



JUSTINE FIGO

Connect

Better
Faster

Features
1001
Conversation
Starters
for Real Leaders

As an executive who has led businesses from scale-ups to multi-billion-dollar balance sheets, I know just how challenging it is to lead other human beings. One of the biggest challenges when you are running a business is to connect what I believe are the foundational pillars - culture, strategy and people. Justine's years of experience and expertise, plus her passion for people shines through. This is a brilliant book, which I highly recommend to any leader who wants to connect with their people at a real level.

Alex Tullio, CEO Speaker Mentor

Connect Better Faster is a fabulous edition to our culture toolbox, the only issue is we need more than 1 copy, it's always in use at meetings, catch ups and in the kitchen common areas.

It's a great way to engage people to get to know each other through conversations that spark fun, creativity and connections

Zoe Russell, Head of HR, Land Services SA

A fabulous and timely volume of practical advice and top tips to assist practitioners to connect with workers. A real time saver for time-poor professionals.

Carol Sumner, Former Executive Director in
Australian Government

As an HR professional, I know that people, culture and connections are vital to success—not only for myself, but for any team and organisation. Finding ways to establish meaningful relationships is critical, and in *Connect Better Faster*, Justine Figo explores new ways to get the ball rolling in an easy and fun way. I highly recommend this book for anyone looking to build authentic relationships.

Maria Sieckman, HR Director, Fortune 500

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending a future planning workshop for a large global group, in San Francisco. I took with me two copies of Justine's book, *Connect Better Faster*. It's 1001 conversation starters/questions and I can absolutely confirm that it was an amazing and valuable resource! The books lived at each end of the conference table, and we began each session with a voluntary Q&A.

The workshop participants, who were engineers from around the world, truly embraced the opportunity to be open with each other and no question asked was skipped over (an option available to all). To have structure in getting to know each other better faster, landed beautifully. Great Book Justine! 5 ☆

Nicky Urban-Weiss, Senior HR Manager, Zendesk

CONNECT BETTER FASTER

FEATURES

1001 CONVERSATION STARTERS

FOR REAL LEADERS

JUSTINE FIGO

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*“I define connection as the energy that exists
between people when they feel seen, heard, and
valued...”*

— Brené Brown

PREFACE

It's April 2020. At the time of writing the update to this book, you and I, and everyone around the world, are currently fighting a global pandemic.

Communities, families and organisations have been literally torn apart to prevent the spread of Covid19. We have been physically separated to stay alive.

During this time, what has suddenly become more important than ever? Connection.

In organisations, from the large strategic conversations around the future of work, to the here and now around making sure that our people are well and mentally healthy, at the centre of it is the question 'how do we make sure that we are genuinely connected?'

This book is a deceptively simple and practical foundation tool to bring your people together to solve the puzzles that face us.

And so, to those of you who have, and are still working around the clock, making connection happen, thank you. More than ever, this work matters. Connecting better faster is now and will continue to be, a vital skill for the future.

Like so many others already have, I hope you find this book helpful.

All the best,

Justine

ABOUT ME

Justine Figo (that's me) Connects People and Culture to Strategy.

Justine started as an employment lawyer, became a people & culture executive in a multi-billion-dollar heavy engineering firm and ultimately led people operations for Australia and NZ across 35,000 people for an iconic Fortune 500 customer service brand.

Now a coach and trainer, Justine blends the hard and the soft. That probably makes her squishy in the middle, but after two kids, she's okay with that.

Justine is the founder of Melbourne's most genuinely connected HR Executive Director's Network. The Network includes some of Melbourne's biggest thinking, biggest hearted HR executives across some of the world's best brands.

Over and over, Justine is trusted to work with the top professionals in leading organisations.

Are you sure your teams are performing as effectively as they can?

You can say hello@justinefigo.com

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INTRODUCTION

'The pressure is on'

Have you noticed that more and more leaders are expected to deliver:

1. bigger results with;
2. fewer resources; and
3. more uncertainty?

All this adds up to growing PRESSURE.

What's the risk of this growing pressure?

- High cost failures
- A poor employee experience
- A poor customer experience
- Brand damage
- And... fairly tired leaders

'Connection controls pressure'

So, what can we do about?

Almost as much as food, humans crave connection. This makes sense when you think that humans evolved as tribes. It's not our physical strength but our shared intelligence that determines our survival. In order to stay alive, we are hardwired to make sure that we matter enough to the people in the tribe around us.

While our ability to connected intelligence will determine our future capability to evolve, it is no coincidence that the wisdom of connection dates back to old proverbs such as “a problem shared is a problem halved”. When we feel supported, we not only feel less emotional pressure, we are more likely to find the solution.

In its now landmark study, titled project Aristotle, Google collected data for 180 of its teams over two years to identify the elements of a high performing team. The greatest single factor by far was psychological safety.¹

¹<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>

Essentially, psychological safety is: "being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career".²

'Do the simple stuff first'

This book is about doing the simplest stuff first. If you don't have a budget, if you only have five minutes, if you can't train your team, if you only do one thing... what would it be? Just pick up the conversation starters in this book at get talking. And understand that the conversation it creates is more than a fluffy chat, it's the beginning of the connection that allows your people to speak up, to problem solve, to find new and better ways to work together so that you can turn that pressure into momentum.

²Kahn, William A. (1990-12-01). "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work". *Academy of Management Journal*. 33 (4): 692-724.

Introducing the Conversation Cascade Model

The moment you start to speak up and listen, you can start to realise 1) you're not alone 2) there's someone who will help you solve your problem and find a solution better than you ever imagined or 3) better still, will stop causing the problem in the first place.

This is because you let people show themselves if 1. you're interested enough to ask about someone, and 2. you can ask a good enough question. 3. You respond by being genuinely interested and making it safe and rewarding to answer.

However, it was psychologist Arthur Aron who proved the deep impact you can achieve with a simple list of questions.

In his famous study, he organised strangers into pairs. The strangers asked each other a set of questions that built intimacy. At the end of asking the questions, the strangers rated how close they felt to each other.

After less than an hour, participants rated their closeness to each other “to be about as close as the average relationship in their lives”³

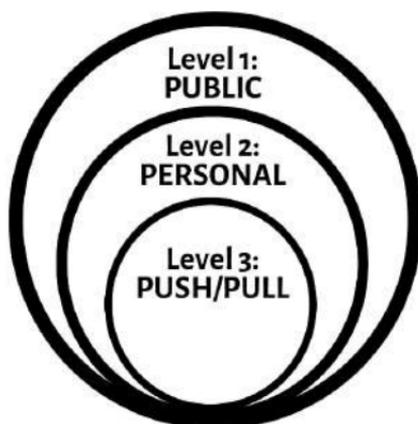
In Arthur Aron’s study, he divided his process into three questions, each more intimate than the next.

When I started this book, I began with the 1001 conversation starters most relevant to creating a transformational conversation purely for relationship building purposes.

Eventually, I sorted the 1001 conversation starters and found three cascading conversation levels emerged. A figure of the three levels is set out below.

³Aron, A et al (1997). The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness: A Procedure and Some Preliminary Findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 23. 363-377.

Figure 1: Conversation Cascade Model



THE PUBLIC LEVEL: is a surface level conversation. It's topics you can assume anyone would ask or know about. This is where comfort and rhythm are established.

THE PRIVATE LEVEL: is what family, friends and people who you trust might know about you. It is where confidence builds.

THE PUSH/PULL LEVEL: is the deepest point. These are the reasons behind what you do. When someone sees why you do what you do, then a genuine connection is created.

The aim is to reach the Push/Pull Level with the genuine permission of your conversation partner. To

get there safely, you travel through Level 1 and 2 first.

I have found this model to be useful across a range of clients and situations.

NOTE: Don't get too attached to the individual questions in the book and the categories they fall under. A question depends on the context. What is public to one person, might be private to another.

Within this book, you will notice that for each question group, the conversation starters are lighter at the beginning and deepen their intensity as you go along. Every topic could be at any level, depending on the situation. Again, don't get too attached to where the topics sit.

How would you use this book?

You might have noticed this book, like most books, makes a handy beer coaster and delightful doorstop.

The beauty of this book is it takes away responsibility from the individual asking the question and you get to "blame the book" and ask better questions faster. So, until your team gets used to the questions in this book, I recommend keeping this book with you as a tool and reading the questions directly from the book.

In my own programs, whether I am running strategy sessions or team alignment programs, I use this book as an informal culture check. At the start of a session, I run a fun and fast ice breaker giving each participant a chance to ask someone else in the room a question. If you are leading a group, I recommend you try it. You can get a read of the team very quickly.

Other uses include:

- Keeping the book on your desk and picking out questions as an energy boost during conversations
- Keeping the book in your car and pulling it out during a long car trip with a co-worker
- Putting it in your bag before a networking event and sneaking off to read it in the toilet when you get nervous
- Passing the book around a group and take turns picking random questions to ask each other
- Highlighting your favourite questions then re-reading them before you go into an important social situation
- Using these questions as self-reflection prompts to build self-awareness and clarity of purpose in life

- Using the questions to interview a person in front of everyone at their going away lunch (this happened to me – thanks Janine!)

You can also jot down a few key questions for your specific situation on a piece of paper. I have created a free question planner to help you with this at www.justinefigo.com/questionplanner

WARNING! Never expect too much from a one-night stand

If you want to get to the heart of a quality connection, you need depth and consistency.

If you take time to ask great questions once, you will get one great connection boost, which is a great start. To be clear, however, a one-off is unlikely to give you what Arthur Aron described in his research as “loyalty, dependence and commitment, or other relationship aspects that might take longer to develop”.

