

Possibly the best business self-help book ever written!  
Robert Middleton, CEO

# Facing the Tiger

Five Questions that Change Everything  
Dr. John J. Scherer

with  
Dorota Nawalaniec





# PREFACE

For the past four months, while the two of us, both sheltering-in-place, have been having almost daily writing conversations about ‘facing the tiger’ – on Zoom, of course – the world has been grappling with major ‘tigers’ coming down the path.

And if we can help you find fresh ways to approach something as big as all that, imagine how confident and skillful you could be when called on to face *other* ‘tigers’ that might be in your life now—or show up later on.

We believe *Facing the Tiger: Five Questions that Change Everything* will help you discover powerful ways to deal with what is happening to you and move you to take creative—you could say transformational—action that benefits you, those around you, and even Life itself.

This is why we wrote this book...

John Scherer

Dorota Nawalaniec

September 3, 2020



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	11	The Shadow's 'Volume-Control'	112
<b>QUESTION #1: What CONFRONTS me?</b>		Polarity Thinking	121
'Facing the Tiger'	22	Integrating the Persona-Shadow	
The PINCH Theory	29	Polarity	129
<b>QUESTION #2: What am I BRINGING?</b>		The Game-of-Life Strategy (or 'Con')	139
What Makes this a 'Tiger'?	43	<b>QUESTION #4: What Calls Me?</b>	
The Three Worlds: Bridging the		Living A Purpose Worthy	
Interpersonal Gap	47	of Who I Am	144
The 'Funnel': Your Decision-Making,		Going for TOV	164
Action-Taking Process	53	The Sweet Spot	176
Your 'Operating System' or 'Living		Your 'GPS' or Greater Purpose	
on Automatic'	58	Statement	198
<b>QUESTION #3: What's been RUNNING me?</b>		<b>QUESTION #5: What will UNLEASH me?</b>	
My 'Somebody Training'	63	Unleashed: FROM what? TO what?	
'Peeling the Onion': Discovering		FOR what?	217
What has been Running Me	80	My Back-Home World ('Map')	220
The Persona: How I Want to be Seen	81	Shifting My State From Automatic	
The Shadow: How I do Not Want		to Authentic	222
to be Seen	88	Putting My Shadow to Work	232
My Addiction and My Terror	93	The Three 'Biggies'	238
My Shadow is My 'Teacher'	104	'Coming Home to Myself':	
'Going to school' with your		The Doorway to Transformation	246
Shadow Character	106	Before you go...	252



# INTRODUCTION

So, why a tiger?!

Because we all have them: difficult people, situations, decisions, problems-to-be-solved, even major life crises.

And NOT facing them leaves us caught in patterns that are not actually serving ourselves, other people or Life.

Finally, 'facing the tiger' is what we need to do everywhere in our lives—to become all of who we are.

What the heck does it mean to 'become all of who we are'?

That's what this book is all about...

You might find it useful to have a pad of paper handy for taking notes for reference later. Think of it as a '*Chronicle of My Transformation Process*'.

Let's get started.

If you wake up in the morning and step into the role of mother/father, life partner, manager, worker, artist, teacher/student, doctor, lawyer, athlete, friend, or in fact into *any* role that involves you interacting with other people, The Five Questions are for you.

Because life is always happening in two 'directions': while you are 'producing' something *for others*, something is also being 'produced' *in you*. Maybe you get paid for doing this, maybe you don't. Either way, what is happening to *you* in this process? – is a life-changing question. Actually, what you do creates both *cost* and *value*.

I love this quote from T.S. Eliot:

Everyone gets the experience.  
Some get the lesson.

This book will help you turn your daily experience from things that happen TO you into things that could happen FOR you.

## SEVA AS SADHANA

In Eastern traditions, there is a phrase that says it all: "*Seva is sadhana.*"

*Seva* is your daily work, what you actually DO, such as washing dishes, talking on the phone, sitting in meetings, making decisions, selling something.

