



Change Your Questions, Change Your Life

Wendy Watson Nelson

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"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."

In this unique and thought-provoking book, "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life," Wendy Watson Nelson explores the power of asking--and answering--certain questions and invites the reader to pause and reflect on the different kinds of questions one can ask and the remarkable ways new questions can help one solve old problems.

Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Details

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From Reader Review Change Your Questions, Change Your Life for online ebook

Jary Welker says

When I first picked up this book in a bookstore I was intrigued by it's title but that was it. As I thumbed through its pages and saw all the colors, graphics and pictures I was almost put off that this could not be too serious of a book if it was so filled with pages filled with text in giant type and pretty pictures. HOW WRONG I WAS! While I did buy the book that day, I also came home and put it on my shelf to read "later." Not only does the author bring years of teaching and professional experience in Family Therapy as a professor and therapist, she has a world of experience on the spiritual side as well. Be prepared to be challenged in your thinking! Don't be surprised if the questions asked of the reader don't render old paradigms about our relationships with family and friends less than useful if approached which the new questions and perspectives offered on its pages. It more of a work book with places to not only stop our reading and reflect but also to pause and write the inspiration received as we do so. Get it! Read it! Enjoy it!

Kristen says

I love Sister Nelson, but was at first put off by the structure of this book -- lots of graphics, text boxes, pictures. Once I got started, though, I found it was excellent. Some really good stories, counsel, and questions to ask ourselves.

Deb says

This is an important book. It almost reads like a self-help book because it's full of very practical ideas. At the same time, it's very spiritually uplifting. I also feel like I know Sister Nelson a little better. This book is one I might like to read again or at least look through again to review certain stories and ideas.

Sarah says

This book was a little...ADD? Not sure how to describe it. I guess I wanted to it to be more specific instead of throwing out a very general idea and then giving a bajillion examples of it (that still left it very general). I guess I had a hard time applying it to myself. I wouldn't necessarily say to forgo reading this book though just on my word, the style may work for your thought processes. It just didn't for mine. I still learned some good things though and I really liked many of the different exercises you could try out (possibly because they were specific). Also, the pictures are really fun although at times they are distracting. When you put a full page picture smack dab in the middle of the sentence, it's hard to enjoy the picture while trying to remember what you were reading. So I guess what I'm trying to say is this book lacked flow. It had many good things, they just weren't organized enough for my brain to be comfortable.

Heather says

I really enjoyed reading this book during General Conference while I was particularly focused on learning and seeking. Good questions are powerful and help us learn and change. I particularly liked the section that talked about the question of finding your life's mission and the idea summarized at the end that God wants us to ask questions. He wants us to seek and to learn and to come to know Him. :)

Here are a few quotes that I liked from the book (listed kind of as an outline of the book's chapters, since I don't have page numbers for the e-book):

The Power of Questions

"Great questions allow us to see a fuller picture. Great questions can motivate us to change because they invite us to reflect. They help us to see some part of ourselves or others or a situation we've never been able to see before!"

"Do you know how much I love you? The question lingers a little bit longer than the statement I love you, doesn't it?"

"Now, honey, if we were at a restaurant and wanted to order this, what would we call it?"

"Troublemaking questions are spiritually weakening....Which question is the biggest bully in your life?"

"In the last 24 hours, what is one question you asked yourself? Is there a question you long someone to ask you? Think of someone with whom you want to build a stronger relationship. What questions do you typically ask them during the first few minutes you are together? What is the last question you asked the Lord?....Do your questions build and lift? Are they likely to strengthen others spiritually?"

"How can I be more like you?"

Questions, Problems, and Solutions

"Questions can be great tools for solving problems. And useful kinds of questions can solve problems and change our lives!"

"How is that situation a problem for me? Why is that situation a problem for me? Answers to these questions help uncover the real problem."

"How do I usually respond? Could my response be part of the problem? Could my response actually be inviting him to respond the way he does?"

"How different would my life be if I discovered that my problem was actually a solution to another problem? To what question could my problem be an answer?....Who is benefitting from the problem? Which relationships are stronger because of the problem?"

"This is going to sound really strange, but I miss the rides to radiation. With cancer looming over our heads, we took time to talk. We talked about things we'd never talked about before. The cancer—which was killing my husband—actually brought our marriage to life! Now that the cancer is gone, we've gone back to our old ways."

“What story have you been telling yourself and others about you and your life? How have you been casting yourself?...We were born to succeed. With the Lord’s help, the hero that you truly are can and will emerge!”

