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| [How to Ask Better Questions](http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/Leadingwithquestions/~3/prhKjDefC34/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email)  23 Sep 2013  by Judith Ross  (originally on [Harvard Business Review Blog Network](http://blogs.hbr.org/hmu/2009/05/real-leaders-ask.html))  Ask the Right Kind of Questions  The most effective and empowering questions create value in one or more of the following ways:  “Can you explain more about this situation?”  How have sales been going?”  “What are the consequences of going this route?”  “Why did this work?”  “Can that be done in any other way?”  “What do you think you will lose if you start sharing responsibility for the implementation process?”  “Based on your experience, what do you suggest we do here?”  We’ve been working together for three hours today; what did we do best as a team?  What enabled us to be successful in coming up with an innovative strategy?  How can we ask better questions?  How can we apply what we are learning to other parts of our work?  What leadership skills helped us succeed today?  “What one idea and/or strategy that we are not currently implementing do you believe would  best contribute to the success of our company?”  “What do you think the issue is?”  “You don’t have to have the answer to ask a great question,” says Marquardt. “A great question will  ultimately get an answer.”  Judith Ross is a freelance writer who has written numerous articles, profiles, and reports for  academic, corporate, and nonprofit organizations.  WHAT QUESTIONS ARE YOU ASKING?   |  | | --- | | Have you found joy in your life?  Has your life brought joy to others?  Where is the place of your deepest learning?  What do I want?  Can I let go of that which I don’t want to lose?  What is the change that I am avoiding?  What am I learning?  To whom do I need to prove myself– and why?  What can I learn from moments of embarrassment?  What defines me?  What makes me defensive – and why is this?  What do I find in the silence?  What in the silence finds me?  What is the background music in my life?  With whom or what am I competing?  Where do I belong?  Where did we come from?  Who did we leave behind?  Who are the guardians – and what are they guarding?  Who are the paradigm shifters – and what are they saying?  What do we / I need to learn next?  What gifts have I received?  What is my gift?  What is my trapdoor?  What direction am I facing?  What has been the hardest feedback you have received?  What was ‘the truth’ in such feedback?  When last did you receive feedback – what did you do with it?  How would you like to be remembered?  Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?  What is our ‘ridiculous’ idea about our future?  What would it take to realize this idea?  What do we need to stop / start doing?  Am I afraid of dying – why is this?  Keith Coats is the Director of Storytelling at [Tomorrow Today](http://leadingwithquestions.us3.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=4320a50bc672b2862b6f985c0&id=0a8d117169&e=f8f9a9fe45).  Keith’s passion and experience  is in Strategic Leadership, Global Trends and the development of individuals and teams. | |

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| **Tell Me The Why**  **BOB TIEDE** | **6 FEB 2014** | [**0 COMMENTS**](http://leadingwithquestions.com/leadership/tell-me-the-why/#commentform)    Guest Post by Cheryl Bachelder  Observation: When our toddler children asked us the “why” question all day long we thought it was charming. It meant they were curious, smart, and exploring the world to learn new things. Then we got to the workplace as adults and things changed. Those people asking “why” questions all day long became annoying and problematic. Their questions became pesky interference in our plan to get the job done fast. Wonder “why” that is so?  Over the weekend, I was reading Kouzes and Posner’s recent book,[**The Truth About Leadership**](http://www.amazon.com/Truth-Leadership-Heart---Matter-ebook/dp/B003VWCQBA/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1382541739&sr=8-1&keywords=the+truth+about+leadership). In research, the authors found that the top three characteristics of admired leaders are honest, forward-looking and inspiring. So if I want to be an admired leader, I need to tell my people the truth, help them know where we are going (the vision) and inspire them to pursue that vision. To inspire or motivate the people, I need to share the “why.”  In short, admired leaders answer the “why” question for the people.  Knowing “why” you are working on something elevates the importance of the work and your engagement in the work. If the “why” is something that matters to you, then the work matters to you. If the “why” inspires you, then you are inspired by the work. If the “why” energizes you, then the work is energizing. The obvious corollary is if the “why” doesn’t matter to you, then the work doesn’t matter much. If the “why” doesn’t inspire or energize you, then the work is mundane, boring, or worse.  Hardwork is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning. Malcolm Gladwell  So my challenge to you today, is to make sure you are taking time to explain the “why” at work. When you assign work, you always give a goal or due date. You usually discuss the expectations for the work. But have you explained the “why” behind the work? Have you taken time to inspire your people? Have you asked the people “why” they are energized about this work? Do you know if they have a different “why” than you do?  He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. Friedrich Nietzsche  Our human condition is that we need to have a why. We need to know that we are doing something that matters. We need to know we are valued. We look to our leaders to tell us the “why” at work. Be a leader that can answer the “why” questions at work.    **Cheryl A. Bachelder** is a passionate restaurant industry leader who serves as CEO of Popeyes® Louisiana Kitchen, a global chain of 2000+ restaurants. Cheryl is known for reinvigorating great brands and inspiring leaders to reach their full potential – and the business results follow. She has enjoyed a rewarding career working for some terrific leaders at Procter &Gamble, Gillette, Nabisco, Domino’s Pizza and Yum brands.  Cheryl blogs at [**The Purpose of Leadership**](http://thepurposeofleadership.com/)  - See more at: http://leadingwithquestions.com/leadership/tell-me-the-why/#sthash.s79spUrD.dpuf |