



TWENTY
YEARS

**OF THE STORIES
THAT MATTER**

Class Overview

Explore StoryCorps' timeline

Explore StoryCorps in all its iterations

Review Listening Skills/Learn New Skills

Conversation skills/questions

Practice Listening and Questioning Skills
through conversations

StoryCorps DIY

TODAY

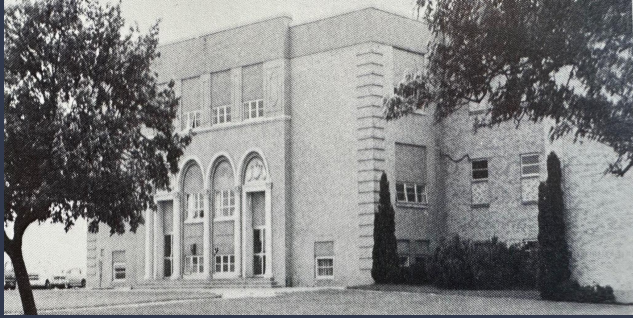
Getting to know each other

Dave Isay clip and StoryCorps timeline



Moderator Intro

Where did I go to high school?



MISSISSINAWA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL



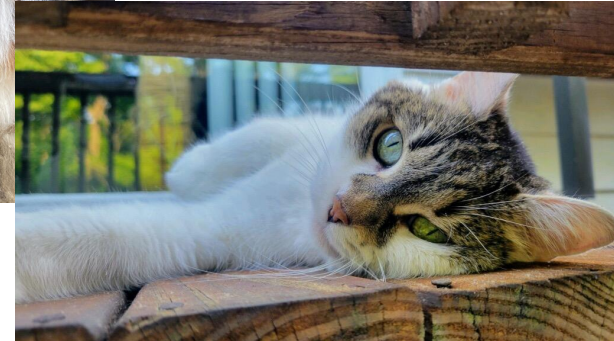
Union City, Ohio
Darke County
100 miles north of Cincinnati



Miami University
William Henry Harrison High
School in Harrison, Ohio



Mom to Ellie and Xi Gua
Live in Westwood
Retired in 2019
Started OLLI in fall of 2019



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After hearing a StoryCorps story...

84% said they gained a better understanding of others' experiences and the value of diverse stories

81% felt more positive about humanity

80% gained a better understanding of social issues

69% reported that their opinions of others were challenged

50% were motivated to improve society

Pre-StoryCorps: 1988-2003, Sound Portraits Productions

2003

StoryCorps begins

StoryBooth in Grand Central Station, New York

2005

**StoryCorps added MobileBooths
September 11 Initiative launches
Debuted on NPR's Morning Edition**



Brothers

2006

Memory Loss Initiative launches

2007

StoryCorps won an Institutional Peabody Award
Listening is an Act of Love was released

2008

StoryCorps' Griot Initiative began

The largest collection of African American stories

Today's Agenda

Continue with the StoryCorps history

View several animated stories

Visit parts of the StoryCorps website

Conversation



Story
Corps®



2009
2010
2012
2013

Historias Initiative launches

Mom: A Celebration of Mothers from StoryCorps

First series of Animated Shorts appeared online and on public television

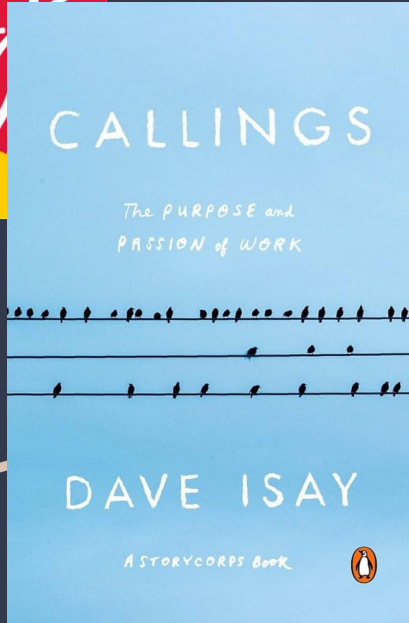
All There Is: Love Stories from StoryCorps

