

## Answering a Question with another Question

If somebody answers your question with another question, there are many possible reasons:

- a) To avoid answering the question;
- b) To be sarcastic or make fun of you;
- c) He doesn't understand the question or he wants more details;
- d) To distract you, because he doesn't have an answer;
- e) He is surprised by the question and needs some time to think of an answer;
- f) To gain time in order to prepare an answer;
- g) To steer the conversation in circles;
- h) To steer the conversation away from a difficult question.

What is it called when somebody answers a question with another question?

- Counter question
- Rhetorical question
- Sarcasm
- Deflection
- Maieutics
- Socratic answer

Here are some examples:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • A: Can I help you?                 | B: Do you have any dictionaries?            |
| • A: Who are you?                    | B: Don't you know?                          |
| • A: Who is speaking?                | B: Who wants to know?                       |
| • A: Where are you?                  | B: Why do you want to know?                 |
| • A: What do you do?                 | B: Why do you ask?                          |
| • A: What do you do?                 | B: Who is asking?                           |
| • A: What do you do?                 | B: Do you really want to know?              |
| • A: Would you like some chocolate?  | B: Do you really need to ask?               |
| • A: Fish or chicken?                | B: Don't you know me?                       |
| • A: Chocolate or carrot cake?       | B: Do I really have to choose?              |
| • A: Where will you go next summer?  | B: Where will I go next summer?             |
| • A: When will the pandemic end?     | B: Do <u>you</u> know the answer?           |
| • A: Can I get a raise?              | B: Why do you think you deserve more money? |
| • A: Can we talk about our marriage? | B: What do you want for dinner? I'm hungry! |
| • A: Do you know what you're saying? | B: Do you think I do?                       |
| • A: Do you have any ideas?          | B: When do I not have any ideas?            |
| • A: Do you want to go out tonight?  | B: Does it have to be tonight?              |
| • A: Are you busy?                   | B: Does it look like I'm busy?              |
| • A: Do you believe in God?          | B: What is God, to you?                     |
| • A: Is this everything?             | B: Do you see anything else?                |
| • A: Where are you going?            | B: Would you really like to know?           |
| • A: Where are we?                   | B: In relation to what?                     |
| • A: Why would you do that?          | B: Why not?                                 |
| • A: How did you meet your wife?     | B: Do you have a lot of time?               |

And finally:

- A: Is it true that you always answer a question with another question?  
B: Who told you that?

**Exercise.** Answer the following questions with an appropriate question.

1. What time is it? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did you do that? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you have two wives? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where is my cell phone? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Can you hear me? \_\_\_\_\_
6. When can I go home? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is there far to go? \_\_\_\_\_