

## 5 Great Questions to Start a Conversation with Anyone You Meet

Starting a conversation with someone you don't know well can seem like a scary business. You probably stand and watch the room full of strangers, hoping desperately that someone will talk first - anyone but you. You don't know if you'll be ignored or what reception your words will get. That's why using questions to start a conversation is a good idea. A question lets the person you're talking to know exactly what you want to get back from them. Because that makes it easy for them to respond, they're likely to answer you and then you're in business; you've got the conversation started. What's so scary about breaking the ice? A. You're scared of being rejected. If I say hello, they won't say hello back to me. Hello doesn't take much effort - but it can also be responded to by a simple smile or a nod. That's not much good if you're hoping to start a conversation. B. "I haven't anything good to say! Who said you had to start a conversation with something fascinating and exciting? That's too much pressure to put on yourself, so get that idea out of your head right now. For both of these reasons questions are a good way to start a conversation. The questions don't have to be anything too clever or intellectual. Your questions should be open-ended so that they invite the person you're asking to give more of a response than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. That's not going to start a very long conversation - is it! Let's have a look at five good questions to start conversations: 1. "How was your day?" is always a nice conversation opener. It's easy to answer and the person you ask is bound to have some opinion on it. Giving the other person a chance to talk about him or herself and focusing on them shows that you are polite and caring. Also, it gives you an opportunity to learn more about the other person. You'll hear what they did with their day and that might also give you clues about any family, work or hobbies that have. You can then pick up on any of these things to develop your conversation with them. 2. "What do you do in your spare time?" is a great question to start conversations with. It helps both of you see how much you have in common - and that gives you a whole raft of ideas to continue the conversation. You can both talk about why you love the hobby and how long you've been doing it. 3. "What do you do for a living?" will give you fertile ground for finding out about the other person and asking more questions. 4. "Have you been on holiday this year" will give you plenty to talk about. Most people have either recently been on a vacation or they're planning one. Good or bad, they'll love to share their vacation stories with you. 5. "Do you have any family?" is a gentle, sensitive way of opening up a potentially easy subject for conversation. Phrasing the question like that also avoids potential embarrassment over divorce, sexuality or childlessness. The 'trick' if there is any, with asking questions to start conversations is to ask an open-ended question on a normal, everyday topic that the person you're talking to will find it easy to answer on. You're trying to get to know them, not interrogate them. A conversation needs to be a two-way process and asking an easy question is the perfect way to draw in the other person and make it a conversation. As soon as you can get a response from the other person that goes somewhere and gives you an idea for something else to say, you've got the conversation going. That's why using questions to start conversations is a great idea.

### About the Author

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