



KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW



Darryl Garland (<https://blog.nationallife.com/author/dgarland/>) 📅 May 25, 2020 👍 7 📁

Individuals & Families (<https://blog.nationallife.com/category/individuals-families/>)

Springtime in Vermont is an exercise in frustration. The temperature can swing thirty degrees in what feels like thirty minutes. The many dirt roads transform from chocolate pudding to Bryce Canyon overnight. I can barely get through the door to my family's mudroom (yes, we have a room for that) through the dozens of jackets, boots and orphaned gloves we keep on-hand to meet each freak snowstorm. Or picnic day. You never know.

This March we were hit with a storm of another variety that put the whole planet into deep freeze and simultaneously threw everything into the air. It feels like the coronavirus pandemic has obscured the future and the present in a dense cloud.

How do we make our way through this uncertainty? "Real" Vermonters, like my father-in-law, whose family has harvested and boiled maple sap to make syrup for generations, call the spring snowstorms "sugar snow" because they seem to hasten the trees' sap flow.

That outlook is more than acceptance of what has been thrown at you. And it's not simply seeing a cloud's "silver lining." The first step in knowing what to do in the unknown is knowing what you know. You know?

Stopping to observe and think about what effect the weather has on their syrup production, sugar makers have learned to deal with the wild Vermont spring weather, or at least tolerate it. With all of our expectations and plans in disarray in a situation we can't control, let's take a few minutes each day to understand what we can control: ourselves.

I recently came across a list of 52 questions from this site (<https://pageflutter.com/52-self-discovery-prompts/>) that can help us understand the weather within us, and forecast how we might respond to stressful times like today. I plan to take a few minutes each morning with one of these questions to write, for my own eyes only, what each question brings to mind. I encourage you to try it too.

1. What is your favorite physical characteristic (face or body)? Describe a time you felt proud of that feature.
2. What physical characteristics are you most self-conscious about? How could you make peace with those?
3. What is your greatest strength? Describe a time this strength served you well.
4. What is your greatest weakness? Describe a time this weakness held you back.
5. Describe a time you felt especially valued and loved.
6. Finish this sentence: "I can't stand it when other people..." Examine those character flaws. Do you also possess them? Be honest.
7. Today is your first day at your dream job. You're so excited you can barely contain yourself. When you arrive at work, you take a minute to look around and appreciate the moment. You can't believe you actually got this job. Where are you? Why do you value this job so much?
8. Name a book that spoke to you on a personal level. Why?
9. If you had a theme song, what would it be?
10. Name an animal whose characteristics you admire. Are you in any way like that animal?
11. What do you enjoy most about your favorite hobby? How can incorporate that into other parts of your life?
12. Describe a day in your life that was especially enjoyable. What made the day so good?
13. When you think about your future, what do you fear the most?
14. When you think about your future, what do you hope for the most?

15. Describe a time you mistreated someone. How do you feel about your behavior, and what would you say to the person now?
16. Write about a missed opportunity you with you had taken. What could you do differently next time?
17. What do you look for in a close friend? Do you have those characteristics?
18. Describe a time a friend went out of their way to help you. How do you serve the people in your life?
19. Are you a spiritual person? Describe your beliefs and/or doubts. How do those beliefs affect how you live your life?
20. Discuss how the people in your life make you feel. How do you perceive yourself after spending time with them? How will that affect how you spend time with them in the future?
21. True or False: "I know how to stick up for myself." Explain your answer.
22. You just moved in to your dream home. Look out the kitchen window. What do you see?
23. Your neighbors are having a party. You only know 1 person who is attending. Will you go to the party?
24. You just spent all day by yourself. Are you bored?
25. You've just met a stranger at a place you frequent. He/she tells you a bit about his/her life. Are you listening intently? Or are you waiting for an opening to talk about yourself? Neither answer is incorrect. Describe how this meeting made you feel.
26. You just spent a day at the beach. How do you feel? Energized? Tired? Alternatively, you spent a day in the mountains. How do you feel?
27. You're in an elevator and someone you admire walks in. Do you give the person your business card? Why or why not?
28. To show someone you love them, are you likely to use words, actions, or another method?
29. You've just started working at a new job. One of your colleagues is mean/unkind to you. How do you handle the situation?
30. You walk into a white room filled with white furniture. Does it feel clean or sterile? What does this tell you about the rest of your home. Imagine the room with colorful walls and colorful furniture. How does this change your feelings?
31. Someone gives you a complex task you're not sure how to accomplish. Do you make a plan? Ask someone for help? Research how others have done similar projects in the past? Read a book on the topic. What does this tell you about your learning style?

32. Do you lean into challenge or away from it? Describe a time you were given a challenge you weren't sure you could complete. How did the situation make you feel?
33. Someone trusts you with a secret and asks you not to reveal it. It's really juicy! Do you tell anyone
34. A colleague takes credit for your work and is rewarded. How does that affect your perception of your own value? How do you react?
35. You are walking on a road, and you encounter three forks. One path leads up a mountain. The other leads into a forest. The third path leads to the ocean. Which path do you take? What do you think this means about you?
36. True or False: "I am more likely to try something if others would be impressed."
37. If you have a problem, would you go to a family member, best friend, or a stranger?
38. You're in a room with a group of people who all share the same opinion on a certain topic. Do you go with the flow or argue the counterpoint?
39. Two teams are playing in a big game. One of them is heavily favored to win. Which team do you support?
40. Your to-do list this week is overwhelming. Do you ask for help or give up sleep?
41. A group of people is having a conversation on a topic you know nothing about. One of them turns to you and asks your opinion. Do admit ignorance or bluff your way out?
42. You are on a team of people creating an iconic building. Which job do you want to help with: managing the project, designing the building, ensuring its safety, or final decorations. Why did you pick that job?
43. You can work at a job you love for very little pay, or work at job you hate for a luxurious salary. Which do you take?
44. You partner is not giving you something you need. Do you tell them or suffer in silence?
45. True or False: "All is fair in love and war." Explain your answer in the context of your life
46. You have an important task to do. Do you do it now or procrastinate?
47. You overhear a stranger giving information/advice you believe is incorrect. Do you correct the person or stay out of it?
48. You are feeling down. What do you do to cheer yourself up?
49. Describe a time you were radiantly happy. What do you value most in that memory?
50. City mouse or country mouse. Which are you?

51. You're on a gameshow that benefits the charity/cause of your choosing. What do you support? Why?

52. You got great news today. Who do you tell first: Your best friend, the first person you see, or social media?

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