Peabody Award for Animations and Audio commemorating the 10th anniversary of 9/11

Military Voices Initiative launches

Ties That Bind: Stories of Love and Gratitude From the First Ten Years of StoryCorps

\$1 million MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions



2014

StoryCorps OutLoud launches

Dave Isay, founder, is named winner of 2015 TED Prize

2015

StoryCorp App launches

Great Thanksgiving Listen launches

2016

Callings: The Purpose and Passion of Work

StoryCorps wins a News and Documentary Emmy for animated "Traffic Stop"

With Steven Spielberg's Righteous Person's Foundation and Upworthy, SC launches #WhoWeAre animation series

Listen. Honor. Share.
STORYCORPS

2017

Project Justice Launches
500th episode of StoryCorps podcast released
StoryCorps app attains its one millionth download (within two years)

2018

One Small Step launches
15th Anniversary
Military Voices initiative, with Google and YouTube

2019

Stonewall Outloud launches using StoryCorps app

2020

Road to Resilience launches
Early days of Covid, StoryCorps Connect launches
American Pathways launches

2023

Story Corps celebrates its 20th anniversary

Explore the StoryCorp website/DIY

Anyone you'd like to do an interview with?
Would it be to record their stories or for a
back and forth conversation?
What stories would you want to share?

Food

Childhood favorites/best dishes made by grandparents/
parents

Table rules growing up/who enforced the rules?

Foods you never thought you'd end up liking but do now

Foods you can't eat any more or dislike now

Favorite meals/dishes/sides/desserts

Favorite type of food/restaurant

Memories of special restaurants

...family gatherings

Comfort food?

Any strange food combinations?

Unusual food in your kitchen?

Whenever I eat _____ I think of _____

Music

Favorite concerts

Can you sing? Are you good at playing an
instrument?

Favorite albums/singles

Do you listen to music these days? How do you
listen—Amazon Music, Pandora...?

Do you sing in the shower? Is there a go-to
Song?

A part time job, job as a teenager/college student
follow up—what did the job entail, who did you meet,
what was your pay, did affect any other part of your
life

How did you meet special people—friends, significant
others...

Games played as a kid—both outdoor games and board
games, made-up games, neighborhood games

Lessons taken as a kid—music, dance

Chores/allowance

Where are we going?

Today

- Safety
- Special Dates
- A brief look back
- Listening Skills, new and review



Where have we been?

StoryCorps Iterations

- ❑ StoryCorps website: storycorps.org
- ❑ StoryCorps podcast: subscribe through your choice of sources, i.e. Apple Podcasts, iTunes, Spotify, Google
- ❑ StoryCorps Animations: watch on website
- ❑ StoryCorps on NPR's Morning Edition, Fridays 8:25 am
- ❑ StoryCorps Archives: <https://archive.storycorps.org>
- ❑ Books



Listen. Honor. Share.
STORYCORPS

Listening is an Act of Love

Mom: A Celebration of Mothers from StoryCorps

All There Is: Love Stories from StoryCorps

Ties That Bind: Stories of Love and Gratitude from the First Ten Years of StoryCorps

Callings: The Purpose and Passion of Work

StoryCorps Initiatives

- Griot
- Outloud/Stonewall Outloud
- Great Thanksgiving Listen
- #WhoWeAre
- Justice Project
- One Small Step
- Military Voices
- American Pathways
- Brightness in Black
- Storycorps Legacy
- September 11
- Memory Loss
- Road to Resilience
- Historias



Methods of recording a StoryCorps Conversation

- Atlanta Booth, Atlanta History Center
- Mobile Booths: Check website for cities
- StoryCorps App
- StoryCorps Connect

What are we doing **for someone else** if we do a good job of listening?

Letting them know they are being taken seriously

Letting them know their feelings are recognized

Letting them know what they say matters

Showing we care

Offering an escape from isolation

Giving them a chance to reframe their narratives

Offering them a chance to clarify or gain a new understanding of their own lives



What are we doing **for ourselves** if we listen well?