The key to successfully using this book, or any other training intervention, is reaction and repetition.

REACTION: when someone shares information, pay attention. Remember what they have said. Ask the follow-up question, if they say something interesting, what else can you ask about it? If it’s appropriate to take action – take action. Build on the

trust they have shown by sharing themselves with you. Make it safe to show themselves again.

REPETITION: keep asking more connection questions. The more you make a habit of building your understanding of each other, the greater the connection you have to work from. Typically, the more you use this book, the better connection you will make.

Follow this process and you start to create teams that are so genuinely connected, they have the ability to pull together anytime, anywhere to deliver high performance under pressure.

LEVEL 1:

PUBLIC
QUESTIONS

CELEBRATION

“The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate”

– Oprah Winfrey



Here is an anti-fun-formula that works every time: 1. Work super hard 2. Finally succeed 3. Let out a big loud sigh of relief and 4. Completely forget about what you have achieved because you are now too worried about achieving your next goal.

When you take time to celebrate along the way you are much more likely to enjoy the journey. The same is true when you are working together as a team.

Pro tip: it helps to understand specifically how each team member personally likes to celebrate (especially if you want to do something nice for that person later on).

CONVERSATION STARTERS: CELEBRATION

- What was the last party you went to?
- If you could have a party anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- How do you like to celebrate your birthday?
- Describe your ideal surprise party.
- When was the last time you celebrated something that happened in your life?
- What is the next thing that you will probably celebrate?
- What is the worst party you have ever been to? Who was there? What happened?
- What was the very best party you have ever been to? What made it so great?
- What has been the biggest celebration in your life so far?
- What is the most memorable celebration at work that you have ever been to?
- At work, when was the last time that you celebrated someone else's achievements? What did you do?

- If you were going to throw a party for someone, who would it be and what would it be for?
- Name three things you have achieved that are worth celebrating.
- If you took more time to celebrate your achievements, how would your life be different?
- When you complete a goal, how do you like to celebrate?
- What are some ways that you like to reward yourself?
- Describe a time when you forgot to celebrate something important.
- Finish this sentence: if I had to find something to celebrate right now, it would probably be...
- Finish this sentence: if I celebrate one thing this year, it will probably be...
- Finish this sentence: a simple way I can celebrate my achievements is to...
- Finish this sentence: if I don't have time to throw a party, I can always...
- Finish this sentence: a simple way that I can encourage others is to...

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- Finish this sentence: when I know that I have done a good job, I like to...
- Finish this sentence: for me, it's not a party unless...

DESERT ISLAND

"If I were ever stranded on a desert island, there would be 3 things I'd need: food, shelter, and a grip"

- George C. Scott



How fantastic would it be to live on a dessert island? The cakes. The chocolates. The juicy fresh fruit. Oh! You're meant to ask questions about *desert* islands, NOT *dessert* islands? Well, I'm sure that could work too.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: DESERT ISLAND

- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what is one photo you would bring with you?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what book would you bring with you?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what movie would you never get sick of watching?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what item of clothing would you leave behind?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what 3 animals would you take with you?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what sort of music would you play?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what is one thing that you would bring from home?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you do to pass the time?

- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what is the one thing you could not live without?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, what is one thing you could happily live without?
- If you were going to be stranded on a desert island, name at least three people you would want on the island with you.
- If you were stranded on a desert island, how would you like to be rescued?
- If you could be stranded on any island in the world, which island would it be?
- If you were rescued from a desert island, what is the first thing you would do when you got home?
- If you were rescued from a desert island, what would be the best things about coming home?

FOOD

“Food is our common ground, a universal experience”

– James Bear



Food is kind of my thing. Give me half a chance and I will eat food every day. Luckily, it turns out that food is kind of a thing for most people. If you want to get a light hearted and passionate conversation going, I generally find that food is a good place to start.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FOOD

- What is your favourite fruit or vegetable?
- What is your least favourite fruit or vegetable?
When would you eat it anyway?
- What is your favourite dessert?
- What is your least favourite dessert? When would you eat it anyway?
- What is your favourite cocktail?
- What is your favourite drink?
- What is your least favourite drink? When would you drink it anyway?
- What is your favourite comfort food? When are you most likely to eat it?
- Where is your favourite place to eat?
- What is your favourite type of food?
- What is your favourite thing to eat when you are on holidays?
- What do you normally have for breakfast?
- What is the strangest thing you have ever eaten?

- If you could eat one dish for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- What food do you wish was never invented? Why?
- What dish would you refuse to eat, even for \$1 million?
- Have you ever had food poisoning? What caused it?
- Describe the worst meal you ever ate. Where were you?
- Describe the best meal you ever ate. Where were you?
- When was the last time you ate too much?
- What was your favourite food when you were growing up?
- What is the best thing that you ever cooked? What was it? Who ate it?
- What is the worst thing that you ever cooked? What was it? Did anyone eat it?
- What do you eat for dinner when you are tired?
- When are you most likely to eat unhealthy food?
- Who is the biggest fan of your cooking?

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- Who is the best cook in the whole world?
- What food brings back special memories for you?
- What is one thing that might make you forget to eat?

HOLIDAYS

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you"

- Anne Lamott



When I was young and single, I remember talking to a (very) good looking young man. He told me that holidays are like a bottle of fine wine - long after the holiday is over, you can still savour the memories. Then he saw a much prettier girl and he stopped talking to me. Obviously, he had absolutely no idea what he was talking about.

If you want to learn about someone's savoured memories or favourite daydreams, talking about holidays can be a great place to start.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: HOLIDAYS

- What is your favourite place to go for a holiday?
- What is your favourite thing to do on holidays?
- What do you like to read on holidays?
- What do you like to eat on holidays?
- What do you like to drink on holidays?
- How often do you use your mobile phone when you are on holiday? What for?
- What don't you like to do when you are on holidays?
- Describe your ideal holiday.
- Who do you like to go on holiday with?
- When was your last holiday? What did you do?
- When will you probably take your next holiday? What will you do?
- What is the longest holiday that you have ever taken? Where did you go? What did you do?
- What is the worst hotel that you ever stayed in?
- What is the best hotel that you ever stayed in?

- What was the worst holiday you ever went on?
- What was the best holiday you ever went on?
- Describe your typical holiday.
- What is your idea of a terrible holiday?
- Where is one place you would never go for a holiday?
- What is your guilty holiday pleasure?
- What is it that you enjoy most when you are on holidays?
- If money was no issue, where would you go for your holiday and who would you take?
- What is the most expensive holiday you have ever been on?
- What is one of the craziest things you have ever done on holidays?
- What is the strangest thing you have ever worn on holidays?
- What is the laziest thing you have ever done on a holiday?
- What is the most annoying thing that ever happened to you on a holiday?

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- What is one of the best things that ever happened to you on a holiday?
- Have you ever taken a holiday just to make someone else happy? How did you enjoy the holiday?
- If you could go on holiday with anyone in the world, who would it be? Why?
- When do you know that it is time for you to take a holiday?
- If you could only choose one place to go for holidays for the rest of your life, where would it be?

LEISURE

*“If you never did you should. These things are
fun and fun is good”*

– Dr. Seuss



Humans are generally much easier to relate to than robots. A great way to show you are human, is to share the different ways that you like to have fun. Of course, maybe pretending to be a robot IS your idea of fun, and that's totally fine too.

If you want to learn how to have more fun with someone, try asking them about how they like to have fun.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: LEISURE

- What sorts of things do you like to read?
- What sport would you like to do more of?
- What is your favourite sport to watch?
- What is your favourite sport to play?
- What is your favourite sports team? Why?
- What is your favourite way to exercise?
- When do you take time for yourself? What do you do?
- Describe your ideal weekend.
- Describe your ideal week.
- Describe your ideal day off.
- What is your guilty pleasure?
- Can you play a musical instrument? Which one?
- What time do you normally go to bed?
- What time do you normally wake up in the morning?
- What is your favourite thing to do outdoors?

- What is your favourite thing to do on a rainy day?
- What is your favourite thing to do on a sunny day?
- What is your favourite way to start the day?
- What do you do on a typical weekend?
- What hobby have you always thought about trying?
- What is one of your hobbies? How often do you do it?
- What is an activity that you have always enjoyed doing?
- What is one thing you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- What is an activity that makes you lose track of time?
- If money wasn't a problem, what would you do all day?
- If you could only have one hobby for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- How do you relax?
- Finish this sentence: At home, I am happiest when I...

NAMES

“What’s in a name?”

– William Shakespeare



I once knew a man with a horrible name (who will remain nameless). I asked him if he ever thought about changing his name. It turned out he liked his name and I was being a horrible person. I learned a valuable lesson about never judging or jumping to conclusions.

A conversation about names can teach you interesting things about people.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: NAMES

- What is a name that you have always liked?
- Which famous person has the coolest name?
- What was the name of one of your childhood toys?
- If you were a dog, what would your name be? Why?
- If you were a superhero, what would your name be?
- How did your parents choose your name?
- If you could choose a different name for yourself, what would it be? Why?
- When people get your name wrong, what do they call you?
- If you could choose your very own nickname, what would it be?
- When you were young, what nicknames did your family have for you?
- Do you like your name? Why?
- If you gave your car a name, what would you call it?

- If your house had a name, what would it be?
- If your life was made into a movie, what would be the name of the movie?

SMELLS

“Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles and all the years you have lived”

– Helen Keller



I was sitting in a café and suddenly I smelt my late Nana’s perfume. The lady at the table next to me was wearing it. The smell was so powerful I could almost feel my Nana running towards me to give me a hug.

