



Jennie Lee is a recognized expert in the fields of yoga therapy and spiritual living. She has taught classical yoga and meditation for over 20 years, and coached private clients in the practices that integrate life spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. Her writing is featured regularly in national magazines such as *Light of Consciousness*, *Awareness*, *Yoga Therapy Today* and online at *Yogapedia*, *Yoga Digest*, *MindBodyGreen* and more. She lives in Hawaii. For more, see JennieLeeYogaTherapy.com

Lite



Mary Ann Mace, Energy Medicine Professional Association (EMPA) staff writer, has an extensive background in writing articles of diverse topics in the healthcare field. She has worked in the insurance and nonprofit healthcare advocacy field managing marketing and client relations. Currently, she assists the members of EMPA with marketing, insurance and membership requests. Mary Ann has an MBA in marketing and management. EnergyMedicineProfessionalAssociation.com



Ann Martin is an internationally known instructor and creator of BLISS-bowls™ Sound Healing Methods online training for practitioners all over the world. As a recognized authority on contemporary sound healing practices, Ms. Martin's classes encompass over 30 years of research, experimentation and education to bring "Whole Person Healing" from bowls into treatment rooms everywhere. Learn more at MileHighHealingVibe.com

Lite



Mari L. McCarthy, Founder and Chief Empowerment Officer of CreateWriteNow.com, mentors health-conscious people in using therapeutic journaling to heal the issues in their tissues and transform their lives. She is the multi award-winning author of *Journaling Power: How To Create The Happy, Healthy Life You Want To Live* and *Heal Your Self With Journaling Power* as well as the creator of 20+ life-changing *Journaling Power* eWorkbooks.



Joan Ranquet has connected with animals professionally for over twenty-five years, she's connected with them personally as long as she can remember. Her calling has led her to work with hundreds of thousands of pet owners, trainers, barn managers, and vets – teaching animal communication. Joan founded CWALU (Communication With All Life University), a certification program for animal communicators and energy healers. She is the author of *Energy Healing for Animals*, and *Communication with all Life* and is an active contributor to *Dharma of Dogs*. JoanRanquet.com



Cate Stillman has guided a global online tribe to thrive in their bodies while achieving their life goals through innovative yoga and Ayurvedic teachings since 2001. She hosts the *Yogahealer Podcast* and is the author of 2 books: *Body Thrive* and *Master of You*. Cate splits her time between Alta, Wyoming and Punta Mita, Mexico. For free training, check out YogaHealer.com and listen to her podcast!

Lite



Amelia Vogler, is a specialist in Grounding and Energy Medicine. She was first introduced to clinical energy work through an indirect treatment of debilitating and consistent migraine headaches. Amelia left Corporate America and created (or re-created) her story to become one that contains chapters of deep personal Spiritual work, one of comprehensive studies of anatomy and physiology, energy theory, practice and finally, to include the opening of her clinical Energy work private practice—The Healing Space. She can be found at AmeliaVogler.com



Robyn Youkellis is a board-certified health coach, wellness expert, business owner, entrepreneur, mama, multiple-hat wearer and the author of two bestselling books, *Go with Your Gut* and *Thin from Within*. She has appeared on *The View*, *The Today Show*, *E! News*, and *The Wall Street Journal Live*, to name a few. Robyn leads with authenticity, honesty, and chutzpah while showing that you can still be edgy, sassy and lovingly teach and preach spiritual principles alongside your social responsibilities. RobynYoukellis.com



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A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands writing in a notebook. The person is wearing a patterned shirt. The notebook is open, and the pen is in their right hand. The background is out of focus.

10 Essential Questions to Ask Yourself

Jennie Lee

I have always loved questions. They are an essential part of my self-care routine. In looking back over almost 40 years of journals in preparation for writing my latest book, *Spark Change: 108 Provocative Questions for Spiritual Evolution*, I was amazed by the repetitive nature of my own inner questioning. I tenaciously asked the same things over and over, until I worked my way into a satisfactory answer. Practicing introspection with a relentless willingness to keep going deeper to answer the questions that matter is one of the most self-honoring things we can do.

I wonder if you can relate to a few of the core themes that came up for me.

