

Questions for Essentialism

Chapter 1

This is a list of discussion questions to help work through the content of the book “Essentialism” By Greg McKeown.

1. What are the things you do each week? Take time to make a list of the items that occupy your time. This will be helpful throughout the book. It is important to actually and honestly evaluate what you are doing.
2. There is a diagram on p. 6 contrasting “a millimeter of progress in a million directions” vs. substantial progress in a single direction. Where are you working in too many directions? Do you feel you have a clear single direction? What would your one direction be if money and resources were not a problem?
3. What things on your activity list (#1) would you give up right now if you could? Why do you continue to doing these things?
4. Are there things that you have committed to do that you resent? What are they? Why did you say yes to them?

5. What activity would you say has made the biggest impact in the lives of others?
In your career? In your income?

6. Who else is making your priorities for you?

7. The author mentions “decision fatigue.” What are you putting off because you are reluctant to make a decision about it?

8. We are often motivated (consciously or unconsciously) by the opinions of others. Which people are you trying to please? How is this helping or hurting you?

9. On p. 16 the author mentions the hospice nurse Bonny Ware, and her observation of the frequent regrets of dying patients. “I wish I’d had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.” We often sell our souls to do what pleases others in ways that are bad. Other times we simply lack courage. How are you conforming to the expectations of others?

10. Note the questions on p. 22, and the diagram. It is not just about cutting things out, but cutting things out so you can figure out the right things.
 - a. “What do I feel deeply inspired by?

 - b. What am I particularly talented at?

 - c. What do I do that meets a significant need in the world?”