

How to Start (or Deepen) a Conversation

Here are 12 questions to get the ball rolling

Twenty years ago, Arthur Aron crafted 36 questions to create closeness between two people in an experimental setting. The opposite of small talk, the list features mind-expanding, open-hearted questions designed to build relationships. A few years ago, the list went viral after an essay in the *New York Times* described how the lab questions could be employed in real life.

A quick search for Aron and 36 questions will yield you the complete list and many ways it has been used!

We consulted and adapted those questions to create conversation starters. We started with 12 questions on strips of paper, which we dropped in a jar in the middle of the table. When the mood is right – and sometimes even when it's not – we pull out a question and go around the table listening to the replies. As you will see, the questions here will inspire more of your own.

- 1 GIVEN THE CHOICE OF ANYONE IN THE WORLD, WHO WOULD YOU WANT AS A DINNER GUEST?
- 2 HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD?
- 3 IF YOU COULD WAKE UP TOMORROW HAVING GAINED ANY ONE QUALITY OR ABILITY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
- 4 IF A CRYSTAL BALL COULD TELL YOU THE FUTURE, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO KNOW?
- 5 WHAT HAVE YOU DREAMED OF DOING FOR A LONG TIME? WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE IT?
- 6 WHAT WOULD CONSTITUTE A "PERFECT" DAY FOR YOU?
- 7 WHO OR WHAT DO YOU FEEL MOST GRATEFUL FOR?
- 8 WHAT IS THE GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR LIFE?
- 9 WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST IN A FRIENDSHIP?
- 10 WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED MEMORY?
- 11 SHARE AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE.
- 12 WHEN DID YOU LAST CRY?