The first is self-improvement. It took a lot of hardship for me to see that everything I went through was a growing opportunity, something I was meant to learn through. Like many people, when I was younger, I rebelled against difficulties. But when I accepted them as fuel for my inner fire, I was able to overcome challenges much more quickly. Now, I enjoy the opportunities challenges bring because I understand that they are helping me to evolve further on my spiritual path.

The second theme was relationships and a desire to understand what was keeping me unfulfilled. My soul knew love was possible and able to be expressed in many ways, but my mind took decades to accept

that it was possible for me. The many iterations of human love I explored in my quest for this fulfillment eventually brought me to the third theme, which was love itself. How to give love and live it in a spiritual sense, with all of humanity. This remains an ever-present challenge that I strive to deepen daily.

Finally, the last theme I saw weaving throughout my self-reflections was longing, the desire to know and follow the longings of my heart and soul. This I have done, and through my own successes and failures, I now have a toolbox to share with others, through my writing and coaching. Below you will find ten questions to ask yourself on these themes and more to help you dive deep into caring for your inner spirit. I share some of my personal answers as well because I continue to make self-reflection a daily practice. Let's celebrate our journey together as we evolve each and every day.

Ten essential questions to ask yourself

1. WHAT IS LIFE ASKING OF ME NOW?

This is mindfulness practice, moment by moment, noticing what the learning opportunity is in front of us. We must show up to our inner work with radical accountability and watch how our egos try to block our spiritual growth. Regardless of the specifics, life is always asking us to choose love over fear and unity over division. In my twenties, I had lofty goals but a surprise pregnancy changed my direction as life asked me "Can you set that aside and focus on being a good mother?" In my thirties, faced with divorce and financial hardship, life asked, "Can you support yourself and survive as a good single mother?" In my forties, after doing much soul searching to determine what aspects of myself needed changing, life asked, "Are you ready to get serious?" Now in my fifties, I know that our circumstances at any given moment are perfect for the purpose of our evolution, if we are listening to what life is asking. It is crucial that we pay attention to what life is asking

us in the moment, our questions will change and grow as we change and grow.

Tip: Be patient with yourself as you transition through life. Change takes time. Never beat yourself up if you do not quite meet an inner aspiration. Self-reflection does not mean self-judgment. Just keep paying attention to what life is asking of you now.

2. WHAT ARE MY FOUNDATIONAL VALUES?

Life presents everyone challenges daily and if we do not have our core values identified, we can easily get off course. Our values help us make good decisions, ones that support our well-being and move us in the direction of our dreams. Maybe the values of harmony and love anchor all your choices and decisions? I know they do for me. Notice how your values might guide the words you choose, the projects you accept, the media you follow, the relationships you maintain, or the intentions you set. In striving to answer the first question about what life is asking of us now, I rely on these core values to stay the course of learning the lessons in front of me to evolve.

Tip: Give yourself daily space and time for self-reflection. If you are too rushed, stressed or overwhelmed, you will not be aligned with your best self. Write down the foundational values that you want to form the basis of your life decisions and actions.

3. WHAT QUESTION HAVE I BEEN LIVING MY WHOLE LIFE?

Looking back at your life, relationships, career etc., try to identify the question that kept pulling you forward. Your soul embodied for a reason, to learn and give in certain ways. By identifying this macro-level question you begin to see why you made many of the choices you made in the past. This is meant to be challenging. Try to keep writing it in new ways as you find new layers, as self-reflection is an on-going process. My question has to do with love, and there is no way to put words around the fullness of what love is. So here is my best attempt at it for now:



What is pure love and how can I be inside it?

Tip: In your time of self-reflection, be gentle. Do not worry if you don't have the answers. Be compassionate and patient. Choose kind thoughts and go easy in how you talk to yourself. Your answers will come in the right time.

4. WHY AM I HERE?

Knowing our reason for being is fundamental to living a purposeful and intentional life. To know ourselves at the soul level brings much greater meaning to our human journey. When I sit with this question I come back time and again to a simple answer. I am here to serve love. Nothing else makes sense to me and every other choice and purpose is informed by this anyway. I do the best I can to serve love through what and who is in front of me each day — my family, friends, readers and students. I do this by opting for love instead of fear in my choices, by asking compassionate questions and by practicing selflessness and compassion. I do not always succeed, but I never doubt my reason for being.

