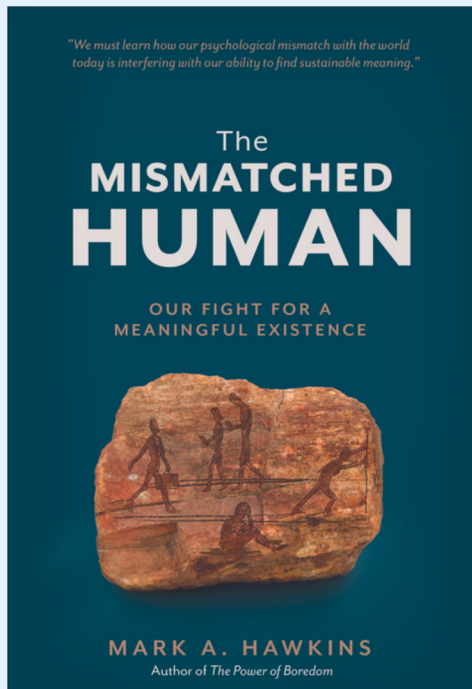


# The Mismatched Human

## SAMPLE Q & A



## A Crisis of Meaning:

How can we know if we're choosing the best way to live?

Ironically, we're bombarded with more options for lifestyles, belief systems, and social movements than ever before. They demand our attention, but we aren't comfortable with settling on a single way to live, lest we miss out on a better option just a phone swipe away.

In his new book, *The Mismatched Human: Our Fight for a Meaningful Existence*, Dr. Hawkins shares why we can feel profoundly mismatched with our modern-day reality despite our best efforts to live fulfilling lives.

**The title of your book is "The Mismatched Human". Can you tell us what you mean by "mismatched"?**

The mismatch is between our psychophysical make up and the world we have created. The book focuses on how this mismatch affects our very human need for a meaningful, fulfilling existence.

What evolutionary biology and psychology suggest is that we have not evolved to be psychologically and physically adapted to our modern world and that this is the cause of much of our suffering.

Because of evolutionary lag time, our DNA has not caught up to the changes that we have made to our world and society. As a consequence, we are not as psychologically as equipped to find the level of meaning and satisfaction we seek in the modern world as we were when we lived as hunter-gatherers.

**But didn't we create the world today? How can we be mismatched with it if we actually created it over time?**

Humans are great at creating things we want, but may not be all that good for us. Many of the systems we have created are double-edged swords: they have allowed us to move forward in some ways, but have made other aspects of our lives more difficult. In the book, I talk about how many of the symbolic systems we have created emerged because of our desire to reconcile our inner and outer worlds.

**Can you explain how this "symbolic world" is part of our lives?**

The symbolic world is the world of stories. Our identities are symbolic. Our philosophies are symbolic. Our religions and beliefs are symbolic. There is no physical component to them. They are simply stories we tell about ourselves and world we participate in. Our past and our thoughts about the future are also symbolic stories that drive much of our lives. They do not exist in any tangible form. We all live out our lives according to narratives that tell us what it means to have a good life. The symbolic world affects our actions and lives, so it is important we are aware of it.

# The Mismatched Human

## SAMPLE Q & A continued...

### **Can you explain what a “crisis of meaning” is?**

A crisis of meaning is when the content our lives (our jobs, our beliefs, our goals etc..) no longer hold the meaning they once did. Most of us experience this at some point in our lives.

For example, we may begin to question what our personal life purpose is, if wonder if we have made the right choices so far. Or we may lose something or someone who provided us with a lot of meaning in our lives and are left feeling empty. Other times, we might feel like there is a conflict between how we are living and how we think we should be living.

### **You mention that we all experience a crisis of meaning at some point. How do we know that this is what is causing our mental or emotional struggle?**

It's usually more obvious that we are suffering from a crisis of meaning during major life transitions. We may have experienced a loss, or we are moving onto a different stage of life when what was once meaningful to us is gone. Good examples are the recent grad undecided on their future, the person experiencing a mid-life crisis, or the recent retiree. So if you are experiencing mental health issues during one of these experiences, a meaning crisis is a likely cause. However, many of us may not immediately be aware that this is the cause and, without deeper reflection, we may think that our partners, our jobs, or our financial situation are to blame for our misery.

Other times, we may experience unexplained bouts of anxiety, depression, insomnia, boredom, or emptiness even though everything in our lives may seem fine on the surface. These symptoms often indicate an unconscious crisis of meaning that is at odds with our conscious mind, when some part of us deep down is out of sync with our conscious lives. If you have persistent mental health issues yet there is nothing obviously wrong in your life, it is likely you may be experiencing an unconscious crisis of meaning. In the end, speaking to a skilled psychotherapist could be beneficial if we are not sure what is exactly negatively impacting our mental health.

### **What do you hope people will learn through the book?**

I hope people will realize that experiencing a crisis of meaning is not necessarily their fault and that it is not some deficit or wrong choice that is making it difficult for them to find fulfillment.

For those who will immerse themselves into it, this book can help readers understand meaning and purpose in a whole new way. It can give insight into how we have gotten to such a crisis of meaning as individuals and as a society. It's a completely new lens though which to view our world and ourselves.

Nowadays, we do have to fight for a meaningful and satisfying life and this book gives readers a good grounding in that fight. We need to know what we are up against so we can use that knowledge to help us.