

The Art of Conversation:

Enhance Your **Charisma** for Success



By Vincent K.C. Ng
• Of Conversation Arts
www.ConversationArts.com

How to Ask Great Questions, Answered

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Neil Gaiman

Have you ever had a conversation, where you stood there for ten minutes and you swore that you felt like you were being interviewed by someone? You felt like all that people were doing were digging information as if they were a computer trying to know as much information as possible. What’s your job? What are your hobbies? What’s the name of your pet gold fish?

Let’s face it! You don’t want to be ONE of THOSE conversationalists - do you?

Stacy was an attendee for a speed dating event hosted by Luvhat. It was her first time and she was nervous, anxious but still excited. As she sat down on her seat and eagerly awaited her first “date,” she kept wondering what the short conversations would be like. As time went on she was being asked the same questions by different people. Her mind began to wander and her hopes of meeting someone interesting that night began to wane off.

I asked her afterwards what it was that didn’t give the experience she was expecting. “Vince, most of these guys are terrible at initiating conversation and asking good and thoughtful questions? Who wants to answer the same questions again and again? It’s like talking to the same person and being interviewed over and over!”

Stacy isn’t the only person I’ve met who has encountered such dilemmas. People and clients have told me the same thing when they are at parties or they attend networking events. They get asked the same questions, but also they don’t know how to ask questions that start engaging conversations.

From the previous section you learned a basic structure of conversations when you’re talking with people. You follow the conversation structure of asking the person a

question and then answering the question you've just asked. This is a good structure to start off with. What makes a great conversation is learning to ask the type of questions that want people to salivate to participate in the conversation.

Now the questions that you choose to ask can produce three types of results. These questions will 1) raise the energy level and intensity of the conversation, 2) keep it the same level or 3) drop the energy

Most conversations generally will go through all three stages at different points. If you ask the right questions you may find that there is liveliness in the conversation all night, but there may be stalls which temporarily drop the energy of the conversation, and even at times you may want to just make small chat with very simple questions to develop the initial stages of rapport.

There are two broad types of questions that people will ask. And these two types are:

1. Data Exchange Questions (Often associated with dropping the energy or keeping it the same.)
2. Emotional Exchange Questions (Associated more with raising the energy of the conversation to more personal and interesting topics.)

Data Exchange Questions

What exactly are data exchange questions?

Let me give you some examples of data exchange questions first.

"What are you planning to do this weekend?"

"Did you get a chance to go snowboarding or skiing this season?"

"How do you get to work everyday?"

"Do you think the weather will improve in the next week?"

"What did you study in school?"

If you look carefully, data exchange questions are questions that gather information but don't get people into an emotional state where they have the desire to share information with you.

The main difference between both is that emotional questions create **motivation and desire** for the other person to want to answer the questions you've asked.

Whether we believe we are creatures of logic or emotion, in the end we are still emotional beings of varying degrees. If not, then why do so many of us stay in jobs we dislike? It's because of the emotional attachment we have towards having money versus being poor. Logically, we should move from a job we dislike to one we do. Many of us don't, but that's beside the point.

Data exchange on its very basic level is like asking questions as if you were back in school. A teacher asks you a question, and a student gives an answer, but there's no feeling or engagement behind it.

Most of the common topics that I've heard from the majority of people that I consider informational exchange are:

1. Their job (only a very small part of the population enjoys their job. Sometimes you do get an emotional response from them if they hate their job as well. And if it happens that a recession is going on, a terrible question to ask.)
2. What they studied back in school
3. What they did the past weekend
4. Good Restaurants to Eat at
5. Sports (if they aren't sports fanatics)
6. Weather
7. TV shows (especially if they don't watch, or it's not their favourite show)

Asking Emotional Questions for Impact

The second type of question is the emotional exchange question.

This type of question focuses on how someone feels, and this is where great conversations generally happen. These types of questions tend to happen naturally and spontaneously. People generally luck out and have something in common and all of a sudden the conversation is charged up. It's not really what the people have in common as so much as their emotional response and connection when they find out what they have in common.

I don't want you to mistaken that I'm saying that all your conversations have to be upbeat and positive. Sometimes the best conversations do go down in the dumps.

Here are some examples of emotional questions.

1. What was the last adventure you've been on?
2. What's the favourite part of your job?
3. What kind of places would you like to travel to that you haven't travelled to yet?
4. Why do think you it's so hard to date in this city?
5. What would you love to do if you weren't in your current job right now?
6. Where do you think a great place would be to take a date?
7. Disney claims to be the most fun place on earth. What do you think, where do you think the most fun place really is?
8. What was the highlight of your trip to Europe?

Asking emotional questions allow you to know the real person. What do they feel about a particular topic? How do they perceive things in the world? While I'm not saying that you can't ask intellectual questions, such as: "What do you think about gender issues in Sudan?" You want to dig in to see if that person is interested in talking about that topic. Using questions to fish for follow up questions is quite common and is okay. And when I do question people and start fishing, I may start off with data exchange questions that will allow me to switch into emotional questions quickly. But the goal is to be able to switch to emotional questions as soon as possible. Here's an example of where I start with a data exchange and then into an emotional question.

