

# Forming Your Question

Thoughts and Recommendations on the Process

by  
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# Four Aspects of Consulting the Oracle

- **1. Forming the Question**
- **2. Studying the Response**
- **3. Implementing the Advice**
- **4. Observing the Results**

# 1. Forming the Question

- **Forming the Question** - focusing one's intention & facilitates formulating the "Right" question
- some say this should take a month
- if its still a Q. at the end of 30 days, then its appropriate to ask the YI
- This discourages frivolous questions.

## 2. Studying the Response

- **Studying the Response** – involves spending time with the Hexagram (both the symbol itself & commentaries)
- like a good poem – reflecting & interpreting its meaning for you
- summarize your understanding in writing
- the gist of its message
- put it on the frig.

### 3. Implementing the Advice

- **Implementing the Advice** - taking Action or Not
- amending one's course, plan, attitude, or behavior based on one's understanding and interpretation of the reading
- *or conversely a decision to ignore recommendations made*
- *(this would seem to negate using the oracle in the first place)*

## 4. Observing the Results

- **Observing the Results** of actions taken or not taken
- Watching how events unfold over time
- learning how the Yi speaks to us
- developing our relationship with the Yi over time
- It is teaching us, and training our intuition.

# THE QUESTION: The Function &/or Purpose of the Q.

- *This section derives from my experiences doing YJ consultations and especially trying to help people confused by their YJ reading. In my experience it often originates with an unclear question.*
- The Question is the bridge between you (the microcosm), and the macrocosmic (i.e. context in which you exist)
- It is the path along which you go outside yourself to obtain new information & insight.
- The info comes back to you along that same path.
- The Q. Focuses You - your **intention** & your **attention** - use it like a mantra.
- The Q. is the Focus for the Response
- It is the Q. you **ask/intend** that will be responded to,
- so spend the time to **clarify** what you really need/want to know & the time to phrase it well.
- A clear & focused Q. usually yields a straightforward Oracle response.
- Conversely, an ambiguous intention &/or sloppy Q. is usually difficult to understand and interpret.

# Before Consulting:

- Write your questions down (drafts to final version)
- Work with the question until you're satisfied it is the right one  
it may go through many stages and transformations.
- Take your time. Its OK.



# CHECKLIST

## (Before you Ask)

- Make sure you haven't already decided, or already know the answer or appropriate action – if so create a different Q.
- (The more it teaches you - the less frequently you have to ask about what to do)
- Become more interested in the *implications* of actions, rather than the decision itself.
- Make sure you have the time to carefully consider the Response
- Make sure you are willing to follow its "Advice" (as best you can)
- that you are open to what it suggests
- you don't "have to" follow it, or do anything, for that matter
- just make sure you are willing to listen.
- Make sure your Q. is worthy – that its not idle, frivolous, or self aggrandizing.
- Ask yourself Why you want to know and what you will do with the information.
- Will it help you become a better person, i.e. a **jun-zi**

# The Jun-Zi (Chun-Tzu)

君子

- literally the ruler's or lord's son, the crown prince, it can be "A Prince" or "The Ruler";
- remember the ruler is known as "The Son of Heaven" and is the holder of the "Mandate of Heaven" 天命 Tiān Mìng
- Jun-zi can refer to, a member of the aristocracy, ruling class, nobility; a nobleman the landed gentry, people with 'a name'.
- Wilhelm translates chun tzu as "superior man" 'man' here, is intended to be genderless, like the Chinese, 人 rén is a person, a human being, humankind a "superior person", is our best self, and only comes with intention & effort.

- A **jūn-zǐ** is an individual personifying all the cultivation and virtues of a noble person.
- Honorable, a person of high integrity, our highest self.
- (The famous herb formula Si Jun Zi Tang is usually translated as the Four Gentlemen Decoction)
- The jun-zi is **‘exemplary person’** or **‘an exemplar’**
- A jun-zi is a role model, an ideal person, a cultivated, perfect/perfected person
- (a person who has cultivated / is cultivating themselves)

- Stephen Karcher refers to jun-zi as the “realizing person” in his translation of the Ta Chuan.
- In his I Ching translation he uses the Chinese term, but defines it as the “ideal of a person who uses divination to order his/her life in accordance with tao rather than willful intention”.
- I might suggest ‘one who follows Dao’
- Timothy White defines jun-zi as “A noble-hearted, self-governing person”