*Sadhana* is the process of deepening your self-awareness and developing into the human being you are capable of becoming. Some would call it 'spiritual practice'. ***Seva as Sadhana is the essence of this book: how to turn what happens during the day into deep personal development.***

This is not about religion, theology or what people believe. What I mean by 'spirit' is that which animates or moves you. What has you get up in the morning? What is it that hums or beats at the center of who you are? That place from which you navigate your way through the day. What I am talking about is beneath your mind, beneath anything that lives like a thought you can have. I mean that place from which those thoughts originate. That place to which you yearn to come home. That place.

## ARE YOU A 'FINISHED PRODUCT'?

"As a human being, are you a finished product or a work-in-progress?" Over the years, I have asked this question (a gift from my close friend and colleague, Art McNeil), of thousands of people around the world. As you might guess, most people say, "Oh, I'm not 'there' yet; I'm a work-in-progress."

The next question I like to ask is, “Well, where do you do your ‘progressing’ or ‘developing’?” People respond with a variety of answers:

- reading a good self-help or leadership book
- going to personal or professional development seminars and workshops
- at my church, synagogue, mosque or spiritual development group
- sitting quietly alone or with close friends

These are all wonderful places to be a work-in-progress. I know from personal experience. But I want you to consider another arena, the one where you spend virtually all of your conscious moments. I am referring to *your everyday experience—life itself*. Every day you spend your waking hours in a *perfect* ‘classroom’ for profound personal, deep—you might even say spiritual—development. As you will see, the people around you are the *perfect* ‘faculty’ for what you need to learn, and the ‘stuff’ that happens to you every day contains your perfect ‘curriculum’, resulting in what you might call your Wisier-at-Work ‘School of Life’.

## THE WISER-AT-WORK SCHOOL OF LIFE

- **This ‘school’ is *tuition-free*.** There are some costs associated with being in the program, but, as you will see, the investment is all internal, involving reflection and self-mastery.
- **Your ‘faculty’ is *always around***—the ones you like and the ones you can’t stand. In fact, as you will see, the ones you don’t particularly like are potentially the most important ‘teachers’ in your developmental process.
- **There are no ‘grades’.** There is, however, continuous, real-time feedback happening. Oh... and your own inner critic. The trick is to figure out what it all means.
- **School is always ‘in session’** and the lessons are always the right ones for you in that moment.
- **There is no final ‘exam’**—only moment-by-moment ‘tests.’ If you don’t do particularly well on a ‘lesson’, don’t worry, it will keep coming back until you get it!

When you start to see *life itself* as a 'classroom' for becoming fully who you are, then everything that happens to you is a developmental opportunity.

## THE ASSIGNMENT

Every educational experience—from kindergarten to graduate school—is designed around a set of learning objectives. If Life is a classroom, then surely there must be objectives there, as well. I am convinced that each of us was sent here with a three-part 'assignment':

1. To continuously discover and develop into the fulness of who we truly are,
2. Allow who we are to be fully expressed from moment to moment in what we do,
3. So that our self-expression makes a meaningful contribution to Life itself.

How can we practice?

## LIFE AS A 'DOJO'

Years ago Black-Belt, Ellen Staphenhorst, introduced me to Aikido, the relatively young Japanese martial art that emphasizes *flowing with* an attack rather than blocking or attacking. The Japanese word is broken into its parts like this:

**Ai** – To blend or harmonize

**Ki** – Energy or intention

**Do** – Path or 'Way'

In Aikido practice, it all begins when someone (called the 'Uke') moves to engage you. In that moment, the two of you begin to train not *against* each other but *with* each other. In an interesting and

transformative re-frame, your Uke is not attacking you, but rather providing you with *an opportunity to practice your craft*.

If you are attempting to become a better tennis player, for instance, it's rather hard to do by yourself. You need a partner on the other side of the net whose role is to hit challenging shots at you. The better they are as a player, the more you are called on to 'raise your game' in the process of *mastering your craft*, which, in this case, means becoming a better tennis player.

**So, in Life, when someone or something 'comes at you', why not frame what is happening as an opportunity to practice your craft and 'raise your game'?** It takes a lot of inner work (like embracing The Five Questions), but eventually it is possible to get to the place where you can actually experience *gratitude* for this opportunity to master your craft, which in this case means becoming a better \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your name here).

