

TEN WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER CONVERSATION

By: - Celeste Headlee

Today, in this world that we live in, where any conversation can turn into an argument based on politics, general issues and what not. Today we are more divided then we were ever, like 10-20 years before. The main problem, we don't try to listen. In this new age of technology, where everyone owns a smartphone, every teenager sends more than a hundred texts a day, therefore they are most likely to text their friend then talk to them. Paul Backwell a school teacher quoted, "I came to realize conversation competence might be the single most overlooked skill that we failed to teach. Kids spend days engaging with ideas and discussions through the screen and rarely have the opportunity to hone their interpersonal communication skills". People/mentors give tips on how to look to be paying attention but do we need it if we are actually listening to the conversation.

The ten rules Celeste discussed where as follows:

1. Don't try to multitask during a conversation, be involved with the speaker. Try to be present there in real time and not think about something else.
2. Never pontificate, that is don't stage an opinion to the listener without any opportunity for them to respond or grow on the conversation and prevent being predictable.
3. Enter a new conversation with a hope of learning something new and that could be possible if we listen, true listening requires setting aside personal opinion such that the speaker becomes less vulnerable and allows him to be more open.
4. Use open-ended questions, start with who, what, where, why or how. If you put a complicated question, we're more likely to receive a simplified version of the answer whereas starting with the above-provided way of asking, we give the speaker a chance to express himself the way he is comfortable in.
5. Go with the flow while having a conversation, thoughts come to our mind between a conversation that can distract you as a listener, thus you might wander off between the conversation and eventually fail to have a good conversation.
6. Don't try to prove you know something if you don't. This way you'll get more and more engrossed in a conversation and not understand things or statements and thus lose an opportunity to learn something new.
7. Don't equate your experiences with their experience; During a conversation, people might share a personal experience, at this moment don't try to share a similar experience of yours.
8. Try not to repeat yourself, this makes us feel like a boring person and makes conversation uncomfortable.
9. Stay out of details, people don't care about detail and discussing details stretches the conversation but makes it ineffective and inefficient.
10. Listen! As mentors and teachers all around the world keep repeating again and again. A good conversation doesn't just requires speaking what you know, but also to allow the other person to speak, hear him and build a conversation on the basis of it.

11. And at the last, be brief with your conversations, speeches, and people listening will not just enjoy but will also learn. As the saying goes, “A good conversation should be like a miniskirt; short enough to retain interest, but long enough to cover the subject”.