

The Questions That Will Save Your Relationships by Glennon Melton – Huffington Post – 24th Jan 2014

Through therapy, we learned to ask each other better questions. We learned that if we really want to know our people, if we really care to know them -- *we need to ask them better questions and then really listen to their answers*. We need to ask questions that carry along with them this message: "I'm not just checking the box here. I really care what you have to say and how you feel. I really want to know you." If we don't want throwaway answers, we can't ask throwaway questions. A caring question is a key that will unlock a room inside the person you love.

So Craig and I don't ask "How was your day?" anymore. After a few years of practicing increasingly intimate question asking, now we find ourselves asking each other questions like these:

When did you feel loved today?

When did you feel lonely?

What did I do today that made you feel appreciated?

What did I say that made you feel unnoticed?

What can I do to help you right now?

I know. WEEEEEEIRRD at first. But not after a while. Not any weirder than asking the same damn empty questions you've always asked that elicit the same damn empty answers you've always gotten.

And so now when our kids get home from school, we don't say: "How was your day?" Because they don't know. Their day was lots of things.

Instead we ask:

How did you feel during your spelling test?

What did you say to the new girl when you all went out to recess?

Did you feel lonely at all today?

Were there any times you felt proud of yourself today?

And I never ask my friends: "How are you?" Because they don't know either.

Instead I ask:

How is your mom's chemo going?

How'd that conference with Ben's teacher turn out?

What's going really well with work right now?

Questions are like gifts -- it's the thought behind them that the receiver really FEELS. We have to know the receiver to give the right gift and to ask the right question. Generic gifts and questions are all right, but personal gifts and questions feel better. Love is specific, I think. It's an art. The more attention and time you give to your questions, the more beautiful the answers become.

Life is a conversation. Make it a good one.