I was so moved that I leaned over and told that lady how much it meant to smell my grandmother’s perfume again.

How was I meant to know that a stranger would not appreciate being told that she smells like a deceased 85-year-old woman?

Scent plays an important role in the brain. Just talking about a smell can bring back powerful memories.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: SMELLS

- What is your favourite smell?
- What is a smell you don't like?
- What is one food that you don't like the smell of?
- What is a smell that puts you off your food?
- What is a smell that makes your mouth water?
- What smell reminds you of holidays?
- What smell do you find relaxing?
- What is a smell that makes you feel sick?
- What is a smell that brings back sad memories?
- What is the worst smell in the world?
- What is a smell that reminds you of your childhood?
- What is a smell that reminds you of someone you love?
- What smell reminds you of your mum?
- What smell reminds you of your dad?
- What smell reminds you of summer?

- What is a smell that makes you smile?
- What is a smell that brings back happy memories?
- Finish this sentence: I wish I could un-smell...
- Finish this sentence: somewhere I have been that smells nice is...
- Finish this sentence: at work, I really like the smell of...
- Finish this sentence: at home, I don't like the smell of...
- Finish this sentence: at home, I really like the smell of...

SONGS

"[Music] gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, and life to everything"

- Plato



Obviously, I have GREAT taste in music. Unfortunately, nobody agrees with me.

Want to have a fun conversation filled with friendly debate and special memories? Try talking about songs.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: SONGS

- What is your favourite song?
- What is your favourite song to sing at karaoke?
- What song always gets stuck in your head?
- What song annoys you?
- In your opinion, what song is completely overrated?
- What song makes you turn off the radio?
- What song makes you laugh?
- What song always gets you onto the dance floor?
- What song makes you cry?
- What song always cheers you up?
- What song inspires you?
- Who is your favourite singer?
- Which is your favourite band?
- What is your favourite style of music?
- What sort of music do find relaxing?
- What sort of music annoys you?

- What music, podcasts or other things, do you like to listen to in the car?
- What sort of music or noise helps you to sleep?
- What song best describes the way that you feel about your friends?
- Which song reminds you of your childhood?
- What song brings back a great memory for you?
- What song bring back a sad memory for you?
- If your life had a theme song, what would it be?
- Finish this sentence: a song I know all the lyrics to is...
- Finish this sentence: a song I always sing along to is...
- Finish this sentence: a song that always makes me want to turn up the volume is...
- Finish this sentence: a song I wish I had written myself is...
- Finish this sentence: the greatest song of all time is...
- Finish this sentence: when I am feeling nervous, the best song to make me feel confident is ...

RANDOM

“You have to systematically create confusion, it sets creativity free. Everything that is contradictory creates life”

– Salvador Dalí



Does everything have to have a point? Potatoes! Obviously not. Sometimes, it's fun to let loose and find where you land.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: RANDOM

- What is something that no one really needs to know about you?
- What is your most random and useless skill?
- What is the most useless household gadget you have ever bought?
- What has been your biggest fashion mistake so far?
- What item of clothing in your wardrobe should you really throw out?
- What is one of the clumsiest things you have ever done?
- If you had to get a tattoo tomorrow, what would it be?
- What is the best thing about the 1990s?
- What sound do you love?
- What sound do you hate?
- What is your idea of paradise?
- If you could work for anyone in the world, who would it be?

- What is something that you regret doing?
- What is the longest that you have gone without sleep? What was the reason?
- When was the last time you had a good night's sleep?
- Who are you secretly a little bit jealous of?
- In your opinion, who has a great sense of humour?
- If you had the courage to ask anyone any question in the world, what would it be? And to whom?
- If you had to work for any famous person in the world, who would it be? Why?
- Who is the last person in the world that you would want to work for?
- What is one thing that you and I might have in common? What is something else?
- What is something random that you remember about me?
- What is something random that you remember about your childhood?
- What is something random that you remember about yesterday?

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- What is something that makes you grumpy in the morning?
- If your life flashed before your eyes, what are some things that you would probably see?
- What do you hope will be written on your tombstone?
- What is something you do when no one is watching?

REMINDS ME OF...

“All our knowledge begins with the senses”

– Immanuel Kant



There is a brown/green feature wall in my office. It reminds me of army camouflage.

One day, a co-worker walked in to my office and said, “that wall is the exact colour of baby poo”.

Conclusion? However you look at it, my office seriously needs repainting.

Even when it comes to the simplest things, everyone has a different experience and perspective.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: REMINDS ME OF...

- What does the smell of petrol remind you of?
- What does the colour blue remind you of?
- What does the colour brown remind you of?
- What does the smell of sweaty gym socks remind you of?
- What does the smell of cigarette smoke remind you of?
- What does the smell of hospitals remind you of?
- What does the smell of a doctor's office remind you of?
- What does the sound of an ambulance siren remind you of?
- What does the smell of a cake fresh out of the oven remind you of?
- What does the smell of coconut remind you of?
- What does the smell of freshly cut grass remind you of?
- What does the smell of food burning remind you of?

- What does the smell of coffee remind you of?
- What does the smell of lavender remind you of?
- What does the smell of stale beer remind you of?
- What does the smell of popcorn remind you of?
- What does the smell of burning food remind you of?
- What does the smell of the ocean remind you of?
- What does the sound of pouring hot water into a cup remind you of?
- What does the sound of footsteps getting closer remind you of?
- What does the sound of a baby crying remind you of?
- What does the sound of children laughing remind you of?
- What does the taste of chocolate remind you of?
- What does the taste of red wine remind you of?
- What does the sound of a car door slamming remind you of?
- What does the sound of a dog barking remind you of?

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- What does the phrase “we need to talk” remind you of?
- What does the phrase “see me in my office” remind you of?

TECHNOLOGY

"It's not that we use technology, we live technology"

- Godfrey Reggio



One time at work, the internet stopped working, so we all cried hysterically. Then we all packed up and went home immediately. Obviously, I'm exaggerating - but only a little bit.

Technology is a big part of our daily lives. So, questions about technology can be a helpful way to learn about how your team members like to live their daily lives.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: TECHNOLOGY

- What is the screensaver on your mobile phone? Why did you choose it?
- Have you ever broken your mobile phone? If so, how?
- What was the last thing that you bought online?
- What is your favourite online shop?
- Do you have a favourite blogger or podcast? If yes, what is it?
- Finish this sentence: I think that the best thing about Facebook is...
- Finish the sentence: I think that the worst thing about Facebook is...
- Finish this sentence: I think the best thing about LinkedIn is...
- Finish this sentence: I think the worst thing about LinkedIn is...
- Finish the sentence: for me, the best thing about the internet is...
- Finish the sentence: for me, the worst thing about the internet is...

- Finish this sentence: my favourite app is ...
- Finish this sentence: the thing I am most likely to download from the internet is...
- Finish this sentence: usually I use my phone to take photos of...
- Finish this sentence: I am most likely to waste time online when I ...
- Finish this sentence: if I lost all access to the internet for 24 hours, I would...
- Describe something that you saw online that made you laugh.
- Describe something you saw online that made you sad.
- Describe something you saw online that made you angry.
- Describe something you saw online that made you grateful.
- What is something that you saw online that you wish you could un-see?
- What is the longest period of time that you have spent in front of a computer/phone? What were you doing?

Connect Better Faster, Level 1: Public Questions

- What time of day are you most likely to be online?
- Apart from when you are asleep, when are you most likely to be offline?
- Who was the last person you sent a text message to? What was it about?
- Who were the last three people you called on your mobile phone?
- If you were going to write a blog about something, what would it be?

LEVEL 2:

PERSONAL
QUESTIONS

FAMILY

"Families are the compass that guides us"

- Brad Henry



My kids were arguing with each other. Suddenly, I heard my mother's voice shouting at them to stop.

I looked around but my mum was nowhere to be seen. It was me. Somewhere along the way, I seem to have become my mother.

We are a part of our families and our families are a part of us. If you want to learn about the people in your team, try asking about their families.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FAMILY

- Describe your family.
- What are your parents like?
- Who is the most interesting person in your family?
- Who is the funniest person in your family?
- Who is the best cook in your family? What do they make?
- What is the most interesting place in the world where you have family?
- How do you like to spend time with your family?
- Did you ever wish you were adopted growing up? If so, when?
- What is your favourite memory of a family dinner?
- Which member of your family are you closest to?
- Who in your family do you most admire? Why?
- If you could be more like anyone in your family, who would it be? Why?

- Which member of your family do you clash with most?
- What is one thing that makes your family different to other families?
- What are you like when you are around your family?
- What does the word “family” mean to you?
- How would your family describe you?
- How would you *like* your family to describe you?
- In your opinion, what does it take to be a good family member?
- What is the best thing about your family?
- What is something about your family that annoys you?
- If you could change anything about your family, what would it be?
- Describe one lesson that your family taught you
- Who else has a family that you admire? Why?
- What is your favourite fictional family?
- If you could be part of anyone else’s family, which family would you choose? Why?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- What is one thing that you don't normally tell people about your family?
- Finish this sentence: my family is

FAVOURITES

*“My favourite words are possibilities,
opportunity and curiosity”*

– Mario Testino



I tell my kids that I don't have favourites. But of course, that's a great big lie. My kids are my most favourite thing in the whole world.

Your favourite things are like a magnet that pull you closer towards what matters in life.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FAVOURITES

- What is your favourite colour?
- What is your favourite joke?
- What is your favourite word?
- What is your favourite movie?
- What is your favourite television show?
- What is your favourite cartoon character?
- What is your favourite ice cream flavour?
- What is your favourite flower?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- What is your favourite shampoo?
- What is your favourite car? Why?
- What is your favourite country? Why?
- What is your favourite fictional character?
- Who is your favourite celebrity? What do you like about them?
- Who is your favourite movie star? Why?
- Who is your favourite business leader? Why?