A: "Oh, so what is it that you're studying in school right now?"

B: "I'm studying psychology at the moment."

A: "What was the last exciting psychological concept you remember studying?"

B: "Hmm, the last...well there was this section on abnormal psychology that I really enjoyed. It was talking about how geniuses are created..."

Now if you're wondering how you actually form an emotional question, the easiest thing you can do is to put an emotional word into your question. Literally putting an emotional word into a question can make a difference, or asking how a certain activity made her feel can help move the conversation into an emotional state.

Examples of emotional words are: fun, exciting, sad, cheerful, happy, angry, enthusiastic, adventurous, fearful, scariest, grateful or enjoyable.

"What was the most enjoyable aspect of your last job?"

"What aspect of your life do you personally find most grateful about?"

"What was the scariest thing you've tried, that you don't regret?"

"Who was the person you feared the most when you were growing up?"

"What's the most adventurous vacation you've had?"

"What kind of activities are you most enthusiastic about doing?"

I'm sure you get the point, but simply putting an emotional word into a question gives it a life of its own.

The other simple way to get people to be in a positive mood when they do talk to you is to simply ask them about their favourite anything. What's the most favourite part of your job? What's was your favourite part about writing your own book? Who was your

favourite childhood friend? Simply using favourite will automatically get the other person to focus on a highlight in their life.

Like most parts of conversation there are no clear set rules, only strong guidelines that are suggested. There are some questions that happen to fit into both categories depending on the person you are talking to. They are neither black nor white, but what you may consider a data exchange question, may be an emotional question. For example in Canada, many people love watching hockey, there's the statement that it's like a religion. So for many Canadians talking about hockey is an emotional topic not a data exchange.

Beware of Cliché Questions

The second part of asking great questions is not only asking emotional questions but you want to avoid asking cliché questions, the way they are normally asked by literally millions of other people.

Cliché questions include and not limited to:

"What do you do?"

"What are your hobbies?"

"Do you have any siblings?"

"What did you study when you were in school?"

Unfortunately people have heard these questions again and again in their life, and many times they often give automatic responses, without really thinking too much about it. However, a charming and charismatic person doesn't try to reinvent the wheel, she just knows she has to make it packaged and marketed better. You can ask about a person's job, or what their hobbies are but you want to be able to ask someone in a different way that they've never been asked before. Let's demonstrate this with a food analogy. Person A says that a cake is delicious. Person B says the cake was irresistible. Which

cake would you most likely try, probably cake B. Even though technically they could have had the same cake, but just simply rewording how the cake tastes makes us more invested into wanting to eat it.

Questions are no different. Simply by wording them in a way that makes them irresistible, we can't help but want to answer them. Ask yourself, haven't there been questions that someone has asked you that you just want to pounce on and answer?

So when I ask questions like the ones above I ask:

"So in your current job what do you like the most about it?"

"If you weren't doing the job you were doing right now, where would you really enjoy spending most of your time?"

"Tell me who your favourite family member is?"

"So what was the last interesting subject you remember studying in school?"

Look at the difference, which set of questions seems to be more engaging? I didn't need to create new types of questions. All I did was repackage them.

Now here's an exercise for you, I'm going to write down a series of cliché questions and I want you to be able to reword them yourself to give it that extra spice it needs.

"What kind of music do you listen to?"

"What's your passion in life?"

"Where have you travelled to?"

As time goes on, you'll find out which questions are great to ask and receive good responses, while other questions just seem to flop. Try out different questions and have fun with them. The most important thing to remember is to record down your thoughts

and reflect on what you believe made a particular set of questions work well and other ones that didn't.

Key Points to Remember:

- ✓ Two types of questions you can ask are data exchange questions and emotional exchange questions.
- ✓ Data exchange questions are used to gather information, and often create low energy and superficial conversations.
- ✓ Emotional exchange questions are used to get emotional responses from people. These are questions people want to answer and help create more spice in the conversation.
- ✓ Good emotional questions generally only need emotional words in them such as fun, exciting, or asking them about their favourite activity or part of an experience.
- ✓ Avoid asking cliché questions that you've been asked five thousand times before.

Are you ready to become a master at the Art of Conversation? Wanting to make more close friends and best friends that you can connect with for the rest of your life? Are you looking to find the love of your life?

For the Full Version, filled with Tons of Tips to improve your professional, social and love life, Purchase the Book Art of Conversation: Enhance Your Charismas for Success at:

<http://www.conversationarts.com/artofconversation>

Remember that all your financial information is 100% secure. And you have a 45 day returnable. Also to get more great conversation tips, sign up for our newsletter that will carry the best blog entries on Conversation Arts.

Conversation Exercise 10: Emotional Engagement

Look over some of the example questions in this chapter. Choose 2 or 3 emotional questions that you would like to try asking in your conversations this week. If you would like to create your own emotionally engaging questions and try them out, then feel free to do so.

Once you've asked the emotionally engaging questions, try asking data exchange questions and pay attention to the energy of the conversation. Do you notice if there is a difference? Do you find that people are more involved with one type of question versus another, or do you think they feel the same?

Notice which questions are getting good responses, and which ones are falling flat. Record your findings in your journal.

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