Learning (a variety of things)

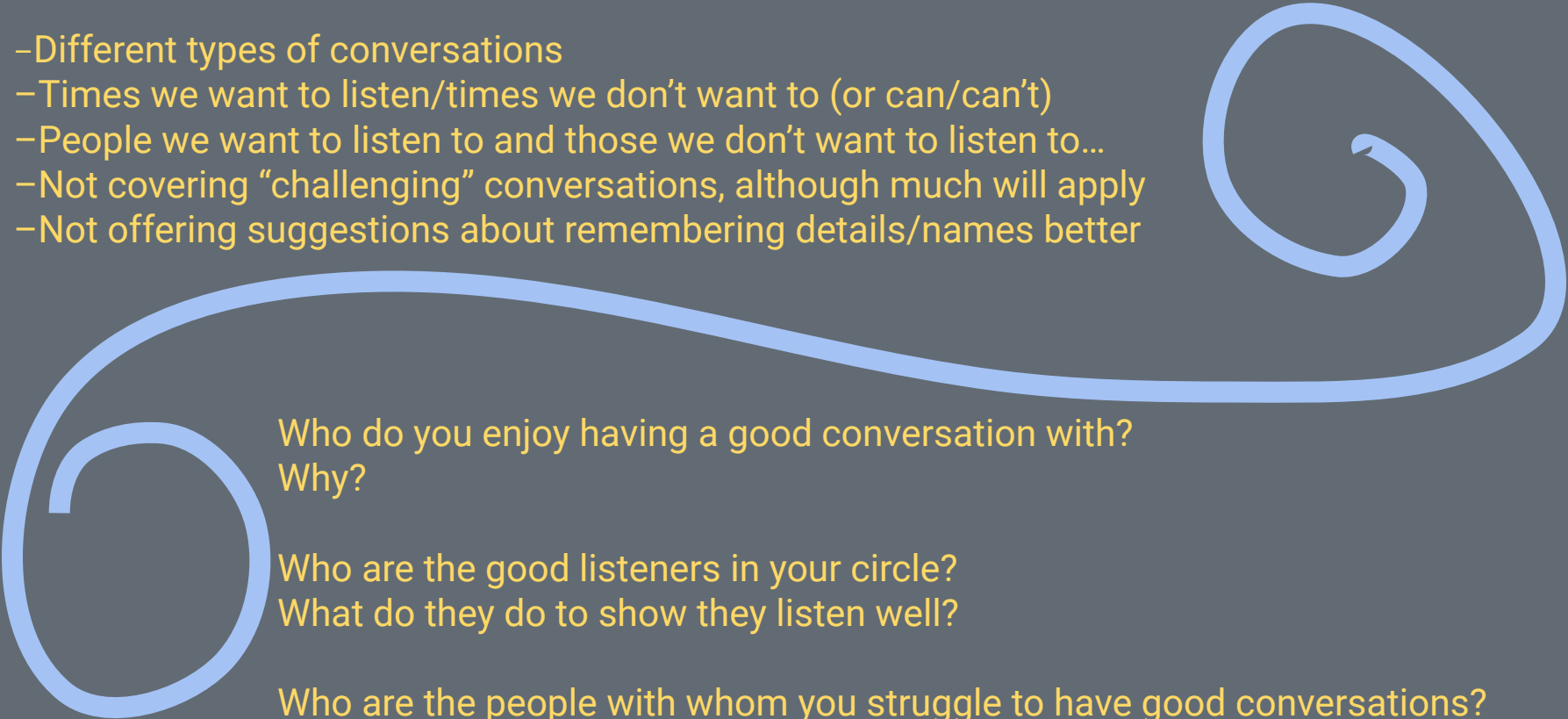
Gaining understanding about another person

Becoming a trusted friend

Establishing a relationship with someone who will listen well to you

Before we go on...

