

## Change Your Questions Change Your Results

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On the path to happiness and success, most of us think we get the greatest mileage from having all the right answers. This is natural as managers and even as parents – that's what our manager, staff, our children and others expect of us, don't they?

We'll maybe there is another option. That is not knowing and being able to ask questions instead. Our brains love questions. They have the power to engage us and to shift our mindsets. They drive knowledge and growth, and fuel both creativity and critical thinking.

The power of questions however is either useful or somewhat destructive depending on mindset. Marilee Adams in her book "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life" describes two paths we can take – the Learner Path or the Judger Path. Let's understand the difference.

The Judger Path will ask the following types of questions:

- What's wrong?
- Who's to blame?
- How can I prove I'm right?
- How can I protect my turf?
- How can I be in control?
- How could I lose?
- How could I get hurt?
- Why is that other person so clueless and frustrating?
- Why bother?

The Learner Path on the other hand will ask the following:

- What works?
- What am I responsible for?
- What are the facts?
- What's the big picture?
- What are my choices?
- What's useful about this?
- What can I learn?

- What is the other person feeling, needing, wanting?
- What's possible?

What questions do you often ask yourself just stop for a moment and reflect on this honestly for yourself. Are your questions results focused or do they lead you to the pit of despair. Do you have an inner critic or are easily upset by feedback provided to you by others. To be honest, it's often what we direct towards ourselves that can be the most damaging.

Becoming more aware of and selective about the types of questions we tend to ask is one of the very best and most empowering tools we have for creating constructive change.

So when someone says "this is not acceptable", in place of imploding, become curious and ask questions that will place you in a position of a learner. So maybe the response could be "OK, how do I fix it" or "can you tell me more". This is one of my favourite coaching questions. It is non-judgmental and invites more detail and is engaging. By asking questions from a Learner perspective, we place ourselves in a position of making thoughtful choice, working towards a solution, and win win relating.

#### Try the ABCC Process

- A – Awareness** – Ask, Am I in Learner or Judger Mode?
- B – Breath** – do I need to step back, pause and look at this more objectively?
- C – Curiosity** – What Learner questions do I need to ask?
- C – Choose** – What's my choice?

Questions are at the very core of how we listen, behave, think and relate, both as individuals and as organizations. Virtually everything we think and do is determined by the questions we ask.

You are in charge of your thinking – moment by moment by moment. Yes, You, not your partner, your work colleague, your manager or even you children. Now that we have faced that, it provides us with the opportunity to do something different, if we so chose.

Unconscious Potential delivers a 1 day program aimed at supporting individuals and organisations in learning how to ask better questions for better workplace effective and business results. Contact us for more details.