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# Questions, Answers, & Curses

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Am I a life-long learner or a result  
of my own curses?

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# Questions, Answers, and Curses

## Questions:

Ponder the following questions:

1. *What if I don't feel that I need to improve?*
2. *My sister-in-law needs this much more than I do. How can I help her?*
3. *Why don't people understand me when I explain things?*
4. *Why do some people avoid certain topics?*
5. *Why do some people clam up whenever there is a disagreement?*
6. *What is the #1 cause of marital discord?*
7. *What is the #1 cause of lost sales?*

## Answers

### 1. **What if I don't feel that I need to improve?**

Although the self-help industry is a multi-billion dollar business, most of the material is 'what' based and not 'how' based. What, doesn't fix the problem, it gives you an awareness that it exists and that there is a potential solution. The myth that knowledge is power stems from this concept. Knowledge is only power when properly applied and that means you must become 'how' based by turning the knowledge into a skill.

Furthermore, self-deception (pride) often hinders those who need it most because they don't see what could be (potential). Environmental conditioning as well as pride causes blinders. Men, for example, are taught to be tough on the outside when in reality our feelings are no different than those of the tender gender; we are just too cool to express them. This is a major stumbling block in sales, in marriage, and in parenting.

Reading a book on self-help or taking a course is a low probability endeavor without practicing the new knowledge. Being held accountable by someone who has mastered the skill is the highest probability of success. Interestingly, as a society we spend all of our resources (time and money) on gaining more money and very little on learning the rules of happiness.

**2. My sister-in-law needs this much more than I do. How can I help her?**

Have you ever flown as a passenger on a commercial aircraft and actually paid attention to the flight attendants' pre-flight act? When they illustrate a loss of cabin pressure, they emphasize the importance of placing the oxygen mask over your mouth first, before you offer assistance to others.

This question has a two-part answer: 1) you must help yourself and get to higher ground before you can offer assistance to others. 2) you can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped, including yourself.

The only change agent is you. It is fallacious to think you will ever change another person. If you focus your energy on mastering a few skills in the happiness arena or the effective communication arena, which are one and the same, you will have more of an impact upon your sister-in-law than a year of trying to persuade her to change.

**3. Why don't people understand me when I explain things?**

If you find that people typically misunderstand your meaning, it is not them. This is another self-deceiving myth that creates havoc when the solution is not sought, but instead assumed. The rule is that you are 100% responsible for your communication space.

You have the right and the ability to question the receiver of your questions for clarity. Clarity is Power. However, when you assume understanding, you don't have clarity and that means you've set expectations upon the scenario and that sets you up for failure.

Unmet expectations are the foundation of frustration. The safest approach to a relationship is without expectation. Work diligently to develop trust and respect and be grateful when you do.

**4. Why do some people avoid certain topics?**

An avoidance behavior is usually caused by a space vacant of trust. When there is no trust in the space, here are the primary causes:

1. You feel you are responsible for having answers or solutions: you are not.
2. You think you are responsible for maintaining the dialogue: you are not.
3. You don't understanding the difference between conflict and contention.
4. You lack the skill to resolve conflict and instead take the path that leads to contention: you either avoid the discussion (silence) or you get angry (violence.)
5. Habitual avoidance can lead to addiction and isolation.

**5. Why do some people clam up whenever there is a disagreement?**

This is similar space as the previous situation where silence is mistakenly deemed a virtue because it avoids an argument. Peacemakers are usually conflict-avoidance specialists and they create more harm than the alleged peace they seek.

Peace is the by-product of understanding, not avoidance behavior. Silence is contentious, it doesn't make things better and the person avoiding it usually has enabling traits to complicate the self-deceptive behavior.

**6. What is the #1 cause of marital discord?**

Some argue that it's money. Others claim its infidelity or perhaps any number of symptoms. Succinctly said: it is a lack of trust. Dr. John Gottman has discovered that Master Marriages (those that last a long time and are happy) are best friends. Best friends trust each other and know how to resolve conflict. They don't hold grudges and remember all the mistakes of the offending partner, down to the hour and minute of the occurrence.

When two people do not possess effective communication skills, they experience contention instead of conflict resolution. One or both do not have the ability to seek understanding, which means, for example, he spends the talking time trying to convince his wife, he is right.

Such strategy means he isn't listening, he isn't present, and he is an agreement-seeking missile. A recipe for contention and divorce.

## 7. What is the #1 cause of lost sales?

Technically you can't lose a sale you didn't have, but the answer is the same, no trust and respect. Research and University studies have determined that the number 1 reason people conduct business with a sales professional is trust and the number two reason is respect. It is not because they like you.

Building rapport is a manipulative attempt to acquire positive feelings; in other words, you are trying to get the prospect to like you in hopes she will do business with you. How do you feel when someone manipulates you? Do you trust that person? Think about this the next time you try to build rapport with someone.

## The Curses

**The Curse of Competence:** I'm good. I'm not perfect or great, but I'm comfortable being here. This is the curse of being good at the expense of becoming great. Competence is the minimum amount of ability needed to carry out a task and it requires no additional effort or skill. Going from good to great requires persistence and effort.

The Curse of Competence takes the wind out of the sails of improvement and growth. Competence is sometimes fed by occasional successes or moderate success. This is called random negative reinforcement. Las Vegas makes millions using this strategy.

Being competitive and satisfied is a self-deceptive process that stunts growth, minimizes happiness, and pushes away the development of trust and respect.

**The Curse of Complacency:** Perhaps you've heard the saying, "You don't know what you don't know?" Complacency does not want to know what you don't know. You're comfortable not knowing or learning or improving. The cost of this curse is missed opportunity and sacrificed wealth and happiness because everything is perceived as okay or good enough.

Complacency is laziness exhibited within parenting and marriage. It manifests itself in apathetic behavior and taking pride in being clueless. The dizzy blonde or cool jocks are gendered stereotypes of the same detrimental behavior of avoiding the responsibility of being present and a positive force.

Being complacent is giving responsibility to others thinking that's okay and even cool. It's not; it's embarrassing to everyone but you. It's a Blind Spot in your behavior.

**The Curse of Knowledge:** Once you know something you can't un-know it. You don't just flip a switch and not know something. Knowledge, however, can hinder your ability to effectively communicate. The Curse of Knowledge is the process of explaining a concept to a friend, a spouse, or a child, and as you explain the concept you hear the tune or see the video in your mind's eye.

The curse is that they don't hear or see either what you do. Parents often suffer from this curse when they talk with their children. Taking out the garbage to dad means something completely different to his son. This is another area where Clarity is Power.

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