- What is your favourite saying?
- Describe your favourite pair of shoes.
- What is your favourite thing to wear on the weekend?
- What is your favourite practical joke?
- What is your favourite place to buy food? Why?
- What is your favourite place to exercise? Why?
- What is your favourite place to read a book? Why?
- What is your favourite place to spend time thinking? Why?
- What is your favourite public/bank holiday? Why?
- What is your favourite day of the week? Why?
- What is your favourite time of the day to relax? Why?
- What is your favourite time of the year? Why?
- What is one of your favourite places to visit in this city?
- As a child, what was your favourite toy?
- Where is your favourite place to stand at a party?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- What is your favourite excuse when you want to leave a party early?
- What is your favourite place to be alone? Why?
- What is one of your favourite ways to have fun?
- What is your favourite way to get to know someone?
- What is one of your favourite ways to do something nice for others?

FIRSTS

“There is a first time for everything”

– Proverb



My first memory is of my dad giving me a great big vanilla ice cream. Then he introduced me to my baby brother. Obviously, I am now deeply suspicious of vanilla ice cream.

It's amazing how impactful “firsts” can be.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *FIRSTS*

- What was your first job?
- Describe your first job interview.
- What was your first car? How did you get the money for it?
- When was the first time you flew on a plane?
- When was the first time you went overseas?
- What is the first big thing you saved up to buy?
- When was one of the first times that you cooked your own meal?
- What is the first birthday party that you remember?
- What is your first memory of your parents?
- When is the first time you realised your parents were human?
- Who was your first teacher?
- Who was your first friend at school?
- Who was the first person to really believe in you?
- When was the first time you were sad at school?

- When was the first time you were happy at school?
- When was the first time you realised you were a grown up?
- Who was your first manager?
- Who was your first role model?
- Who was your first mentor?
- When you arrive at work in the morning, what is the first thing you do?
- What was your first thought when you got to work today?
- When was the first time you were sad at work?
- When was the first time you were happy at work?
- When was the first time you received negative feedback?
- When was one of the first times you received positive feedback at work? What was it for? Who gave it to you?
- What was one of the first times that someone let you down?
- When is one of the first times that you remember being scared?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- When is one of the first times you remember apologising?
- When was the first time that you made a big mistake?
- Describe one of the first times you amazed yourself.

FRIENDS

*“Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you
who you are”*

– Proverb



Different friends bring out my different sides (my funny side, my serious side, my shopping for clothes side...).

When you ask your team members about their friends, you might just discover a new side to them.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FRIENDS

- Who is your oldest friend?
- Who is your newest friend?
- Who is your funniest friend?
- Who is your most famous friend? What are they famous for?
- When was the last time you spent time with a good friend? What did you do?
- What is your idea of a great night out with friends?
- What does the word “friendship” mean to you?
- Describe your ideal friend.
- How many friends do you have on Facebook? How many of these friends do you talk to regularly?
- Which friend leads you astray? How?
- Who is your most loyal friend? What lessons can you learn from them?
- Who is your kindest friend? What lessons can you learn from them?

- Who is your best friend? What can you learn from them?
- Who is your wisest friend? What have you learned from them?
- Who is the friend you call when you are sad? What do they do to cheer you up?
- Who is your bravest friend? What makes them so brave?
- Which friend do you share your secrets with?
- Which friend is most different to you? Why are you friends?
- What is one thing that your friends probably appreciate about you?
- What is one thing that your friends probably wish you didn't do?
- What is the nicest thing you have ever done for a friend?
- What is the nicest thing a friend has ever done for you?
- Finish this sentence: if I could be friends with anyone in the world it would be...
- Finish this sentence: my friends mean a lot to me because ...

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- Finish this sentence: I believe that to be a great friend, you need to...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that the difference between a good friend and a great friend is...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that my friends are ...
- Finish this sentence: my friends annoy me when ...
- Finish this sentence: my friends would say that I am...
- Finish this sentence: something that a lot of my friends do is...
- Finish this sentence: once, I decided to stop being friends with someone because...
- Finish this sentence: something that all my friends know about me is...
- Finish this sentence: something that none of my friends know about me is...

GOALS

“To achieve happiness, we should make certain that we are never without an important goal”

- Earl Nightingale



A friend of mine was offered a promotion. She said ‘no’. It just wasn’t what she wanted. Her manager was surprised and was left with no one to fill the role.

If you want to get to know someone, it helps to know what goals they are trying to achieve.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: GOALS

- What is a goal you are working on this week?
- What is a goal you will probably work on next week?
- What is one thing you are trying to achieve at the moment?
- What is a goal you have been working on this year?
- Finish this sentence: this year, I will finally...
- What is a goal you want to work on next year?
- Which of your goals do you think you will achieve?
- What is one goal you think you will never achieve?
- What is the worst goal that you ever set for yourself?
- When you have the time, what is something you would like to do more of?
- What is the strangest goal that you ever set for yourself?
- Who helps you set your goals?

- Who is the person that you are most likely to tell about your work goals?
- What goal are you currently inspired to achieve?
- Who is good at helping you stick to your goals?
- What is a goal that you were able to achieve because someone helped you?
- What is a goal that you can only achieve with the help of others?

HOME

“There is no place like home”

- Dorothy, the Wizard of Oz



The artwork on my walls at home is priceless. It has been drawn by my children. I'm hoping that the artwork on the walls is so beautiful that it distracts you from the permanent pen artwork that our children have also left on our floors, table and couch.

Our homes say a lot about how we choose to live our lives. How do the people in your team choose to live their lives?

CONVERSATION STARTERS: HOME

- Describe where you live.
- Who lives in your home?
- What does your home smell like?
- What is something special about your home?
- Where in the world do you feel most at home?
- What are your neighbours like?
- How did you end up deciding to live in your current home?
- What is the messiest room in your house?
- What is your favourite room in your house?
- What do you like best about your home?
- What is one thing that you don't like about your home?
- If you could redecorate one room in your home, which room would it be and why?
- What is your favourite thing to look at in your home?

- What is your favourite window in your home? What can you see out this window?
- What is your favourite chair in your home? Where is it? What do you like to do there?
- How does your home reflect your personality?
- If your house was burning down and you could save only one thing, what would it be?
- What does the word “home” mean to you?
- What does your dream home look like?
- Where would your dream home be?
- What is the best place that you have ever lived?
- How old were you when you moved out of home? Why did you move and where did you go?
- What is your favourite painting or photo hanging on the walls of your home?
- Finish this sentence: the strangest thing you will find in my home is...
- Finish this sentence: the ugliest piece of furniture in my home is...
- Finish this sentence: when people visit my home, I hope that they don't notice...

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- Finish this sentence: when people visit my home, the first thing they probably notice is...
- What is the best thing that has happened in your home?
- Finish this sentence: to me, no home is complete without...
- Finish this sentence: I feel at home when...

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

“Some people come in our life as blessings. Some come in your life as lessons”

– Mother Teresa



Miss Trethewey, my grade one teacher, made learning fun. How? By finding hundreds of creative ways to give us lollies.

Naturally, we all loved her. Naturally, Miss Trethewey is still one of my most favourite people ever. She definitely counts as an important person in my life.

People can impact on our lives for the most surprising reasons. Want to have a meaningful conversation with someone in your team? Try asking about the important people in their lives.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: IMPORTANT PEOPLE

- Whose birthday do you always remember?
- Who always remembers your birthday?
- What is your favourite hobby? Who introduced you to it?
- Who was your favourite school teacher? Why?
- Who was your most boring teacher? Why?
- Who was your least favourite school teacher? Why?
- What was the best present you ever received? Who gave it to you? What made it special?
- Who makes your life better?
- Who is good at making you smile?
- Who would you trust with your life?
- Who is good at listening to you?
- Who is a good sounding board for you?
- Who gives you helpful feedback?
- Who is a role model for you? Why?

- Whose achievements do you admire? What are they?
- Who is someone you respect? Why?
- Describe someone (no names) who you don't respect. What did they do?
- When you have good news, who is the first person you tell?
- When you do something that you are proud of, who is the first person you tell?
- When someone hurts your feelings, who is the first person you tell?
- Name the five most important people in your life.
- Who do you wish would listen more to your advice?
- If you could be anyone else in the world, who would you be? Why?
- If you could throw a party and invite anyone in the world, who would you invite?
- Name someone who makes you feel grateful? What do they make you feel grateful for?
- Who did something nice for you when they didn't have to? What was it?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- Name one person who helped you become the person you are today. What did they do?
- Who has changed your life? What did they do?
- Who has helped you to be a better person? What did they do?
- Who is good at bringing out the best in you? What do they do?
- Who is your biggest cheerleader? What sort of things would they say about you?
- If you could say thank you to anyone right now, who would it be? What for?

IMPORTANT MOMENTS

"We do not remember days, we remember moments"

– Cesare Pavese



Right at this moment, I am sitting on a plane, and I'm writing this book. I'm also eating cold pasta salad from a plastic tray. Does that count as an important life moment? Probably not.

Important life moments have a habit of changing how we see ourselves and the world. So, it's really quite handy to ask your team members about the important moments in their lives.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: IMPORTANT MOMENTS

- Have you ever met or seen someone famous? Who was it? What were they doing?
- What is one of your happier moments?
- What was one of your sadder moments?
- What is one of your more embarrassing moments?
- When did you last lose your temper? What happened?
- Describe a time that you felt loved.
- Describe a time when you felt relaxed.
- Describe a time when you over-reacted.
- Describe a time when you surprised yourself.
- Describe a time when you couldn't stop laughing.
- Describe a time when you felt proud of yourself.
- Describe a time when you felt proud of someone else.
- Describe a time when someone helped you.
- Describe a time when you learned an important lesson about work.