- Different types of conversations
- Times we want to listen/times we don't want to (or can/can't)
- People we want to listen to and those we don't want to listen to...
- Not covering "challenging" conversations, although much will apply
- Not offering suggestions about remembering details/names better



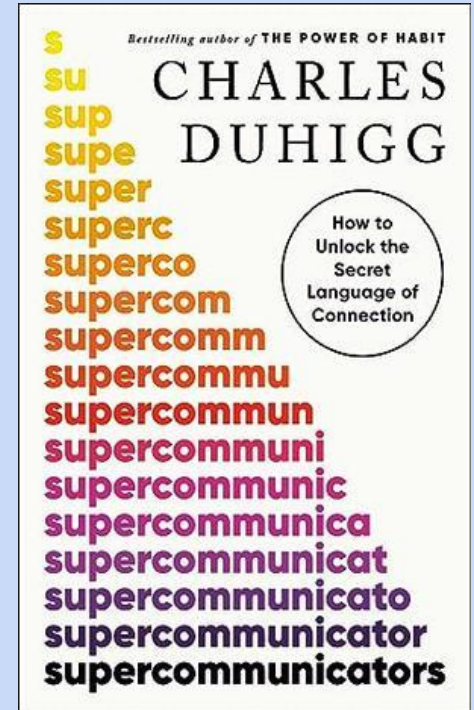
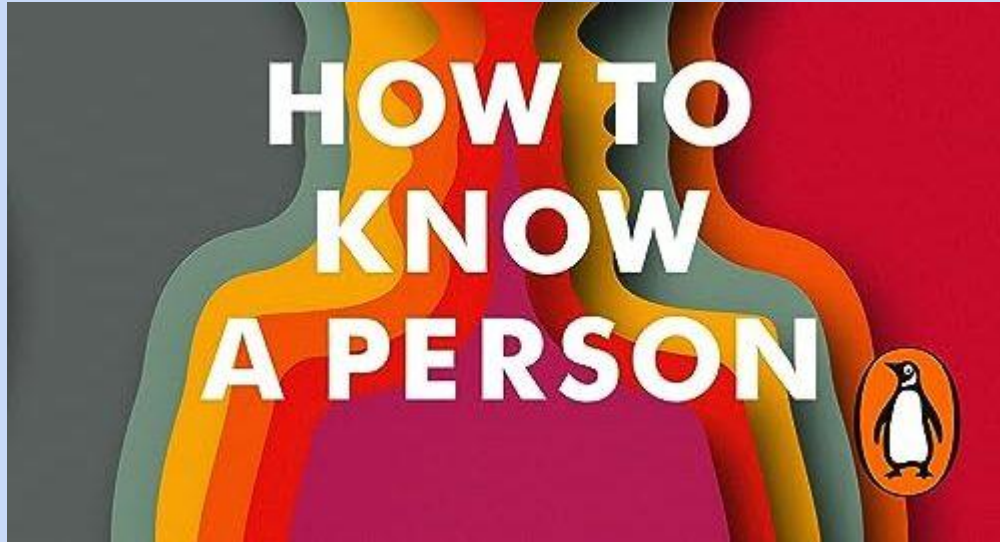
Who do you enjoy having a good conversation with?
Why?

Who are the good listeners in your circle?
What do they do to show they listen well?

Who are the people with whom you struggle to have good conversations?
Reasons?

How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen
David Brooks, 2023.

Supercommunicators: How to Unlock the Secret Language of Connection Charles Duhigg, 2024.



The Listening Mindset

Illuminator

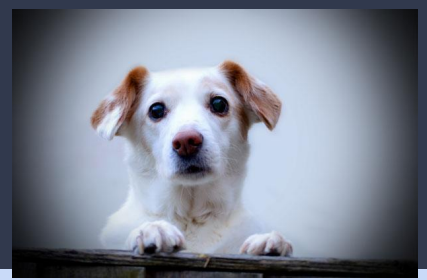
“Seeing other people in all their fullness doesn’t just happen—it’s a craft, a set of skills, a way of life.”
David Brooks



“The quality of your life depends quite a bit on the quality of attention you project on the world.”
Brooks

