

# Change Your Questions Change Your Life Summary

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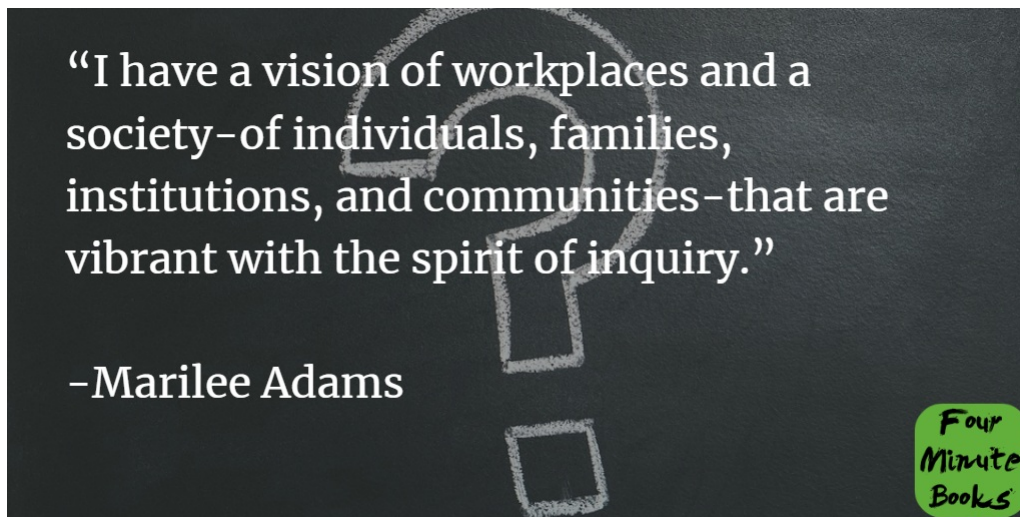


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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Change Your Questions Change Your Life* will teach you how to revolutionize your thinking through the use of questions that foster a learning mindset.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Through a vivid cast of characters, author Marilee Adams invites us into a workplace fable from which you'll learn how to revolutionize your personal and professional relationships. Awareness of your thinking patterns will lead you to questions like *What happened?*, *What are the facts?*, and *What assumptions am I making?* Instead of seeking fault and blame.

You'll learn that, in addition to judging others, we're also quick to judge ourselves. Every one of us operates from a mix of learner and judger mindsets. With effort, we can cultivate the seeds of connection by watering and fertilizing rich beds of acceptance, curiosity, dialogue and creativity, while pulling the weeds of blame, rigidity, assumptions, and fear.

Additionally, you'll learn how to implement the ABCC Choice Process. First, ask yourself if you are judging. Next, take a breath and get curious about your circumstances. Finally, choose to ask learner questions. The insights, diagrams, and stories in *Change Your Questions Change Your Life: 12 Powerful Tools for Leadership, Coaching, and Life* give you the tools to shape positive interactions in every facet of your life.

Activate your curiosity with these 3 lessons:

1. The questions we ask ourselves and others either open doors for learning or lead us into a judger pit.

2. Switching questions have the power to move us from a path of judgment to a course of learning like a railroad switch routes a train to a new track.
3. Utilizing twelve questions researched by the author can shift individuals and groups toward comprehensive and creative possibilities.

*Question Thinking* offers us the opportunity to flip from fixed to growth mindsets by changing the questions we ask ourselves and others. Asking *What happened?* versus *Why am I such a failure?* sets a tone of inquiry instead of defeat. Let's learn how to ask questions that will transform our relationships and lead us toward possibility and creativity.

## Lesson 1: You have the power to choose your reactions, whether to learn or to judge.

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Thoughts, feelings, and circumstances fill every waking moment of our days and spill over into our dreams. As recovering judges, our first opportunity for change presents itself when we observe our thoughts and recognize their nature.

Questions like: *What am I responsible for?* and *What are they thinking, feeling, and wanting?* steer us toward rational choices, solutions, and win-win relations. In contrast, when we ask *Why are they so stupid?* or *Why bother?* we find ourselves stuck in a pit of judgment.

Imagine receiving a call from your teenager who just backed your brand-new SUV into the shopping cart corral at the grocery store. Or, an email from your boss highlighting every benchmark you did not hit over the last quarter. Maybe you received a summons for jury duty, and it's scheduled for the same week as your much-anticipated vacation. All of those scenarios elicit thoughts and feelings. How should you deal with them?

**Will you ask: *Why am I so careless? Why am I a failure? Why Bother?* Or, instead: *What happened? What are my choices? What's best to do now?***

Events, good and bad, flow through our lives like a river. When you mindfully paddle, you master the ability to skirt rocks and find less turbulent waters within the rapids. Asking learner questions keeps you moving forward.

## Lesson 2: Like a life preserver, a switching question can save you from drowning in a pit of misery.

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Imagine yourself at a long, rectangular conference table waiting for a meeting to begin. For ten minutes, the woman to your right has been rapid firing opinions about your child's primary school, which her children previously attended. You endure her complaints about

the teachers, the lunch program, and the new math curriculum. She even has an opinion about how the janitor mops the floors. Running through your mind are questions like, *How did I get seated here?* and *Who does she think she is?*

If you stop to think about it, you are asking yourself judger questions about a judgmental person. Ironical? Two judgers do not lead to possibility. How can you turn the situation around?

Feelings of anger and frustration alert your observer to your judger mindset. Now is your opportunity to shift into questions that will keep you out of the judger pit. **A Switching Question gives you the freedom to explore options like *What does she need?* and *How else can I think about her?*** When your observer wakes you up, you can flip the switch to learner mode and turn the conversation around for both of you.

Practice asking yourself questions like *What assumptions am I making?* and *How can I be more objective and honest?* One Switching Question has the potential to free you and your companion from the judger pit. Before you know it, you'll be paddling alongside each other on calm water.

## Lesson 3: Use these twelve questions to guide your success in personal and organizational explorations.

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When you encounter situations in which you are frustrated, feeling stuck, or want something to change, ask the questions listed below from different perspectives. You can substitute *You* and *We* for *I*.

You don't need to ask these questions in any specific order, and not every question fits every situation. The goal is to incorporate learner questions into your daily thinking patterns. **As you regularly reference and ask queries from the list, you will find yourself traveling the learner path while opening yourself and everyone you interact with to possibility.**

1. What do I want?
2. What are my choices?
3. What assumptions am I making?
4. What am I responsible for?
5. How else can I think about this?
6. What is the other person thinking, feeling, and wanting?
7. What am I missing or avoiding?
8. What can I learn from this person/situation/mistake/failure, success?
9. What action steps make the most sense?
10. What questions should I ask?
11. How can I turn this into a win-win?

12. What's possible?

Make a copy of the list and keep it handy!

## Change Your Questions Change Your Life Review

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As I read *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life*, I found myself wanting to share each lesson with anybody willing to listen. The book's ideas and questions are functional tools to shift away from conflict and into progress. I've put my internal observer on alert. When I find myself asking judgmental questions, I turn and look for a *switching question* to change my direction.

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## Who would I recommend the Change Your Questions Change Your Life summary to?

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The 32-year-old who has just been promoted to a managerial position, a 52-year-old newly elected school board member, and anyone wanting to live a life of curiosity and exploration.