

Power Questions: Build Relationships, Win New Business and Influence Others

by Andrew Sobel & Jerold Panas

Book Review by Gary Tomlinson

“What do you think most engages a prospective client or makes a lasting impression on someone you’ve just met? The popular belief is that we win business by being clever and quick on our feet and that our brilliance – saying just the right thing – is what attracts others. But as *Power Questions* compellingly demonstrates, knowing the right question to ask is actually far more important than having a ready answer.”

Sobel and Panas begin their book, *Power Questions*, by asking a CEO of a \$12-Billion company this question; “What most impresses you when you meet someone who is trying to win your business? What builds trust and credibility with you early on in a relationship?” The CEO responded by saying “I can always tell how experienced and insightful a prospective consultant, banker or lawyer is by the quality of their questions and how intently they listen. That’s how simple it is.”

“Good questions are often more powerful than answers. Good questions challenge your thinking. They reframe and redefine the problem. They throw cold water on our most dearly held assumptions and force us out of our traditional thinking. They motivate us to learn and discover more. They remind us of what is most important in our lives.”

Sobel and Panas have written more than just another good business book. They have written a valuable resource guide. Their book consists of 34 short chapters that recount a conversation or situation that was transformed through one of their power questions. Each chapter has suggestions on how to use the question, when to use the question, alternative versions of the question and additional follow-up questions.

In the final section of their book, called “Not Just for Sunday,” they list another 293 power questions under these nine categories:

1. Win new business.
2. Build relationships.
3. Coach and mentor others.
4. Resolve a crisis or complaint.
5. Engage your leadership.
6. Engage your employees.
7. Evaluate a new proposal or idea.
8. Improve your meetings.
9. Ask for a gift.

“Great leaders ask great questions. They know that if they come up with all the answers, the chances of having anyone else buy into the solution are next to zero. But if their employees come up with the answer – if they feel ownership of it – there is a good chance it will bear fruit. Telling, commanding and stating the truth as you see it will not engage or empower. Answers make you feel like a leader, but questions create real followers.” This holds true for parents, teachers, coaches, spouses and friends as well.

“Learning to use the power of questions can dramatically increase your professional and personal effectiveness!” This book will help you build and deepen all relationships. Sobel and Panas share 337 essential questions to help you succeed at *work* and in *life*.

“Learning to use the power of questions can dramatically increase your professional and personal effectiveness. This book will help you build and deepen relationships. Sell more of your products, services and ideas. Motivate others to give more effort than they ever thought possible. And become more effective at influencing clients, colleagues and friends.”

As Dale Carnegie said; "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." You do this by asking powerful questions and then listening intently.

Gary Tomlinson (Reviewer): This is an incredible book and resource guide. If I could ever go back to my younger self and have a conversation, I would share with me the importance of asking great questions and then actively listening to the answers. Not only would I make a great impression, I just might learn something too! You never hear anyone accuse someone else of “listening too much.” To learn more about *Power Questions* go to www.andrewsobel.com. To order a copy of *Power Questions* go to www.amazon.com.

Gary Tomlinson is a business consultant and motivational speaker. As a business consultant he specializes in strategy execution management. He works with senior executives to help them clarify, deploy and achieve their organizational initiatives down to an individual level. Gary uses a unique and dynamic methodology that is part process, part software and part roadmap that enables his clients to close the gap between planning and implementation. As a motivational speaker, Gary’s favorite topics are the “Art of Telling,” “Making Change when Change is Hard” and “Top Ten Messages from Ten Top Books.” You can engage Gary at gary@gary-tomlinson.com. To see his other book reviews, book reports and educational videos visit his website at www.gary-tomlinson.com.