

Curious Questions Guide

Asking curious questions helps conversations move from the surface to something deeper. You can think of it like this: if a conversation is like a swimming pool, some questions stay at the top of the water, and some help us look below the surface. Deeper questions help people reflect, share more, and understand each other better. Remember: the best curious questions usually cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. They often start with words like “how,” “what,” or “why.”

Below are the question levels and types with examples. Come up with your own questions in each category that follow your curiosity and feel like your own voice.

FIRST LEVEL: Getting the Basics

1. Focus Questions

These help someone share what is most important to them.

“What parts of this topic matter most to you?”

“What concerns you about this issue?”

2. Observation Questions

These help you understand what the person has seen or heard.

“What have you noticed about this situation?”

“Which sources do you trust and why?”

3. Thought Questions

These explore how the person is thinking about the situation.

“What do you think about...?”

“How do you see these things connecting?”

4. Feeling Questions

These invite someone to share their emotional experience.

“How do you feel about what's happening?”

“How has this affected you personally?”

SECOND LEVEL: Going Deeper

5. Hope Questions

These questions help someone imagine a different future.

"How would you like things to be instead?"

"What does this situation mean in your own life?"

6. Change Questions

These explore what needs to shift.

"How could things change to be more like you want?"

"What are some ways these changes might happen?"

7. New Possibilities

These open the door to creative ideas.

"What are all the possible ways to make this change?"

"What are other approaches that might work?"

8. Considering Consequences

These help someone think about impact.

"How would your idea affect others in your community?"

"What might happen if...?"

9. Challenge Questions

These bring up the barriers.

"What would need to change to make this possible?"

"What stops you from moving forward?"

10. Support Questions

These help someone think about what they need.

"How can I support you?"

"What would help you participate in making change?"

11. Action Steps

These questions help someone take the next small step.

"Who do you need to talk with next?"

"What small step could you take this week?"

Notes: