



## HOW TO ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

These questions & insights are drawn from Warren Berger's *The Beautiful Book of Questions*.

### INSTEAD OF ASKING, "HOW ARE YOU?"

- Try asking, "What's the best thing that happened to you today?" This can be adapted to ask about this week, the weekend, etc.
- Try asking, "What are you excited about in your life right now?"
- Try asking, "What are you most looking forward to at this gathering?" This one is good for conferences and other social events.

### INSTEAD OF ASKING, "WHAT DO YOU DO?"

- Try asking, "What are you most passionate about?" This is a great way to shift from a job (which may be boring) to interests.
- Try asking, "What problem do you wish you could solve?" This shifts from present realities to larger goals and possibilities.
- Try asking, "What did you want to be when you were growing up?" This question invites a story about growing up and the road that led to the present.

### INSTEAD OF ASKING, "HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND?"

- Try asking, "What was the best part of your weekend?"

### INSTEAD OF ASKING, "WHERE ARE YOU FROM?"

- Try asking, "What's the strangest/most interesting thing about where you grew up?"

### TIP: ASK MORE OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

In addition, try crafting the question so that it is asking for more of a feeling, an experience, a story.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO GET TO KNOW OTHERS:

- Try looking at Heather Holleman's 100 Favorite Questions - [Download them here.](#)



## HOW TO GROW AS A LISTENER

Precisely because there is so much "noise" out there, we all must work harder than ever to listen. We associate listening with hearing, but experts point out that it's more of a full-bodied activity. "Good listeners have a physical, mental, and emotional presence, and they know how to integrate all three," says Judith Humphrey, founder of the communications firm the Humphrey Group. It's interesting that the Chinese symbol for listening incorporates the ear, the eyes, and the heart, which also illustrates that face that good listening is a demanding and full body activity.

Before engaging in important conversations, the first question to ask yourself is, **"AM I READY TO LISTEN FULLY?"**

Stay quiet longer. Rather than jumping in with opinions, statements or stories of your own.

Before you speak, use the acronym **WAIT, "Why am I talking?"**

### ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO BE A BETTER LISTENER:

- **Paraphrase** – "Just to be clear, are you saying \_\_\_\_\_?" At key points, repeat back a paraphrase of what you've heard.
- **Mirroring** - repeat a few key words.
- **Can you explain what you mean by that?** This is a classic "clarifying" question used by interviewers to invite people to better explain themselves. Remember, tone is important. Go for curious, not puzzled or antagonistic.
- **I imagine that made you feel \_\_\_\_\_, right?**
- **Echo question** - repeat a key word....like nobody?
- **And what else?** The "AWE" question may be the best way to draw out deeper insights-and keep you in listening mode. Another variation is, tell me more about that. Two caveats, be sure you sincerely ask it. And don't ask it more than 3 times, on the third time maybe ask, is there anything else?