



The Most Valuable Question You May Ever Ask

by Jack Canfield

As you begin to take action toward the fulfillment of your goals and dreams, you must realize that not every action will be perfect.

Not every action will produce the desired result. Not every action will work.

Making mistakes, getting it almost right, and experimenting to see what happens are all part of the process of eventually getting it right.

Thomas Edison is reported to have tried over 2,000 different experiments that failed before he finally got the light bulb to work. He once told a reporter that, from his perspective, he had never failed at all. Inventing the light bulb was just a 2,000-step process. If you can adopt that attitude, then you can be free to take an action, notice what result you get, and then adjust your next actions based on the feedback you have received.

Ready, Fire, Aim!

Don't be afraid to just jump in and get started moving toward your goals. As long as you pay attention to the feedback you receive, you will make progress. Just getting into the game and firing allows you to correct and refine your aim.

The Most Valuable Question You May Ever Learn

In the 1980s, a multimillionaire businessman taught me a question that radically changed the quality of my life. So what is this magical question that can improve the quality of every relationship you are in, every product you produce, every service you deliver, every meeting you conduct, every class you teach and every transaction you enter into?

Here it is:

“On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the quality of our relationship during the last week?”

Here are a number of variations on the same question that have served me well over the years...

“On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate...

- our service?
- our product?
- this meeting?
- our performance?
- my coaching/managing?
- my parenting/babysitting?
- my teaching?
- this class/seminar/workshop?
- our date/vacation?
- this meal?
- this book/recording/show?

Any answer less than a 10 always gets this follow-up question:

“What would it take to make it a 10?”

This is where the *really* valuable information comes from. Knowing that a person is dissatisfied is not enough. Knowing in detail what will satisfy them gives you the information you need to do whatever it takes to create a winning product, service or relationship.

There Are Two Kinds of Feedback

There are two kinds of feedback you might encounter – negative and positive. We tend to prefer the positive – that is, results, money, praise, promotion, raise, awards, happiness, inner-peace, etc. It feels better. It tells us we are on course and doing the right thing.

We tend not to like negative feedback – lack of results, little or no money, criticism, poor evaluations, complaints, unhappiness, inner conflict, pain, etc.

However, there is as much useful data in negative feedback as there is in positive feedback. It tells us that we are off course, headed in the wrong direction, doing the wrong thing. This is priceless information!

In fact, it's so valuable that one of the most useful projects you could undertake is to change how you respond to negative feedback. I like to refer to negative feedback as information for “improvement opportunities.” Here is a place where I can get better.

Ask Yourself for Feedback

In addition to asking others for feedback, you need to ask yourself for feedback, too. More than any other source of feedback, your body will tell you whether or not you are on course or not. When you are relaxed and happy, your body is telling you that you are on track. When you are constantly exhausted, tense, in pain, unhappy and angry, then you are off track.

Take time to listen to what your body is saying to you. Take time to listen to your physical sensations and your feelings. They are sending you important messages. Are you listening?

Remember, Feedback Is Simply Information

You don't have to take it personally. Just welcome it and use it.

For more on Using Feedback to Your Advantage, review [Principle #19](#) in [The Success Principles](#). It's one of the most important principles you can apply.

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