



Ben Meer 

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Asking good questions is a superpower.

They expand minds, generate insights,
and make you look smart.

12 of the best questions to do just that:

7.6k Likes **1.6k** Retweets **121** Replies



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"How can you achieve your 10 year plan in the next 6 months?"

Ask this when:

- They're thinking too small
- You want to generate bigger and bolder ideas

Breakthrough outdated paradigms.

(Source: Peter Thiel)



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The Feynman Technique

"How would you teach it to a child?"

Ask this when:

- They're learning something new
- The subject is complex
- They're formulating "how-to" instructions

Encourage them to return to learning, fill in knowledge gaps, and simplify further.



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The 5 Whys Method

"Why?" (Repeat 3-5 times)

Ask this when:

- You want to uncover root causes, not proximate

Proximate = what immediately caused something to happen.

Root = the real reason something happened

Be hard on the problem, soft on the person.

(H/T: Sakichi Toyoda)



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Amazon's Working Backward Method

"What would a press release for this product say?"

Ask this when:

- They have a new product idea

Follow-up actions:

- Work backward from the customer POV
- Draft an FAQ + press release BEFORE building the product



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Second Order Thinking

"And then what?"

"What do the consequences look like in
10 minutes? 10 months? 10 Years?"

Ask this when:

- There's a bias towards instant gratification
- Thinking through time

(Source: Farnam Street)



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Second Order Thinking Cont'd

Many extraordinary things in life are first-order negative, second-order positive.

Ex: Starting a new workout regimen.

It's painful at first, with little instant gratification (negative).

But there IS a long-term health payoff (positive).



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"How have you been complicit in creating the conditions you say you don't want?"

Ask this when:

- They don't own their outcomes

First, build rapport and show positive intention.

They'll identify negative behaviors and regain their locus of control.

(Source: Jerry Colonna)



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"What would happen if you didn't have to?"

Ask this when:

- You hear the words "have to" or "must"
- You notice unhealthy stress/anxiety

Ex: "I have to get into Harvard."

Expand their attractive options set =
reduce stress.



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"If there was a miracle tonight, and when you woke up tomorrow...

everything [in this area of your life/work] was exactly as you'd like it to be,

how would you know a miracle occurred?"

"What would you see, hear and feel?"

Ask this when:

- Specifying their goals/ideal outcome



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"What would that give you that you wouldn't otherwise have?"

Ask this when:

- Clarifying desires
- Shifting focus to gratitude

As @Naval says, "Play stupid games, win stupid prizes."

This question often reveals whether the prize is worth it.



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"What are you like when you're at your best?"

Ask this when:

- They're lacking confidence
- They're seeking life direction

Listen for skills and qualities that might align with a fulfilling career.



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The Joe Rogan Razor

"What would you do right now if a documentary crew were following you around?"

Ask this when:

- Clarifying their purpose
- There's an ethical decision

Rogan says the best life advice he's ever received:

Live your life like you're the hero in the movie.



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"What would you do if you knew it was OK to fail?"

Ask this when:

- Fear and perfectionism are holding them back

In the words of Adam Grant:

"The greatest originals are the ones who fail the most, because they're the ones who try the most."



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One final thing:

Be your own best coach.

Ask these questions to yourself, too.

You'll be dangerous.



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What questions would you add? Let us all know in the comments!

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