

GIFTS

from the

MOUNTAIN

SIMPLE TRUTHS FOR LIFE'S COMPLEXITIES

BY
EILEEN McDARGH

**FIRESTARTER CONVERSATION GUIDE:
ALL USERS**

Gifts from the Mountain Firestarter Conversation Guide: All Users

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About this guide:

This conversation guide is designed to generate deep conversations and connections.

Using Eileen McDargh's *Gifts from the Mountain* as a starting point, the questions in the guide will get people talking about what matters to them.

DIRECTIONS:

The questions listed here primarily stem from the concepts discussed in *Gifts from the Mountain*. As the conversation leader, go through the questions and determine which are best suited for your organization. Be willing to answer the first question yourself to get thoughtful conversation going if participants are reluctant to start talking. Additionally, be open to the conversation taking its own path, allowing it to be free form. Also, remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

LOOK FOR VIEWING POINTS

“Who would have thought that by slowing down, I would know more by noticing more?”

1. What have you failed to notice in your work environment? Consider things, people, tasks, procedures.
2. Take a moment to consider what is negative in your environment. Is there any way to put a positive brush stroke on it?
3. Can you find the beauty in your work?
4. When is the last time you either received an opinion or suggestion from someone unexpected? When is the last time you asked for an opinion or suggestion from someone unexpected? What did you do with this information?
5. Who might have a radically different view point? Is there something you might learn from seeking that view point? Why might you resist looking around?

EVERY OUNCE COUNTS

“What am I holding on to that doesn’t serve me anymore?”

1. What non-essential things do you have, either at work or at home, that weigh you down? What can you do to lessen these things?
2. How do you handle clutter? Does it bother you or distract you? What is the benefit of getting rid of clutter?
3. On the trail, hikers bring only the necessities. What do you consider to be your necessities?
4. What do you need to simplify in your life? List two to three things you can simplify. What steps do you need to take to ensure this happens?
5. How can fear hinder you from simplifying your life?
6. Emotions can weigh us down. Whom or what might you need to forgive?

DON'T CROSS THE CREEK UNTIL YOU COME TO IT

“Where are you inventing scenarios that aren't going to happen?”

1. Have you ever invented or awfulized a worst-case scenario that was significantly worse than what actually happened? How did this make you feel? Was it worth the time you spent worrying about it?
2. Do you worry a lot? Have you ever found it to be valuable or positive?
3. What steps can you take to lessen the amount of time you spend worrying?
4. Conversely, what have you done that in retrospect, was much harder than you thought it might be?
5. Could there be a benefit in having a plan for the worst case? How can you create a plan without being too negative?

WATCH FOR WILD ONIONS

“What could we do to add zest to our lives? What’s the wild onion that most people would miss?”

1. Where do you need to add zest to your life? How can you do this?
2. How do you feel about spontaneity? Do you feel it has a place at work? How can you be spontaneous at work?
3. What might make your work more fun? For your colleagues? For your customers or clients? Your patients or your students?
4. Where do you need to add spice to your service or product? How can you make this happen?
5. What part of your life/work do you enjoy the most? Are you doing enough of it?

THE EASY TRAIL CAN BE THE MOST DANGEROUS

“Where have we become complacent? The truth of the matter is, the easy trail is often the most dangerous.”

1. Has a habit ever tripped you up? What happened?
2. Where are you moving so quickly that you're getting into trouble? How can you correct it? How can you slow down?
3. What has become so easy that you no longer think about it? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
4. Have you or your company ever become too confident with your success? What is so easy right now that you take it for granted? Should you consider any improvements or changes?

CELEBRATE HOW FAR YOU'VE COME

“We also need to talk about what it took to get up here. To reflect, to remember.”

1. What value is there in acknowledging and celebrating a completed task or achievement? What if that achievement had issues/errors? What did you learn? Should you still celebrate? How will you do that?
2. What is the cost in skipping this step?
3. When is the last time you celebrated yourself? When was the last time you celebrated someone else?
4. A big part of celebrating is gratitude. Who helped you get where you are? Have you thanked them and expressed gratitude? When is the last time someone showed you gratitude and how did it feel?
5. How can celebrating keep you motivated and help you enjoy life's journey?
6. Celebrate small wins. What should you celebrate NOW that is a stepping stone to the next part of the journey?

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FIRESTARTER CONVERSATION GUIDE: EDUCATION

Gifts from the Mountain Firestarter Conversation Guide: Education

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About this guide:

These activities are designed specifically for educators. The intention is to generate deep conversations and connections using Eileen McDargh's *Gifts from the Mountain*.

DIRECTIONS:

The brief activities will help you focus on important issues within education. The trainer will lead the group and encourage conversation. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Note to the trainer: this information can be prepared on a white-board to reduce paper waste.

1. Take a moment to consider how the concepts in *Gifts from the Mountain* apply to your work in education. Rank them in order of relevance to you – 1 being the most relevant, 6 being the least.

- ___ Look For Viewing Points
- ___ Every Ounce Counts
- ___ Don't Cross The Creek Until You Come To It
- ___ Watch For Wild Onions
- ___ The Easy Trail Can Be The Most Dangerous
- ___ Celebrate How Far You've Come

What did you rank as number one? Why is this important to you as an educator? Is this something you currently do or something you need to do more of? What might be the ramifications of this on your students? Your colleagues?

What did you rank as number six? Why is this less relevant than the other concepts? How can you find a way to add this idea into your work?

2. In small groups, take a few minutes to make a list of the three biggest and most difficult challenges you face as an educator today. Examples may include: budget, parent involvement, behavior, technology, accountability, etc.

As a group, discuss the challenges and determine where there is overlap.

Choose a few of the challenges and have a discussion about how the concepts in *Gifts from the Mountain* might be able to help you overcome them.

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FIRESTARTER CONVERSATION GUIDE: HEALTH CARE

Gifts from the Mountain Firestarter Conversation Guide: Health Care

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About this guide:

This conversation guide is designed specifically for organizations in the health care industry. The intention is to generate deep conversations and connections using Eileen McDargh's *Gifts from the Mountain*. The questions in this guide will get people talking about what matters to them.

DIRECTIONS:

The questions listed focus on important issues within the health care industry. You can incorporate these questions with the All Users guide, or use them independently. As the conversation leader, go through the questions and determine which are best suited for your organization. Be willing to answer the first question yourself to start thoughtful conversations if participants are reluctant to talk. Additionally, be open to the conversation taking its own path, allowing it to be free form. Also, remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

BUDGET CONCERNS

- Budget concerns are a huge issue for many companies within the health care industry. How can looking for viewing points possibly be used to help ease budget concerns?
- Consider the concept Every Ounce Counts. What can you get rid of to help with budget concerns? Consider the environment in your answer— is there a way to use fewer office supplies? Can mailings be sent via email? Be creative.
- If one of your projects or requests is canceled or denied because of budget constraints, how does that make you feel about your work? Are there any opportunities to revisit the request in the future?

INNOVATION

- For good reason, hospitals, clinics, medical supply and device companies, and other health care based organizations have strict guidelines about change. How does your organization handle opinions and suggestions from employees or volunteers? Remember: seek viewing points and not just a view point.
- Are you able to share your opinions, as well as seek out those of others?
- How can you balance change and innovation with company protocols?

DIVERSITY

- Diversity is an important issue within health care organizations. How can looking for view points help us better understand those different from ourselves? What value can diversity add to your organization? How might these diverse view points create a more inclusive viewing point as you serve within your health care setting
- Health care organizations are full of diversity — diversity of race, generation, thought process, financial status, etc. Think of a time when working with someone different from you resulted in a better outcome. What happened?