

BUILD A MINI-RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VOTER & ROLL WITH RESISTANCE	
TRY THIS:	BECAUSE:
<p>DO NOT DEBATE! Resist the temptation to <i>debate</i> the voter. (This is at the top of the list for a reason!)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People simply <i>cannot</i> be argued out of their beliefs. ● Anything that feels like debate or argument will make them want to leave the conversation. ● Debate causes people to double down on their beliefs.
<p>Don't lead with facts/information. Note that we did <i>not</i> say: "don't <i>share</i> facts/information"! You actually <i>should</i> do this, but only <i>after</i> you've built trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Leading with</i> facts/information comes off as debating.
<p>Ask questions. Let your natural, authentic curiosity shine. Find out what's on their mind, what worries them, what they hope for, what they want to see for their family. (<i>See a list of sample questions on the next page.</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People feel seen and welcomed when you're curious about them, their experience, and their opinions. ● Questions are the best way to keep people engaged in the conversation.
<p>Affirm the voter when they express an opinion (although you hope to later change their mind). <i>When you want to debate them, this is your cue to affirm them instead.</i> Use phrases like "I hear you," "I see what you're saying," or "I get that."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affirming the voter makes them feel listened to. ● Feeling listened to builds trust. ● Counterintuitively, affirming a belief you'd like to change lays the groundwork for a <i>future</i> shift in beliefs/opinions.
<p>Affirm the voter's experience. Say things like: "that sounds really hard."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Again, affirming the voter makes them feel listened to. ● Feeling listened to builds trust.
<p>Reflect back. This is active listening, to ensure that you're getting what they say. For example: "it sounds like you're frustrated that you believed Biden when he said things would get better, but they haven't for your family."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is yet another way to make the voter feel listened to. ● Feeling listened to builds trust.
<p>Slow down. <i>After</i> you have "hooked" them with your opening lines (which you indeed may want to deliver on the faster side), you can afford to slow down.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Slower speech, especially when your tone is warm, makes people feel calm and comfortable.
<p>Allow for silence. After you've asked a question and they don't answer right away, try counting to seven. If they still haven't answered, gently prompt them (perhaps with a new version of the same question).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While it can feel awkward to you, often people are just collecting their thoughts. ● If you jump in again too quickly, the voter is likely to feel rushed.

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<p>Backchannel. The term “backchanneling” refers to what people say <i>while</i> someone else is talking - <i>without</i> interrupting them. You can say: “mm” “mm-hmm” “wow!” “totally!” “seriously?” “my goodness.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Backchanneling is something engaged humans naturally do. ● It signals that you're listening.
<p>Share your story; be vulnerable. While you want the voter to talk more than you do, it's also important to share your own stories. In sharing how you feel about a candidate or policy, try relating it to something that's challenging. For example: “I support Candidate XX because they want to preserve Obamacare. I have a serious pre-existing condition with expensive treatments, and without the ACA I wouldn't be able to get insurance.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The best conversations include reciprocity. ● Voters trust you more when you reveal something to them about yourself. ● It helps to be vulnerable, since you're asking them to be vulnerable with you.
<p>Relate in. As you talk about yourself, try to find something you have in common. For example, if someone says that they don't vote, you may be someone who can say: “I get it, I didn't vote for years because I didn't see the point!”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When people find they have something in common with someone else, they feel closer. ● They might feel like: “we're on the same team,” “this person gets it,” or “they're one of us!”
<p>Connect on values, even when your opinions differ. For example, maybe they think Biden has done a terrible job on the economy; you can relate to the desire to make sure you have enough money to feed your family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You may not be able to relate to the voter's surface opinions, but you can relate in by surfacing values in common. ● You can probably relate to their deeper values and needs.

Sample Questions:¹

- If you could change three things about the country/state/community, what would you change?
- If you were in charge, what are the two or three things you'd most want to change about the country?
- If you were in an elevator with Candidate XX, what would you ask them to put at the top of their to-do list?
- What keeps you up at night?
- What's on your heart? (*Consider using this phrasing if it feels authentic to you.*)
- **Don't ask:** “what issues are important for you?” (*The word “issues” is too policy-wonky; it doesn't sound like a normal person in a regular conversation.*)
- **Question-like magic phrases:** Say more about that / tell me more.

¹ The top four bullet points are from Swing Left phonebank trainings. See talkwithvoters.com. These trainings also highlight the magic phrase “tell me more about that.”