Attention

The Illuminator's Gaze



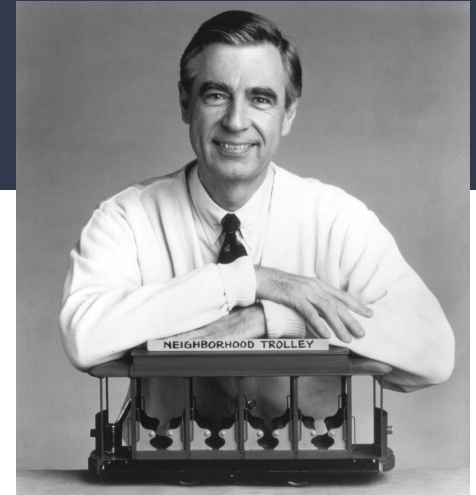
The way you look at someone even before you begin talking can say so much.

**I see you as unique and worthy of my time and attention.
Everyone is fascinating in some way.
“I’ll do you the honor of suspending judgement
and letting you be as you are.”**

Listening Mindset/Illuminator Qualities

Tenderness

Ogla Tokarczuk, novelist, said, “Tenderness is deep emotional concern about another being, its fragility, its unique nature.”



Receptivity

Overcoming insecurities and pre-occupation with self, and opening yourself up to the experience of another.

Resisting the urge to project your own viewpoint.

Not so much empathy, as inquiry and acceptance.

Being Curious

Wonder, ask, be naive—not afraid of looking unintelligent.
“Be curious, not judgmental.” Whitman? Lasso?
Charlotte Observer?



Recap of last week

Listening Mindset/Illuminator's Gaze

Tenderness

Receptivity

Curiosity

Today

One more Illuminator trait

Noise

Diminisher Traits

Practical Listening Skills

Conversation



Listening Mindset/Illuminator Qualities, continued

Holistic Attitude

Taking in the wholeness of a person; not qualifying them as one thing or another.

Leo Tolstoy wrote, “Every man bears within him the germs of every human quality, and now manifests one, now another, and frequently he is quite unlike himself, while still remaining the same man.”

Being and illuminator is the ideal; not easy to do 100% of the time.

Noise

- 1) Physical Noise: sounds that distract
- 2) Psychological Noise: physical sensations, feelings, thoughts
- 3) Semantic Noise: word ambiguity, cultural differences, jargon, misuse of grammar; also words that trigger strong emotions

Diminisher Traits

Egotism: (opposite of receptivity)

Interested only in their opinions, their stories; no curiosity

Naive Realism: so locked into their perspective/worldview that they can't conceive other people have another perspective that is just as real.

Lesser Minds: "I am much more complicated, deeper, more intellectual, interesting..."

Objectivism and Essentialism: Making assumptions, generalizations about a person; learning one thing about someone and then making a whole series of further assumptions—stacking

Static Mindset: A certain concept was formed about a person and was never updated despite time and/ or contradictions.

Practical Techniques for Better Listening

When you've truly chosen to listen

- ❑ Understand Lag Time and use it appropriately
- ❑ We speak at 120-150 wpm while our brains can hear at 400 wpm
- ❑ All or nothing—pay attention, focus on the speaker
 - ❑ Try to predict
 - ❑ Review
 - ❑ Read body language
 - ❑ Formulate questions

- ❑ Deal with distractions
 - ❑ Change location if needed
 - ❑ Eliminate the distraction
 - ❑ Plan for a better time to communicate
- ❑ Practice Active Listening: SPLANT
 - ❑ Sit up
 - ❑ (convey a) positive attitude
 - ❑ Lean forward
 - ❑ Ask questions
 - ❑ Nod
 - ❑ Track the speaker (look at them, make eye contact, and read body language*)

“Listen so hard you're burning calories!”

Practical Techniques for Better Listening

- ❑ Interpret the message as accurately as possible
 - ❑ Remember semantic noise and connotative meaning
 - ❑ Reflective Listening/Looping
 - ❑ Prove you're listening, and listening correctly
 - ❑ "What I think I hear you saying..."
 - ❑ Repeat in your own words what you just heard them say and ask if you got it right—it doesn't have to be verbatim; distill the other person's thoughts into your own words.
 - ❑ Or, ask, "Could you repeat that, I want to be sure I understand." Or, "Say more about that."

