

3 GAME-CHANGER QUESTIONS

by Gerry Monasterial

It was an ordinary pre-Covid Saturday morning at a small coffee shop in downtown OKC that inspired a conversation that would make 2020 a bit more bearable as it began to unfold. My wife, my 17-year-old daughter, & I all nibbled on our breakfast tarts, admired our latte foam swirls, & dove into some New Year conversations. Although we didn't solve the world's problems nor did we think to prepare for the unknown but upcoming Pandemic, we shared intriguing ideas on being fearless in the New Year. We first identified that the word fearless is only an adjective & has to be verbified to give it life. In other words, "being fearless" has to translate to the action of "fearing less".

BEING FEARLESS (ADJECTIVE) TO FEAR LESS (VERB)

The following outline of 3 questions is what evolved as we brainstormed on what that transition could create. Whether it's in our personal or professional lives, most of us don't live with absolutely no fear. We all have fears, the difference is some manage their fears & take calculated risks toward success while others succumb to their fears before they even think about the possibilities. I hope that you will bring the outline below to life by making a robust list for each question. These questions deal with your mind, your heart, & your guts. There are definitely no wrong answers, just possibilities.

1 | *What would you do if you were guaranteed **NOT** to fail?*

This question is almost as daunting as it is freeing. If you're like most, living within limitations or restrictions feels more comfortable than we admit. Imagine pulling onto your local highway with a speed limit sign that reads "No limit", or "Totally up to you", or "Go Big or Go Home". What would come to mind first?

The exhilaration of flying down the highway at top speed or the danger of injury or death? Although I'd like to say that I would put the pedal to the medal to see if my 2004 Honda Civic could hit 100, my family would probably say that I would spend my time explaining ten different reasons this would be a terrible idea. After all, the car has internal issues. Old tires, worn belts, loose front fender, & many more weaknesses could contribute to disaster. There are also always external factors. Other drivers, deer, flying debris, bright sun, and on & on. With all those dangers, I think I'll keep my Honda at the comfortable speed of 65. This tends to be my way of thinking, whether I'm dealing with the high-way or the mind-way. I naturally see the limits & the obstacles first. Once in a while, I may look long enough to eventually see the possibilities. This is one form of a limiting belief and this is why Question #1 is so important & so powerful. Guaranteed NOT TO FAIL? Wow, if that doesn't take the lid off your mindset for just a moment, then I'll trade you cars. Forget about all the internal & external obstacles for a moment & explore the possibilities. After all, who's to say you're not driving a Tesla? How many items can you put on this list, from personal endeavors to professional? From the trivial to the life-changing? Make a List. A Long List!

2 | *From your answers in question 1, What is still worth trying even if you **COULD** fail?*

There are two main points to consider when answering this question. First, the mind's ability to unleash power is matched only by the heart's ability to unveil worth. When we endeavor for growth & the growth of those around us, our endeavor is never wasted because it unveils & highlights the worth of people. We all have examples of someone who made decisions with their mind AND heart. They positively impacted those around them because of not only what they did, but why they did it. There was intentionality in their deeds, regardless of the results. This brings me to the second point. Failure is not defining, it is designing. Success is rarely a stand-alone event. It is more often a succession of attempts that designs the person, then the outcome. A culmination of endeavors that eventually reach a conclusion because of the learning lessons that come from every failure. Although a direction or a task toward a goal can be ceased, failure itself isn't final. So, if this is the case, isn't a single failure just one potential step closer to a successful outcome? When we combine the goal of unveiling worth & designing someone for a successful outcome, the answer to question # 2 begins to come into focus. How many of your endeavors deserve to be pursued? How can your pursuits, regardless of their results, positively impact you & those around you? What is still worth trying, not because of the result, but because of the learning, the impact, and the growth that could happen? Tighten up that List!

3 | *From your answers in question 2, What can you do to **minimize** your chance of failure?*

This third question only refers to the finality of a chosen endeavor or goal from question 2. As I mentioned earlier, failure itself isn't final. And since it is designing rather than defining, failure is absolutely essential in the process toward success. Our job is to fail our way forward in order to minimize our chance of failing our end goal.

With that in mind, let's address question 3. In business, quotes like "culture eats strategy for breakfast" and "execution eats strategy for lunch" are staples among high-performing leaders & their teams. Although I agree that strategy without culture and execution is meaningless, why not have all three? Why not have breakfast with culture, lunch with execution, and dinner with strategy? This 3rd question calls on both strategy AND execution. Whereas the first two questions depend on your mind & your heart, this final question depends on your guts. Do you have the guts to plan & execute? Putting something in ink brings it to life. Adding a task to your calendar with a deadline puts it in view. Including others in your endeavor emphasizes its worth & fosters accountability. If you already have the What & the Why, you might as well add the How. In addition, I'll add the Why Not?! Bring that list to life!

We started off this conversation with how to verbify the word fearless. To be clear, we're not verbifying the word fearnot. Our goal is to fear less. In order to fear less, we must use our minds, our hearts, & our guts to pursue the possibilities in the face of our fears. There is one final aspect to fearing less. Most of our life heroes became heroes not because they lacked fear, but because they pursued something greater than their fear. Fear < Pursuit. We must have something larger than fear on the other side of the equation. They feared less than ...something. After answering the 3 Game Changer Questions, What is your something?

QUOTES:

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." – Nelson Mandela

"If we take the generally accepted definition of bravery as a quality which knows no fear, I have never seen a brave man. All men are frightened. The more intelligent they are, the more they are frightened." –General George S. Patton

"One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do." –Henry Ford

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear." –George Addair
