



Interview Questions on

The Art of Uncertainty *How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*

For Dennis Merritt Jones

What inspired you to write a book on the topic on uncertainty? Was it difficult to pin down something that is, by definition, ambiguous?

In my mind there is really nothing ambiguous about uncertainty. Depending on one's attachment or non-attachment to the need to control one's own destiny, the idea of living life in the mystery of uncertainty will evoke distinct feelings of either sheer panic or unprecedented freedom. Since we are always at choice, I choose to associate living in the mystery of uncertainty with freedom; freedom to grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, freedom to learn and express new ideas, freedom to experience new possibilities, freedom to let go of what no longer serves me in healthy ways, freedom to change my mind and *then* change it again, and so on. I have lived much of my adult life with the awareness that life truly is a mystery and that most people simply pretend, wish, or hope that this is not the case--but it is.

I was inspired to write *The Art of Uncertainty* because one of the core elements of my beliefs is that we were put here to grow and express life in ever greater ways and that can never happen if we are stuck in the rut (or the box called the

“known”). We can’t create anything new from within the field of what we already know; the only way to honor the Life Force that surges through each of us is to step into the mystery of the unknown where all possibilities exist and allow its current to take us where it will, trusting that it knows better than we where that is and how to get us there. This is not to say we don’t play a major role in what that may look like, because if we are fully engaged in the present moment we enter into the flow as a conscious co-creator with a universe expanding at the speed of light.

You ask readers to “Live in the mystery of life and love it.” That is easier said than done. Which mysteries are lingering in your life and how have you bonded with them?

The better question is which mysteries are *not* lingering in my life. This is exactly the point of the book: Every moment of every day *is* a lingering mystery so why not learn to love it. There is no area of my life that is not a total mystery every moment of every day: We construct this idea (fantasy) in our heads that when we arise each morning the day ahead is a known factor and it clearly is not. The mysteries lingering in my life are *exactly* the same mysteries that linger in your life. The only possible difference might be that, while you may not want to deal with them because it creates such anxiety and suffering, I have learned to “be” in the mystery as it unfolds because I have learned that to resist it only causes more suffering and angst. Do I know what is going to happen tomorrow or, for that matter, five minutes from now? Do you? Of course that is a rhetorical question because we all know the answer--we just don’t want to believe we don’t know or don’t have control. I have bonded with the mystery of uncertainty in my life to the best of my ability by embracing it, not resisting it, and by being present as it reveals itself in every sacred second. This is a very liberating way to live if you are willing to come to the edge of “what is” and trust there is something within you that knows how to respond with whatever unfolds.

The book advises readers to seek someone who has conquered the mystery they are facing to mentor them. Have you found a teacher who has overcome the mysteries in your life? How have they guided you?

Actually, what I wrote is, “Seek out someone you trust who may have already *stepped into the same mystery* of the unknown that is calling you. That person will be easy to spot because he or she is already doing what you are being called to do.” Stepping into the mystery doesn’t mean we conquer it, it means we have merged with it. I don’t know of anyone, living or dead who has ever “conquered” the mystery of uncertainty because its not a foe to be defeated. There are many individuals, both past and present, demonstrating what it looks like to live fully present in the moment in absolute surrender, allowing Infinite Presence to wash over them, around them and through them...and, go figure, they are sustained naturally, only as Life in the sacred continuum of the moment can.

It would be easy to point to ancient masters such as Buddha and Jesus, or contemporary masters such as the Dali Lama, as examples of those who have mastered the art of living in uncertainty. But, then again, it could as easily be the lady sitting next to you on the bus who happens to exude that deep sense of tranquility and being at peace in the present moment with “what is.” Some of my greatest teachers of how to live in the mystery of the moment are the creatures and elements in Nature. Just watch a dog and you’ll see a master at being present in the moment. Sit and gaze into the bud of a rose and you’ll see an example of the exquisiteness of Nature “being” with “what is” in the moment and not resisting it. Regardless of the source or the teacher, the message seems to be that the present moment is the only portal to the mystery of that which is yet to be.

You compare us to baby birds who don’t know they can fly until they are pushed from the nest. Which life events become that “push” in our lives?

