

Episode 27: Four Essential Questions Episode Highlights

Awaken-Awakening is to know and experience ourselves as emotional & spiritual creatures, created to live fully. We do so through relationship with ourselves, others, and God. We **awaken** to feelings, needs, desire, longings and hope, or “The Spiritual Root System.” And we awaken to our inborn need to connect.

[Free Resource. The Spiritual Root System](#)

Acquire-Acquiring is to gain the skills of using how we are created to live fully in a life that is wonderful and yet difficult. We are created to live full lives in relationship with ourselves, others, and God. In living full lives, we embrace and express our feelings, needs, desire, longings, and hope with others and God. When we **awaken** and then **acquire** the skills of living fully, we are moving through life in the River of Euphoria.

[Free Resource. The River of Euphoria](#)

Arrive-Arriving is a reference to us becoming people who are **Portable Sanctuaries**. People who are **Portable Sanctuaries** are people who live in the River of Euphoria and have become safe people because they offer replenishment to those who are empty. They offer redemption to those who feel worthless, and they offer restoration to those whose storehouses are empty. We never fully arrive; we are always growing and learning. But we become more able to be of service.

The Four Essential Questions allow us to remain in the life-long process of **Awakening**, **Acquiring**, and **Arriving**.

The **Four Essential Questions** are:

- Where am I? (Where are you emotionally? (I feel sad. I feel hurt.)
- What am I doing with where I am? (I'm hiding out. I want to run away. I am celebrating.) • What happened? (I dared to try something new, and I got laughed at.)
- What was it like? (It was scary and lonely.)

These **Four Essential Questions** are never summed up or finished completely. They are circles that are moving forward, headed toward where you are made to go. They continue for the rest of our lives.

These **Four Essential Questions** allow us to continue to grow. The answers keep us connected to **awakening**, **acquiring** skills, and **arriving** over and over again.

These questions keep us fully involved in living exactly how we are created to live and move us to do what we're made to do.

We are created to do one thing in life, and that is to live fully. Meaning, purpose, and significance develop out of being fully alive emotionally and spiritually. The only way we are going to remain fully alive is through all of the relational experiences we have with others and God.

If you're fully alive:

- You will find your meaning.
- You will find your purpose.
- You will display and receive your significance.

- You will be able to give yourself to something greater than yourself.

We were born to pursue the experience of being fully alive.

It turns out that full life is a lot less expensive than we realize. It is a free gift from God. It's called the free gift of living water. It costs nothing. God gives it freely so that we can have a full life. It does, however, require that we admit our thirst.

"...Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." **Revelation 22:17 (NIV)**

"...The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." **John 10:10 (NIV)**

The devil ("thief") comes to steal, kill, and destroy. He destroys our **awakening**, and kills our ability to **acquire** the skills of living, and destroys our **arrival** (our ability to give other people what they need.)

The answers to these **Four Essential Questions** won't solve life's problems, but they will allow us to live fully with ourselves, others, and God amidst life's problems.

The **Four Essential Questions**, among other things, allow us to:

- Be known from the inside out.
- They allow us to be joined with others.
- Develop discernment.
- Allow us to become fully present.

We cannot answer The **Four Essential Questions** as long as we are always trying to escape ourselves, or stay away from our internal experience to avoid ourselves. We avoid our hearts by running away from our feelings, our needs, our desire, our longings, and our hope, and by not connecting these true things to life. If we run from how we are created, we can't answer the questions.

We will still seek life to the full even when we run from our hearts. We will attempt to find an alternative, less vulnerable form of finding fulfillment, so we distract ourselves by climbing the **Ladder of Achievement**. We try to get away from ourselves by performing and proving ourselves to others, and we ask, "How am I doing?" which only gives us validation from the outside. This is where addiction comes from. We avoid the four questions when we live on the **Ladder of Achievement**.

[Living With Heart Podcast, "The Ladder," Episode 25](#)

[Free Resource. "The Ladder"](#)

The **Four Essential Questions** open us up to the experience of repentance. The blessing of turning away from that which destroys us and coming "home" to how we're created.

Awakening, Acquiring and Arriving are expressions of a repentant life lived off the ladder, no longer surviving by proving myself to others (a life of living fully how God created us). The benefits are:

- Living off the ladder into living in The River of Euphoria.
- Giving up independence, and gaining the benefit of depending on others and God.
- Giving up having to be powerful, and becoming empowered by being fully present.

Giving up trusting reality only, and believing in truths that overcome difficulties.

Parents have a great responsibility to raise their children to know that they are loved, they are connected, they can trust, and their needs are met. Grownups need the same things as children need, just the grownup versions of them. But needing these things means that they will be dependent upon how they are made, the God Who made them, and what they are made to do. As grownups, we are not controlled by the world. We have the ability to make independent decisions; yet, we remain dependent beings.

Essential Question #1: Where am I?

“But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” **Genesis 3:9 (NIV)**

ayeka is the Hebrew word for “Where are you?” It is a question that seeks an answer from the inside-out.” Seeking the heart of the person.

This reference in **Genesis 3:9** is a specific pursuit of a singular person.

God is seeking to know Adam’s heart. He wants to know where Adam is emotionally and spiritually. So, God asks Adam, “**Where are you?**” Not because He didn’t know where Adam was physically. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He knew exactly where Adam was physically, and He also knew what was in Adam’s heart. But He knew that Adam must express where his heart is from the inside- out for a connection to occur.

