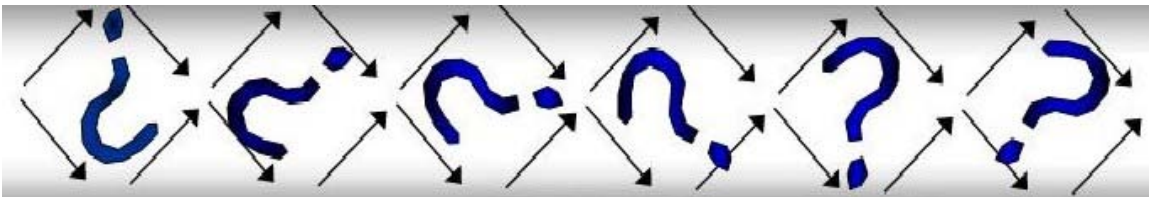




The best questions are open, invite exploration, and inspire a positive, appreciative perspective of a situation. They help us tap into our wisdom, expand our understanding and, best of all, place us in the emotion of Curiosity.

Below I share some of my favorite provocative, positive questions to help you explore the year ahead. Pick just one or several, and make space in your life to sit with the question(s) for awhile. I promise that a written response to ANY of these will shift you to a different space for 2011. At the end of this section I invite you to share YOUR most awesome questions.

Awesome Questions to Consider for 2011



QUESTIONS TO ANSWER ONE TIME

- * What do I value?
- * What do I want to learn this year?
- * What promises will I make to myself?
- * What does my “wise self” say to start doing a bit more of each day?
- * What am I aware of, right now?
- * What do I want, right now?
- * How do I stop myself from having that, right now?
- * Why is that important to me? (ask this five times, e.g. “and why is THAT important... etc)
- * What is missing for me, that I will take care of this year?
- * What do I already know, that I’m not using?
- * What assumptions am I making about this situation (or person)?
- * *and* What would happen if I dropped those assumptions?
- * What must I be doing more often to be comfortable that I am growing?
- * Where might I ask for help/support?
- * What is missing for me?
- * *and the companion*, What will I do about that in the next year?
- * What is a small step I could take – to which I could commit 100%?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER 100 TIMES

(write one of these at the top of a page, and keep writing till you’ve answered it at least 100 times. Prepare to be surprised at what you learn when you get past the predictable and really start pushing yourself!)

- * Who am I?
- * What do I do?
- * What do I offer the world?
- * What brings me Joy?



Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

- * What makes me laugh?
- * What am I putting up with in my work or life (that I'm no longer willing to tolerate)?
- * What do I believe to be true?
- * What is my passion?
- * What am I grateful for? (What are the blessings in my life?)
- * What have I accomplished in my life?
- * *and the flip side*, What will I accomplish in my life?

10-YEAR QUESTIONS

(these you can revisit over and over again and the answers will continue to shift)

- * What do I want to be in the world?
- * What sort of leader am I becoming? (or parent, or person, or...)
- * What is my invitation to others?
- * Now that <this> has happened, what else is possible for me?
- * What will I die for in order to keep alive the things that matter?

What is YOUR most awesome question, the question that really rocks your world and makes you think? [Click here to send me your favorite.](#) (I'll share the compilation in the future!)

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The 13 Principles of Happiness are really about asking yourself a series of questions, like, "How am I living my Values?" "How might I build my Reserves?" and "To What am I Paying Attention?" Visit <http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/happiness/philosophies.cfm>, to download a colorful 1-page PDF Poster. Post it on your workplace wall or your fridge at home, and use it to coach yourself and others to Choose Happiness.

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## II. IN THE WORKPLACE: LEAD WITH QUESTIONS

**One of the oldest and most enduring leadership models in business today is Situational Leadership (SL)**, developed by Blanchard and Hersey several decades ago. The SL model works with the stages of learning through which we all progress when we take on a new task. The four stages (these are in my own words) are:

1. Clueless
2. Learner
3. Competent yet not Confident
4. Expert

**The core lesson of SL is that people at different stages of learning need their leader to treat them according to their situation, or where they are on the learning journey.** Someone brand new, who is Clueless, needs a manager to explain everything and provide specific instruction. A manager who likes to direct and tell people what to do is quite effective for beginners.

**Once an individual starts to learn a task, however, a good leader will gradually back off on Telling and shift to Asking questions as a primary tool for motivation.** Learners need supportive questions like “What do you already understand?” or “Are you ready for the next step?” The Competent-yet-not-Confident person needs a coach who will ask, “What do you think the best answer is?” or “What do you need from me?” Finally, the Expert – who fully understands the task – needs little more than, “Can you take care of this? Thanks.”

**Why are questions such a powerful tool for leading?** Because people are motivated in the workplace when they have the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute. Questions allow people to be part of their own learning, to solve their own problems, and demonstrate their competence. A manager who insists on telling people what to will destroy motivation and build an environment in which people stop caring -- who needs to think if the manager Knows It All?

**The best tool for leading is a good question asked at the right time.** Leaders who Lead with Questions build positive workplace cultures that allow everyone to feel like they are part of the conversation and that their opinion counts.

**Remember: Leadership is not about a title.** Anyone can be a leader who shows up in curiosity and seeks to bring out the best in others by challenging them with Powerful Questions.

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#### IV. PERSONAL: LEARNING LANGUAGE

**Our grandson received his first books as Christmas presents this year.** At four months old he's hardly ready to read, but that's OK – these are aimed specifically at an infant. The books (which are all chewable and washable, of course!) are filled with bright pictures and small words that emphasize the first sounds a baby makes, like ba-ba, and da-da-da. While not exactly Dickens, the books kick off what will hopefully be a lifetime of reading and learning language.

**Meanwhile, we finalized plans to visit Italy in 2011, and I've committed to learn basic conversational Italian before we leave.** I just finished uploading a Pimsleur language series so I can begin daily 30-minute lessons via my iPod and iPad.

**I'm hoping my brain is not yet too old and stiff to take on this challenge.** The last time I learned a new language was 20 years ago, when I learned conversational Thai in advance of traveling to Thailand for our younger daughter's adoption. That was a very foreign experience, since the languages of Southeast Asia are tonal rather than syllabic.

**Italian already feels familiar.** The printed language guide reminds me that I probably know dozens of Italian words already, like *spaghetti*, *gnocchi*, *bambino*, *per favore*, *grazie*, *signora*, and just about every form of *pasta*.

**Even if I show up and speak fractured Italian, I hope our hosts will appreciate my efforts.** Plus, the exercise will keep my brain sharp for one more year. And that makes me pretty happy!

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#### IV. WATCH THIS SPACE

**Pay attention for emerging news from The Executive Happiness Coach®.** I have been working on some new projects – watch for an off-cycle news item this month.

