

QBQ! Summary

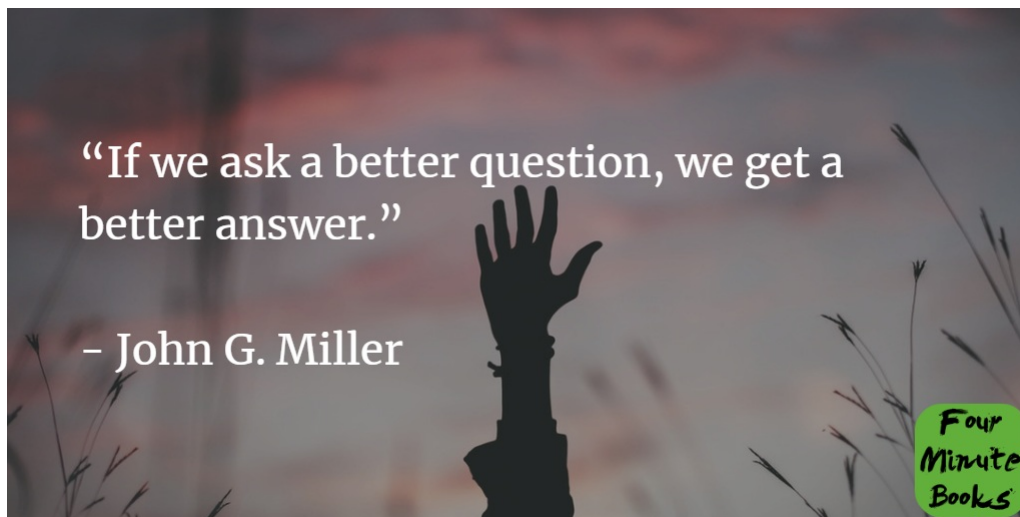


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1-Sentence-Summary: *QBQ! will teach you to ask better questions that help you have personal accountability, and how doing so will revolutionize every aspect of your life for the better.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Imagine you're enjoying a nice lunch at your favorite restaurant. As a busy waiter takes your order, you request to have a Diet Coke to drink. Unfortunately, the young man informs you that they only have Pepsi. Not wanting to take too long, you let him know that's alright and think nothing of it as he hurries off. Eventually, your food comes, and you begin to enjoy your meal.

Moments later you hear a flurry of activity behind you and before you know it there is a nice, cold, 20-ounce bottle of Diet Coke in front of you. "I thought you said that you didn't sell Coke?" you ask the diligent waiter. He responds with "we don't, but the grocery store around the corner did!" As you question who paid for it and the boy mentions that he did, you are taken aback in amazement. What incredible service!

This is just what happened to author John Miller as he describes at the beginning of his book *QBQ! The Question Behind the Question: Practicing Personal Accountability at Work and in Life.* This diligent young waiter perfectly exemplifies what it means to have the right attitude. A trait that you'll soon see is a simple matter of asking better questions.

Here are the 3 most life-changing lessons this book teaches about having the right attitude when life gets hard:

1. Ask questions that begin with “what” or “how” rather than “why,” “when,” or “who.”
2. Instead of asking questions about “they,” “them,” “we,” or “you,” make sure that you focus on yourself by including “I.”
3. The best questions are action-focused.

Get your thinking cap on and let's learn how to ask better questions!

Lesson 1: Rather than asking “why,” “when,” or “who,” make sure that you start your queries with “what” or “how.”

There are two types of questions. The wrong ones that lead to inaction and pain are called IQ's, or “Incorrect Questions.” These are the questions like “why me?” that come up after something goes wrong. In contrast, the Question Behind the Question (QBQ) is “behind” those initial negative thoughts we might have when a difficulty arises. Learning to ask the QBQ will help you successfully navigate any hardship.

Think of how you feel when you hear questions like these, for example:

- “When is management going to provide us with more products?”
- “Why are we always so short-staffed?”
- “When are the customers going to learn to read the menu?”

Each of these statements is full of blame, negativity, and a disturbing lack of ownership. On the flip side, QBQ's always start with “what” or “how,” like these:

- “What can I do to make this situation better?”
- “How can I do this differently in a way that works?”

Reading those questions and asking ones like them is empowering. **They are full of opportunity, enthusiasm, and ownership.** QBQ's help your brain change from a state of feeling victimized to a focus on how to make a difference and move forward. Just like the young man at the restaurant, people that ask QBQ's have a natural energy about them, and they get ahead in life. The first step to forming a QBQ is to begin with “what” or “how.”

Lesson 2: When you focus on yourself by including “I” in your questions, you develop the rare and valuable habit of accountability.

People these days seem to be all about blaming everyone but themselves for their problems. We hear people say of their troubles “it's just the way it is” without any hope for changing their situation. Many feel entitled to benefits without any willingness to become proactive and accountable for improving their situation.

Don't be like the rest of the world. Instead of blaming everything else for your problems, maintain accountability by asking questions with "I" in them. Doing so will help you take ownership over aspects of your life that you feel you can never improve. Things that seem permanent to you now will become changeable when you put "I" into your questions.

Some situations prove to have barriers that seem insurmountable. Often we find ourselves focusing only on these problems and our limitations, rather than what we can change. **By asking questions with "I" in them, we shift the focus from what we can't improve, to what we can.** Once we do that, our situation seems so much better.

Lesson 3: To master the QBQ, ask questions that focus on action.

Even though we may initially fear the risks of taking action, *not* acting is a greater risk. As Miller teaches:

"Action, even when it leads to mistakes, brings learning and growth. Inaction brings stagnation and atrophy."

When we move forward, even if we are not entirely sure, we express the courage to find solutions to our problems. In circumstances where we fail to act, we stagnate from remaining stuck in the past. I've had many experiences where action solved even the grizzliest of problems. In times when I was uncertain if what I thought to do would work, I always progressed from the feedback I received only after acting.

A few years ago, an immediate family member was in the hospital with a semi-serious condition. At first, we were terrified and heartbroken by the gravity of the situation. Fortunately, I was reading *QBQ!* at the time. As I began asking questions like "What can I do to help?" and "How *can* I improve this situation?" things started to get better.

Even though I'm not a medical professional, I discovered steps I could take to help my loved one because I asked the right questions. Thankfully, their condition improved rapidly, and they surprised everyone by coming home earlier than expected. **This family member is healthy and well today, and I attribute that in part to my learning how to ask QBQ questions.**

Asking QBQ's is as simple as combining all three of these principles. Start with "what" or "how," include "I," and focus your question on action. With practice, you'll become a master at the QBQ, and your life will dramatically improve!

QBQ! Review

I love *QBQ!* and have since I read it a couple of years ago. I read *Learned Optimism* right before picking up this one, and my biggest question after that one was how to stay accountable and proactive while being optimistic. This book was the short and powerful answer I needed, and I highly recommend it as a must-read for everyone!

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Who would I recommend the QBQ! summary to?

The 17-year-old high school student who loves to gossip and blame others for their misfortunes, the 45-year-old computer programmer who has just lost their job, and anyone who has ever asked themselves “why me?”