# Occurrences of Jun-Zi/Junzi in the Text

- **Jun-zi occurs 20x in the main text:**
- 4x in the Judgments: 2.0, 12.0, 13.0, 15.0 // none  
[# = H# dot line# // separates Upper Canon & Lower Canon]
- 16x in Line texts: 1.3, 3.3, 9.6, 15.1, 15.3, 20.1, 20.5, 20.6, 23.6 //  
33.4, 34.3, 36.1, 40.5, 43.3, 49.6, 64.5
- Occurs in 53 of the 64 Image texts (Wings 3 & 4).  
*Not in these eleven: 8, 11, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 30 // 44, & 59*

- **Jun** (without zi) **occurs 6 more times in Line texts:**
- 3x as 大君 **dà jūn** = big/great ruler (7.6, 10.3, 19.5)
- 3x preceded by 其 qí, a 3rd person pronoun = his/one's/their ruler (24.6, // 54.5, 62.2)
- A primary quality of a jun-zi, is xīn = sincerity 信  
A person who stands by their word(s).
- R. Wilhelm transcribes this as chün-tzu and translates as 'superior man'.
- M. Pearson translates as 'you should' and explains her choice on p.37-39.

# Forming & Phrasing the Question (The Art of Asking)

- Make sure what you Ask & what you Intend are Aligned
- Make the Q. succinct, concise & to the point.
- Telegraphic (like a telegram, or instant message)
- or a poem (haiku)
- it does not need to be a complete sentence, or grammatically correct
- Make every word count
- say what you mean, and mean what you ask
- **Test:** Does it roll off your tongue easily
- does it sound “right” out loud
- work with it until your sure it is the right Q.
- that it speaks to the core/essence of your situation.
- Write it down (don't just do it in your head)

# Common Mistakes

- Ask only One Q. at a time
- the Q. may include qualifiers that make it clear & precise
- Are the Who, What, When, Where, How & Why's clearly implied and *understood* by you
- They do not necessarily need to be spelled out in the Q.
- Don't make it too complicated
- The Question ***should not*** be a:
  - Compound Q. - the text can't possibly respond to two questions at once.
  - Either/Or Q. - this is the most typical compound Q
  - Cluttered Q. - too many details or implications to allow a clear interpretation



- Don't ask YES/NO type Questions - might as well flip a coin (which is OK too)
- Avoid "SHOULD I" type Questions
- dependent, too childlike and asks the Yi to be parental with you
- remember "noble hearted **and** self governing"
- Instead ask:
  - What is likely to occur/happen if...?
  - What result can I expect upon...?
- Remember consulting is like asking the universe what time it is.

# Developing Rituals

- Ritual **transforms** you, the time, and the place.
- Ritual puts you 'in touch' with your 'higher self' and the 'collective unconscious'.
- **Create a Special Place** - set aside/cleared/purified
- **Set Aside Special Times** - of the day/week/year
- (traditionally considered inappropriate to divine after dark)
- **Hexagram for the Week**
  - Day 1: study the Initial hexagram, changing lines and resultant hexagram
  - Days 2-7: study the lines (one line per day) in context of above
- **Hexagram for the Year** (each line will cover 2 months)
  - on New Year's Day, Chinese New Year
  - on your birthday

# Ritual (continued)

- **Prepare Yourself**
  - relax, open up, clear and focus yourself
  - meditate, do some tai-ji, take a hot bath etc. (whatever works for you)
- **Directional Symbolism**
  - book faces South - direction of Li, illumination & clarity, insight
  - you face North (i.e. the book) - direction of Kan, darkness, mystery & the unknown
- **Method** (choose your method)
  - coins, stalks, beads, etc. - each involves its own ritual process
- **Develop your own Style**
  - personal style of consulting - develop your own ritual(s)

# Create Your Own Personal Yi Jing Notebook/Journal

- Keep a record/notebook/journal of Questions asked and Oracle responses (**date them**)
- **Spend Time with the Response**
- study it - reflect on it
- select the most pertinent sections and quote them in your journal
- use different sources to deepen & broaden your understanding
- Summarize your interpretation of the Response to your Q.
- Identify and record your proposed course of action
- or the learning you want to practice
- Apply your interpretation of the Response to your life-situation
- periodically make notes as to how the situation unfolded
- or if ongoing, how it progresses