

ONE-TO-ONE “STARTER KIT”

What follows are some **sample questions or suggestions** that could be used in one-to-one relational conversations. These were developed for use in guided one-to-one exercises in training sessions when there is not time to do and debrief a demonstration one-to-one. There is a legitimate resistance on the part of trainers to providing a set of questions for people new to the tool of one-to-ones. Therefore, the lists will have to wait until several qualifiers are offered.

Caution: never get it into your mind that you must cover all these questions! The key to a good one-to-one is to choose a few questions to begin with and then to follow your curiosity, and the other person’s willingness, to get you deep into their values, vision, life and motivations.

This move to go deep takes courage, a willingness to really listen and to take risks. If you’re thinking about what next pre-determined question you’re going to ask, you’ll miss the “breadcrumbs” or “pearls” the person is dropping that could lead you to a real treasure! You’ll also miss your own internal cues that a risk is presenting itself for the taking.

It must be admitted that sometimes, a ways into the one-to-one, you might need to use a question from this set of examples if the conversation gets dry or when you want to move in a new direction. That’s okay. Just don’t get bogged down in the idea that you have to cover a lot of broad territory. Going deep by following a natural course of conversation is the real goal.

To start, have **a few simple questions** ready to use early on to develop a relaxed rapport between you and the person you’re visiting. This will get them talking and help you get a feel for them.

Don’t, by any means, use all of the following, but pick and choose a couple or a few, depending on what interests you or what you already know you have in common with them.

- ◆ Where were you born and how long did you live there?
- ◆ What was it like where and when you were growing up?
- ◆ What was your family life like?
- ◆ How long have you lived here?
- ◆ What brought you here?
- ◆ How do you feel about living here?
- ◆ How long have you been a part of this church?
- ◆ What attracted you?
- ◆ What keeps you here?
- ◆ What do you wish was different?

TIP: stories tell the most and are usually more enjoyable than simple answers to questions. Rather than moving on to additional questions all the time, **probe for specifics** about their experiences and their true feelings about things. Ask for examples of what they mean, stories that illustrate their point.

In the process of the conversation, **be sure to share some things about yourself** and your experiences, especially in relation to things they bring up. Especially seek to find some common ground, if it is there. Say enough to build a relational bridge and a sense that you are trustworthy as someone who has parallel experiences and feelings. But **don’t linger in your own story**.

Don't wait very long before taking a risk and going deeper in the conversation. If you spend too much time with surface type questions, you'll get into a pattern, as will they, and it will be very difficult to move into more substantive conversation. What follows are some questions that call for deeper responses. Again, **don't use all of these!** Just use those that will help you go deeper and provide opportunities to probe with **"why?"** and **"what was that like for you?"**

- Why are you in the job or role you are in now?
- What do you like about what you're doing?
- What are the challenges?
- What kind of impact in your community do you want to have?
- How's it going – the work of making an impact?
- What is the most important thing in your life right now?
- How are you handling that most important thing?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced?
- How did you handle that challenge?
- How is that challenge still affecting you?
- What role has faith play in that process?
- What accomplishment or project are you most proud of?
- What did you bring to that enterprise (assets)?
- What did you learn (esp. about yourself) in the process?
- What has created real disappointment for you in terms of wanting to make something happen?
- What were your (esp. internal) barriers to success?
- What did you learn (esp. about yourself) in the process?

What you want to do is to get them talking about more than just facts and figures, names and events. You want to find ways to explore:

- What makes them angry, sad, or joyful
- What their ambitions and dreams are
- Why they are attracted to certain people, organizations, or communities
- What has grabbed them most along their familial, educational, or faith journey
- Why they spend their professional and personal time the way they do
- What values and relationships they are willing to take risks and make sacrifices around

You can develop your own questions to get at these things.

After the conversation, you should be able to determine some basic things about the person you just visited. You should be able to **jot some notes down to remember the essence of the conversation**. You won't know the answers to all of these, but you will know some things in a deep way about a few of them:

- What does this person care most about and why?
- What motivates them?
- What do they get excited talking about?
- How do they spend their time and why?
- What assets does this person have and where do they get to exercise them?
- What relationships does this person have and value and why?
- What specific concerns or ideas does this person have?
- Why is this person a member of this church or community?
- What would make this person feel very honored if they were invited into it?

ONE-ON-ONE REFLECTION

Person Visited: _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ City _____

E-mail: _____ Role in congregation: _____

A. What are this person's areas of "self interest"?

B. What talents, background, and/or gifts does this person has to offer?

C. What memorable stories did this person tell me that illustrate something important about them?

D. What clarity about him/herself did this person seem to find in the course of our conversation?

E. What was the riskiest question I asked?

F. What might be the basis of a follow up conversation, a deeper relationship or a collaboration?

G. What else do I want to remember from this conversation?
