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Focus

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Why is there air? and other interesting questions

Those of us who have achieved a "certain age" may remember Bill Cosby's phonograph album *Why Is There Air?* I believe the answer to that question has something to do with inflating soccer balls.

Also:

- Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?
- If a piano player is a pianist, why isn't a race car driver a racist?
- Why is a wise guy not respected like a wise man?
- Since croutons are stale bread, why are they sold in airtight packages?
- If you spin an oriental person in circles, does he become disoriented?

And finally, "Why isn't the number 11 pronounced oneteen or onety-one?"

Before you dismiss such questions as silly or childish, consider the opportunities these kinds of questions present. For example, imagine you are an accountant and a business client asks, "Why does a Balance Sheet have to balance?" That question presents a marvelous opportunity to guide the client to a better understanding of core issues affecting profitability and company value, if you avoid jargon (debits, credits and the like).

The Bottom Line: Take advantage of the "teachable moments" life presents; they are rare. Use the answer to illuminate (not just inform) and convey a richer understanding of process, interactions, and/or history - the "why" behind the "what."

Your life, and that of the questioner, will be richer for it.

Tom Wagner

Special thanks to Marlo Kirkpatrick for her help with the nonsensical questions. Building relationships with creative people like her adds spice to life and vigor to business.

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identify the Right Questions
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