- ❑ Evaluate the message
 - ❑ Before forming an opinion, be sure you have all the information; don't jump to conclusions based on personal bias.
 - ❑ *Ask yourself if you're listening to someone or against someone.
- ❑ Respond to the message
 - ❑ Both verbal and nonverbal signals let the speaker know the message was heard and how it was heard
 - ❑ Plus, it's just polite!

- ❑ Mirror the speaker
 - ❑ Mood
 - ❑ Energy
 - ❑ Body language
 - ❑ Paralanguage/nonlinguistical emotional expressions
 - ❑ tone, pitch, inflection, rate, volume

- ❑ Helps to experience the emotions of the speaker
- ❑ Smiles at smiles, yawns at yawns
- ❑ Attunes breathing patterns, heart rate, even vocabulary levels

Body language can
Enhance
Compliment
Replace
Contradict

Albert Mehrabian research:

55% body language
38% paralanguage
7% words

In person
Phone call
Email/text message

Last week:

- ❑ Diminisher Traits
 - ❑ Egotism
 - ❑ Naive Realism
 - ❑ Lesser Minds
 - ❑ Objectivism/Essentialism
 - ❑ Static Mindset
- ❑ Listening Skills
 - ❑ Understand lag time
 - ❑ Eliminate Distractions
 - ❑ Be an Active Listener
 - ❑ Interpret the Message
 - ❑ Evaluate the Message
 - ❑ Respond to the Message
 - ❑ Mirror the Speaker
 - ❑ Read Body Language and Paralanguage

*Ended with "Set One" Questions

Today:

StoryCorps Animation

Perspective Taking vs. Perspective Getting

Set of 36 Questions

Conversation Tips:



Nicholas Epley, psychologist and Professor of Behavioral Science

Perspective Taking:

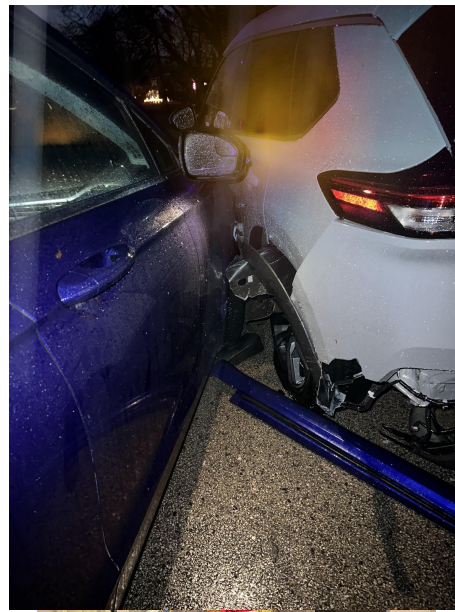
trying to see a situation from the other person's perspective and show them we **empathize**

This can be untrustworthy

It can show how little we understand someone else and how they feel

Perspective Getting/Receiving

Asking people to describe their **inner lives, their values, beliefs, and feelings, and meaningful experiences**



36 Questions to Ask Your Partner That Lead to Love

Fast Friends Procedure

1995 Elaine and Arthur Aron
Research psychologists
State University of New York–Stony Brook
300+ strangers
60 minutes
No instructions to stay in touch
Seven weeks later
57% sought out their partner
35% had socialized
One pair...