Important Moments

- Describe a time when you learned an important lesson about taking care of yourself.
- Describe a time when you learned an important lesson about teamwork.
- Describe a time when you learned an important lesson about family.
- Describe a time when someone amazed you.
- Describe a time when someone was kind to you.
- Describe something nice that someone has done for you this week.
- If you could go back in time and relive any moment in your life, what would it be?
- Describe a moment that your life changed.
- Describe a moment when you realised something important.

IN THE PAST

“Oh yes, the past can hurt, but you can either run from it or learn from it”

– Rafiki, the Lion King



Because of my past, I have quite positive associations with public speaking. When I was in high school, my busy parents always made time to come and hear me speak.

How you interpret the events in your past makes up the foundation of how you act today.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *IN THE PAST*

- Describe your best birthday ever.
- Describe your worst birthday ever.
- When you were a kid, what was your favourite television show?
- As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- What you were like as a child?
- What is a happy memory from your childhood?
- What do you miss about being a child?
- Who is someone you were jealous of when you were growing up?
- What was something that you enjoyed doing when you were a child?
- When you were a child, what did you get in trouble for?
- When you were a child, what did you dislike doing?
- What was life like for you growing up?

- If you could go back and be ten years old again, what would you do differently?
- If you could change anything about your childhood, what would it be?
- What were you like as a teenager?
- When you were a teenager, what did your bedroom look like?
- What is something rebellious that you did when you were younger?
- What is one thing about your past that you don't usually tell people about?
- Did you turn out the way that you thought you would? In what ways?
- In what way has your life turned out *exactly* as you planned?
- How has your life turned out *differently* to the way you planned?
- What is something nice that happened to you last week?
- How have you changed over the past five years?
- If you could turn back time, how would you change your life?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- How have you recently become a better person?
- What is something that you did in the past that you would never do today?
- Finish this sentence: something that only my oldest friends remember about me is...
- Finish this sentence: even though I am an adult, sometimes I still think that I am...
- Finish this sentence: I finally grew up when...
- Finish this sentence: one of the best things that ever happened to me was...
- Finish this sentence: one of the most important things that ever happened to me was...
- Finish this sentence: now that I am older, I wish that I had...
- Finish this sentence: I still can't believe that I ...
- Finish this sentence: in the past, I would have ...

MEMORIES

“Memory is a way of holding on to the things you love, the things you never want to lose”

– Kevin Arnold, the Wonder Years (a quality television show)



No one told me that having kids would ruin my memory. Or maybe they just forgot to tell me. I don't blame them. There are a lot of things to remember. Still, I know that the important things are superglued onto my heart.

Want to know about the key parts of a person's life? Try asking that person about their important memories.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: MEMORIES

- What is something that you remember about the home you grew up in?
- What is your first memory?
- What is your first memory of your best friend?
- What moment at school would you prefer to forget?
- What moment at school would you always remember?
- What is something that you remember most about your childhood?
- What is your favourite memory of school?
- What is your worst memory of school?
- What is your first memory of your first job?
- What moment at work will you always remember?
- What moment at work would you prefer to forget?
- Who has been one of your more memorable managers? Why?

- What is something that you try to remember when you are at work?
- What is something you try to forget about when you are at work?
- What is something that you need to remember to do next week?
- What is the thing that you remember most about yesterday?
- What is one moment that you can remember like it was yesterday?
- What is one thing that will you remember most about this year?
- Who is one of the most memorable people you have ever met? Why?
- What is one of the most memorable places you have ever been? What made it so memorable?
- What is something you try to remember when you are at home?
- What is something you try to forget about when you are at home?
- What is something that you always need to remind other people to do?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- What is something that you have a habit of forgetting?
- What is something that others always seem to be reminding you to do?
- What do you do if you want to make sure you remember something?
- What is one memory that makes you sad?
- What is one of your more embarrassing memories?
- What is one of your worst memories?
- Describe a special memory that you have of someone you love.
- What memory will you keep in your heart forever?
- What is one of your favourite memories.
- What is one memory that makes you happy?
- What is one memory that you wish you could go back and change?
- What is a memory that you have probably exaggerated over time?

SPECIAL PLACES

*“You’re off to great places, today is your day,
your mountain is waiting so... get on your way”*

– Dr Seuss



One of my most favourite places in the whole world? The couch at home; I like to sit there and read a good book. One of my least favourite places in the world? The dentist’s chair. I’d say that’s self-explanatory.

Some places can make a person feel happy. Other places can make a person feel, well, less than happy. So, it can be helpful to learn about which locations bring out the best (and worst) in your team members.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: SPECIAL PLACES

- Where does your best friend live?
- If money was no issue, what suburb would you live in?
- Where is the most beautiful place you have ever been?
- What is your favourite place in the world?
- In your opinion, what is one of the most underrated places in the world?
- What is one place you want to visit before you die?
- What is the most fascinating place you have ever visited?
- What is the most magical or spiritual place you have ever been? What made it so special?
- If you could live anywhere, where would you live?
- If you had to move overseas tomorrow, which country would you choose? Why?
- Apart from your home, where do you spend most of your time on the weekend?

- What is the best place you have been this week?
- What is one place that you would like to go in the next twelve months?
- If you could be anywhere else right now, where would it be?
- What is one place that you try to avoid going?
- Where could you happily spend hours?
- Where do you go to feel better?
- If you could spend more time anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- As a child, where did you spend time playing?
- As a child, where did you go to cry?
- Finish this sentence: a place I will probably never travel to is...
- Finish this sentence: a place I will definitely travel to one day is...
- Finish this sentence: a place I never want to visit again is...
- Finish this sentence: a place I definitely want to visit again is...

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- Finish this sentence: a place I will never forget visiting is...
- Finish this sentence: a place that has sad memories for me is...
- Finish this sentence: for me, the happiest place on earth is...
- Finish this sentence: a place that I like to spend time with other people is...
- Finish this sentence: a place where I feel like I can be myself is...

TELL ME ABOUT A TIME...

*"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living
someone else's life"*

– Steve Jobs



It is a law of nature that if you are trying to sleep-in, a dog WILL start barking. It is a law of nature that all dads WILL start making Dad Jokes. And it is a law of nature that if you work in HR, you WILL start using the following question; "tell me about a time you..."

I don't own a dog. I'm not a dad. But I have worked in HR. So, I can say that you do get more specific answers when you ask someone to describe an exact time when something happened.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: TELL ME ABOUT A TIME...

- Tell me about a time you ate a delicious meal.
- Tell me about a time you got really stuck in traffic. How did you react?
- Tell me about a time you decided to sleep in.
- Tell me about a time you accidentally slept in. How did it happen? What were you meant to be doing instead?
- Tell me about a time you had trouble sleeping. What was keeping you awake?
- Tell me about a time you laughed so hard it hurt.
- Tell me about a time when you laughed when you probably should not have.
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
- Tell me about a time that you should have spoken up but you didn't.
- Tell me about a time you felt guilty.
- Tell me about a time you were bored.
- Tell me about a time you did something creative.

Tell Me About A Time...

- Tell me about a time that you were totally focused.
- Tell me about a time you felt completely free.
- Tell me about a time that you did something crazy.
- Tell me about a time you made someone cry.
- Tell me about a time you cried.
- Tell me about a time you cried in front of someone.
- Tell me about a time you told someone about your feelings.
- Tell me about a time someone hurt your feelings.
- Tell me about a time you hurt somebody's feelings.
- Tell me about a time you surprised yourself at work.
- Tell me about a time you were proud of yourself.
- Tell me about a time you were proud of someone else at work.
- Tell me about a time you were proud of a family member.

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- Tell me about a time you talked to a stranger.
- Tell me about a time a stranger did something nice for you.
- Tell me about a time you helped a stranger.
- Tell me about the last time you got frustrated with someone.
- Tell me about a time you disagreed with someone.
- Tell me about a time when you had to handle a challenging situation.
- Tell me about a time you really challenged yourself. What did you learn from it?
- Tell me about a time you were scared.
- Tell me about a time you were sick.
- Tell me about a time when you lost your temper.
- Tell me about a time someone told you off.
- Tell me about a time you were selfish. What happened?
- Tell me about a time that you learned from a mistake.

Tell Me About A Time...

- Tell me about a time you just sat quietly and did nothing but think.
- Tell me about a time you spent quality time with someone you love.
- Tell me about a time someone said something nice to you.
- Tell me about a time someone believed in you. How did that impact you?
- Tell me about a time someone made you feel good about yourself.

THE BEST

"I am easily satisfied with the very best"

– Winston Churchill



It's easy to notice every-single-thing-that-you-have-ever-done-wrong. However, it is much more helpful to focus on the things you did best.

Asking someone in your team about their best things can be a great way to draw out the best in that person.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *THE BEST*

- Who is the best singer you know?
- What was the best thing you have ever eaten?
- What was the best photo you have ever taken?
- What is the best piece of clothing in your wardrobe?
- What was the best book you ever read?
- What has been the best night out of your life?
- What is the best thing about your family?
- What has been the best thing that has happened so far today?
- What has been the best thing that has happened so far this year?
- What has been the best day of your life so far?
- What is the best way to make you laugh?
- What is the best way to make you happy?
- What is the best way to make you angry?
- What is the best way someone can react when you are upset?

