Questions are the Answer

HAL GREGERSEN
Executive Director, MIT Leadership Center
Author, Questions are the Answer
“The important and difficult job is never to find the right answer, it is to find the right question.”

Peter Drucker
“Getting the right question is key to getting the right answer.”

Jeff Bezos
Compose 3 Conditions and Wait

unexpectedly WRONG
UNCOMFORTABLE unusually
reflectively QUIET
“I didn’t know what I didn’t know.”

Fadi Ghandour
Compose 3 Conditions and Wait

unexpectedly WRONG

UNCOMFORTABLE unusually

reflectively QUIET
“Good questions are recursive.”

Ed Catmull
Compose 3 Conditions and Wait

unexpectedly WRONG
UNCOMFORTABLE unusually
reflectively QUIET
PATAGONIA’S KEYSTONE QUESTIONS

• How can I make a living without losing my soul?
• What kind of organization does a leader who cares about that tension build?
• Beyond having less negative impact on the planet, how could we manage to operate a net-zero impact?
• What if we were to give away our knowledge of how to be more green?
• How do we make it uncomfortable for other companies not to follow us?
“We are seeking the edge, the most uncomfortable edge we can find.”
• make a difference •
• make a difference •
Question Burst
Question Burst

• Brainstorm questions ONLY
  • No answers
  • No preambles or explanations
  • Write down 15-20 questions verbatim
Before doing the QuestionBurst...
After doing the QuestionBurst...
After doing the QuestionBurst, how do you “now” feel about your challenge?

- A lot better: 8%
- Better: 36%
- A little better: 41%
- The same: 12%
- A little worse: 2%
- Worse: 0%
- A lot worse: 1%
After doing the QuestionBurst, have you reframed your innovation challenge, seeing it differently now?

- See it the same: 20%
- See it a little differently: 52%
- See it differently: 22%
- See it a lot differently: 6%

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After doing the QuestionBurst, did you discover at least one new idea to help you solve your challenge?

- Yes: 85%
- No: 15%

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CEO
1. Am I a good father?
2. Do I listen enough?
3. Do I tend to want to solve/act too much?
4. Do I push too hard?
5. Do I hover or “helicopter” too much?
6. What hurts the most? Why?
7. What is she the best at?
8. Do I recognize (and praise) that enough?
9. How is she better than you?
10. What talents compliment yours?
11. What do her eyes say when she expresses concern?
12. When do her eyes sparkle?
13. How can you slow down to see what you’re missing?
14. What does your schedule say matters most to you?
15. What are her greatest worries?
16. How well do they know what they are?
17. What is uniquely independent about her?
18. Living in what country could change her life the most?
19. What will you do when she gets married? Why?
20. What are her greatest areas of independence from you?
21. What has she learned lately from her own experience?
I thought the hardest thing would be losing her, but I now realize that the hardest thing is letting her grow & flourish on her own. 

*I need to let her find her.*