“Positive changes are more likely to occur in a person’s life when that person: 1. Has a bright recollection of times in her life when she handled something well. 2. Is able to think and talk about his problems as being outside himself, rather than something that defines who he is. 3. Sees herself as one who has risen above obstacles, conquered difficulties, and has been able to wrestle problems to the ground.”

Three Kinds of Questions

“These three kinds of questions can gather information and introduce information simultaneously: Difference Questions, Behavioral Effect Questions, and What If Questions.”

“Difference is information...Explore differences between people, relationships, and situations. Use words such as ‘most,’ ‘least,’ ‘best,’ ‘worst,’ ‘biggest,’ or ‘smallest.’”

“That question might not just gather information, it may also introduce new information.”

“Difference questions have an unusual ‘staying power,’ so the thoughts and feelings and actions the question triggers can influence the situation even when you are not present...These questions introduce new ideas. They introduce change.”

“What is the most effective thing you do to keep yourself safe from the pornographic images that pop up on your computer, TV, or cell phone?”

Beliefs and Questions

“What are your beliefs doing for you?”

“A belief is the lens through which we view the world.”

“What we believe is what we see.”

“If we are tired, feeling mistreated, lonely, or spiritually bankrupt, we may not see things the same way we would if we were rested; feeling loved, supported, needed, and wanted; and were spiritually in tune with the Lord. We see things as WE really are!”

“The truth is that painful or confusing life experience can distort our way of looking at things and generate beliefs that constrain us and cause problems.”

“Hindering and constraining beliefs lock us up. They lock up our minds and our hearts. They lock up our solution-seeking and problem-solving abilities. Constraining beliefs hold our true selves captive!”

“Helpful or facilitating beliefs keep us open to divine truths and direction.”

“Since finding our core beliefs can help us solve our problems, how can we find them?”

“Your core beliefs are revealed in the questions you ask yourself and in the stories you tell.”

“What beliefs about myself hold me captive? What beliefs about another person constrain me? What beliefs about life prevent me from moving forward? What beliefs about love prevent me from giving and receiving

love?”

Seven Questions That Can Change Your Life

1. What Is on My Premortal List of Things to Do While on Earth?

“What were you born to do? Why are you here on earth? Especially now? Why were you born into your particular family?...What is the wonderful mission for which I was sent to earth? What do I need to do to fill the measure of my creation? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that if a person could gaze into heaven for five minutes, he would know more about heaven than if he studied the topic forever.”

“President Joseph F. Smith taught the following about our missions on earth: ‘He that sent His Only Begotten Son into the world to accomplish the mission which he did, also sent every soul within the sound of my voice, and indeed every man and woman in the world, to accomplish a mission, and that mission cannot be accomplished by neglect; nor by indifference; nor can it be accomplished in ignorance. We must learn our duty; learn the requirements that the Lord has made at our hands, and understand the responsibilities that he has placed upon us.’”

“What is the part you are to play in helping the Savior with His mission, which is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man?”

“The more obedient we are to Him, the more we grow into our true selves and the more we are able to do what we came here to do. The only way I know to do what we’ve come here to do—to live up to who we are and to worthily fulfill our premortal commitments, our life’s mission—is to consecrate all that we have and all that we are to the Lord. That means putting Him and His work first. That means using our gifts and talents to build up His kingdom rather than our own. That means surrendering everything to Him, even our will. Increasingly impeccable obedience is key to finding your mission. And consecration is key to fulfilling your mission once you’ve found it!”

“We have opportunities to find and fulfill our missions, but we don’t have to. No one is making us do it. We have our agency to choose how we will spend our time and energy and talents and resources while we are here on earth. All of that, in fact, is part of our testing.”

“To what did I agree in the premortal world that my Heavenly Father is honoring and is therefore not able to respond to my present request?”

“Because that information is lost to us at birth, the only way we can discover what our mortal missions are is to pray and ask the Lord to reveal them to us...let our Heavenly Father know that we are serious, when we pray: ‘Please help me to fill the measure of my creation; please help me to fulfill the wonderful mission for which I was sent to earth.’”

“When the Spirit whispers the assurance that this is part of our life mission and is on our ‘to do’ list, everything changes.”

“If you are not finding and fulfilling your mortal mission, it really doesn’t matter what else you are doing. You will not be happy. That’s a guarantee. Even though the world, and perhaps even those you love, may be cheering you on in your life’s work and successes, your spirit will be churning as time goes on.”

