



## **25 Powerful Questions for Awakening Meaning in Life and Work: A guide to awareness and action**

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*Our lives are often measured in timelines and checklists. "It's Friday and I made it through the week." "This weekend I need to shop for groceries, get a haircut, and do laundry."*

*How meaningful are these tasks in the context of your life? If you are like many of us, you may not often create the time or space to pause and consider what's really important to you.*

*On some level we are always in the process of self-discovery. This probably happens whether we are fully aware or not. Author and Life Coach Diane Dreher, PhD writes, "Seeking your calling is a process of discovery that continues throughout your life, informed by your questions, your conflicts, and your deepest dreams."*

*Many people spend significant energy searching for happiness. Exploring meaningful pursuits and reaching towards a purpose that is larger than one's self is a significant element of enduring happiness (Seligman, 2002).*

*When did you last take some time to intentionally look inside yourself and pay attention to the person that you are and who you want to become?*

*Even though we may not pause to notice, our inner voice continues to call us to wake up and pay attention. Sometimes our callings are louder than others. These 25 Powerful Questions offer a spring board to help you begin move forward on your journey of self-awareness. Gaining clarity and meaning is a unique path for everyone. This provocative inquiry can help you awaken some clarity to what is meaningful in your life.*

## **25 Thought-Provoking Questions for Awakening Clarity and Meaning**

1. If I were writing a book about my life's story, what would the title be? What do I *wish* the title of my auto-biography could be?
2. What is the most important lesson I have learned in my life?
3. Who are the 3 to 5 people I admire most? What do I admire about each of them? What commonalities do I notice among them?

4. Who do I need to be in order to be myself?
5. What is my number one priority in life?
6. If I could do anything I wanted, knew I wouldn't fail, and there were no obstacles, what would I do?
7. If I could be five times more courageous, what would I do?
8. What risks do I need to take in my life and why?
9. What are my five greatest strengths?
10. What is my most significant achievement in my life thus far?
11. What thoughts, beliefs, ideas, actions feed my soul?
12. What question am I afraid to ask myself?
13. If I were to die tomorrow, what would I wish I had done that I have not yet gotten to?
14. How do I want to be remembered by others when I am no longer living?
15. How would I hate to be described by people?
16. When I listen to the small voice inside me, what do I hear, see, feel?
17. If I could change 3 things about my life, what would they be?
18. When do I feel most fulfilled? When am I least fulfilled?
19. What is my life's purpose?
20. What have I not said to those closest to me that I want to say?
21. What do I feel most grateful for? (Create a list)

**Calling Yourself to Action:**

22. When is the "right" time to start working on a new goal that is important to me?
23. What is a small action I can do to become more of the person I want to be?
24. What goal, if any, would I like to set for myself and work on to completion?
25. What action step(s) am I ready to take today? This week? This month?

## Tips to Stimulate Clarity and Action

*There are many ways to work with these questions. You might choose to reflect on one inquiry at a time - maybe one question each morning when you awaken, or in the evening after dinner.*

*Another option might be to sit down and respond to a group of questions all at once.*

*Pick one or more tips that will work for you.*

- Give yourself the gift of time.
- Set a conscious intention to reflect and create clarity as you respond to each question.
- Create a space in which you can engage with these questions and record your responses. This space might be written or electronic. Return to these questions periodically to ponder, nourish, refine, or change your responses. We are works in progress; as we change, our thoughts, energies, and ideas change.
- Set up a vision board and post/hang it where you can see it daily. A cork "bulletin" board, whiteboard, or poster board work effectively. Post ideas, quotes, motivational words, visuals that inspire you. Post meaningful goals and messages. This process helps highlight goals and ideas in daily awareness so you can keep circling back to them. For more information on creating a vision board, see the resources below.
- Develop a mission and vision statement for your life; let it be a work in progress that you return to frequently.
- Seek out and read books, electronic sources and other materials to stimulate your thinking, self-exploration and awareness, learning and development. Create notes and visuals to help you remember and make use of what strikes you as significant.
- Identify your positive attributes and strengths, and build on them.
- Make connections with other people who are involved in a process of seeking clarity and meaning in their lives.
- Give yourself space to slow down and become more aware of what's important and meaningful to you. Many people find practices such as breath awareness, meditation, visualization, spiritual processes, and time in natural surroundings to be helpful. Engage in a balance that includes action and pausing to be present.
- Breathe in clarity and breathe out confusion. Breathe in meaning and breathe out stress.
- Listen to your heart, body, and spirit along with your mind. Pay attention to what you are feeling and where you are feeling it; Pay attention to your inner wisdom and knowings.
- Seek out mentors, advocates, and/or a professional coach to offer support and inspiration toward gaining clarity and moving toward your objectives.
- When you are ready, move forward from contemplation to actions!

## Resources

Berns-Zare, Ilene (2016). Nine Smart Strategies to Grow in Life.

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Levoy, Gregg (1997). Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life. Harmony Books, NY.

Rath, Tom (2007). Strengths Finder 2.0. Gallup Press, NY.

Rider, E. (2015). The Reason Vision Boards Work and How to Make One. The Huffington Post, 3/14/2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elizabeth-rider/the-scientific-reason-why\\_b\\_6392274.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elizabeth-rider/the-scientific-reason-why_b_6392274.html)

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## About Ilene

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