



The Power of Morning Questions: Training Your Mind to Savor and Align

Most of us start our mornings with a task list. But what if you began with a question list instead—questions that connect you to what matters most?

For example:

- *What am I grateful for?*
- *What about that makes me feel grateful?*
- *Where do I feel that gratitude in my body?*
- *If this gratitude had a color, what color would it be?*
- *Does being grateful bring a sense of movement or stillness?*

These aren't small questions—they're ways of "staying with" one of your values, and sprinkling it in throughout the day. In this case, the morning. In **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**, this is called *flavor and savor* (Harris & Hayes, 2020), noticing, amplifying, and inhabiting experience rather than brushing past it.


Why does this matter?

- ◆ **Experiential Avoidance** — Many of us push away uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, which ironically makes them stronger and more persistent (Hayes et al., 1996; Chawla & Ostafin, 2007). Morning questions train us to *turn toward* experience with curiosity instead of avoidance.
- ◆ **Attention Training** — Research shows that deliberately directing attention to emotional experiences increases well-being and reduces rumination (Kiken et al., 2015). These questions shift us from autopilot to presence.
- ◆ **Values Alignment** — By building questions around personal values, we strengthen what psychologists call *values-congruent living*, a key predictor of meaning and life satisfaction (Kashdan & McKnight, 2013).

For example, if you value family connection, you might ask:

- 👉 *What deep connections do I have with my family?*
- 👉 *What memories are most vivid?*
- 👉 *What about those connections do I cherish?*
- 👉 *Where do I feel those connections in my body?*

These morning practices don't just spark positive emotion, they cultivate *psychological flexibility*—the ability to adapt, stay present, and take values-driven action. Psychological flexibility is strongly linked to lower stress, higher resilience, and overall flourishing (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010; Hayes et al., 2011).

 **Try this tomorrow:** Choose one of your core values. Write 3–5 questions you could ask yourself that bring that value to life through memories and visceral sensations. Incorporate all of your senses – what you see, feel, hear, smell and even taste. Sit with your answers for a few minutes before you start your day.

You may find that your mornings shift from hurried to intentional—and that shift can ripple throughout the rest of your day.

References

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