- What is one of the best things that anyone has ever done for you at work?
- What is one of the best things that has ever happened to you at work?
- What is the best thing about your job?
- Excluding your current job, what is the best job you have ever had?
- What is the best way to thank you for doing a good job?
- What does it take for a manager to bring out the best in you?
- What does it take for a co-worker to bring out the best in you?
- What do you find is the best way for others to get to know you?
- What is one of the best things about you?
- When you are at your best, what does it feel like?
- When you are at your best, what sort of things do you do?
- What are you best at?
- In your experience, what is the best way for you to make sure that you hit your goals?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- In your experience, what do you find is the best way for you to stay organised?
- What was the best compliment you ever received?
- What was the best thing anybody ever said to you?
- What was the best question anybody ever asked you?
- What was the best piece of feedback you ever received?
- What was the best lesson you ever learned?
- What is the best decision you ever made?
- In your opinion, what is the best thing to do when things go wrong?
- What was one of the best things you ever did for somebody else?
- What is one of the best things that someone has ever done for you?

THE WORST

"It's warts and all in my songs, and I think that's why people can relate to them"

- Adele



I LOVE happy people. But, do you really trust someone who is ALWAYS happy and NEVER complains?

Connecting with someone in your team involves knowing the whole human, not just somebody's shiny, toothpaste, professional work face.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *THE WORST*

- What is the worst movie you have ever seen?
- What is the worst job you have ever had?
- What is the worst present that anyone has ever given you?
- What is one of the worst jokes you have ever heard?
- Who is the worst driver you know?
- Who is the worst cook you know?
- Who, among the people you know, is the worst at telling jokes?
- Who is the worst liar you know?
- What is the worst piece of clothing in your wardrobe?
- What is the worst thing you have ever eaten?
- What is the worst thing that you ever got in trouble for growing up?
- What is one of the worst things about your family?

- What was your worst day at work ever? What happened?
- Describe your worst job interview.
- What is the worst thing about your job?
- What is your worst time of day at work?
- At work, what is the worst way to try to make you happy?
- At work, when do other people bring out the worst in you?
- What has been the worst thing about today so far?
- What has been the worst thing about this year so far?
- What has been the worst day of your life?
- What has been the worst year of your life?
- What is the worst piece of feedback you have ever received?
- What is the worst compliment you have ever received?
- What is the worst question anyone has ever asked you?

Connect Better Faster, Level 2: Personal Questions

- What is one of the worst things anyone could ever say to you?
- What is the worst thing anyone has ever said to you?
- What is the worst decision you ever made?
- In your opinion, what is the worst thing you can do when things go wrong?
- What are you worst at?
- What is one of the worst things about you?
- When you are at your worst, what helps you feel better?

LEVEL 3:

PUSH/PULL
QUESTIONS

COURAGE

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it"

- Nelson Mandela



Superman is NOT brave. Strong? Yes. Cool powers? Of course. Badly dressed? Definitely. But brave? No way. Why? Because he was never scared.

Courage is when you face your fears (and pain) to do what you believe in anyway. When you start looking, you can find small acts of courage everywhere.

So, you can criticise yourself for being afraid -or - you can inspire yourself each time you have the courage to face your fears and do what matters.

You can do the same with your team. Try pointing out the daily acts of courage that you notice in your team members. It is one of the fastest ways to inspire and encourage the people around you., After all, it's called en-COURAGE-ment for a reason.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: COURAGE

- What is the bravest outfit you have ever worn?
- Name one brave famous person. What brave things do they do?
- Who is the bravest person you know? What brave things do they do?
- In your opinion, what are three things that brave people do?
- In your opinion, what is the difference between brave and stupid?
- When is the first time that you remember being brave?
- Describe the last time you remember being brave.
- What is the bravest thing that you did last year?
- Finish this sentence: Even though I don't like it, I still...
- What is one thing that you were scared to do but you did anyway? What happened? What did you learn from the experience?
- Describe a time in your life when you If you were 10 per cent braver, how would your life be different?

- Describe a time when someone helped you to be brave.
- Describe a time when you had to face one of your fears.
- Describe a time when you saw someone being brave at work.
- Describe a situation where you find it hard to be brave.
- Describe a time in your life when you found it hard to be brave.
- Describe a time in your life when you wish you had been braver.
- Who inspires you to be more courageous?
- If you were 10 per cent braver, how would your life be different?
- If you were the bravest person in the world, what would you do tomorrow?
- What is one brave thing that you could do tomorrow?
- Finish this sentence: even though I get nervous, I still...
- Finish this sentence: I am brave when I...

DREAMS

“Dreams at first seem impossible, then seem improbable, and finally, when we commit ourselves, become inevitable”

– Mahatma Gandhi



In a team situation, it is easier to motivate someone when you know what they dream of.

Better still, when you learn about the dreams of the people in your team, it is easier to help make their dreams come true. Helping to make someone else's dream come true can be one of the most rewarding things you ever do.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: DREAMS

- What is your dream car?
- What is one thing that gives you bad dreams?
- Where is somewhere you have always dreamed of going?
- What is your dream job?
- Describe your dream boss.
- Describe your dream workplace.
- Describe your dream life.
- What is something that you daydream about?
- What is a dream you have had since you were a child?
- What is something that you dream of doing when you are old?
- What does your ideal future look like?
- What would it take for you to be happy beyond your wildest dreams?
- What is one dream that you have already achieved?

- What sorts of things do you dream of doing in the future?
- What is one dream that you might never achieve?
- What is one dream you are too scared to follow?
- What is one dream you don't normally tell people about?
- If you could surprise yourself and achieve anything, what would it be?
- If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?
- If you knew you couldn't fail, what is one dream that you would follow?
- What advice would you give to someone who wanted to follow their dreams?
- When did you last help someone to follow their dreams?
- Who has helped you to follow your dreams?
- What is one way that someone else can help you to follow your dreams?
- Finish this sentence: Something I have always wanted to do is...

FEARS & DISLIKES

“The fears we don’t face become our limits”

– Robin Sharma



Naturally, fears can be scary. What am I scared of at the moment? I’m actually scared of over-sharing, but let’s pretend I didn’t tell you that.

It is much easier to understand someone when you know what they are running away from and what they are trying to protect themselves against.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FEARS & DISLIKES

- What is one of the scariest things you have ever done?
- What have you always been scared of?
- What is the scariest movie you have ever seen?
- What animal scares you most?
- When do you get scared at work?
- What is your least favourite time of the day?
- What is one chore that you really don't like to do?
- What is the most boring thing that you do in a day?
- If you could get rid of one of your daily tasks, what would it be?
- What is your pet peeve?
- What sort of person do you find annoying?
- What is one thing that you are too scared to try?
- What sort of movies don't you like?
- What sort of TV shows don't you like?

- Describe one fear that gets in the way of your success at work.
- If you could overcome any fear, what would it be?
- What is the strangest thing that you are scared of?
- Finish this sentence: I really don't like conversations about...
- Finish this sentence: I try to avoid...
- Finish this sentence: I don't like people who...
- Finish this sentence: I'm scared of...
- Finish this sentence: I am too scared to...
- Finish this sentence: I don't like it when...
- Finish this sentence: last week I got annoyed when...
- Finish this sentence: I get scared when...
- Finish this sentence: one question I hope that no one ever asks me is...

FUTURE

*“The future depends on many things, but mostly
you”*

– Frank Tyger



If you think about it, a team is really a group of individuals who are making up the future together.

So, it's useful to understand the future that each team member wants to create.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *FUTURE*

- When you think of the word “future”, what is the first thing that comes into your head?
- If you had the power to travel into the future, where would you go? Why?
- What is something that you are looking forward to doing next week?
- In three years from now, how would you like your life to be different?
- What is one thing that you want to achieve in the next five years?
- In ten years, how would you like to be a better person?
- If you had to guess, what do you think your life would be like in 20 years from now?
- Where might you want to live when you retire?
- How do you think you will spend your time when you retire?
- What is one thing that you would like to own when you get older?

- What is something you look forward to doing when you are older?
- What plans do you have for the future?
- Finish this sentence: when I grow up I want to be...
- Finish this sentence: in the future, I will stop...
- Finish this sentence: in the future, I will continue...
- Finish this sentence: in the future, I will start...
- Finish this sentence: the future is looking bright because...
- Finish this sentence: in the future, I could amaze myself because...
- Finish this sentence: it is possible that in the future I will learn how to ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that the key to a happy future is ...
- What is one of the best things that could possibly happen to you in the future?

HABITS

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then,
is not an act, but a habit"*

- Will Durant



I have been trying to write a book my entire life but I couldn't. Spoiler alert - I finally wrote this book. So, what changed for me? I got into the habit of writing more often.

Over time, I have realised that HABIT is the secret ingredient to nearly everything in life, including great team culture.

If you want a more innovative team culture, practice innovating every day. If you want to create a more supportive team environment, find one way to support each other every day. I could go on (and on) but I won't.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *HABITS*

- What is your worst habit at home?
- What is your best habit at home?
- What is your morning routine?
- What is your routine when you get home from work?
- What is your best habit at work?
- What is your worst habit at work?
- What is your strangest habit?
- What is the strangest habit you have ever heard of?
- What is your most expensive habit?
- What is a habit that you used to have as a child?
- What is your most embarrassing habit?
- In your opinion, what is one habit that everyone should have?
- In your opinion, what habit helps you to succeed at work?
- What habit is holding you back from achieving what you want?