The metaphor of being pushed out of the nest, aka our comfort zone, is something most people can relate to because it happens on a regular basis--we just tend to ignore it until it becomes less painful to move forward than stay where we are. There is no area of our lives where we are not forced to step to the edge of uncertainty at one point or another. This includes our relationships, careers, physical health, finances, and so on. We need only look to anyone who has been in a long term relationship or job which came to an abrupt end. The same could be said about someone receiving an unfavorable medical diagnosis. In that moment they are pushed to the very edge of their comfort zone and forced to deal with the uncertainty of what tomorrow may or may not bring.

Still others will come to the edge of their nest because they are called from within--there is an inner knowing that there is more to do...more to be, and the only way to discover what that might be is to come to the edge and lean over. In the birds case it comes down to fly or die. As they outgrow their comfortable nest they have no choice. However, we do have a choice. Whether we are pushed to the edge of uncertainty by inspiration or desperation, by pleasure or pain, the practice is to remember that the same Intelligence that lives within the bird that knows how to fly lives within us as well.

In what situations would the tactics you recommend in the book be helpful?

As already stated, life itself is the laboratory in which we discover how to live in the mystery of uncertainty. There is no area of our lives where, at some point, a situation won't arise that invites us to come closer to the edge of the unknown. The "situations" are inherent in life itself. The tactics offered in the book are all simple ways--but not always easy--to initiate and implement. However, they are accessible and applicable to anyone who is willing. Take a look at your own life and see where there is a need to grow, change or create something new--whatever the situation, the resolution will *always* be the same; coming to the edge of what we don't know and trusting there is something within us that does know and then, with trust, faith and courage, following its lead. *The Art of*

Uncertainty is a guide book to assist those who are ready to implement a shift somewhere in their life and are willing to come to the edge of that which is yet to be.

Your work is inspired by a diverse assortment of spiritual luminaries. Which of them remain most important to you and what have you learned from their work?

I have been greatly inspired by the ancients as well as contemporary thinkers. From Hermes, Lao-tsu, Moses, Buddha, and Jesus, to Emerson, Thoreau, Ernest Holmes, Charles Fillmore, Mary Baker Eddy, Emma Curtis Hopkins, Gary Zukav, Thich Nhat Hanh, Deepak Chopra, and so many others. While the messengers are all quite uniquely different, their message has that common thread of truth running through it: Life is fundamentally a spiritual adventure and we were put here to *experience* that adventure, not sit on the metaphoric side of the road (aka the rut) and watch the parade of infinite possibilities that lie in the unknown pass us by.

You write that when we ignore universal Law, our ignorance has automatic consequences. (pg. 97) What are those consequences? How can we be more aware, and avoid them?

We live in a universe that operates solely on an impartial, nonjudgmental, Law of Cause and Effect. We are continually becoming cause to our own effect by means of deepest thoughts and beliefs. If, out of ignorance of how the Law works, we misuse it with misguided thoughts and beliefs, we suffer the consequences. In other words we are not punished “for” our mistakes, but rather, “by them.”

How we can become more aware of the Law of Cause and Effect is to be mindful of what we embrace as the truth about ourselves and life understanding that the universe “has ears” and the only word it knows is “Yes.” Mindfulness is a major topic in the *Art of Uncertainty* and is one of the best tools at our disposal when it comes to using the Law in beneficent and meaningful ways to create a life truly worth living.

The book recommends patience as a way to outlast uncertainty. What strategies can we use to cultivate patience in times of confusion?

I offer this insight which, in part, is quoted from one the many Mindfulness Practices in *The Art of Uncertainty*:

- Be mindful to notice whether you are at ease or if there is a sense of stress attached to whatever you are doing in any given moment. This will require emotional awareness. If you are feeling stressful take time for some self inquiry and try to discover where you are feeling out of control--if you are willing, you'll find it.
- Then spend time outside each day and simply observe nature. Witness the effortlessness in which Life patiently unfolds right before your eyes.
- Look and listen for signs in nature of forced effort and struggle; you will notice none. You'll never hear a rose grunt, trying to force its buds to open before they are ready.
- Then, align with that Energy of ease and see how it can filter into your life experience in that moment...and breathe, knowing this too shall pass.

For further inquiries please contact Dennis through his website:

www.DennisMerrittJones.com