







ASK!

A B O O K O F D I S C O V E R Y

Scott M. Barley



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To my parents, Gilbert and Anne, for putting up with my many
questions as a child and as an adult, and for everyone
who understands the power of asking and
embraces all that they will discover.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Marta for her patience throughout my many months of writing, organizing and planning this book. Without her understanding, this idea would still be in my computer along side many others.

I want to also thank Valerie Blaze, Chanda Chaix and Sabina Mora for their kind assistance and selfless efforts with this project.

Finally, I want to give my appreciation to everyone who uses this book to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others. Life is indeed too short not to ask.



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INTRODUCTION

*To **ask** is to be empowered. To **ask** is to be
enlightened. To **ask** is to find answers.*

Scott M. Barley



ASK!

ask (äsk)

1. to put a question to; inquire of.
2. to request information about.

As if purposely hardwired for the task, man has been asking questions since the beginning of time. For thousands of years from the Phoenicians to the ancient Greeks to today, civilizations have pondered everything from why our planet exists and what place it holds in the universe, to what may be the most repeated question of them all - "What is the meaning of life?"

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For all of us, regardless of age, wealth, or circumstance, this ongoing quest for knowledge continues to this day - an innate need to better understand everything that surrounds us.

We typically see this inquisitive nature develop early in our childhood. It comes neatly packaged in a rather unassuming, yet powerful little word called “why.” If you do not remember the days when you were in your own tenacious “why phase” as a child, ask those who knew you then, for they most certainly do.

As we continue to mature and our experiences multiply in number and

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broaden in scope, we soon realize that to successfully find answers, the simple act of asking is not only a key ingredient, but it also plays a vital role in our relationships, our understanding of the world around us and it is critical in the quest to understand ourselves.

Today, while most of us ask and answer countless questions on a daily basis, what we are routinely subjected to are more benign queries, such as the habitually repeated “How are you?” or the ubiquitous “How was your weekend?” - hardly questions of exceptional depth or insight.

Suppose, however, you were to raise the level of discourse to some-

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thing a bit more challenging, such as “*Have you ever cheated on a test?*” or “*Describe a time when you were not a good friend.*” Clearly, the gulf between the “everyday question” and those of greater substance is undeniably apparent.

After all, how well do we really know anyone until we deliberately explore beyond the frequently uninspired dialogues associated with casual conversation?

ASK! was created exactly for this purpose, to go outside the sphere of the common exchange. Written to challenge both readers and respon-

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dents alike, the goal of **ASK!** is to compel everyone to look within themselves for meaningful answers, often for the very first time.

You may wonder if there is a preferred or accepted answer to each question. In a word, no.

The only correct answer you can give is the one that is straightforward, candid and forthright. It is important that this book be used this way, as a catalyst to stimulate open and honest dialogue between friends, family, loved ones, acquaintances and anyone attempting to shed light on each other's experiences, wants and needs, values and beliefs.

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Some questions in this book may require an extra moment to ponder or reflect while others may seem trivial to you. Some questions may make you blush while others may test you. All, however, are deliberate and serve a purpose.

The challenge of this book is to answer each question as honestly as possible. Only upon further discussion and discovery may you soon realize that one particular question could take on a life of its own, stimulated by additional questions of your own, creating an enlightened, thought provoking discussion that could possibly last for hours.

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Keep in mind not to take any one question too seriously. Remember, everyone has their own level of comfort when disclosing certain aspects of their lives. Some will be quite candid with their responses, others will be more reserved.

But don't miss the point of this book. Too much reservation or secrecy will only shade the truth and inhibit discovery. Avoid the temptation to give the "safe" answer. Avoid following the pack. Avoid responding with what you believe others might expect you to say.

Finally, have fun with this book!

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This is an opportunity for you to reveal, explore and most importantly, learn.

Make **ASK!** an exciting journey into awareness, self-discovery and truth through evocative and meaningful discussion. This book is not only a means to an end, but it is an important tool in understanding who we are and why we do what we do.

After all, when it really comes down to it, all anyone ever has to do to get answers is simply **ASK!**



