

Reader Views

Book reviews, for readers, by readers.

7101 Hwy 71 W #200
Austin, Texas 78735
512/288-8555
admin@readerviews.com
www.readerviews.com

Interview with Gunnar Jensen Author of “What If...?”

Today we are talking with Gunnar Jensen, author of the new thought-provoking inspirational book, “What If...?” Welcome to Reader Views Gunnar.

Juanita: Gunnar, we are grateful to be speaking with you all the way from Denmark. Please tell us the idea behind your book, “What If...?”

Gunnar: I have always been very interested in the big existential questions and I have a very curious mind. This led me to read an awful lot of books and many of these books have helped me a lot. On the other hand, many times I have been a little irritated as they all repeatedly tell me exactly what I have to do in order to live a happy life. Therefore, I wanted to write a book that doesn't give any answers to anything but hopefully gives inspiration to curious and open-minded people.

Juanita: How will contemplating these questions translate into a happier, more fulfilling life?

Gunnar: If the answers you find are positive you will feel happy. The questions are organized in a way that people might find a possible total world picture. If your answers are negative, you will not be happier – but you will possibly be more aware of your own beliefs and values.

Juanita: What has fueled your desire to help people in this way?

Gunnar: I would like to inspire people and encourage people to understand their own lives - and to think and talk about things other than career, money and so on. Everybody is going to die some day and it is a little late to start thinking about life & death and the existential questions in the last moments of our lives.

Juanita: On the back of your book, it is stated that “It is important to understand our role in the universe and the purpose of our lives.” Why do you think we are so disconnected from these deeply personal parts of ourselves?

Gunnar: I think that one reason is that we are overly focused on the material things in our lives – and extremely busy all the time. Most people, including myself at various

times in my life, are so busy thinking about how to make a living and having a career that they don't have time to reflect. One day takes the other and suddenly you are "caught up". It is a little like turning down the light a little by a little. You don't notice how dark it is until suddenly someone turns it on again. Many times it requires some kind of drastic circumstance, like the loss of someone near, a serious illness, or a catastrophe to make people aware of the really important issues in life.

Juanita: The way in which you address the topics of your book through questions seems brilliant. Why do you think this technique is radically more profound than simply giving us your interpretation of the answers, as so many books do?

Gunnar: Like I mentioned earlier, I don't always like to be told the answers to everything. Who says that those who give the answers are correct? How do they know? Maybe there are several answers to a lot of questions. Maybe the answers are relative to the person who asks the question. Maybe the answers to a lot of questions are unknown and you have to figure out yourself what *you* think is the most likely answer.

Juanita: What was your inspiration for writing "What If...?"

Gunnar: Actually one day when I was meditating the words "What if" suddenly came into my mind. I didn't know why, so I started to think about what the meaning of that might be. Then I got the idea that it could be a very good title for a book – an inspirational book without any answers at all.

Juanita: What do you think sparked that "what if" that suddenly came to your mind?

Gunnar: I think that the universe (or God or higher spiritual dimensions) put the inspiration into my mind. For many years I have wanted to change my life and work with what is important for me, which are the big existential questions. This was a way to help me to move in that direction.

Juanita: You worked for nearly 30 years in the IT industry, and have recently decided to dedicate your life to writing. Tell us about IT and what has prompted the transition at this point in your life?

Gunnar: My job in the IT-industry (most of the time in sales) has been a means to make a living. My real interest has always been the big issues in life. More than 20 years ago I promised myself that by the age of fifty, I would not be a sales person any more. I have had good experiences along the way though, and it has enabled me to now invest in my real interest.

Juanita: What would you say to someone that is living their life in the fast paced world and struggles with finding the time to look within?

Gunnar: I would say to them that they should enjoy life, in all aspects, and be happy; but remember to be grateful for their lives and try to take a little time once in a while to think about the whole of existence. This includes both life and death, and eternity. Like I mentioned earlier, it is very late to think about death when you are in your last moments of life. I think that if you clarify these issues earlier in your life, you will approach your last moments in a more relaxed way.

Juanita: Who do you want to read “What If...?”

Gunnar: Everybody who has an open mind and an interest in trying to understand what **life is all about.**

Juanita: Have you always been a philosopher?

Gunnar: Yes, when I was a small boy I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what eternity meant: When did it start and when does it end? And if it didn't start and it doesn't end then how can anything be without a start and an end?

Juanita: It is incredible that even as a young boy, you were asking yourself these deeply reflective questions. Would you like children to read your book, and would you suggest **parents use “What If...?” to open the lines of communication with their children?**

Gunnar: I think that children reflect much more about life than we think, but I don't believe that the book as such is a book for children. On the other hand, I think that the questions are relevant for everybody and I think that it is a very good book to use as an inspiration to talk to your children, as well to discuss with anybody else.

Juanita: Why have you chosen the path of philosophy and spirituality as opposed to **church and religion?**

Gunnar: I think that the Christian religion (which is the one I have grown up with) is a very good religion in many ways, yet I don't understand it fully. I think that the messages from Jesus are very good but I dislike the talk about sins, punishment and hell. I also try to find some general reason and justice in all our existence. Therefore, I think that the idea that we are here for a purpose, which is eternal learning, is a much more logical and understandable explanation. If we are not part of an eternal process it is very difficult to find any justice in the fact that small children die from aids in Africa or get shot in a gunfight in Palestine etc.

Juanita: “What If...?” has been published in Danish, English, Spanish and German. What has been the international response to your book?

Gunnar: To be honest it has been on the market for such a short time that I can hardly say. I'm only starting publicity for the book and I have already received very good reviews. The sequence of my marketing efforts is: First the Danish edition, then the English, then the Spanish and finally the German version. At the international book fair in Frankfurt in October, I will try to sell foreign rights to additional languages and market the book even more extensively.

Juanita: What have been some of the works that have pinpointed and sparked deep personal contemplation for you?

Gunnar: When I was a boy the Bible made a deep impression on me and I was (and am still!) a big fan of Jesus. The book “A Course in Miracles” really changed my life some years ago and the works of the Danish author Martinus have helped me to put a lot of things together. Also books of e.g. Wayne Dyer, Deepak Chopra, James Redfield and many others have helped me along the way.

Juanita: Gunnar, do you feel that each person, within themselves, already has all the answers to timeless questions about life?

Gunnar: Yes, if we know how to find them. I still struggle to find them myself. A lot of books and other types of guidance have helped so far but I'm still struggling with all my upbringing, doubts etc.

Juanita: Gunnar, what would be the biggest existential question you still struggle with?

Gunnar: I think it's the initial one: Where is the beginning? If there is a creator then who created *him*? If there is no creator then how did everything come to exist? This is really a question that can keep your mind occupied.

Juanita: How can your reader find out more about you and your endeavors?

Gunnar: I have a website www.gunnar-jensen.com and the blog www.gunnarjensen.blogspot.com.

Juanita: Gunnar, it has been great talking with you. Your soul-searching book "What If...?" is a unique and inspiring read into the depths of existential thought. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Do you have any last thoughts for your readers?

Gunnar: Be happy, enjoy your life and don't be afraid to die.