

7 QUESTIONS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEADERS ASK THEMSELVES DAILY

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There is something powerful about our ability to ask questions, especially when we ask them of ourselves. In his article on the topic, psychology journalist, Steven Handel, says, “the truth is that questions can help us begin thinking in new ways, which can then help us find answers that aren’t immediately apparent. The majority of our thinking happens unconsciously. But by asking questions, we bring our internal thought processes into the spotlight.”

Effective leaders understand this power and leverage it to their benefit on a daily basis. There are 7 primary questions that make the list, and these include:

1. **What are my priorities for the day?** It is really hard to follow someone who isn’t organized. If a leader shows up late for meetings, forgets commitments, and overbooks the day, it is increasingly difficult to inspire employees to work differently (or to stay onboard, because that kind of disorganization breeds chaos). Effective leaders understand the importance of organization, and that begins with creating priorities each and every day.
2. **What should I delegate?** To delegate effectively means leveraging the strengths and talents of a team in a way that maximizes productivity. A good leader doesn’t try to take everything on alone; instead, he or she starts the day by evaluating ways to make the most of the available time.
3. **What can be improved?** Status quo is a dangerous thing. An effective leader spends a significant amount of time asking this question and seeking out ways to improve processes, policies, functions, and anything else that can be improved to make a positive impact on the company and its bottom line.
4. **How can I help someone else?** Helping others to be the best versions of themselves has a direct and positive impact on work and the company. Effective leaders know that serving others inspires and motivates those individuals, improving productivity. They are, therefore, willing to spend time out of their day to do so.
5. **Who can I thank?** Effective leaders are also very aware of the need to acknowledge others for their contributions. Whether it’s a simple ‘thank you’ for coffee or an emotional letter to a long-time mentor for her influence, gratitude happens every day.
6. **What can I do today in anticipation of tomorrow?** In the same vein as organization, effective leaders are proactive. They look ahead in their planning to anticipate what’s coming down the pipe and the action items that can be taken now in order to be better prepared and ahead of the game.
7. **What did I learn today?** An effective leader knows the growth and learning process never ends. So, every day closes with this same question – seeking to identify those things that worked well and those things that did not. For those things that fall into the latter group, contemplation is then given to how it can be approached differently the next time.

Making this a habit is doable and advised. You can start by writing these questions down and pinning them somewhere you’re sure to look often, like a planner or notebook. Another good idea is to setup reminders throughout the day to include one of each of the questions, in order. Once you’ve done this for a while, reminders won’t be needed – it will be second-hand.

Just remember: “Asking the right questions is often more important than having all the answers.” – Handel.