“Do you feel a growing urgency, an impatience, to do all that the Lord requires of you so that you can fulfill your life’s mission?”

“Finding your life’s mission is crucial to finding happiness in this life.”

“Even though she is doing all kinds of ‘right things,’ her spirit can tell there is something more—or something different—she needs to be doing.”

“If you feel a little unsettled these days, the reason may be that you are not yet fulfilling the wonderful mission for which you were sent to earth.”

“She had been looking for her mission somewhere other than in the situation in which He has presently placed her. Through the whisperings of the Spirit, her mind was enlarged and her heart changed. Her mind was flooded with ideas—ideas confirming that she was in exactly the right place for what the Lord needs her to do.”

“What happens to our souls when the only desire of our hearts is to give back all that we have and are to the Lord?...When we want to consecrate every relationship unto Him?...Do you have musical talent?...Or a talent to teach with clarity?...Or to demonstrate compassion for others?...Chances are you developed those abilities in your premortal existence, so it’s no wonder that your spirit yearns to use them now to help build up the kingdom of God here on the earth. That’s what you were born to do.....What comes to your mind and heart when you really think about consecrating your abilities to the Lord to help build up His kingdom? What do you want more of? Less of?”

“The Lord knows you. He loves you. He believes in you. And He is counting on you to do exactly what you said you would do, to fulfill the wonderful mission for which you were sent to earth. Happily, you don’t have to do it alone. He stands willing for us to seek His help.”

2. What Is the One Question I Most Need to Have Answered in the Scriptures Today?

“‘Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.’ (2 Nephi 32:3)....there are no exceptions.”

“Every question in your life can be answered through the word of the Lord. The scriptures are answer books!”

“Let’s think about what our options are. 1. We can look to the world. 2. We can look to the word of the Lord.”

“Consider what the Lord has given us. Consider all that he wants to give us. How many times do we turn away from the very help that would heal, lift, free, and strengthen us?...In what ways have you and I been resisting the love of the Lord, the help of the Savior? How many times have we looked to the world instead of to Him for help?”

“What can we count on when we seek answers to our problems from the world? The answers may change depending upon whom you talk to and depending upon how new the theory is upon which the answer is based. We can always count on change when it comes to the theories, suggestions, and instructions of the world, because they always do! In stark contrast, as the Spirit of the Lord teaches us the word of the Lord, He will bring to our hearts and minds the wisdom we are lacking.”

“Take a piece of paper and make four columns. Label the four columns: date, question asked, scriptural reference of answer, answer.”

“What can happen as you follow a course of searching the scriptures for answers to your life dilemmas? Your confidence will begin to grow....You will be far less stressed....You will truly experience His words showing you all things that you should do...You will feel your faith growing....You will feel an increased ability to hear the voice of the Lord through the Spirit and through His words, the scriptures.”

“Early in the day I had taken one question that was troubling me to the scriptures and, as anticipated, I received an answer that got me through the day. Then just before I went to sleep, I felt drawn to ask one more question. I opened my scriptures and my eyes fell on one verse. But what came to mind, in addition to the words in the verse, was an entire concept I had never considered before. I ran to my computer and recorded the thoughts that kept coming to my mind. Because they were so useful and so new to me, I wanted to remember these ideas. I typed as quickly as I could. Four pages later, I was done. By reading just that one verse, the eyes of my understanding were indeed opened. I couldn’t believe what had happened. And I am grateful.”

“You may stand amazed—or maybe a little chagrined—as you recognize the treasures for your life that have been available to you all this time.”

“What happens when you take your questions to the scriptures? Your perspective, your life, and your feelings can change!”

“Do not try this experiment at home unless you are ready to have your world turned upside down.”

“Now this little bundle of light and love—and wisdom—cannot really read, but after listening to her parents and older sisters read the scriptures at mealtimes day after day throughout her young life, the following is what was written on her heart. These are Beth’s precise words [at three years old] as she ‘read’ her scriptures:

‘And He spoke unto me, and He talked to me.

‘And His apostles returned and He died.

‘And He listened to me and He loved me.

‘And He was the Truth of God.

‘And He gave me everything I needed.

‘And He was done!’”

3. What Are Three Words to Follow for a Great Life?

“Not Even Once.”

4. Whose Agenda Is This Supporting?

“Whose agenda are we supporting when we relax our spiritual muscles, don’t do the spiritual work of asking and seeking, and thus live far beneath our privileges?”

“We have to first live worthily in order to receive the ordinances, and then we have to keep our covenants with the Lord throughout our lives on earth by continuing to live worthily—which basically means living much differently from most people in the world.”

