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The law of great questions

Questions make it a conversation. And conversation, according to many, is where life itself shows up. This Upline® editorial is nearly 7 years old (December, 1999). Is it true? Does it matter? Did it ever? For you to decide....

by **John Milton Fogg**

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"That's a great question."

If you've ever heard that said to you, you know what a good feeling comes with it. Why is that?

We all take some well-earned pride in being able to ask a good or great question. It shows interest, intelligence, caring… all things that most people really like to be known for.

> ***A person who asks a question is an explorer.***

He or she is on a quest, pursuing the answer, in search of knowledge, seeking the truth about something, making a request.
Asking questions is a noble cause.

Ask and Ye Shall Receive

> ***Questions open doors.***

They are the medium we use to discover what's going on for someone--and for ourselves as well. When you're with a prospect, working with a member of your organization or doing training for a whole Network group, questions are your stock and trade. They are the one and only thing that turns a monologue into a dialogue, which, as Plato asserted, is where the

truth is revealed. Questions make it a conversation. And conversation, according to many, is where life itself shows up.

Having a genuine interest in people is perhaps the one true requirement for success in Network Marketing. The medium of conversation is the way we experience and express this interest and concern. The currency we exchange in the transaction is language. Asking questions and listening to the answers is the investment we make. Understanding is the return and reward.

Great Questions

Our first set of great questions comes from John Kalench's superb Network Marketing primer, *Being the Best You Can Be in MLM*. Although John offers these simply as "the five fundamental questions in your prospect's mind that must be answered at an opportunity meeting," it's easy to see that they exist from your very first encounter all the way through the "acceptance phase" of being in the business-- a phase that for some can last years. In order to sponsor anyone, finding the real answers to these questions are mandatory.

- "Is this business easy, i.e., can I really do it?"
- "Is it fun?"
- "Will I really make money doing this?"
- "Will they help me do it?"
- "Is now the right time to get involved?"

As you can see, a negative answer to any of the above would be an obstacle to entering the business. For your presentation to succeed, each of these must be answered to your prospect's satisfaction. One way of making sure your prospect gets these questions answered is the direct approach:

"Mary, in my experience, everyone considering this opportunity has five questions that must be answered in order for them to make the right choice. I'd like to ask you these questions and find out what answers you've come up with. Is that okay with you?"

Questions That Get To the Heart of the Matter

Getting down to the essence of things is another of those mandatory tasks in questioning. Here are a number of great questions designed to do just that.

- "What does that mean to you?"
- "What does that provide for you?"

These two come from Carol McCall and Mike Smith, [former partners] of the World Institute for Life Planning. Mike and Carol's work is based on revealing people's values, and these two questions help to focus the person's answers and reveal their values.

As an example: If you were involved in a sponsoring interview and were asking about what was most important to your prospect in his or her life, "What does that mean to you?" would be the perfect follow up question. If they said something as vague yet important as "time" or "money," "What does that mean to you?" followed by, "What will that provide for you?" will get right to the heart of the matter. Their answers will have both of you talking about their values, and at that level, they will immediately see if your opportunity is the right thing for them.

Also, the "to you" and "for you" aspects of these questions enable the person to give an answer that relates directly to them, rather than a dictionary definition they may or may not agree with or care about.

Keep a' Goin'

It's of vital importance to keep the conversation going. The reason is that you don't want to tell your prospect or "Distributor in training" the answer. You want them to discover it for themselves. And you have to keep the Q & A's rolling along for them to do that.

"Say more about that ..." is the perfect extender. This "request" question allows you to go deeper and at the same time, communicates strongly to the other person that you're interested and you care.

Richard Brooke, CEO of Oxyfresh, tells a wonderful story that illustrates the power of this aspect of asking questions.

A few years ago, a psychologist set up a unique test. He got a first class ticket on a direct flight from New York to San Francisco. His plan was to take his seat, strike up a conversation with the person next to him, and for the entire flight-- about six hours worth-- he would keep the person engaged in conversation, yet volunteer nothing about himself. He would only ask questions. At the other end, his team of researchers would

interview the subject of the psychologist's questions to get his or her response.

When the plane touched down in San Francisco, the psychologist's subject was interviewed and he said two revealing things about the man sitting next to him:

First, when asked what he thought of the man who'd sat next to him-- the psychologist who had said nothing about himself but only asked questions-- he replied, "He's the most interesting man I have ever met in my life!"

When asked, what was his name? -- "Gosh, I didn't catch his name!"
So much for "The more you tell-- the more you sell." At least, that is, if your intent is for someone to "sell themselves."

Some Classic Revealers

The following questions have long been cherished by motivational and human potential trainers as great "truth tellers." They aren't the kind you blurt right out in the very beginning. You'll need to establish a good relationship first, then you can use them to reveal a tremendous amount about what the person with whom you're speaking holds important and dear.

- "If you were to win the lottery today-- $1 million tax free-- what would you do tomorrow?"
- "If you had six months to live, what would you do the time you had left?"
- "What are you best known for?"
- "If money were not an issue-- what would you do for a living?"
- "Imagine that you are delivering the eulogy at your own funeral-- what would you say about your life?"

One and all, these are pretty juicy questions-- i.e., they've got a lot of energy (juice) in them. They are almost impossible to take lightly, and when you are intent on finding an honest fit between a prospect and your opportunity, questions like these will enable the conversation to be based on the individual's real values and lead to certainty.

Thou Shalt Not Manipulate

The 11th Commandment, which was a post-it pebble that fell off the tablets Moses brought down from the mountain, was "Thou Shalt Not Manipulate." One of the delightful things about all of the above questions is that by their very nature-- being value based and truth seeking-- they tend to make manipulation (by either side) pretty difficult. Of course, if one is intent on one's own a priori agenda, the truth can come crooked no matter what; keeping the 11th Commandment is the best thing to do. Getting someone into the business against his or her will or better judgment is quite doable, because the rewards we offer have such a broad appeal. Everybody wants additional income, freedom, more control over their life and work, a Network of caring, supportive friends, the chance to live their dreams.

But recruiting is not sponsoring. A name on a distributor application is like the tip of an arrow. Without the energy of the bow and the driving force of the shaft, it won't get very far.

The goal of every savvy Network Marketer is to sponsor people who are right-- right for your opportunity, right for the products, for whom now is the right time.

The purpose of all the above questions is to establish that.
It's also for them to establish. You can draw all the stunning conclusions you want for someone, but the best you can get from that is their agreement. If they are the ones doing the discovering and concluding, what you'll end up with is a man or woman of great conviction. And what

grows out of that self-discovery is a depth of commitment and integrity of intent that will assure MLM success!

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He is the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of the highly regarded publication Upline®... was a Contributing Editor to SUCCESS magazine... the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of Network Marketing Lifestyles magazine... founding editor of Networking Times... the founder of GreatestNetworker.com... and is co-founder of TheNetworkMarketingMagazine.com.

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He has spoken around the globe, through out Canada and the United States, in Australia, China, Costa Rica, Crete, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Trinidad and the Ukraine.

John is 57 years old, married to Jekaterina (Katyusha), has a daughter Rachel 24, son Johnny 20, daughter Eleonora Milena (Ele) who's 3.6 and is expecting his (last :-) child in April, 2006.

"95 percent of all the men and women who get involved in network marketing are struggling, failing and will quit within their first year. The worst part is, it's not their fault! That's totally unacceptable. We can change that— starting right now. It's time...."