



Radical Curiosity
NOW

Curiosity > Animosity

tips to make conversations curious instead of divisive

Make Curiosity Not Animosity



If it gets tough, try saying...

I'm going to take a break from this so I can digest a bit.

I value learning and I'm trying to stay open minded.

I'm trying to spend more time finding common ground.

I know there are differing opinions on that. But I'm not interested in debating.

Insults don't really affect me.

This really isn't productive.

I'm trying to learn something, not get into a fight.

I'm going to step away so I can ponder this on my own.

We both have strong feelings about this. I'm ready for a break.

Personal Best Practices (things I can control about me)

- Visualize yourself staying in your own personal circle — use I statements and speak from personal experience. Avoid hearsay.
- Focus on managing yourself only. Stay curious instead of correcting.
- Listen first and listen to understand, instead of listening to find fault.
- Besides *assuming best intent*, avoid assumptions.
- Listen to your own body. Practice trusting clues in yourself.
- Distract the ego in you that wants to win — give it an assignment to find out as many new things as possible to distract it from fighting.
- Practice stretching your imagination and assume points of view are infinite. This will help you stay in the middle vs black-and-white.
- Stay aware of your own stereotypes — “is this true because I’ve seen it myself, or because I’ve heard it?” We all have biases.
- Be careful for your sneaky, automatic judgement voice, who will be looking to critique. Give the judge something to do while you listen . . .like prompting you to stay curious.
- Challenge yourself to practice empathy first. What if every part of your life had been the same as this person’s? How might it feel?
- End with gratitude—and mean it. Saying thank you will tell your brain you just received something of value.

Duo and Group Best Practices (things ‘we’ can strive for)

- Set expectations in advance if possible — Agree to not focus on changing the other person’s mind, instead focus on radical curiosity.
- Agree to avoid win/lose and us/them tactics and motivations.
- Reframe the conversation in advance — strive for a curiosity and learning mission instead of a debate.
- Agree to avoid interruptions.
- Set a goal at the beginning to find at least 3 common grounds.
- Agree to share the space. Be intentional about how much time each person has to share.
- Be careful of questions disguised as judgements —i.e. “don’t you think that’s a little misguided?” is really a judgement.
- Set up a time limit or other guidelines so you have an out if things are not going well. Consider a time-out or set agreements for how to get back on track if things go haywire.
- End with gratitude—no matter what.