



## The Wright Stuff

*The analytical uses the intellect. When you ask a "what's wrong" question, your intellect will take apart, take apart and take apart until it's left with tiny pieces. The opposite happens if you ask a "what's right?" intuitive question.*

a conversation with **Kurt and Patricia Wright**

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More than 30 years ago, Kurt Wright made a life- and work-changing decision. He stopped asking, "What's wrong?" What Kurt and Patricia did for a living (they are now retired) is to shift their clients 180 degrees from the common corporate (and most all other domains, as well) "find-what's-wrong-and-fix-it" mindset, to one of asking "What's right?" questions instead.

**"What's right" questions, the Wrights assert, move our minds from negative to positive, from problems to possibilities, from being prisoners of the past to creative visionaries discovering and designing our futures.**

Radical? Well, Kurt didn't write the paradigm-shifting book, *Breaking The Rules*, to continue the status quo of a working world wrapped up in what's wrong. If you're interested in doing business with your intuition and heart, as well as working smart, meet Mr. and Mrs. Wright.

**What's the biggest challenge involved in creating a team?**

**Kurt:** The biggest issue is the relationship between our own head and our own heart. Everything in relation to other people simply mirrors that inner relationship. Our work is all about helping people solidify the inner team work-

**Patricia:** ... the relationship between the head and the heart, the intuitive and the analytical, conscious and unconscious, the man-nature and spirit-nature. Our ability to work with others grows out of that relationship in ourselves. Our ability to have a team or an organization work well is an outgrowth of what we've done internally, with ourselves, and externally, with others.

**Kurt:** And here's the paradox:

**One of the best ways to get that relationship working internally is to work on it externally!**

### **Why is that?**

**Kurt:** Relating to you gives me an opportunity to practice being completely free of judging. Judging has a separating, dividing function. The teamwork relationship is when we use our intellect to frame questions in such a way that they can only process intuitively. That's the key to the partnership between the head and the heart. The more we practice asking the right questions with others, the more we strengthen that habit internally.

### **What do you mean by the "right questions"?**

**Kurt:** We mean questions that engage your intuition. The intellect is a divider; its deductive reasoning breaks the whole into parts. The intuition is an assembler, an integrator, a synthesizer; it pulls different parts together into a whole.

**The key issue is learning to ask questions that evoke that integrative functioning.**

**Patricia:** That's ultimate teamwork: the team is integrated together toward a specific place or goal.

**Kurt:** It's fascinating to watch what happens with a team: when you ask integrative questions, they huddle closer together around the table; they get energized. When you ask deductive questions—questions that cause people to process analytically— you can actually watch the group separate. You can see that divisiveness as it manifests; it's amazing! As they grade and opionate, you can feel the energy drain out of the conversation.

**Patricia:** The analytical uses the intellect. When you ask a "what's wrong" question, your intellect will take apart, take apart and take apart until it's left with tiny pieces. The opposite happens if you ask a "what's right?" question.

### **What are other examples of that question?**

**Patricia:** "What's whole? What's ideal? What's complete?"

**Kurt:** "What's working? What's useful? What's helpful?"

**Patricia:** The analytical has no way to deal with those questions; it has to defer to the intuitive. As people learn to respond to those questions, they start getting answers from their intuition...

**...and those insights energize them.  
It's always a very connecting, inte-  
grating, synthesizing process.**

When a group comes together with a problem or an issue to discuss, the typical first question is, "What's wrong? How are we going to fix this?"

That line of inquiry produces analytical answers, which often go into rationalization, finger-pointing and piecemeal solution: Where do we place the blame? You can literally watch people lean back in their chairs and move away from the table, because it's so uncomfortable to be around those questions and their results. I've seen people actually get up and move their chairs all the way into the corners of the room!

Now, take that same organization into the room and start with the question, "What's already working in this situation?" You get a totally different result— because you're accessing intuition.

## **When you talk about intuition, are you talking about inner self, spiritual self, unconscious...?**

**Kurt:** We define intuition as "a different way of processing data."

**Patricia:** I do relate it to spirit: when I'm listening to my intuition, my gut feeling, I'm also getting a message from my higher self, from spirit, from the universe. It's my way of connecting to my unconscious.

**Kurt:** A computer chip's most useful design feature is its ability to reflect back precisely what has been put in. Let's say that differently: the computer chip's most useful design feature is that it's programmable. Programmable equals deceivable— the two are completely interchangeable concepts.

The clinical medical research that won Dr. Sperry the 1981 Nobel Prize for Medicine concluded that when the intellect is separated surgically from the intuition, it is wholly incapable of distinguishing truth from fiction.

