

40 Questions a Psychologist Would Ask You

TO HELP YOU REFLECT



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How often do you stop and think about what you're doing? Or sit with the **thoughts** that are racing through your mind?

Do you ever take the time to reflect on your **goals**? Or the balance between various areas of your life?



At OpenUp we focus on eight topics. According to our psychologists, these are the topics that provide a sense of peace and happiness, and give you direction in life: job satisfaction, a sense of purpose, stress and worrying, self-confidence, lifestyle, mindfulness, relationships, and sleep. You can discuss all these topics with our psychologists, but you can also **work on them yourself**. To do this, you can try reflecting on these forty questions that should get you thinking.

Tip!

You might want to answer them in your head, but we'd recommend writing them down. Getting your thoughts and feelings down on paper definitely frees up some space in your mind and boosts your mood. And you can also read back over them at a later date.

Job satisfaction

You spend a lot of your life at work. So, it makes sense that your job strongly influences your mental state. Your relationship with work constantly changes. As you develop, your relationship with work develops too. This development takes place on both professional and personal levels.



On a professional level, you gain knowledge and experience while developing your skills and acquiring more responsibility. On a personal level, your worldview changes as does your living situation, the structure of your family, your dreams, and your goals for the future.

This means that it's definitely not weird if you occasionally find yourself asking whether you're working in the right place or if your job aligns with your goals and home situation, and if it's time to take the next step.

The following **questions will help you to reflect on this:**



1

Why do you do what you do?

2

What do you do so well that you could teach that skill to other people?

3

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

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4 When do you come home at the end of the day feeling energized? Which elements of your (work)day contributed to that?

5 Which values do you live by? And to what degree do you notice these values showing up in the work you do?

Sense of purpose

Having purpose in life or a meaningful job is important for your mental health. Having direction in your life gives you a sense of peace and fulfilment, but it's not always easy to find that.

We live in a society where we have a lot of freedom to choose. In many ways, that's a wonderful thing. But this freedom of choice also makes it more difficult to find a sense of purpose. Because while in collectivist cultures, meaning is found through family bonds, taking care of loved ones, and serving the community, we in our individualistic societies are responsible for finding our own sense of purpose: you do what you want in life. But how are you supposed to know what you want?

Also, of interest here: [How To Make Each Day Special](#)

Reminder:

It's up to you to seek out your own sense of direction. Fortunately, this search is a great learning opportunity!





6 What does your perfect work day/relationship/day off look like? And the most important elements?

7 What did you really enjoy or do well as a child?

8 Which movies, books, podcasts or programs have inspired you or made you think? Why was that?



9

**Who do you admire (or have you admired) in life?
Why is that? What does this person stand for?**

10

**What would you do if you were a multi-millionaire?
What does this say about your values and what's
important to you?**

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Stress and worrying

Although we've always been told that stress is bad for you and that you should try to prevent it as much as possible, stress does have some important functions. A healthy dose of stress keeps your brain sharp, for example during presentations at work, job interviews, and tight deadlines.

Even acute stress is important. It helps your body to react when in danger. This is the well-known 'fight or flight response': your breathing and heart rate accelerates, your muscles tense up, and your senses get sharper.

To learn more:

[How to Turn Stress and Fear into a Good Thing](#)

Therefore, stress itself isn't really a problem. It all comes down to how we handle stress. [Research](#) shows that people who believe stress is helpful to experience fewer negative side effects from stress than those who think it's bad for them.

This means stress can be helpful in the short term. But if you've been experiencing long-term stress for days or weeks, it could become unhealthy. Often the situation in which this stress would have been useful is long over, but your nervous system remains overactive, which eventually leaves you exhausted.

By stopping to think about your stress, reflecting on what you're feeling, and consciously considering the best way to handle it, you'll develop a healthy relationship with stress.





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When do you experience good stress? In what kinds of situations?

12

How does good stress benefit you?

13

**When do you experience bad stress?
In what kinds of situations?**



14

What physical symptoms do you notice when you're experiencing stress?

15

How can you utilize stress and tension in a way that is beneficial to you?

Self-confidence



It's easy to feel insecure. We're constantly comparing ourselves to others. On Instagram we see how amazing other people's lives are, in magazines we see how beautiful people are, and on LinkedIn we see how successful they are.

Even though we're well aware that sometimes the media (and social media) presents a distorted view of reality, it still often makes us feel insecure. Maybe you've had thoughts like "I'll never be able to do this" or "other people are better at this than me".

How can you cope with insecurity in a healthy way?

