

Submission for weekly column “Space for Reflection” in The Current

### **The Big Questions**

As college students, we are used to the class/study/test cycle: We take a course, study the information, demonstrate our knowledge by giving the correct answers on an exam, and (hopefully!) earn a good grade. This pattern of gauging how well we are doing by how well we respond to questions is so much a part of our lives as students that it becomes normal to think success is all about having the right answers.

But is it possible that success can be just as much tied to having the right questions as the right answers? Maybe even having questions for which we have no answers! Confused yet? I’m not talking about academic success now but about leading a meaningful, fulfilling life. Asking the “big” questions in life may not directly lead to an A on a test, but it could make you a happier person.

So what are the big questions? These are the questions that make us stop and ponder what life is all about, what matters most, what kind of people we want to be. The Multicultural and Spiritual Affairs program here at Nova sponsors a yearly contest called the Life Questions contest. Last year, 64 questions were submitted, each one asking a “big” question to promote deep thought within the NSU community.

Some of the questions touch on identity, such as “How do you define yourself?” Some of them have to do with how we treat other people, such as “How can I choose love over judgment?” Other questions address our purpose in life, such as “What will you do with today?” and “What is your life passion?” Another subject those submitting questions confronted was the issue of meaning. One submission was “What is the meaning of your life?” Another was simply, “What matters?”

The questions were all great because they make us think about the important stuff in life. The Life Questions Contest Committee has made their selection of the five winning questions. Look for an announcement of the winners in next week’s paper. And start considering what question you might want to submit for this year’s contest!

Yes, it’s great to have answers, especially when we’re taking a test. But remember to value questions themselves. Ask yourself (and your friends) the big questions. It may be the start of a really cool conversation. We don’t have to have the answers, at this point. Just the fact that we are thinking about these deep issues will add meaning to our lives.

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