5. If I Were to Pray for and Picture the Holy Ghost Being Right Beside me, How Would I Manage This Difficult Situation?

“Stop and let your spirit—complete with its divinely inherited DNA (so to speak) take the lead.”

6. How Can I Be More of My True Self at the End of This Experience?

“Do you know who you are? The Lord expects you to live your life fully.”

“How can we grow more into our true selves?”

“Principle #1: Remove every obstacle that is preventing you from being your true self. . . . There is power in prayer. There is power in praying to have obstacles removed that are preventing us from being our true selves.”

“Principle #2: Remember that you lived premortally. . . . When you are seeking to know who you really are—when you feel as though you are going through ‘an identity crisis’ and don’t know what to do—know this: You are a god or goddess in embryo!”

“Principle #3: You can be your true self only when you are obedient to the Lord and are near to Him. . . . Drawing near to the Lord is part of the process of finding our true selves.”

“Principle #4: You can be your true self only when you are increasingly pure and leave the world behind. . . . What small amount of worldly glitter is keeping you from being your true self?”

“Principle #5: To be your true self, you need to stay immersed in truth and seek in every way to be infused with light! . . . We should consider the powerful influence of the words of the Lord as they are spoken aloud in our homes.”

7. What Do I Know to Be True?

“Make a list entitled ‘Things I Know to Be True.’ Perhaps you’ll want to create a password-protected document on your computer. These truths are your treasures and should be safeguarded.”

“Which truths can really make a difference in the way we live our lives and in the joy we find in living? Truths that support a growing faith in God are fundamental to a happy life. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that each individual needs to know three truths to ‘exercise faith in God unto life and salvation’:

‘First, the idea that he actually exists.

‘Secondly, a correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.

‘Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will.’”

“How do you respond to truth?”

“Sometimes truth scares us. Sometimes we are afraid to acknowledge what we know to be true—even to ourselves—because we don’t want the responsibility that comes with knowing something is true. For example, the responsibility of updating our ‘catalog of truths’ means discarding old ideas we have held on to for years and embracing new ones. . . . It takes courage to stand up for what we know to be true.”

“How can you find truth? How can you know what is true? How can you keep adding to your treasure trove of truths? Are you ready for a real adventure? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: ‘The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching.’ Truth-seeking requires work. Real work. Spiritual work. Persistent spiritual work. But what thrilling experiences await as you seek truth and wisdom in this way!”

“Our lives change with every truth we embrace!”

“What do I know to be true? Read your list. Review your list. Remember your list of ‘Things I Know to Be

True' and let each truth take root in your mind and penetrate your heart so that each can be healed.”

“You are a child of God. Hold on to that truth.”

“You can't be truly powerful if you are not pure!....Power is the ability to do what the Lord needs you to do.”

“We need to immerse ourselves in truth. We need to seek truths. We need to speak truths—to ourselves and to others. We need to remember what we know to be true. We need to share what we know to be true with those we love. Let the truths you know and love connect you with the people you know and love! One caution: We need to be careful how we share what we know to be true with others. We need to share with the utmost honoring of the law of agency.”

Questions, Hearts, Truths, and the Lord

“How are you doing—really?”

“Great questions can build great relationships! They can connect people heart to heart. Just imagine how our lives would change if we would just change our questions—and if we really listened to the questions that others ask! Just imagine how our lives would change if we would just change our questions and only asked questions that showed others how much we care about them and how much we want to get to know their hearts!”

“Great questions can introduce new information. How can you invite someone to think about something new, something different? Ask great questions!”

“What questions do you ask about the Savior?”

“God wants us to ask Him questions. When we are confused about what to do we can heed the counsel of James: ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God’ (James 1:5).”

“‘Have ye inquired of the Lord?’ (1 Nephi 15:8)”

“‘Ask, and it shall be given you’ (Matthew 7:7).”

Johan Martinsson says

This book has taught me how to collaborate more effectively and to get out of very difficult situations!

I heartily recommend it! Some of the things I learned are :

What is important is not to find the best answers but think of the most important questions. From there the answers always develop and do so with the maximum of information. It minimises the risk of "not having thought of..."

Questions fosters an open mind, stimulates good ideas from everyone and generally a collaborative mind-set. There's less competition of who finds the best ideas (solutions).

Whenever we're on the judgers path we'd want to get back to the questioners path because in the judgers

swamp there's only frustration and loneliness. Whereas in the learner path there's creative solutions and well-being.