Wanting to be "good enough" is a very human thing. We all want other people to have a positive view of us and we also want to have a positive view of ourselves. It gives us self-confidence. Reflecting on the following questions can help you in your quest for more self-confidence.

To learn more:

[How to Handle Criticism?](#)



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To what extent do you accept yourself?

17

When are you (or when have you been) proud of yourself?

18

When do you feel that you can add value or make a contribution?

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19

How do you handle feedback or criticism?

20

Which compliments you've received have stuck with you?

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Lifestyle

Everyone wants to feel healthy, and a healthy body contributes to your mental health. That's why we think lifestyle is such an important topic at OpenUp.



Sometimes it's necessary to make adjustments to our lifestyles, but that's not always easy. Have you ever tried to change your diet or consistently work out three times a week? You can usually keep it up for a couple of weeks, but trying to properly adopt a new lifestyle is no mean feat.

That's because the benefits of a healthier life are far off in the future, meanwhile, our workout class is scheduled for today. Short-term rewards – I could go to a bar with my friend instead – often come into conflict with long-term gains. Since short-term rewards are the ones that are in your reach, they have a stronger pull for us.

But practice makes perfect!

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**How important is a healthy lifestyle to you?
On a scale of 1 to 10.**

22

**To what extent do you put this into practice?
Where could you improve?**

23

**For you, what are the three most important
reasons for making a lifestyle change?**



24

Imagine you wanted to change your lifestyle, which steps would you need to take?

25

What (possible) obstacles are standing in the way of you maintaining the lifestyle you want on a long-term basis? And how could you tackle these?

Mindfulness

Being more present, total focus and increased energy, getting more enjoyment out of life, and being better at managing stress: these are all benefits of living in the here and now.

Mindfulness is a very useful tool for this.

You'll learn to be fully present at the moment; to be conscious of who you are and what you're doing without becoming overwhelmed with what's going on around you. Daily practice is the key here.

**Practice mindfulness
with OpenUp:**

[Follow one of
our guided meditations](#)





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How mindful are you in your life at the moment?

27

When do you get distracted and either stop living in the moment or become less present (does your mind wander off)?

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28

What do you need to train your focus more (to practice mindfulness)?

29

In which moments are you present with your full attention? What effect does that have on you?

30

Are there any times when you do things on autopilot even though you'd prefer to experience them more consciously?

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Relationships

Relationships between people can take many forms. Friendships, business relationships, or romantic relationships, for example. Everyone needs secure relationships that allow them to bond with another person and count on them for support.

Further Reading:

[A Practical Guide to Meaningful Relationships](#)

Good relationships (whether corporate, friendly or romantic) make you extra resilient. You have somebody to share your struggles with and to celebrate your successes. Relationships make you feel happy and contribute to your sense of purpose, for example through warm conversations and shared memories. They also help you to cope with significant events in your life and prevent you from feeling lonely.





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What's important to you in a relationship? What are your values?

32

What bonds you to another person in a relationship?

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When do you feel safe with another person?

34

What are your wants and needs in a relationship?

35

What have you learned from past relationships?

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Sleep

Could sleeping be the world's most popular hobby? On average, we spend one-third of our lives sleeping. Many people love it. And that's a good thing too! Because an enormous wealth of [sleep research](#) shows that a good night's sleep is important for our overall health. We recover physically, our energy renews, and we can think clearly again. Sleep is also good for our mood. You've probably experienced that "short fuse" you have after a poor night's sleep.



But sleep isn't always fun for everybody. Insomnia, nightmares, worrying, and sleep walking mean that for some people the bedroom isn't a particularly appealing place. Are you one of these people? Then you're not alone. [Research](#) carried out by the Netherlands Brain Foundation and Trimbos Institute found that 63% of Dutch people are dissatisfied with their quality of sleep.

To learn more:

[How to Sleep Well Even if You're Stressed](#)



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What does your sleep pattern look like?

37

To what extent would you like to change your current sleep pattern? What would you need to help you with this?

38

When you look at your bedroom, to what extent is it equipped to help you sleep? What kind of improvements could you make here?



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Do you worry at night? If so, at what times?

40

**What ratio of exertion to relaxation helps you to maintain a good sleep pattern?
Try experimenting here!**

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Let's openup

These 40 questions are examples of questions that a psychologist might ask you during a consultation.

Together you'll explore what's going on in your life by doing things like answering questions, creating clarity, and getting to the heart of the things that are bothering you.

Want to dive deeper into your personal situation?

[Book a session](#)