

1:1 Conversations

Consolidated Guide

This guide is designed for one in-person conversation of up to 75 minutes in length between two people. After settling in, one of the participants reads the **Goals** and **Ground Rules** out loud and the other reads the **Guidelines** out loud.

Goals

1. Gain an understanding of the experiences, feelings, and beliefs of your partner
2. Discover any areas of commonality as well as differences
3. Think of ways to bridge differences for the sake of our communities and our country

Ground Rules

1. We're here to explain our views and to understand the other person, not to convince the other person to shift their attitudes or change their mind. In other words, this is an open sharing, not a debate to establish who has the right perspective or correct facts.
2. We're here as individuals. Let's not assume the other person holds the views of a larger group—unless they say they do.
3. We'll stick to the process for each stage of the conversation. Example: if the Question is what we each learned about how the other person sees an issue, that's all we do -- even if it means resisting the urge to "correct" the other person's obvious error or blind spot!
4. We give ourselves permission to remind each other gently if we veer off from the process, as in "I think right now we're supposed to be..."

Guidelines

1. Which attributes apply to your pair?
Heritage; Political Leaning; Urban/Rural; Across Generations
2. Choose questions from categories where your differences apply
3. Once you've chosen a question, take turns answering it

4. If all four categories apply, limit your answers to no more than 2 min/person/question
5. Don't feel rushed, you don't need to address every question
6. If only 1 or 2 categories apply, you can take more time/question
7. Please complete your conversations by (specific time)
8. While listening, make eye contact and pay attention
9. Don't interrupt

Acknowledge that we are both on board with these goals, ground rules, and guidelines.

Introductory Questions

Q 1: Ice Breaker: Name, Hometown, What was your favorite meal as a child?

Heritage

Q 1: Do you identify a difference about you and your group in terms of heritage...meaning race, ethnicity, or cultural background? What is the group that you say "we" about when engaging in a conversation with someone from a different group?

Q 2: What is awesome/great/special/cool for you about being a member of your group and having your heritage? Only positives here.

Q 3: What is painful/disturbing/draining/despairing for you about being a member of your group and having your heritage? This could include how your group has been treated or how people in your group have treated others.

Q 4: What needs to change within my own racial/ethnic/cultural community, along with larger societal change, for all of our country's

children to succeed and flourish, and what resources already present in my community can be drawn upon?

Q 5: How do we each feel about the conversation we've just had?

Political Leaning

Q 1: Why do you think your side's values and policies are good for the country? Speak just about your own side and avoid comparisons that characterize the other side ("My side cares more about....")

Q 2A: What are your reservations or concerns about your own side? This is an opportunity for humility about your own side—what makes you wince (at least a little) about your own side? Make sure you refer only to your side and avoid watering down your points by saying things like "Of course, both sides are guilty of this."

Q 2B: What did you learn about the other person's concerns about their own side, and do you see anything in common?

Q 3A: Talk about your view of an issue that's important to you, call it "Issue 1". Try to listen for values, beliefs, feelings, and hopes that underlie the other person's specific policy views on the issue.

Q 3B: The other person gives their view of the same issue, Issue 1. This is an opportunity to talk about how you see the issue, rather than just counter the view of the other person (although differences are important to air). It helps if you can begin with any areas of similarity or agreement.

Q 4A: The other person shares their views about a different issue, "Issue 2". Same process as in Q 3A above.

Q 4B: The other person gives their view of Issue 2. Same process as in Q 3B above.

Q 5A: What are your hopes and aspirations for our country? Suggestion: focus on the positives you hope for, rather than just the negatives you hope we avoid.

Q 5B: Afterwards for both: As you listened, what stood out as most important to the other person, and did you see anything in common?

Q 6: What are you taking with you from this Braver Angels conversation?

Urban/Rural

Q 1A: What do you value about living where you do? What are the best parts of residing in your community and your part of your state?

Only positives here, consider telling a personal story to make your community come alive to the other person, and try to avoid negative comparisons with other places (as in, “I could never live in a dangerous city or in a small town with too little to do”).

Q 1B: What did you learn about how the other person sees the positives of living where they do, and do you see anything in common?

Q 2A: What is difficult or challenging for you about living where you do? What are the downsides?

Q 2B: What did you learn about the other person’s experience of the hard parts of living where they do, and do you see anything in common?

Q 3: What can each of us do individually, within our own group, and together to build bridges between rural and urban people and communities? This might include anything from speaking up more effectively within our geographic groups, to visible, public steps.

Q 4: What are you taking with you from this Braver Angels conversation?

Across Generations

Q 1: What is the best part of being your current age and what are the best characteristics of people of your generation? Knowing that you can't speak for everyone in your generation, try to connect your own experience with that of others of your age group. What feels special about this stage in life that you share with millions of other Americans? Avoid making negative comparisons with other generations ("We're smarter because we've lived longer" or "We're more open-minded because we're younger.") Just the good stuff.

Q 2: What is difficult or challenging for you and your generation right now? What are the downsides? Try to connect your personal challenges to those of your generation, rather than just focus on our own circumstances. For example, if health care or paying for college is a challenge for you, how does this affect others in your generation?

Q 3: One of the reasons for these conversations across generations is that people often have stereotypes of those who are younger or older. In your view, what are the main misconceptions or misunderstandings that people have about your generation? What images of your generation would you like to correct or set straight?

Q 4: Afterwards for both: How do we each feel about the conversation we've just had?

Q 5: What are you taking with you from this Braver Angels conversation?

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