

EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

"Good leaders ask great questions that inspire others to dream more, think more, learn more, do more, and become more." John C. Maxwell

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TOPIC THIS ISSUE:
THE POWER OF ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS



4 QUESTIONS THAT BROUGHT AN ENTIRE HIGH SCHOOL TO ITS KNEES

BY: PAUL SMITH



Chad was a high school senior in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the captain of the basketball team. The night before a big game, the entire team came to Chad's house for dinner.

At one point in the evening, the conversation turned to a girl at school. But not just any girl. It was a very special girl we'll call Jenny. And the things they had to say about her were, to say the least, unkind. What's more, the instigator of those unkind words was the captain of the team, Chad Hymas.

Jenny was a very smart young lady. She had a lovely smile that she always wore and long dark hair. But she also had a number of visible disabilities.

Jenny was confined to a wheelchair and was blind in both eyes. She was missing one arm, and her other arm and hand had limited functionality. When she ate, she wore a pink bib to protect her clothes from the inevitable spill. She also had difficulty with speech, so she carried a computer with her that could speak for her when she typed out words on an oversized and simplified keyboard.

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A few minutes later, Chad’s father knocked on the door and walked in. “I cannot believe what I’ve heard for the last twenty minutes,” he said. “But it’s not your fault. I’m mostly disappointed in your captain.”

After considering that for a few seconds, he continued, “Actually, it’s not even my son’s fault. It’s my fault. I raised him. I owe you all an apology.” And without saying another word, he left the room.

The Next Day At School...

The team mostly wanted to pretend the night before had never happened, which they were having some degree of success with...until Chad’s father unexpectedly walked into the school cafeteria.

“I’m here to teach you how to stand up,” he said. “And I need you and the team to follow me right now and take me to Jenny.” Tentatively, the whole table of boys stood up. Chad pointed to the lonely table in the middle of the room where Jenny was eating lunch by herself.

As Chad described to me what happened next, he said, “Dad went over and gently touched her arm to announce their presence. Jenny started to shake.

But it was clear she wasn’t shaking out of fear. She was actually nervous

with *excitement* that someone – anyone – wanted to be next to her and to talk to her.”

Chad’s father introduced himself and the team to Jenny, then started asking questions so everyone could get to know her better. It took half an hour for her to answer only four questions, but it was worth the time.

Because the questions he asked, and the answers she gave, taught them more than they could have imagined.

The Four Questions That Brought A High School To Its Knees

I. “Who’s your best friend?”

Jenny responded, “My mother, Stacy.” This teenaged girl had to count her mother as her best friend, which spoke volumes about her social life at school.

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2. The second question was, “What does your dad do for a living?”

Jenny’s chillingly simple response: “I don’t know who my father is.”

3. The third question he asked was, “How long have you been in a wheelchair?”

Jenny answered, “My . . . whole . . . life.” For a group of boys who spend every day running and jumping up and down on a basketball court, this was a sobering answer. But even that paled in comparison to the last question’s answer.

4. “What is it you dream of and love to do the most?”

Jenny responded, “I like listening to the girls cheer at the basketball games.”

What Jenny loves to do the most is listen to the girls cheering for the very boys who the night before had said such awful things about her.

A Change In Perspective

Over the next week, the talk in the school rightfully centered on Jenny: who she was as a person, and how *everyone* treated her. Jenny was elected captain of the cheerleading squad. She was outfitted with a skirt, joined the rest of the girls courtside, and learned to twirl circles in her wheelchair. As the captain, it was Jenny’s job to call each and every one of the cheers the girls performed.

Her story made the local news, which was quickly picked up in syndication and reprinted in newspapers across the country. Soon people that usually didn’t come to basketball games were showing up, but not to watch the game. They came to watch Jenny.

For the rest of her high school career, Jenny still sat at the same table for lunch. But it was no longer empty. “They couldn’t make a table big enough for everyone that wanted to sit with Jenny after that,” Chad said.

The Takeaway

Looking back, Kelly Hymas could have responded to what he heard downstairs that night any number of ways. He



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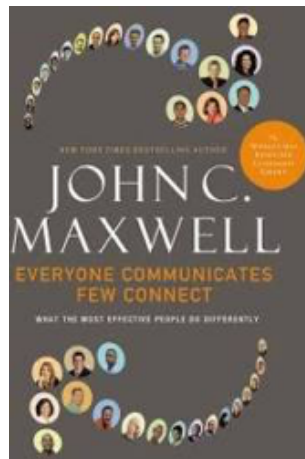
could have just let it slide, thinking it's just how teenage boys are. Or he could have quietly confronted Chad when the evening was over and the team was gone.