After Adam sinned, he:

- Had a feeling that he didn’t want to expose. (He didn’t want to know it or feel it. He didn’t want anyone else to have to deal with it. He wanted to escape it.)
- Was afraid, so he hid.
- Refused to cry out.
- Didn’t choose to **awaken** and act accordingly. He refused to live how he was created.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” **Psalms 139: 13-14 (NIV)**

“You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor.” **Psalms 8:5 (NIV)**

Virginia Apgar was an American physician, obstetrical anesthesiologist and medical researcher who is best known for developing the Apgar Score that is used in newborn assessment.

[Living with Heart Podcast. “How We Are Made – Introduction to Neediness” Episode 2](#)

“**Where are you?**” starts with:

- Being able to tell the truth about what you feel.
- Using the 8 Feelings, “*The Voice of the Heart*” by Chip Dodd
- Telling the truth about what is actually happening, using the gifts of the feelings and the skills to confess them and take ownership of them.

“**Where are you?**” is an emotional confession about what is happening inside of you.

How do you actually confess what is happening inside of you?

- Identify what is happening inside of you.

- Explore what is happening inside of you.
- Express what's happening inside of you.

How do I find my feelings? (Fear, Sad, Anger, Shame, Hurt, Guilt, Lonely, and Glad) • You were born with them, so you can return to them by looking at the list of feelings and choosing the one you are feeling.

- Describe an experience you're having to help you be able to name your feelings.
- Imagine what it's like for someone else to be in your situation, and ask yourself, "What would they be feeling if they were in my shoes?" ("They must be feeling _____.")
- Remember, many of us have been trained not to recognize our feelings, so it may take time to grow into being able to identify what you're feeling.
- Ask yourself what a child would feel in that situation.

[Link to Free Resource The 8 Feelings List](#)

[Link to Free Resource 8 Feelings for Children](#)

"Where are you?" starts with: What am I feeling? > What am I needing? > What am I wanting, desiring, hungering for? > What am I looking for?.... These questions lead us to becoming more known to ourselves and thus more vulnerable.

Vulnerability leads to self-possession. When I can name my feelings, my needs, and my desire, I've laid claim to property, to ownership. This is where I am....This is an **awakening** to being fully alive.

Essential Question #2: What am I doing with where I am?

This is a question of self-reflection that allows us to be "response-able" with what is happening in our hearts. My ability to speak it connects me "response-ably" to God and others.

A victim is someone who denies or distrusts that feelings matter. They have disconnected from owning where they are, and they are not able to share their hearts with others.

Taking ownership of what is happening in our hearts requires us to be very brave.

"What am I doing?" is me looking in the mirror and saying, "Here's the truth, here's the truth about where I am, and here's the truth about what I'm doing with where I am." The important question is, "Am I running from it or am I dealing with it?"

We need to be able to look in the mirror and take ownership of what's going on inside of us. We also need to have people in our lives who help us see what we can't see. We need to be able to admit and acknowledge "response-ability" for our behaviors.

Since we don't have 360-degree view of ourselves, we need others to share with us what we cannot see, encouraging things and hard-to-hear things. These people create a **Circle of Security**.

If we avoid our hearts, we become dishonest and avoidant. We seek illegitimate means to get legitimate needs met.

Essential Question #3 "What has happened?"

This question moves us towards being able to see and share the story of our lives.

This question allows us to consider what has happened in our lives and/or is happening in our lives that take us away from knowing what we feel and what we are doing. Or it helps us name and tell

the stories of how we felt and what we did.

Knowing our stories and the feelings that go with them allow us to relate to others and others relate to us. This is one of the factors that makes Alcoholics Anonymous so fruitful.

We can use timelines, actually make a record of your life chronologically, and then ask yourself what was happening with your heart and relationships during the different times. What is happening also applies to today, the story of what happened during my day, what I felt and what I did with the feelings.

“What happened?” has a self-reflective component to it: What happened to make me foreclose on my feelings? Who helped affirm my heart’s experiences? Who taught me to “hide out” versus “cry out”? Who was the greatest influence in my life? What do I need to make amends for and to whom?

When a person can tell their story and the feelings that go with it, they are in tune with, in touch with, and updated in their lives, and they can be trusted. They are people who you can seek out to share where you really are. These people are called **Portable Sanctuaries**.

[Living With Heart Podcast, “Becoming a Portable Sanctuary” Episode 26](#)

When we don’t ask ourselves, **“What happened?”** and therefore, don’t answer the question, we become removed from our hearts and we aren’t close to others or God. We are seduced into living in isolation. Isolation means that we are trapped and unable to say what life is like for us. We cannot answer **Essential Question #3**, and we are removed from being able to know ourselves.

Essential Question #4: What was it like? You are answering the question in the present about what something was like in the past. You’re experiencing your life and being known in the present.

Because you are answering this question in the present, you have the opportunity to act on it in the present. It gives you choices.

If we don’t live in our feelings and know how to use them, we are never able to be present with another person; therefore, we can’t be in genuine relationship.

If you’re not able to be present with others:

- Anxiety tends to be higher.
- Need for control tends to be higher.
- Tendencies towards depressing your life’s experiences is higher.
- Addictive processes become more prevalent.

When a person starts to answer the question, **“What was it like?”**, they actually begin looking for someone who is a **Portable Sanctuary** to tell their experiences to.

[Living With Heart Podcast, “Becoming a Portable Sanctuary” Episode 26](#)

We’re not created for isolation: we are created for connection. These **Four Essential Questions** allow us to live in connection.

Dr. Chip Dodd

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