

Finding the Questions

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All good teachers or interviewers know that the secret to evoking answers lies in asking the right questions.

As I was training to teach yoga, I would meet regularly with my teachers. We'd practice together. My teachers were available to answer questions I had. After several weeks of working together like this, I found that sometimes entire sessions would pass, their expertise readily available, and I hadn't so much as said hello to them.

I really wanted to engage them; I wanted to be taught by them but didn't know what to ask. I came to understand that my teachers were willing to give me what I asked for. Judging by the type and quality of my questions, my teachers understood how much and what type of teaching I was ready to absorb. If I wasn't asking, they weren't teaching. In these sessions, they gave neither unsolicited information nor information I wasn't ready to absorb.

I started to formulate questions, often several days before our sessions. By searching and contemplating, I was amazed at how many of my questions were answered by experience and my own insight before I even proffered them to my teachers. The questions that did make it to my teachers were refined; they were specific and honed. With this specificity, my teachers and I were able to engage on the level I had craved.

Ask a Difficult Question

After years of study, I approached one of my teachers and with wonder and confusion in my eyes I asked, "All of this knowledge is beautiful and inspiring, but what does it have to do with teaching a yoga class?" Wisely, my teacher smiled and without saying a word, she simply shook her head. Nothing else needed be said. I knew I was to find the answers to my myself and that somehow it was the asking that would be the lit a flame inside me.



Years later, I'm still looking for this answer, pleased with each new discovery that seems to piece together the puzzle. Not long after my teacher had so wisely taught me by saying nothing, I asked my other teacher who was moving, "What else do I need to know? How will I be taught?" To which he looked at me solemnly and said, "You have everything you need. You have the answers."

We Already Have the Answers

And somewhere inside we do have the answers, or at very least something inside knows where to look. Yoga is in part understanding our place in this Universe and appreciating the conversation between us and it. It



seems to me that our opportunity to participate in this conversation depends largely on the questions that we ask, by how much we search. If we aren't asking, our teachers aren't teaching. Searching for and asking the right questions refines the listening of our everyday lives and prepares us for the type of learning we hope for. Carrying these questions into our yoga practice, our meditations, prayers, work, and daily lives prepares us to receive answers, sometimes in the least

likely of ways. It teaches us in the ways we crave for. Sometimes yoga is simply the quiet discipline that will reveal the answers that were always there, like diamonds in the rock.

Sometimes it is just enough to ask the question. Let the answer come organically, when it's time for you to receive it. In the meantime, enjoy the game of watching the Universe respond. Enjoy the mindfulness of listening. Herein lies many of our answers. And maybe there are no answers. This is the answer.

Poem

Every part of you has a secret language.
Your hands and your feet say what you've done.
And every need brings in what's needed.
Pain bears its cure like a child
Having nothing produces provisions.
Ask a difficult question,
And the marvelous answer appears.

—Rumi

I encourage you to contemplate your big questions. Bring them to yoga class and listen, feel, experience the ways your practice, your inner-knowing, responds.



Scott Moore is a senior teacher of yoga and mindfulness in New York City and when he's not teaching or conducting retreats, he writes for Conscious Life News, Elephant Journal, Mantra Magazine, and his own [blog](#) at [scottmooreyoga.com](#). Scott also loves to trail run, play the saxophone, and travel with his wife and son. Check out his [yoga retreats to places like Hawaii and Amalfi Coast](#), his [online Yoga Nidra](#)

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