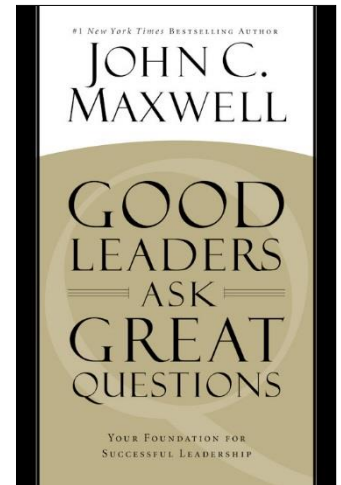


## CHAPTER 1

### WHY ARE QUESTIONS SO IMPORTANT?

#### Opening Question

*What do you hope to get out of this mastermind study? What would be a win?*



#### Discussion

1. Maxwell listed several practical ways that questions can be a benefit. Which ways have you used questions and what were the results?
  - Questions unlock and open doors that otherwise remain closed.
  - Questions are the most effective means of connecting with people.
  - Questions cultivate humility.
  - Questions help you to engage others in conversation.
  - Questions allow you to build better ideas.
  - Questions give you a different perspective.
  - Questions challenge mind-sets and get you out of ruts.
2. In the chapter, Maxwell gave two lists of questions that changed his life: questions others asked him, and questions he asked others. Can you think of a question that made a major impact on your personal or professional life?
3. John Maxwell has said that when he started his career as a leader, he thought the leader was supposed to have all the answers, and his focus was on *answering* questions. Today, he is focused on *asking* questions. As a leader, when do you think it's important to ask questions and when do you think it's important to answer them? Explain.
4. When you ask questions, are they more likely to be philosophical (ideas-based) or pragmatic (results-based)? What motivates you to ask the type of questions you naturally gravitate to?
5. Are you impatient with or appreciative of leaders who ask the opposite type of questions? Why?

6. How might you benefit from being more open to other kinds of questioners?
  7. When you want to brainstorm ideas, solve problems, or build upon concepts to improve them, whom do you invite into the process and why?
  8. Look at the criteria Maxwell uses when deciding whom to invite to the table to share ideas (page 12). He invites people who:
    - Understand the value of questions
    - Desire the success of others
    - Add value to others' thoughts
    - Are not threatened by others' strengths
    - Can emotionally handle quick changes in the conversation
    - Understand their place of value at the table
    - Bring out the best thinking in the people around them
    - Have experienced success in the area under discussion
    - Leave the table with a "we" attitude, not a "me" attitude
- Would you eliminate any of his criteria? If so, why? Would you add criteria of your own? Why?
9. What problem or challenge are you currently dealing with that is especially difficult? How might you benefit by asking questions to bring resolution to the issue?
  10. Most people who have developed a high level of expertise in an area start giving more answers and asking fewer questions in that area. In what area might that be true for you, and how might you re-start the questioning process to gain from its benefits again?

## **Application**

In what area, context, or situation are you willing to commit to asking more questions in the coming week? What benefit do you expect to gain from it?

## **Reading**

Before the next mastermind meeting, please read "What Questions Do I Ask Myself as a Leader?" on pages 26-47.

## Using Questions for Problem Solving

“The ability to ask the right question is more than half the battle of finding the answer.”

--Thomas J. Watson, founder of IBM

### **The key to solving problems is asking the right question.**

John Maxwell offers three questions a leader can use for problem solving:

- Why do we have this problem?
- How do we solve this problem?
- What specific steps must we take to solve this problem?

Maxwell's questions are a good starting point. Here are additional questions we might ask within the context of “Why do we have this problem?”

When did this problem first arise?

Why is it a problem?

What are the symptoms of the problem?

What are the negative results of this problem?

What is the root of the problem?

What other kinds of difficulties may arise as a result of this problem?

Do we need to investigate further to understand the problem adequately?

How critical or urgent is this problem?

Who on the team has the greatest expertise in this area and what does he or she think?

What's the opinion of the person closest to the problem?

What questions might you ask to expand on Maxwell's second question: “How do we solve this problem?”