

The Lost Art of Conversation

(Discussion Questions)



Meaningful Discussions



When people
arrive at your
table

- ✓ Ask people to order something so that we can keep up good relations with this restaurant since they are letting us use their space.
- ✓ Ask people to place their food and drink orders **before** the discussion starts so that the discussion won't be interrupted as much.

Once the food and drinks have been ordered let everyone know...

Our main Intention

- is to provide a **balanced discussion** where everyone has a chance to speak.

We only have two rules

- respect for everyone at the table, and one person talking at a time (during the facilitated portion).

Interjecting

- In order to avoid anyone from **dominating** the discussion, just **raise your hand** if you would like to speak. That way, everyone (including the facilitator) knows that you have something to say.

Okay, let's
get started!



*Around the table question:

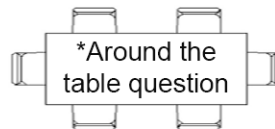
People answer the question from left to right ending with the person who asked it.

WARM UP QUESTIONS always help build respect at the table...

Nobody's perfect, so if you had to pick one, which conversation skill would you like to improve on during this discussion?

(See page 2)

Which of the **Food For Thought videos** was the most **interesting** to you, and why? (See page 3 with videos)



What is your favourite strategy when faced with a **boring or annoying** conversation in a social gathering? (*i.e. run like hell*)

... now that we're warmed up, select from the questions below in any order...

Why do you believe so many people seem **incapable or not interested** in having **meaningful** discussions?

Name one or two **taboo or controversial** topics which should be discussed more in society.

What is your advice when **forced** to make small talk at **work or family** situations?

Do you consider **yourself** to be a good conversationalist? If so, in what way?

When waiting at a bus stop, elevator, or waiting room, do you usually prefer to make small talk or to not talk at all?

What makes a conversation **meaningful** to you instead of just interesting or pleasant?

Would anyone like to ask a question related to this topic which **has not been** asked yet?

AFTER 90 MINUTES:

Feel free to stick around as long as you like. If there are multiple tables for this event then you are encouraged to **move to other tables** to mix and mingle.

Conversations are no longer limited to the topic.

(This is the handout for question #1)

Conversation Skills

Nobody is perfect, so which of these skills would you like to be more **mindful** of during this discussion?



Listening while not being too distracted by your own thoughts at the same time.

Interjecting – sensing when others have made their points and raising your hand if necessary.

Disagreeing in a respectful way while providing benefit of the doubt to others.

Not Dominating the discussion by being mindful of how long you take to make a point.

Attitude – being mindful about the amount of positivity or negativity that you are contributing.

Confidence - not being afraid to share your viewpoint from your unique perspective.

Volume Level - speak so that the person sitting the farthest away from you can still hear you.

Connecting Ideas that have been mentioned previously by different people.

Humour – finding the best possible times to lighten up the conversation if it's appropriate.

Empathy – the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

(Feel free to pick a conversation skill which is not included on this list)