The following day, I'm sure he had other things he needed to be doing in the middle of the workday. But in both cases, he took the time and the risk to make a point to his son in a way he will never forget.

Would you do the same?

3 Questions That Must Be Answered in Every Interaction

BY: JOHN C. MAXWELL
FROM *EVERYONE COMMUNICATES FEW CONNECT*



When you are trying to connect with people, **it's not about you — it's about them.** If you want to connect with others, you have to get over yourself. You have to change the focus from inward to outward, off of yourself and onto others. And the great thing is that you can do it. Anyone can. All it takes is the will to change your focus, the determination to follow through and the acquisition of a handful of skills!

Three Questions People Are Asking About You

Understanding that your focus must be on others is often the greatest hurdle people face in connecting with others. It's a matter of having the right attitude. But that alone is not enough. You must be able to communicate that attitude of selflessness. How do you do that? You do it by answering three questions that people always ask themselves when interacting with others, whether as a client, customer, guest, audience member, friend, colleague or employee:

1. **“Do you care for me?”** Mutual concern creates



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connection between people. Whenever you can help other people understand that you genuinely care about them, you open the door to connection, communication and interaction. You begin to create a relationship. And from that moment on, you have the potential to create something beneficial for both you and them, because good relationships usually lead to good things: ideas, growth, partnerships and more.

2. “Can you help me?” In his book *Presenting to Win*, Jerry Weissman points out that when people communicate, they focus too much on the features of their product or service instead of answering the question, “Can you help me?” The key, says Weissman, is to focus on benefits, not features. In our current world, people are bombarded with information daily about the features of this product or that gadget. They tend to tune it out. If you want to get someone’s attention, show that you can help.

3. “Can I trust you?” Trust is vital to any business. In fact, it’s vital to life itself. Author and speaker Jeffrey Gitomer once said that trust is even more important than love!

If I Were You ...

Whenever people take action, they do so for their reasons, not yours. That’s why we have to get on their agenda and try to see things from their point of view. If we don’t, we’re just wasting their time and ours.

You can connect with others if you’re willing to get off your own agenda, to think about others and to try to understand who they are and what they want. If you really want to help people, connecting becomes more natural and less mechanical. It goes from being some- thing that you merely do to becoming part of who you really are. If you’re willing to learn how to connect, you will be amazed at the doors that will open to you and the people you will be able to work with. **All you have to do is keep reminding yourself that connecting is all about others.**



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Asking The Right Questions

BY: BOB TIEDE



What is a leader, who thinks they need to know all the right answers, tempted to do, when they are asked a question for which they don't know the answer?

Yes – they are tempted to make up an answer on the spot! How do I know? I used to be that leader! My staff were kind and none of them said it out loud, but I am sure there were times they were thinking, “I don't think

Bob knows – I think he just made that up!”

What a heavy burden sits on the shoulders of any leader, who thinks they need to have all the answers! Because we all know that no one can have all the answers! Here is what is so interesting – just having a few simple questions ready to use anytime you are asked a question you don't know the answer for is so easy!

Here are mine:

Can you please tell me more? I use this one, even when I think I know the answer – because so many times I have answered what I thought was the question only to discover that I had missed their question. Asking, “Can you please tell me more?” greatly increases the odds that I will actually understand their question.

Wow! That's a great question! I don't know the answer! How would you answer? Many times they will actually have an answer to their question! But of course they might respond by saying, “I don't know – that is why I am asking you!”

You can then respond by asking:

Again – you are asking a great question! I don't



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know the answer! How do you think we might find the answer? They will appreciate that you have affirmed their question and they will likely have ideas of how to find out the answer.

Additional questions you might ask are: **Who might know? Might we find an answer online?**

They are likely to have several ideas on where an answer might be found. And then you can ask, **Would you be willing to pursue finding out the answer and then bringing it back to me?**

If you are that leader – who thinks you need to have all the answers – is that burden feeling a lot lighter now?

It really is true that: **“Leadership is not as much about knowing the right answers as it is about asking the right questions.”**