Lisa Brown says

A wonderfully powerful book, where the author, Wendy Watson Nelson, explores the power of asking--and answering--certain questions, which help you to strengthen your relationship with God and your knowledge of your divine nature. The creative format of the book, using pictures and graphics, makes it especially appealing. I really loved this book, and although it took me a while to read it (I originally started it back in 2010 when it was first published), I am so glad I did. It is the type of book that is meant to be read and pondered, over a period of time. It was truly inspiring.

Angie says

My 3-star rating is really the average of the first and second halves of the book. I was ready to abandon this one after a few chapters. It led me to (rightly) assume that the author has a professional background in the psychology or therapy field, as it reads like homework from therapy sessions. Not really what I was looking for, so I started skimming. It got much better for me about halfway through, when she switches gears to write a more spiritual and scripturally-based book about the power of questions. That half of the book I enjoyed, and felt like I got more out of it. Her suggestions and assertions are greatly enhanced when she includes people's specific experiences with them.

Sarah says

Awesome read by Ben's former prof (now Elder Nelson's wife). She has an amazing reputation as an MFT. From what I can tell so far, the book is an exercise in discovering/achieving our life missions (from a temporal and spiritual perspective). I'm going slow because it's kind of like a text/work book and I'm doing the exercises as I go. It's already enhanced my life.

Jodi says

Wendy Watson Nelson recently visited our area and I was able to hear her speak on multiple occasions. I decided to look into more of her books and found this one. I enjoyed her talks and thought I'd enjoy this book, but I was ready to put it down after just a chapter or two. I decided to plug along and see if it got better. I was glad I stuck with it.

I give the first half of the book 2 stars--it might be helpful to people reading it that have more serious relationship challenges or life struggles, but for me, it felt too much like a workbook and a therapy session, but I didn't have a "problem" I was trying to work through. Sis. Nelson is a therapist by profession, so I'm sure this is all great information, but I just didn't need any therapy as I read it. There are also a lot of pages devoted to questions you are supposed to reflect on and then questions and prompts for you to write your thoughts about. I didn't do any of that and mostly just skimmed through this first half. In a nutshell, it was

trying to teach the reader how to ask better questions to help strengthen relationships or solve problems. It might be helpful for some people, but it felt too much like a therapy session for me.

The second half of the book was much better. There were several stories in this book that she shared in her talks while she was visiting our area. They were good to hear again. She spent the second half of the book talking about specific questions we should be asking ourselves that will help us improve our lives, such as... What is on your pre-mortal to do list? What did you promise pre-mortally that you would do here on earth and are you doing what you said you'd do? And other questions that help the reader examine their life and priorities. It was uplifting and inspiring. There were still sections of each chapter that encouraged you to stop and think about questions and write your thoughts, but the second half had just a bit less of that.

I've heard other reviewers mention how beautiful of a book this is visually. I only had access to the ebook, so the beauty of the book didn't come through for me. In fact, there were several images with quotes or summaries of points made in them that I couldn't make big enough to read clearly on my black and white kindle. So this might be one of those books that is better to read as a hard copy.

Karen says

This is a great book. It is the kind of book you dont have to read all at once but when you do pick it up to read you will enjoy it.

Shannon says

While the message is good, the book felt like a visual assault. It also felt like reading commercials because the ideas jumped from one to another so quickly.

Tyler Olson says

... and impact/change others' lives.

Holly says

I know I give a lot of 5 star reviews, but I really did think Change Your Questions Change Your Life was amazing! This is a hard book to describe. You really need to see it, it's not like any other church book I've read.

The author Wendy Watson Nelson, is the wife of Elder Russell M. Nelson and she was married for the first time when she was in her 50's (I think). She has a Ph.D. in family therapy and was a professor at BYU before she married Elder Nelson.

I think the easiest way to describe this book is like she is in therapy sessions with her readers. In the book she asks lots of questions where she suggests you write your answers and gives lots of ideas for activities to do to

examine your own life. I just read straight through the book and did not stop to do any of it, but my plan is to re-read it with a highlighter, a pad of post-it notes, and a notebook handy. Even just reading the book quickly like I did, it caused me to think a lot about her ideas for self-improvement. I own a copy that I would be happy to loan out. Deseret Book had it for 50% off last month, I don't know if that sale is still on.

Nancy Fuller says

I love books that make you think. This book teaches you how to ask questions about just about everything in your life. The questions help you see things you might not have seen before. They help you focus on what is truly important.