In this way, that person 'coming at you', your Uke, becomes a *tiger-to-be-faced*. Learning how to face your tigers is therefore a crucial aspect of self-mastery.

## SELF-MASTERY

This kind of learning is not just about mastering a subject or a set of skills, the object of most classrooms. This classroom is more about *self-mastery* which Lao Tzu described in 700 BCE:

*Those who understand much may be wise, but those  
who understand themselves are even wiser.  
Those who are master over many may be powerful, but those  
who are mastering themselves are more powerful still.*

~ Lao Tzu,

Becoming wiser at work means learning how to manage *internal* things like success, failure, fear, pride, confusion, frustration, anger, competition. In self-mastery there *are* skills to be learned, but they

are skills that assist you in *processing what is happening to you*. To go back to the T.S. Eliot quote, it is figuring out the *lessons* in your *experiences*.

## HOMework THAT TAKES YOU 'HOME'

If you decide to face your tigers by taking on The Five Questions in the course of self-mastery, *there will be homework*.

Paradoxically, the work you will need to do has nothing to do with changing anything about yourself. It's exactly the opposite. This homework is *work that takes you home*—home to who you truly are, to that Self which is capable of mastering being you, discovering the person inside your position or role. It's hard work to peel back the layers that have covered over this vital center, this core essence of who you are, but it may be one of the reasons you are here.

Your homework may involve some of the most challenging self-development you have ever attempted. If you take it on, however, it could allow you to relax and enjoy your life, regardless of the circumstances. Whether or not you are aware of it, this could be something you have been searching for, striving for, saving for, maybe even fighting for. But the first step is accepting that where you are right now is *exactly* where you need to be to start the journey. If you are in Paris and want to go to New York, you have to start in Paris!

## WHY FIVE QUESTIONS? WHY NOT FIVE ANSWERS?

Some might wonder how an approach based on *questions* could be of any value when what the world is seeking is *answers*.

First of all, questions are much more powerful than answers. As long as you are asking a question, you are open to input and discovery. The instant you find the answer, you stop looking; you shut down to new input. Answers eventually lead to rigidity. Rigidity leads to certainty. Certainty leads to stagnation. Stagnation leads to the need for fresh thinking, and that requires asking new questions. The

questions asked here are universal, aimed at everyone. But what ‘comes up’ in *you* while you engage in these questions will be completely unique.

What you need is an approach that creates *transformation*, a very different outcome from merely *seeking a change*. Change happens on the outside. Transformation on the inside. *Change* can be accomplished by applying answers; *transformation* requires living into the right questions, and these five are a great place to start.

## YOU CAN'T REALLY *CHANGE* YOURSELF!

Most personal change efforts are based on the core belief that there is something wrong with who you are now. Consider this: you couldn't have any other kind of attitude, relationships, health, management style, or success, *given who you have been up to now*.

If you want to create any kind of fundamental *difference* in your life, the secret is not to try to become someone or something **else** (*change*), but to become more fully who you **are** (*transformation*).

## NEW WATER FROM THE OLD WELL

Perhaps you can now see that changing something implies *replacing* or *negating* what is there now. Transformation, on the other hand, implies reaching deep within what is there now to find the ‘seeds’ for a new larger reality. It is more like the true meaning of *education*: from its Latin root *e-ducare*, ‘to draw out’, as in drawing water out of a well. *You can think of the kind of transformation described here as drawing new water out of your old well—by going deeper than you dipped before*. The way to get your bucket deeper into your well is by taking on these powerful questions, instead of jumping at attractive-looking answers. When you courageously engage with these five questions, everything has

a chance to shift inside and around you. It starts with fully understanding who you are, down deep, and then being *that* person.

If you are ready for this possibility, let's begin. The approach is actually very simple. Not easy, but simple. Here it is...

