

Often it's best to use questions to figure out what we are feeling as well as what is going on. **First** is an article that is edited (and added to) to fit these two pages. As we think about what we are going through as well as wonder how our lives will change as we end physical isolation, questions help. And the right questions will help us even more, as individuals, as families, as a church and a community!

Then there is an outstanding set of questions from a person I've worked with and respected over the years. He gives us a prayer of questions! This kind of exercise, even similar questions but from different angles, help us clarify and learn about ourselves as well as the situations we are in. Enjoy! And add your questions to these as one way to understand as well as think about the future.

6 Underlying Benefits of Asking Questions By Inga Stasiulionyte Oct. 17, 2016 From Success

Questions push people (and ourselves) to figure out the answers on their own. (And with others.) It's helpful in discovering a person's individual way of thinking and their mental blocks, and in applying specific mindsets to help them achieve their goals. The philosophy is simple: Asking the right questions gives people the answers they need to move forward in life.

We need to start looking at our dreams practically, (including for church.) Simply put, our dreams are the problems we have to learn to solve. Dreams are called "dreams" for a reason—it is something better than what we have now. And to achieve what's better, we have to start finding new solutions; we have to learn new ways to think. (As people have commented before - Let's not waste this crises!)

1. We learn about life through questions. It is scientifically proven that we learn about life by asking questions. Children naturally start learning about the world by observing, testing and asking "why." Through questions, children learn the cause-and-effect relationship and, most important, the meaning of words.

2. The more we question, the better answers we get. Unfortunately, with responsibilities and age, the questioning stops and we settle for the few options that we have learned. The minute those options don't work, we get stuck. Whenever we experience an obstacle, our brain goes to the fastest pattern it can find from our experiences similar to the current situation. This is why we sometimes have illogical reactions: We do not give time for the brain to find a better solution. The more information and experiences we have, the more options we have to solve our problems.

3. The quality of our lives depends on questions we ask. The quality of our lives is directly related to the quality of our thinking. "The quality of our thinking, in turn, is determined by the quality of our questions, for questions are the engine, the driving force behind thinking." —*The Miniature Guide to the Art of Asking Essential Questions*

4. Questioning makes you open. Questioning forms new patterns in the brain. The more patterns it forms, the more flexible it becomes. With flexibility, it can access more information already stored in your brain instead of reverting to the old patterns.

5. Questioning makes you wiser. When you become more open because of a flexible brain, you become perceptive of many different perspectives and less biased in your decisions.

6. Asking the right questions creates happiness. We all know how peace and harmony feels, but not many of us take a minute to understand what causes these feelings. When we entertain this deep question, we start understanding how to feel at peace more often. We realize we are the creators of our feelings; they don't just happen to us. (And part of happiness is finding and following better leaders!)

Start by asking yourself simple but deep questions.

Also ask specific questions which are better than general questions.

Then start asking yourself more difficult questions.

The more times we ask ourselves important (specific) questions, the easier it gets to accept ourselves and to take charge in changing our lives for the better

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From Menno Media *April 15, 2020*

We've been working to collect thoughtful written and recorded pieces from pastors and leaders around the church in the U.S. and Canada. We'll be sharing them here in hopes that they can serve as an encouragement during these difficult times. This reflection is from **Jim Lapp** of Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Loving God, we find ourselves asking the meaning of this time that has been thrust upon us. We wonder:

Is it about slowing down?

Is it about becoming more dependent on you?

Is it to stimulate the church to more creativity and resilience in how we practice community?

Is it to teach us new ways to pray and worship with fresh language and liturgies?

Is it to cause older ones among us to get more comfortable with technology?

Is it to release deep hunger and thirst that affluence cannot satisfy?

Is it to invite us into greater quietness and solitude?

Is it to press us toward greater interdependence as humankind?

Is it to learn the effects our lifestyles have on one another?

Is it to provide a reprieve to the earth from the pollutants from our cars and industry?

Is it to be still and know that you are God?

O Creator and Redeemer, God, who set the seasons of the planet into rhythm and accompanies us in all the seasons of our lives. Don't allow this time to pass by without our learning what it means for us and this earth we call home. Let our anxieties not hinder drawing deeply on the sources of nourishment you offer, most especially your steadfast love and grace. Amen.