BELIEFS

VALUES

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

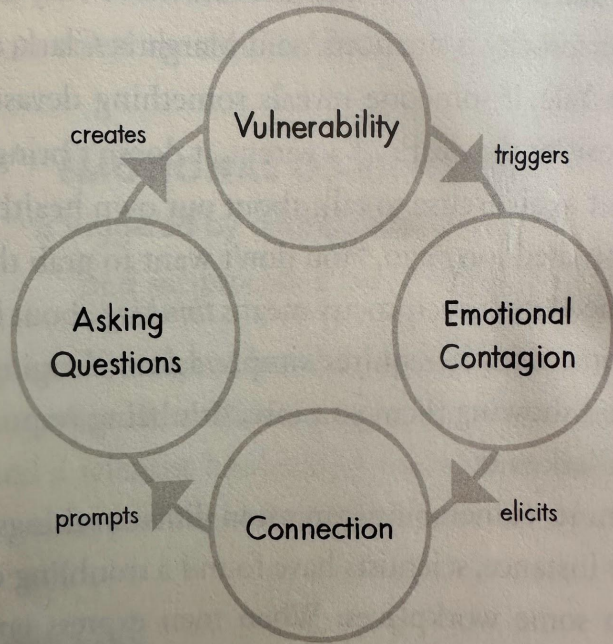


Vulnerability

- Sustained
- Escalating
- Reciprocal
- Personal, self-disclosure

Chosen somewhat haphazardly, at first
The Ungame
Dreameed up at coffee breaks/bar
Emotional? Unemotional?

- ❖ Asking deep questions about feelings, values, beliefs and meaning experiences creates vulnerability
- ❖ That vulnerability triggers emotional contagion
- ❖ Emotional contagion helps us connect



Emotional contagion—think mirroring
Consciously or unconsciously, humans synchronize their emotions with the emotions being expressed by a speaker.

“We become more susceptible to emotional contagion, and more emotionally contagious ourselves, when we share something that feels raw, something that another person might judge.” - Duhigg

Reciprocity

- ❑ Fast Friends—take turns
- ❑ Everyone offered, then reciprocated, vulnerability

How you do that matters

Don't steal the spotlight; prove you're listening (respond, question, loop) before revealing your own emotions

Follow-Up Questions

Powerful

Signal you're listening

That you want to know more

Lead into easy reciprocity

Peggy: I still miss my mom every day, even though she's been gone 10 years.

Lori: What do you miss most?

Peggy: Being able to pick up the phone and tell her about my day.

Lori: You must have done that often?

Peggy: Yes, we talked nearly every day. She was such a good listener.

Lori: My mom's been gone 6 years. I miss her, too. I still often think things like, "I can't wait to tell Mom about what I learned in class today."

Introductory questions can become deep questions

Recast a fact-based question by inviting others to share their **preferences, beliefs, and values, or to share meaningful experiences:**

“Where did you go to high school?”

could become

“Who are you still in touch with from high school?” or

“What do you wish your high school self had known?”

Try to avoid asking best, favorite, worst; instead, try asking about some of your favorites, some of the best/worst

Practice:

*Where do you live?

Where are you from?

What is/was your career?

How long have you lived _____?

What are your hobbies?

Or, be like Epley!

Presentation to Wall Street professional investors

“How to Listen”

He didn't do a powerpoint on listening skills

He believed deep, vulnerable questions were easier to ask—and more enjoyable to answer—than most people realized.

Paired strangers for a 10-minute conversation

1) If a crystal ball could tell you the future, what would you want to know?

2) For what do you feel most grateful?

3) Describe a time when you cried in front of another person.

Survey prior to conversation—how awkward/uncomfortable the conversation would be: they were dreading it!

Epley tried to stop the conversation after 10 minutes

Survey post-conversation/comments: amazing, best conversation I've had in months, significantly more connected to their conversation partner...

Epley on the train to work:

What do you do for a living?

What do you love about your job?

Have you ever dreamed about doing something else?

More from David Brooks:

“Being a mediocre conversationalist is easy.
Being a good conversationalist is hard.”

“A good conversation starts in one place and ends up in another.”

- ❑ Make them authors, not witnesses
 - ❑ Asking concrete follow-up questions help them revisit an experience in a more vivid way.
 - ❑ Ask not only what happened, but how they experienced what happened
 - ❑ Ask how someone is experiencing now what they experienced then.
 - ❑ Draw out what lessons they learned and how they changed because of the experience

- ❑ Don't fear the pause
 - ❑ Some cultures are comfortable with an 8-second pause between one comment and the next
 - ❑ Americans can tolerate about 4 seconds
 - ❑ A good conversationalist controls impatience and ***listens to learn rather than respond***
 - ❑ Wait for the other person to finish, pause a few beats and consider how to respond

Do you want to be...