## COME HOME TO YOURSELF

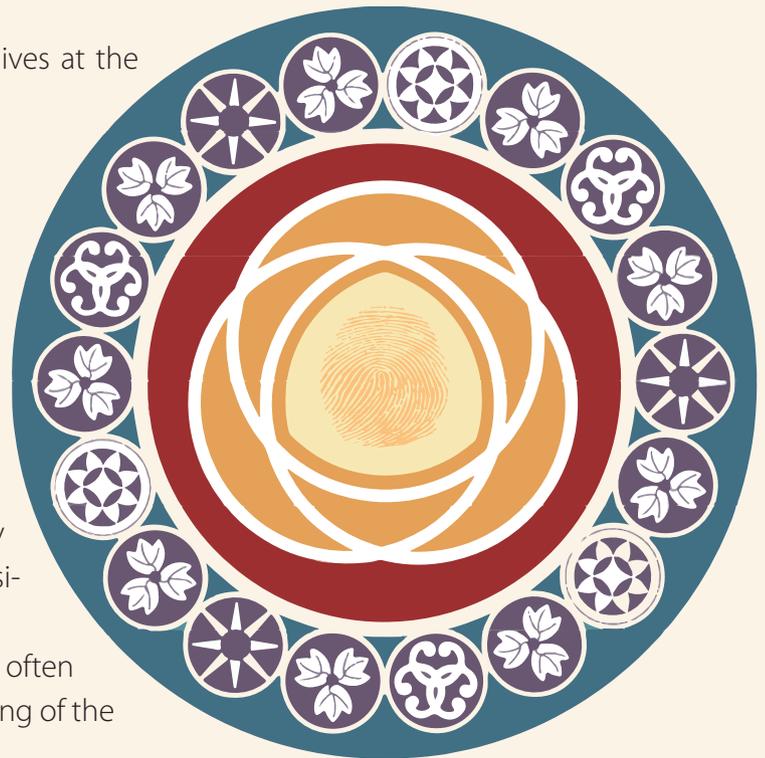
*Come home to your Self.* Not the little self, the one that worries all the time, tries hard to impress people, and keep up the illusion of safety and control. I'm talking about coming home to the *huge* Self, the one that truly *lives* and loves and knows why it's here, and can't wait for the next sunrise. The one that yearns to encounter the next challenging person or situation, because of what will be learned in that fire. Your *true* Self, your higher or deeper Self, the one who is already wiser at work, whatever that work is.

Think of it as your 'core' or essence that lives at the center of a Mandala:

### THE MANDALA

Most of us live from day to day on the surface, out on the perimeter, of our lives. This is where 'stuff' happens to us: the good, the bad, the hard, the easy, the joyful and the painful. By staying out there we avoid feeling the 'negative' things very deeply; however this strategy means we also don't often experience the 'positive' things either.

When we interact with other people, it is often the outer layer of who we are (the lovely blue ring of the



Mandala) interacting with the outer layer of who *they* are. Then we wonder why we do not have more influence or respect or connection...

As we become the deeper aspects of who *we* are, we become more present—and more capable of interacting with—the deeper aspects of who *other* people are. As we move toward that 'golden center', everything on the surface changes!

In the Golden Center is your own fingerprint. It's who you are beneath all the roles you play and the expectations of others. It's where everything right and good about you lives.

## GETTING STARTED

Let's explore these Five Questions together and discover—or maybe *re-discover*—that path of turning work and life itself into deep development. When you were born, you were a master of that way of learning. In fact, it was all you knew how to do at first. You were a *learning being*, designed to grow and develop and discover yourself and the world in every moment of every day.

**Born to be learners, we turn into 'knowers'.**

Let me show you how to turn anything and everything that happens to you at work—and at home—into a *developmental 'lesson'*, a flash of awareness that deepens and expands you more fully into your real Self at the center of The Mandala, and maximizes your contribution to others and even to Life itself.

I'll say it again: To become wiser-at-work and more of what you are capable of being, you don't need to *change* yourself. You need to *come home* to your Self. This changes everything...

Now I hope you can see why I say 'This book is for you...'



Every time you see this icon might be a good time to make some notes in your *Journal* or *Chronicle*.



Throughout the book, *this* icon (except here!) will take you to a video about an important personal development model or concept. (These videos can also be excellent ways to share the concepts with friends or colleagues.)