



HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Humanity Conversation

A simple guide for your first conversation

THE PURPOSE

Don't try to change someone's mind. Try to understand something you don't yet understand.

Why have a Humanity Conversation?

We live in a world where people increasingly talk past one another. The Humanity Conversation is a practical way to do something different: listen with genuine curiosity to someone whose perspective differs from your own.

One conversation will not solve humanity's problems. But learning to understand one another better is a skill we can practice—and a culture of cooperation has to begin with people.

The challenge

Think of one person whose perspective differs significantly from yours. It could be about politics, religion, culture, society, work, education, technology, or any issue that matters to you.

Choose someone you can speak with safely and respectfully.

Before the conversation

- What do I already assume about this person or their position?
- What might I be missing?
- What would I genuinely like to understand?
- Can I listen without planning my counterargument?

YOUR INTENTION

I am not here to win. I am here to understand.

Start with the invitation

You can make the purpose explicit:

"I'm trying to get better at understanding people who see things differently from me. Would you be willing to have a conversation where I mostly listen and try to understand your perspective?"

The central question

ASK THIS

"What is something you believe that you think people like me don't understand?"

Then listen. Resist the urge to immediately agree, disagree, correct, explain, or defend your own position.

Questions that help you go deeper

What led you to see it that way?

Invite their experiences, influences, and reasoning.

What experiences have influenced your perspective?

Look beyond the opinion to the person behind it.

What matters most to you about this issue?

Explore the values, needs, or concerns underneath the position.

What do you think people who disagree with you misunderstand?

Give them space to explain what they feel is missing.

Is there anything about the other side that you think they get right?

Look for nuance rather than polarization.

What would you most like people on the other side to understand about you?

Create space for empathy and recognition.

Listen for the person, not just the position

Two people can hold opposing opinions while sharing important underlying concerns. Listen for security, fairness, freedom, belonging, dignity, opportunity, family, responsibility, or hope.

Ask yourself: "What human concern is this person trying to protect or achieve?"

When you disagree

- Ask: "Can you help me understand why you see it that way?"
- Reflect back: "If I understand you correctly, you're saying..."
- Check: "Did I understand that accurately?"

- Only then, if appropriate, share your own perspective.

A USEFUL RULE

Understanding someone is not the same as agreeing with them.

Try the perspective challenge

- “What do you think people on your side might be getting wrong?”
- “What is the strongest argument against your own position?”
- “What could make you reconsider part of your view?”
- “What do you think I understand better than you do?”

Find the common ground

Don't force agreement. Look for genuine areas of shared concern, shared values, or shared goals.

What do we both care about, even if we disagree about how to achieve it?

Is there anything we can agree is worth improving?

Is there something we could work on together?

End with reflection

What is one thing you understand better now?

Did anything surprise you?

What do you think we still disagree about?

Is there anything we can respect about each other's perspective?

After the conversation

- What did I learn about this person?
- What assumption of mine was challenged?
- Did I listen to understand, or was I preparing to respond?
- Did I discover something we have in common?
- Did my perspective change, deepen, or become more nuanced?
- What could I do differently in my next difficult conversation?

The Humanity Conversation commitment

REMEMBER

We don't have to think alike to stand together.

A successful Humanity Conversation does not necessarily end with agreement. It succeeds when two people leave with a better understanding of one another—and perhaps a little more willingness to cooperate despite their differences.

Pass it on

If this conversation was meaningful, invite one other person to have their own Humanity Conversation.

**One conversation can change a relationship.
Millions can help change a culture.**

Optional: Using this guide in a Humanity Circle

Choose one central question, give everyone space to speak, encourage participants to ask clarifying questions before challenging a point, and finish by identifying what the group understands better—not simply what it agrees on.

- Shared Humanity: everyone deserves dignity and a fair hearing.
- Better Understanding: seek to understand before judging.
- Constructive Cooperation: look for common ground without manufacturing agreement.
- Keep the focus on ideas and experiences, not attacks on people or groups.
- If the conversation becomes heated, slow it down rather than shutting down disagreement.

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