Tip: Start by *choosing to believe* that indeed you are here for a special reason. Practice looking to the goodness in yourself and others, seeing through eyes of love. As you do this, your reason for being will become clearer and clearer.

5. WHO AM I?

Humans have studied 'self' for millennium through the lenses of psychology, philosophy, religion, meditation and just plain living. Through these many layers of self-analysis, we come to know ourselves through outer roles such as daughter, son, mother, father, wife, husband, friend, teacher, student, etc. But there is another dimension of higher Self in which we can know ourselves as love, light, energy, joy, stillness and so much more. Bridging the worlds of human self and divine Self to become fully integrated is the journey of being.

Tip: Write a description of your spiritual self, not

your outer roles and relationships, but what makes you, *you* inside. Then consider how much you are expressing this in your day to day relationships and activities.

6. WHAT GIVES MY LIFE THE MOST MEANING?

A sense of meaning is a universal human desire, but it does not mean you have to change the world! Meaning is felt in thousands of simple ways too, such as preparing a loving meal for your family, sharing a moment of connection with a stranger, offering to help a friend in need. For me, the things that provide the greatest sense of meaning are loving relationships, purpose driven projects, spiritual growth, marriage, parenting and trying to serve whomever I can each day. When you start this question do not focus so much on what you *think* should be your answer but go with the first thing that comes to mind. The rest will follow.

Tip: Assess what brings meaning to your heart. If you have a lot of activities that do not contribute in some way, consider replacing them with ones that do support what feel meaningful to you.

7. WHAT DO I KNOW FOR SURE?

For a long time, Oprah Winfrey asked this question of her guests. It is a wonderful question that can have such a grounding effect for keeping us in the moment, anchored in simple truth. Sometimes the answer can be as basic as, "Well I know I am breathing." Here are a few things I know for sure:

- We are one big human family and compassion and empathy are our keys to survival.
- Change is not easy for anyone, but when we are ready, it can happen in an instant.
- We are all imperfect and evolving but we find joy when we act from love.
- We do not know the half of what we don't know.

Tip: Give yourself some time in stillness each day to listen to your heart. Start with the simple check in around what you know for sure. This will ground you



in the moment and help you approach the day from a more secure state of mind.

8. HOW CAN I BE OF GREATEST SERVICE?

It is amazing what connection occurs when we ask this simple question. Far more than giving advice or stepping in with solutions, if we show up for the people in our lives, with willing ears and humble minds, and we ask, 'how can I help?' all manner of shared blessings unfold. We cannot always help others, and we are not responsible for their answers or solutions, but we can always ask.

Some sub-questions you might want to use with this are:

- Can you help me understand you better?
- How can I best support you?
- In what way can I show you more love?

Tip: To begin, ask the three sub-questions above to yourself. Fill your inner cup first so you have the capacity to help others. Then pay attention to the many ways, big and small, that you can help others each day.

9. WHAT DO I NEED TO LEARN FROM THIS SITUATION?

This is our accountability question. It is great to ask whenever you feel frustrated or stuck. I ask it when I feel the blame monster rising in my mind or when I feel fear about to sabotage my courage and power. It is definitely not easy, but by striving to see challenges as blessings in disguise, a lot changes, especially inside ourselves.

Tip: Keep your sense of humor as you look for the lessons within the challenges. It is always good to be able to laugh at ourselves.

10. IF I COULD, WHAT ONE THING WOULD I CHANGE ABOUT THE WORLD?

It is useless to sit around waiting for others to change — we must act. Considering where we want to see

change in the world is a great indicator of where we can step into service. The change I want to see in the world is a change of consciousness. Maybe yours is as simple as peace or something more complex or personal.

Tip: Trust that you have something of value to share with the world. Whatever is in your heart, offer it. Everyone has something essential to contribute.

These ten big questions are ones to return to again and again. As we evolve, our answers do too. Self-reflection is an essential aspect of self-care and by committing to your own personal, spiritual development, you naturally play a part in uplifting the collective consciousness as well. €



Learn more about author Jennie Lee at JennieLeeYogaTherapy.com

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