Programming a chip is the management of the one-zero, on-off, here-there switches— and that is deceptively close to good-bad, right-wrong. But the computer chip cannot function in true terms of good-bad or right-wrong; it cannot execute those instructions—

**nor can the human rational, analytical mind! It's just that it's subject to the illusion of thinking that it can.**

All non-teamwork interaction is caused by the intellect falling into the trap of thinking it can judge right-wrong, good-bad— which it cannot.

## **How is intuition a "different way" of processing data?**

**Kurt:** The intuition uses three basic process languages— none of which, interestingly, involve words or numbers: it operates at too high a speed for either words or numbers to serve.

**Instead, its three process languages are feelings, patterns and pictures.**

These languages operate at much higher speeds than words or numbers. "A picture is worth a thousand words."

My own strongest language— the one that works best for tapping my intuition, for reading, discerning and interpreting what my intuition is trying to tell me— is patterns. Patricia, you see images, don't you?

**Patricia:** I see pictures, yes, and I have gut feelings.

**Kurt:** In terms of reading feelings, I'm way down on the learning curve; but boy, am I strong on reading patterns.

**Patricia:** Let's say we first get a feeling, or a picture. In order to have actual functionality, to gain access to the intuition, we have to slow it down and put it into words. That's the reason very few people have really good access to their intuition:

**They haven't learned how to slow down and put into words what they get, such that their rational mind can understand and make sense of it.**

We live in a world where the rational, analytical mind is put on a pedestal. "If you can't explain it, then it probably isn't so." Learning to distinguish what those feelings, patterns and pictures are and putting them into words is the real challenge.

**How does this relate especially to team?**

**Patricia:** The first issue is to learn to do this for ourselves; then we can help other people learn, too. But paradoxically, as Kurt said, it's hard to do this with yourself in a vacuum. So the team becomes especially valuable in a number of ways.

As you ask other people these intuition-engaging questions, these what's right, what's whole, what's ideal, what's perfect, what's working kinds of questions, it gets them to process intuitively— and it also gets you to process intuitively.

**The ultimate teamwork is to have**

**an organization, group or a couple  
that's asking each other these  
questions all the time:**

then we're accessing our own intuition and helping our partner or our team members access their intuition or the group intuition.

**And that's by asking the "what's  
right" question?**

**Kurt:** Actually, there are five levels of "What's right?" questions.

**The first is "What's working?" We  
call that an agenda-setting question.**

This means we're initiating a discovery process to find out what's worthy of an inquiry, what's worthy of studying further. This is crucial, because most people use this as a dismissal question: if it's working, then we can dismiss it, we don't have to use up energy thinking about it.

The second level question is, "What is it that makes that work?" That's the question that causes the intuition to pull together the disparate parts into a unified whole, which causes a Eureka!, an epiphany.

**This jolt of energy and insight will not  
occur unless it's invited to occur— by  
asking the right question.**

That's the child's "Why?" which is why three-year-olds have energy coming out their ears: they're asking the why question.

**"Why is the sky blue, daddy?"**

**Kurt:** Exactly. Their asking the question is eventually going to cause a Eureka! to happen.

## **Is the parental difficulty with answering that question the fact that we try to do it analytically?**

**Kurt:** We've been conditioned by our educational system to believe that we're not okay if we don't have the answer, so instead of using it as an agenda-setting question, we penalize the child for asking!

Nineteen children out of 20 have stopped asking that question by the age of ten. But every visionary I've ever studied over the course of over 30 years' inquiry has had the same questions and the same energy as a three-year-old child.

## **The two, the question and the energy level, are inextricably linked.**

The third level is, "What would be ideally right?" That shoves a wedge out into space and pries open a vacuum. *The most powerful motivating force in the universe is the vacuum of an unanswered question.*

A specific feeling develops around the edge of this vacuum, technically known as "creative tension"; this works as if it's sending an e-mail message out to the universe, inviting the perfect resources to come fill the gap. The person who makes best use of his intuition focuses on holding open the vacuum of not knowing.

## **And I repeat: it is the most powerful motivating force in the universe. The difficulty is that it so closely resembles pain!**

### **Why is that?**

**Kurt:** Because of all the educational, social and cultural conditioning that we're not okay if we don't have the answer, most people misinterpret that feeling of not knowing, that creative tension, and go scrambling around trying to find something to put in the hole, to stop the feeling.

The fourth level of "What's right?" question is, "What's not yet quite right?"

Now, that sounds a lot like "What's wrong?" and in practice, people will often use "what's wrong" language for it. However, its operating effectiveness is that it is a way to further define the edges of the not known, to tighten up the vacuum—

**which strengthens the vacuum and causes it more rapidly to attract the perfect items.**

For a person operating at his best, the fifth level question is actually somewhat redundant. It is, "What resources can I find to fill the gap?"