- What habit have you recently started?
- What is a habit have you grown out of?
- What is a habit that you have worked hard to change?
- What is one habit that you have not been able to break so far?
- What bad habit would you most like to break? Why?
- What is your best exercise habit?
- What is your best healthy eating habit?
- What is an old habit that you fall into when you are stressed?
- Finish this sentence: on the weekends, usually I ...
- Finish this sentence: when I am happy, I have a habit of...
- Finish this sentence: when I am doing my best work I have a habit of...
- Finish this sentence: one habit I plan to change is...
- Finish this sentence: if I could introduce one new habit to my day it would be...

I BELIEVE...

“Belief creates the actual fact”

– William James



Generally, I believe that there is no truth - only different points of view. I believe this 100 per cent, except when it comes to chocolate chip biscuits. Obviously, chocolate chip biscuits are totally delicious, and anyone who disagrees with me is completely wrong.

Want to find out what you have in common with someone at a deeper level? Try asking about their beliefs.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: I BELIEVE...

- Finish this sentence: I believe that the secret to having fun is ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe there is nothing better than...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that you can never have enough ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe in the power of...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that there is no substitute for ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe you should always watch out for...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that you should never trust someone who...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that in order to be happy you need to ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I waste too much time worrying about ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that there is nothing wrong with...
- Finish this sentence: I believe you get great results when ...

- Finish this sentence: I believe that a great leader is someone who...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that a good manager is someone who...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that when it comes to giving feedback...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that when it comes to receiving feedback...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that people are...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I am...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I need to be...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I could be more ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I could be less...
- Finish this sentence: I believe in others because...
- Finish this sentence: I believe in myself because...

IF I COULD...

*“Logic will get you from A to B, imagination
will get you anywhere”*

– Albert Einstein



Imagine all the things you could achieve if there was nothing you couldn't do.

You can learn a lot about a person when you peel away the limitations they put on themselves.

Now, imagine what you could achieve if everyone in your team felt safe enough to peel away their limiting beliefs and let their imaginations run wild.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: IF I COULD...

- If you could choose to be any famous person for a day, who would you be? Why?
- If you could choose any superpower, which superpower would you choose? Why?
- If you could eat any food without putting on weight or getting sick, what would you eat all day?
- If you could turn anyone into a pumpkin, who would it be?
- If you could cure one disease, which disease would it be? Why?
- If you could be invisible for 24 hours, where would you go?
- If you could be the world's greatest musician, what sort of songs would you write?
- If you could do one naughty thing without getting caught, what would it be?
- If you could control people's thoughts, what sort of things would you make them think?
- If you could choose to win any event in the Olympics, which event would you choose?

- If you could become a world champion in anything, what would it be?
- If you could learn any skill in the world, what skill would it be?
- If you could visit any period in history, which period would it be? Why?
- If you could see into the future, what would you want to learn?
- If could you be leader of the whole world, what is the first thing you would do?
- If you could change anything about your family, what would it be?
- If you could laugh more, sleep more or exercise more, which would you choose? Why?
- If you could be smarter, stronger, or richer, which would you choose? Why?
- If you didn't need any sleep, what would you do with the extra time?
- If you could change anything about your job, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about your workplace, what would it be?

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- If you could change anything about the world, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about your weekends, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about your friends, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about your life, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be?
- If you could learn to appreciate yourself more, how would your life be different?
- If you could tell your family anything at all, what would you tell them?
- If you could choose any three wishes, what would they be?

IF I WAS A...

“Who in the world am I? Ah, that’s the great puzzle”

– Alice, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland



If I was a good cook... then none of my friends would recognise me. If I was a tree... I’d want to *branch* out into something new. If I was a... well, you get the idea. Answering these kinds of questions can be lots of fun really. When you can laugh together, it’s a lot easier to work together too.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: IF I WAS A...

- If you were a dessert, which dessert would you be? Why?
- If you were a world famous chef, what would you cook?
- If you were a piece of fruit, which piece of fruit would you be? Why?
- If you were a restaurant, what sort of food would be on the menu? Why?
- If you were a pair of shoes, what sort of shoes would you be? Why?
- If you were a car, what sort of car would you be? Why?
- If you were a house, what sort of house would you be? Why?
- If you were a chair, what sort of chair would you be? Why?
- If you were any piece of furniture, which piece of furniture would be you? Why?
- If you were a wild animal, what animal would you be? Why?

- If you were a household pet, what sort of pet would you be? Why?
- If you were a plant, what plant would you be? Why?
- If you were any item in a supermarket, what would you be? Why?
- If you were any period in history, which period in history would you be? Why?
- If you were anything that can be found in the ocean, what would you be? Why?
- If you were any city in the world, which city would you be? Why?
- If you were a musical instrument, which musical instrument would you be? Why?
- If you were a children's toy, what toy would you be? Why?
- If you were a painting, what sort of painting would you be? Why?
- If you were a song, which song would you be? Why?
- If you were any character from any fairy tale, which character would you be? Why?

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- If you were any movie star, which movie star would you be? Why?
- If you were famous, how would your life be different?
- If you were a spoilt celebrity, what is something you would demand?
- If you were a celebrity, what would you be famous for?
- If you were a teacher, what would you teach? Why?
- If you were a doctor, what would you specialise in? Why?
- If you were completely perfect in every way, what would you do in a day?
- If you were completely perfect in every way, what would your friends notice you doing?

INSPIRATION

“Everybody that I meet inspires me. You can learn so much from any person that you meet any day on the side of the street”

– Nick Carter (a super famous boy band star from the 1990s)



Every time I am about to start writing something new, I wonder where the next idea will come from. But if I am looking for inspiration, inspiration usually finds me.

It might sound simple, but if you want to have an inspiring conversation, try asking someone about what inspires them.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: *INSPIRATION*

- What is one quote or saying that inspires you?
- Name a famous person who inspires you.
- Name someone you know who inspires you.
- Name one place that inspires you.
- Describe a picture that inspires you.
- What is something inspirational that you found online?
- What inspires you to be a better person?
- What inspires you to make a difference?
- What inspires you to try harder next time?
- What inspires you to eat well?
- What inspires you to get fit?
- What inspires you to get out of bed in the morning?
- What inspires you to help others?
- What inspires you to just be yourself?
- What inspires you to learn from your mistakes?

- What inspires you at work?
- What, if anything, inspires you to be a leader?
- When things get hard at work, what inspires you to keep going?
- What is the most inspirational thing you have seen happen at a workplace?
- When was the last time that you felt inspired?
- Describe a time in your life that you were completely uninspired.
- Describe a time in your life when you felt inspired.
- Describe the most inspirational person you have ever worked with.
- Describe a time somebody inspired you. What did they do?
- Describe a time somebody made you want to be a better person?
- What would it take for someone to inspire you?
- How would you like to be able to inspire others?
- In your opinion, who is an inspirational leader?

LIFE LESSONS

“Learn from the mistakes of others, you can never live long enough to make them all yourself”

– Groucho Marx



I don't necessarily agree with every piece of advice that I ever hear. In fact, I recommend that you only accept the advice that works for you (and I promise I'll totally understand if you completely ignore this piece of advice).

A simple way to find the wisdom inside your team members is to ask them about the lessons they have learned in life.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: LIFE LESSONS

- What is one thing that you learned last week?
- What is one thing that you wish you had known five years ago?
- What is one piece of advice that you remember receiving when you were a child?
- If you were seven years old, what advice would you give to your adult self?
- What advice would you give to your fifteen-year-old self?
- What is one lesson that you have learned since becoming an adult?
- What is one thing that you learned on your first job?
- What advice would you give to someone starting out in your industry?
- Who do you go to for advice?
- Who has taught you some of your most valuable lessons?
- What makes a great teacher?

- What is one lesson that you learned from someone you didn't like?
- Name someone who asks you for advice.
- What is the best piece of advice you ever received?
- What is the worst piece of advice you ever received?
- What is one piece of advice that has always stuck with you?
- What is a lesson in life that you had to learn the hard way?
- If you could un-learn something, what would it be?
- What is one mistake you have learned from?
- What piece of advice would you like your best friend to listen to?
- What piece of advice do you often give to others?
- What advice do you give to others that you should probably listen to yourself?
- In your opinion, what is one lesson that everyone needs to learn in life?

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- What advice would you give to someone who wants to get to know you better?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to be your friend?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to earn your respect?
- When have you listened to someone else's advice instead of following your instinct? What happened?
- Finish this sentence: one of the best decisions that I ever made was to ...

MONEY

“Money doesn't always bring happiness. People with ten million dollars are no happier than people with nine million dollars”

– Hobart Brown



If you want to learn about the values and beliefs of your team members, I'll bet you \$100 that talking about money is a powerful place to start.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: MONEY

- When is the last time that you got something for free? What was it?
- Name one famous person who obviously has too much money?
- What is the silliest thing that you have ever heard of anyone spending money on?
- When would you be happy to give your money to a stranger?
- When would you lend a friend money?
- When would you refuse to lend a friend money?
- If you had to borrow money from someone, who is the first person you would ask?
- What is one thing that you enjoy spending your money on?
- What is the best thing you have ever spent your money on?
- What is the worst thing you have ever spent your money on?
- What is the last thing in the world that you would spend your money on?

- In your opinion, what is a complete waste of money?
- What is one sign that you are spending too much money?
- What is one thing that you would like to buy, but really can't justify spending the money on?
- If money was no object, what would you buy?
- In your opinion, how much money is enough money?
- In your opinion, when is someone rich?
- If you won the lottery tomorrow, how would you spend your money?
- What would you do if you lost all your money tomorrow?
- What would be your biggest worry if you lost all your money tomorrow?
- Finish this sentence: I think you should never spend your money on...
- Finish this sentence: I think you should always spend your money on...
- Finish this sentence: money can't buy happiness but it can buy ...