Helped



Will Smith and Viola Davis

WS: Who are you?

VD: Clear signs of confusion

WS: "Look, I'm always going to be that 15-year-old boy whose girlfriend broke up with him. That's always going to be me. So, who are you?"

VD: I'm the little girl who would run after school every day in the third grade because these boys hated me because I was...not pretty. Because I was...Black."

Imago: an archetype or idealized image

Hugged



Heard



Today's Plan

Body Language

Getting out of a tedious conversation

Conversation and reflection

Body Language

https://www.ted.com/talks/janine_marie_driver_how_to_get_exactly_what_you_want_by_reading_the_body_language_of_murderers

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are?language=en

Angry? Frustrated? Happy? Smug?
Confused? Scornful? Sullen? Bored?

Specific, granular emotions are hard to register with any accuracy

However, we have a system that has evolved within our brains for a quick method for gauging other people's emotional temperature when we first encounter someone.

Flee or stay? Friend or foe?

		MOOD	
		Positive	Negative
ENERGY	High	Upbeat, joyful, excited, enthusiastic	Angry, insulted, outraged, indignant
	Low	Blissful, content, grateful, satisfied	Frustrated, annoyed, grumpy, discouraged

NASA Psychiatrist Terrance McGuire

International Space Station—6 month+ stays

Needed to be physically and mentally healthy; and to be able to navigate the tensions, boredom, arguments and anxiety of living in an enclosed space for long periods.

Along with cognitively skilled, they needed to pay more attention to personality, specifically:

Emotional Intelligence

People with EI

- Build relationships
- Regulate their own and other's feelings/emotions
- Empathize
- They are a pleasure to be around
- Leave others feeling better



Meanwhile...Psychologist Robert Provine was studying laughter!

Recorded 1,200 instances of “naturally occurring human laughter.”

<20% of the laughter was in response to any effort to produce laughter

Most followed typical banter.



Duhigg says, “We laugh...to show someone we want to connect with them—and our companions laugh back to demonstrate they want to connect with us, as well.”

(Reciprocity/Emotional Contagion in Fast Friends Procedure)

***How we laugh/match others is important. We have alignment if laughter is same type; no alignment if one person is producing a belly laugh and someone else emits just a chuckle.

Not just mirroring, but *matching* in ways that show we want to align

2016 Study: participants who listened to one-second recordings of people laughing could accurately distinguish between friends laughing and strangers trying to laugh alike!

Laughter is hard to fake well.

When people genuinely laughed together, mood and energy almost always matched.



Back at NASA...

- ❑ McGuire knew about Provine's laughter study
- ❑ He reviewed audio recordings from 20 years of applicant interviews
- ❑ Noticed the differences in laughter applicants returned after he had laughed
 - ❑ Genuine laughter that matched his mood/energy came from those who'd become successful astronauts
 - ❑ Those who'd ended up washing out, hadn't matched his mood/energy!

Other emotional expressions besides laughter: vocal inflections, tone, pacing, noises would match or diverge

McGuire changed some of his interview methods.



Pay attention more to mood and energy than to all body language

Match those two attributes (or show that you hear their emotions)

How to politely (or not so politely) get away from an overtalker

Ideas from Alexander Lyon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=434PNkoewI>

↓

- ❑ It's me, not you.
- ❑ Recap and say goodbye
- ❑ Aunt Sophie's approach
- ❑ In a group, come to the rescue: interrupt with a specific question, stop speaker after the answer and ask someone else a specific question
- ❑ Redirect/save them from themselves

Humor

Where do you find it?

How important is it in life?

Natural World

Do you get enough?

Nature bathing

How does it impact you?

Arts and Entertainment

Important?

What's it do for you?

Loneliness

Travel Forms

Tours

beach vacay

Self-initiated

cities/towns

Family

mountains/hiking

Independent

relaxing

What do you miss about work?

Family Dynamics

TV Shows/Movies

Books

When and where (school/home) should sex education be taught?

Science and Technology

Do you have faith in them, or are they frightening/unreliable?

Cause more harm or more good?

Younger generations

Older generations