



## Moving Forward in Uncertainty

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Uncertainty has become a way of life today, on all fronts. Even in the best of situations in your day-to-day life, you stand on the edge of uncertainty. Economic, political, social, and technological forces shape your life in ways you can't predict or know. You are bombarded every day with change and challenges, that bring new and different ideas, opportunities, people, events, and images. As you live, work, and play with others in your near circles or in the larger community, you confront and navigate of the multiplicity of backgrounds, perspectives, and personalities. Even those who are best known to you are often puzzling and unpredictable.

When faced with a particular challenge or even in the moment of uncertainty, how do you move forward when the world is so unpredictable? How can you decide when there is so much you don't know? In HSD Adaptive Action, a three-stage iterative cycle of asking What? So what? and Now what?, helps you see the patterns in your world, understand them in the moment, and take action to move toward a greater fit between you and your environment.. This cycle allows you to gather data in the What? stage, make sense of that data in the So what? stage, and then use that information to take the next wise action.

Your challenge is to know what questions will best inform your Adaptive Action, when you are so overwhelmed with the complexities of life. HSD offers a set of questions that help you sort through your options to focus on the challenges at hand.

- **What are the three most important things about the present situation?** You can't deal with everything at once, and you can't decide on the most important, and you can't walk away. In this moment, the best you can do is select the ones that seem most pressing, relevant, and engaging at this moment.
- **What do you want to be the same or different in the future?** This helps you look realistically at these three most important things and make some judgments about what "works" about those three important things and what doesn't work. And it gives you a chance to explore and voice your aspirations in concrete and clear ways.
- **What is for sure and what are your questions?** Take inventory of what you do know. Sometimes in the sense of being overwhelmed, you can forget that there is a great deal you do know about your situation. If nothing else, get really clear about your own subjective truth and whatever objective data you have at hand. Then you can create your inventory of questions about this situation. What don't you know that you think you need to know? Gather those questions to explore what is.
- **What contradictions do you see?** What doesn't make sense to you? Identify what you see that just doesn't match what you know or what others see and know. Name those things that just don't make sense.

- **What have been recent surprises?** List those things that you see or experience that seemed to come from left field. Describe what it was that surprised you and what you can see in the situation that may have triggered that surprise.
- **What will make a difference in the near future?** Knowing that you can't predict or control the impact of any action in these kinds of situations, identify one step you can take to change the patterns you face. Because Adaptive Action is an iterative process, you can know that you will have the opportunity, in the next iteration, to adjust or shift your actions, it will feel safer to do something.

Too often you get paralyzed by the belief that you need to know everything that's "out there" before you can act. In today's complex landscape, however, there's no way to know everything that's "out there." You can however, use these questions to help you identify what's next., and then what comes after that.

Use these questions the next time you feel stuck and afraid because of the complexity in your challenges. Let us know how they work for you.

Royce

## Questions for Uncertain Times

1. What are the three most important things about the present situation?
2. What do you want to be the same or different in the future?
3. What is for sure and what are your questions?
4. What contradictions do you see?
5. What have been recent surprises?