**Can you give me a real world example of how these questions operate?**

**Patricia:** We built a Network Marketing business some years ago. After working on it hard for about three years, we were able to take off two years in Hawaii, living quite nicely on our residual income—which is the whole point of network marketing, right?

The reason we were able to do that— which we know, because I watched our company closely, and during this time there was hardly anybody else actually taking off— was that through our questions,

**... we helped people get to their own inner knowing as to why they were building an organization. That's an intuitive knowing.**

We'd start with, "What's working already in your business?" We would have them define what their strengths were; what did they want to expand upon to build their business?

There's a tremendous amount of good training, material and systems out there and systems are fine— if they fit your strengths. But first we need to identify, what are my strengths? What are my talents? What's the best way I can go about building this business? Because we did that with our key people, and taught some of them to do it with their key people, we had an organization where people were

building their Network Marketing businesses for their own reasons— for themselves, not for us.

**How does a team functioning in this way operate?  
What's different there?**

**Patricia:** Through our questions, we were able to get people on our team to see where their greatest strengths were. We had some people who were incredibly good at explaining nutrition and how the body works. If I had someone with a specific physical issue, I knew exactly who in my organization could explain how the product would affect that issue. Others were really good at explaining how the business works. They learned to pair up and work together, whether in the same organization or cross-line.

Through these kinds of what's-right questions, you build a much stronger person.

**If I'm comfortable with who I am and what my strengths are, then I'll be much more open to calling you to access your strengths.**

If feel insecure about who I am, I'm not going to open myself up and call you to get your help— because it makes me feel I'm less by comparison.

When you have stronger people, understanding what their own strengths and competencies are, they're more apt to use other people's strengths to build a strong entire organization.

**How do you ascertain people's strengths? Do you come right out and say, "So, what're you good at?"**

**Patricia:** No, because people don't have a clue! We have several tools for that. One is to ask you to come up with a list of those qualities you respect and admire in other people. Why? Because that's an indication of your own greatest strengths. It's a mirror.

We'd say, bring to mind somebody whom you respect or admire a great deal; it could be Abraham Lincoln, Jesus, or someone you know; then list the five or six greatest strengths you most admire in that person. We'd have them do this with two or three people— and we'd begin to see some real similarities. We'd show them how what they admire in others is a mirror of their own strengths— and they would go, Aha!

Then we'd suggest that they go out and start asking other people, "What do you see as some of my greatest strengths?" And they're floored at the answers they get! They would come back and tell us, "Man, they saw these strengths in me— and I never saw that!"

I'll tell you what this does for self-esteem: it raises it several notches! When I start looking at what's right about me, at what my strengths are, I start feeling really good about myself. The more that happens, the more I'm able to come to you for help in your particular strength area.

**If you do that in a group setting, people start seeing what are the strengths in the organization as a whole.**

**Kurt:** Then it gets to where the person can be honest, where they can say with great comfort, "I'm just not doing a very good job at this part of my work assignment. Can somebody help me here?" We've had situations where people have shuffled around job responsibilities, because they were able to get honest about their failings. In an environment where everyone's protecting what's wrong, that'll never happen.

**Patricia:** Then you have the ultimate teamwork— which is where people are truly honest about what's going on with them

### **What role does vision play in teamwork?**

**Kurt:** That's a paradoxical question, in a way, because anybody who is operating in a "what's wrong?" question simply does not have the energy to develop a vision, and it's virtually useless to have them address the question of vision.

**Patricia:** When we go into an organization, we have to start with building the energy.

## Energy is everything.

It's wonderful to have a vision leading the organization, if it's coming from an energizing place, but what you often find in organizations is a trying-to-fix-what's-wrong statement masquerading as a vision.

**Kurt:** Which brings us back to the bottom line: the best way to tell that you are processing analytically is that you'll be draining yourself of energy. You can actually feel the ebb, the takeaway, the diminishment of your energy.

**Conversely, the best way to tell that you're processing intuitively is that you will always be juiced, you'll always feel your energy going up.**

The best way to begin testing this is by asking the simple question around the family dinner table at night: "What's the best thing that happened to you today?"

**Patricia:** It's such a simple question— but it's powerful. We've been working with corporations for 25 years or so, and this has been the single most effective question.

It's also the best way to build people's self-esteem. You can start with your children, when they're really little. I've had people from our corporate work come back and say, "My relationship with my teenager has changed— we're talking now, and we weren't before."

The question, "What's the best thing that happened for you today?" allows people to be honest about what's going well in their day, instead of coming home from their school or their work and complaining about what happened all day long.

**Kurt:** Patricia and I have been together for 23-and-a-half years this month— and we do not go a day without asking that question of each other multiple times.

**Patricia:** And it's amazing the insights that emerge. After all that time, you think you know your partner-but you don't have a clue! By asking that question, you learn a whole lot more than you could ever imagine.