



Braver Angels

Conversation About Race, Ethnicity and Culture

(This guide is for two conversations)

FIRST CONVERSATION (1 hour)

Part 1: Opening (10 minutes)

After taking time to make sure the online settings are working, or after both people are settled in for the in-person conversation, one of the participants reads the goals and then the other reads the ground rules.

Goals

- More understanding of the experiences, feelings, and beliefs of someone of a different race or ethnic group
- Discovering any areas of commonality in addition to differences
- Ideas for how we might make a difference for our children and our nation

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're going to 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 then even if it means resisting the urge to "correct" the other person's obvious error or blind spot!
4. We give each other permission to remind each other gently if we veer off from the process, as in "I think right now we're supposed to be doing...."

Are we both on board with these goals and ground rules, and ready to go?

Part 2: Getting to Know Each Other (10 minutes)

Question 1: Why did we each decide to participate in this conversation?

(Each person takes 1 minute)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation, 2 min. (here and elsewhere, feel free to use less time. Set a timer if you wish.)

Did you see anything in common in why you are participating?

Alternate who begins responding to each question from here on.

Question 2: Share something about ourselves such as where we each live and for how long, family, and (if we like) a fun question: What was your favorite meal as a child?

(Up to 2 minutes each)

Part 3: How We Each Feel about Being Part of Our Group (35 minutes)

Question 3: How do you identify yourself in terms of race, ethnicity or cultural heritage? Feel free to answer this question in a way that makes sense to you.

The basic idea is to name a group that you can say "we" about when engaging in a conversation with someone of another racial, ethnic, or cultural group. This might involve standard categories of race or ethnicity, or combinations like race and geographical region, country of origin, social class, religious heritage--or other dimensions of identity.

(1 minute each, more time if needed)

Question 4: What do you value about having your racial, ethnic or cultural identity? What is awesome/great/special/cool for you about being a member of your group and having your heritage? Only positives here.

(Up to 4 minutes each. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation:

- **What did you learn about how the other person sees the positives of being part of the group they identify with, and do you see anything in common?**

(4 minutes total)

Question 5: 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.

(4 minutes each. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation:

- **What did you learn about the other person's experience of the hard parts of being in their group, and do you see anything in common?**

(4 minutes total)

Check Out (5 minutes)

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

Do we both want to go forward with the second conversation?

Confirm schedule for the second conversation

BRAVER ANGELS

1:1 Conversation About Race, Ethnicity and Culture

SECOND CONVERSATION (1 hour)

PART 1: Opening (10 minutes)

After taking time to settle in, silently look through the goals and ground rules again. When finished, signal that you are both on board and ready to go.

Any reflections from the first conversation or thoughts since then? (3 min. total)

One person at a time. Listen and appreciate what each of you says.

If there is something you want to change this time (for example, more equal sharing of the time, or sticking more closely to the questions), decide that together. Then move on to Part 2.

PART 2: Changes We Each Would Like to See (32 minutes)

Question 1: How would it be helpful to our communities and our nation if people of different race, ethnicity and culture understood each other better and worked together for the common good of all? From this point forward, alternate asking the questions and responding to them. Focus on your hopes and aspirations here rather than on specific action ideas. (Those come later.)

(2 minutes each. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation, (4 minutes total):

- **As you listened, what stood out as most important to the other person, and did you see anything in common?**

Question 2: What needs to change in the structures, institutions, or culture of American society so that all of our country's children have a better chance to succeed and flourish?

(4 minutes each. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation (4 minutes total):

- **What did you learn about how the other person views what needs to change in society, and did you see anything in common?**

Question 3: 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?

(4 minutes each. No cross talk.)

Afterwards back and forth conversation *(4 minutes total)*:

- What did you learn about how the other person thinks about what needs to change in their own community, and did you see anything in common?

(4 minutes total)

PART 3: Action Ideas (13 minutes)

Question 3: What can each of us do individually, within our own group, and together to create a better world for all of our country's children?

Take a few minutes to write down a few ideas, starting with what you plan to do personally. "Actions" might include anything from speaking up more effectively within or between our racial/ethnic/cultural groups, to visible, public steps to take.

No pressure here to fill all the boxes. When you are finished writing, take turns sharing and discussing your ideas. If you want to take notes on what the other person proposes, print out an extra copy of this page. Afterwards, share what you wrote.

Personal Actions (Me as an individual)	Potential actions to take by people in my group	Potential actions to take by all of us together

CHECK OUT

(5 minutes)

What are we each taking with us from these two Braver Angels conversations?

(2 minutes each)

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