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- Finish this sentence: for \$10 million I would...
- Finish this sentence: even for \$10 million I would never...
- Finish this sentence: for me, the best thing about having money is...

STRENGTHS

“Success is achieved by developing our strengths, not by eliminating our weaknesses”

– Marilyn vos Savant



If you want to do well, a very important starting point is to look for what you do well.

The same goes for every single person in your team. If you want your team to do well, help them to find what they do well.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: STRENGTHS

- What is one of your hidden talents?
- What is the strangest talent that you have?
- If you had to enter a talent contest, what would your act be?
- What are three positive words that describes you?
- What is a skill that has always come naturally to you?
- What is one thing you are good at?
- What did people compliment you on when you were a child?
- What is one thing that you have gotten better at over time?
- What is one of your strengths at home?
- What is one thing that you do well at work?
- What is a strength that helps you to succeed at work?
- Describe a time when your strengths helped you to succeed at work.
- Finish this sentence: I don't want to boast but...

- Finish this sentence: if you really know me, you will know that I am good at...
- Finish this sentence: you might not know this but I am good at...
- Finish this sentence: recently, I have noticed that I am good at...
- Finish this sentence: I work in my current job because I am good at ...
- Finish this sentence: at work, something I do well is...
- Finish this sentence: in a team, something that I generally do well is...
- Finish this sentence: my friends would say that something I do well is ...
- Finish this sentence: my family would say I that something I do well is...
- Finish this sentence: my boss would say that something I do well is...
- Finish this sentence: my co-workers would say that something I do well is...

SUCCESS

*“Success consists of going from failure to failure
without loss of enthusiasm”*

– Winston Churchill



I would love to have some kind of super important sounding description of what success means to me. But I don't; I just want to be more happy, more often.

If you want to get to know what motivates the members of your team, try asking about what success means to them.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: SUCCESS

- Who is the most successful person in your family?
- Who is the most successful person (dead or alive) that you can think of?
- What is the first thing that jumps into your head when you hear the word “success”?
- How has your idea of success changed over time?
- What is one thing that successful people do?
- What is one thing that successful people don’t do?
- As a child, what was your proudest achievement?
- What is one way that you have succeeded in the past week?
- Describe one of your proudest achievements.
- What is something you achieved that you never thought you could?
- What is your biggest professional achievement?
- List three of your achievements at work this year.
- What is your biggest personal achievement?

- What is one achievement that you don't normally tell other people about?
- If you couldn't fail, what would you do?
- If you could succeed at anything, what would it be?
- What is one thing you want to achieve at work before you retire?
- What is one thing that you want to achieve before you die?
- If you were completely perfect, how would your life be different?
- Who helps you to succeed at work? How?
- Finish this sentence: I still can't believe that I managed to...
- Finish this sentence: I never thought that I would be able to...
- Finish this sentence: I can't believe that I still haven't...
- Finish this sentence: I will be so proud of myself when...
- Finish this sentence: I am so proud of myself for...

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- Finish this sentence: secretly, I'm a little bit proud of myself for...
- Finish this sentence: I think my friends are proud of me for...
- Finish this sentence: I will be successful when...
- Finish this sentence: I would probably succeed more if I...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that I could be more successful if ...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that it is impossible to succeed unless...
- Finish this sentence: success happens when...
- Finish this sentence: one of the secrets of my success is...
- Finish this sentence: I believe that the greatest success of all is...

TRUST

“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them”

– Ernest Hemingway



I'm going to put my Captain Obvious Hat on. If you want to build trust with your team, have you tried asking them how to do it?

CONVERSATION STARTERS: TRUST

- Describe a person (real or fictional) who seems trustworthy. What is it specifically about them that you trust?
- Describe someone at work who you trust.
- Describe a time that someone broke your trust.
- What would it take for you to trust me less?
- What would it take for you to trust me more?
- Finish this sentence: at home, you can always trust me to...
- Finish this sentence: at work, you can always trust me to...
- Finish this sentence: I never trust people who...
- Finish this sentence: I trust people who...
- Finish this sentence: my friends can always trust me to...
- Finish this sentence: I trust myself to...

VALUES

“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ’em all over everything you do”

– Elvis Presley



If you want a connection with someone to matter, try finding out what really matters to them.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: VALUES

- What superhero do you most admire? Why?
- If you could sit down and have dinner with anyone, alive or dead, who would it be? Why?
- If you had to be famous for one thing, what would it be?
- If you were completely perfect, what clothes would you wear? What would these clothes say about you?
- What is one thing you have always enjoyed doing?
- What is one thing that you always find the time to do?
- What is one thing that makes you very angry?
- List any three things that you care about.
- What five things matter most to you in life?
- In your opinion, what is one thing that a good person does?
- In your opinion, what does it take to be a good person?

- List three people you respect. What do you respect about them?
- What does someone have to do to earn your respect?
- Describe someone who you would not respect.
- Name a famous person who is a terrible leader? Why?
- What is one thing that a bad leader does?
- If you could be like any leader, who would it be? Why?
- What sort of company would you never work for? Why?
- What sort of manager would you never work for? Why?
- What job would you never do (no matter how much you were paid)?
- What is one thing about your job that you find rewarding?
- When are you happy at work?
- List three things that matter at work.
- List three things that you don't care about at work.

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- When you retire, what would you like your workmates to remember you for?
- What do you want future generations to remember you for?
- What is your favourite charity or cause? Why?
- What is one way that you like to help other people?
- Finish this sentence: the best thing that I own is...
- Finish this sentence: I am lucky because...
- Finish this sentence: It has been a good day when...
- Finish this sentence: to me success is...
- Finish this sentence: when it comes to doing what matters, my motto is...
- Finish this sentence: I think it is a waste of time to...
- Finish this sentence: I believe you should always...
- Finish this sentence: I know I should, but I don't care about...
- Finish this sentence: I am willing to work hard so that ...

- Finish this sentence: generally, I wish that people were more...
- Finish this sentence: generally, I appreciate it when people...
- Finish this sentence: one quality that I admire in others is...
- Finish this sentence: I respect people who can...
- Finish this sentence: I respect people who never...
- Finish this sentence: generally, I don't respect people who...
- Finish this sentence: something that other people probably respect about me is...
- Finish this sentence: one thing that I respect about myself is...
- Finish this sentence: I think the world would be a better place if...

WHEN I...

“Do not learn how to react, learn how to respond”

– Buddha



When I am under pressure to say something interesting, I find it very hard to be interesting. See.

If a member of your team believes that they will act a certain way, then they probably will.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: WHEN I...

- Finish this sentence: when I go shopping, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I want to get to know someone, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I meet someone new, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when someone isn't listening to me, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I don't like someone, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am in a meeting, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am in a silly mood, usually I...
- Finish the sentence: when I am relaxing, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I see something sad, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am angry, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am happy, usually I...

- Finish this sentence: when I am in a hurry, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am disappointed, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am tired, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am scared, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when someone hurts me, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I believe someone has been treated unfairly, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I get feedback from others, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I hear bad news, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am with my family, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am with my friends, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am by myself, usually I...

Connect Better Faster, Level 3: Push/Pull Questions

- Finish this sentence: when I feel supported at work, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I am feeling unstoppable, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when there is something I want to achieve, usually I ...
- Finish this sentence: when someone tells me that I can't do something, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when there is something that I don't want to do, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I make a mistake usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when there is a lot of change going on in my life, usually I...
- Finish this sentence: when I want to learn something new, usually I...

NEXT QUESTIONS

“When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen”

– Ernest Hemingway



You might have noticed by now that this book has 1001 Conversation Starters. So, what do you do when someone answers your question?

Hint: answering back with a terribly long and clever story that’s all about you is probably only interesting to you and, well, maybe your mum.

When someone answers your question, try showing you are interested in *their* answer. Often, the solution is to ask another, more open and thoughtful question. The following is a list of questions that can help you.

CONVERSATION STARTERS: NEXT QUESTIONS

- What else?
- What if...
- What if you did?
- What changed?
- What happened?
- What might be going on there?
- What if we...
- What if you...
- What if they...
- What makes that so...
- What might it take to ...
- What are you willing to ...
- What was it about ...
- What stands out for you...
- What did you notice about...
- Why?
- Yes, and...

- Yes, but why?
- Why not?
- Who are they?
- Who else?
- When?
- When else?
- How?
- How come?
- How else?
- How might you do that?
- Have you?
- Have they?
- Would you?
- Did you?
- So, what do you think about it?
- Go on...
- Yes, and...
- Tell me more...

THANK YOU

To Lauren. This book, this chapter of my life, exists because of you. I owe you lunch. I owe you the world. Let's start with lunch?

To Demi, Rob and Sue. I believe it's possible to be a better person because you believed in me.

To Maria, Tamara and Sam, this second edition is only here because of the love you gave the first edition (and me).

To Jeremy, you are my partner in proofreading and parenting (probably in the reverse order of priority). I still think I'm the luckiest.

Connect Better Faster

To Marina, Julieanne, Caro and Katherine - why are you so patient? I mean, I sort of get it. You don't get a choice, do you? I keep turning up. So, you're stuck with me. Seriously, thank you is not enough.

To my awesome online community, your constant messages of encouragement and your general requests to "keep it coming" regularly blow me away and lift me up.

Last of all, thank you to my family. Thank you for your entirely biased, ridiculously disproportionate, irrational and disturbingly unwavering belief in me. You are living proof that sanity is entirely over-rated.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

If you want to learn more about connecting your people and culture to your strategy through:

- Executive Coaching
- Leadership Development, or
- Conference Events

You can say hello@justinefigo.com.

