

Want better conversations?

Ask better questions.

“What does it mean to ‘hold space’ for someone else? It means that we are willing to walk alongside another person in whatever journey they’re on without judging them, making them feel inadequate, trying to fix them, or trying to impact the outcome. When we hold space for other people, we open our hearts, offer unconditional support, and let go of judgment and control.”

- Heather Plett, *The Art of Holding Space*

Most of us aren’t looking to be fixed. We’re looking to be witnessed.

That requires that we set aside the impulse to offer advice, and that we relinquish control — turning our attention to offering questions, rather than answers.

Good questions connect us back to the intention of the conversation. They keep us focused on deepening our connection with the person we are talking to, and help us to avoid straying into tangents.

Good questions are questions that anyone can answer, and that allow for varying degrees of depth. They are accessible to everyone who is part of the conversation — and they leave room for both direct answers to the questions, and for sharing your reaction to those questions. (In other words, feeling uncomfortable with a question, or not having an answer, is an answer, too.)

Good questions are not meant to satisfy your own curiosity; they are questions that **connect a person back to their own experience.** They allow a person to recognize their own wisdom.

Good questions take us beneath the surface. They invite us to see the stories that often propel us to show up in the world in the many ways we do, but aren’t necessarily the stories we are apt to share. They help us realize how often we see someone’s arrival point without seeing the process that people took to arrive. Good questions both invite people to share more deeply, and they help us see and remember all we do not know about another’s story.

Good questions are honest and open.

“An honest, open question is one you cannot possibly ask while thinking, ‘I know the right answer to this and I sure hope you give it to me,’” writes Parker Palmer, founder of the Center for Courage & Renewal. “Thus, ‘Have you ever thought about seeing a therapist?’ is not an honest, open question! But, ‘What did you learn from the experience you just told us about?’ is.”

A few spacious questions we love:

What’s coming up for you today?

What are you feeling in your body?

What are other moments in your life that this brings up?

How has that shown up for you?

What has this meant for you?

What would happen if you don't make a decision today?

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