

# Some Questions to Ponder

1. Would you rather work with people who are more or less knowledgeable and skillful than yourself? Why?

2. Would you rather work with people who agree almost completely with you or with people who challenge you, your ideas, and/or your style almost all the time? Why?

3. Imagine you join a group where all the other members are different than you in a characteristic such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Imagine, further, that whenever you attend meetings, everyone is very tense and nothing is accomplished, but when you are absent, meetings are pleasant, empowering, and productive. What would you do?

4. Imagine there were several people you were trying to involve in a project. If you knew they would get excited about the project and join if you bent the truth (lied a little bit), would you do it? Why?

5. It is possible that reality is just an elaborate play in which everyone else in the world besides you is an extremely intelligent alien creature acting a part. Perhaps each night, while you sleep, they all get together and laugh at the silly things you did that day. Can you know that this is not true? If so, how?

6. If forced to choose, would you rather be sane and surrounded by people who are crazy or crazy and surrounded by people who are sane? Why?

7. Who, which individual or group, will gain the most if your life goals are accomplished?

8. Who, which individual or group, will lose the most if you fail to accomplish your life goals?

9. Imagine you are facilitating a meeting and things are not going well. Then someone else butts in and takes charge. Would you prefer that the rest of the meeting go better or worse than before? Why?

10. Try to think of five good reasons for never having children and five good reasons for having children. Which reasons are better? Why?

11. If you are in a group of people who are less knowledgeable or skilled than yourself, would you rather teach them so their knowledge and skill increase or compete with them for a prize? Why?

12. Imagine there is a worldwide disaster that kills every human except for you and five other people. If you could choose what these other people would be like, describe the main characteristics you would want each one to have (not necessarily the same for each person). Why did you choose these characteristics?

13. Imagine you were given the choice of living in an absolute dictatorship with you as the dictator or in a democracy in which everyone had a say in decisions. Which would you choose? Why?

14. Imagine you have a heated disagreement with someone over choosing a course of action. Imagine both of your perspectives seem reasonable and so, for a long time, neither of you will agree to the other's choice. Finally though, the other person agrees to go along with your choice in the interest of making a decision. But imagine that several days later you discover that one of your best arguments is fallacious and the other choice is therefore clearly superior. Would you admit your error and switch to the other course of action or would you remain silent and go on with your own choice? Why?

15. Suppose that all cruelty, strife, and poverty in the world could be ended in exchange for the sacrifice of your life. Under these circumstances would you commit suicide? Why or why not?

16. Imagine you knew a baby would have a horrible, miserable life and then kill her/himself at age twenty. If you could kill this baby now without anyone knowing, would you do it? Why or why not?

17. How do you know that you do not live in an absolute dictatorship controlled by a few individuals who have threatened, mesmerized, or manipulated everyone (including all politicians, journalists, TV producers, teachers, ministers, etc.) to do what they want and to lie, fabricate stories, or do anything else necessary to hide their control?

**Share your thoughts with another person: one person listens while the other answers a question. Then the second listens while the first either answers this same question or answers the next question.**

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