in hand. Any time we seek to understand a "higher power", we acknowledge an existence more grand and expansive than the limits of our understanding.

In Christianity, we recognize and worship a God who knows us intimately, but whom we know only in part. Our knowledge is restricted both by the limitations of our mind, and by the boundaries our God sets on what He chooses to reveal. While this opens the door for faith for those who believe, it frustrates and confounds those who are bound to logic and the limited human ability to understand.

Naturally, when understanding is limited, questions arise. We ask God "why", challenging His decisions and wisdom ... and God is often silent. We ask "how", "where", and "when", seeking the security of knowledge rather than the peace of trust ... and God is often silent.

However, when we pursue a deeper relationship with God by asking "Who are you?" and "Will you reveal more of yourself to me?", He generously responds by granting deeper understanding and insight.

So ask, seek, knock ... and enjoy the unique opportunity to share a love relationship with the God of the universe.



"It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question."
- Decouvertes

"A scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, he is one who asks the right questions."
- Claude Levi-Strauss