

*Learn to ask  
questions like a pro.*

# Dare to Ask

*Els Dragt &  
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# Why this book?

Conversation is an art and asking questions is the fuel that sparks it. Having a face-to-face dialogue creates deeper connections and increases our empathy towards others.

This might be exactly what we need in our current times of exclamation marks. More and more we turn to our screens for connection and instant answers. But aren't we losing something when we forget to ask more questions, broader questions, sincere questions, creative questions, especially of other human beings?

Asking a question is free, easy, and at everyone's disposal. Everyone can learn to ask better questions to connect with others. You can do it too!

Get inspired by the insights of masters of questionology from all walks of life. With the essential guidelines and practical tips in this book your skills will improve quickly.

You can put your newly acquired superpowers to use in all kinds of everyday situations. Start asking questions at birthday parties, business meetings, a first date, at the bus stop or in creative brainstorming.

Are you ready to create more meaningful connections with others? Dare to ask!

**Els Dragt & Jeroen Timmer**

# 10 more reasons for questions



If you're not convinced yet on why to ask questions, take a look at the following list of many more reasons to pose questions:

- To learn a new skill
- To solve a specific problem
- To challenge the status quo
- To eliminate confusion
- To influence someone
- To take control of a conversation
- To inquire and gather information
- To get someone's attention
- To test someone on their knowledge
- To stimulate idea generation

Which other reasons can you think of to ask questions?

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Although there are many reasons to ask questions, there are also reasons why we sometimes feel inhibited and don't dare to ask questions. Turn the page to find out about these barriers.





02

HOW  
TO GET  
INTO  
THE  
QUES  
TION  
MOOD?

*“If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spend 55 minutes thinking about the question proper to ask and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”*

— Einstein

04

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# HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS ?

# Keep it simple

Asked how he gets people to talk on film about controversial subjects, documentary maker Louis Theroux shares this strategy: “It’s about asking a really simple question and giving people the space to answer it.”

Keep your questions short and simple. Don’t use too many words and long sentences. No introduction, no explanation, no repeating, no additions. Just pose a naked, bare, simple question.

If something isn’t clear about the question, the other person will ask you to clarify. Or you will notice by the answer that’s given and you can rephrase your question accordingly.

Also make sure to ask one question at a time. Many of us tend to blurt out lots of questions at once, such as “What happened and when, and how did you feel?” This is confusing for people and raises the chance of inadequate answers or people just choosing one of the questions to answer.

Allow people the time to consider each question separately. After posing the question you remain silent until the other says something. Then, repeat the process: ask one simple question again.





# Small talk, big purpose

What are your thoughts on small talk? You know, those seemingly superficial chats about the weather or traffic. This small talk actually serves a big purpose: building rapport. It makes us understand who we have in front of us and provides clues for a more in-depth conversation.

Extroverts have no trouble with chit-chat and quickly moving from one topic to another. Whereas people with more introvert tendencies prefer to skip small talk and rather go into an in-depth one-on-one conversation.

If you find it hard to come up with topics during small talk, make use of the FORD-topics.

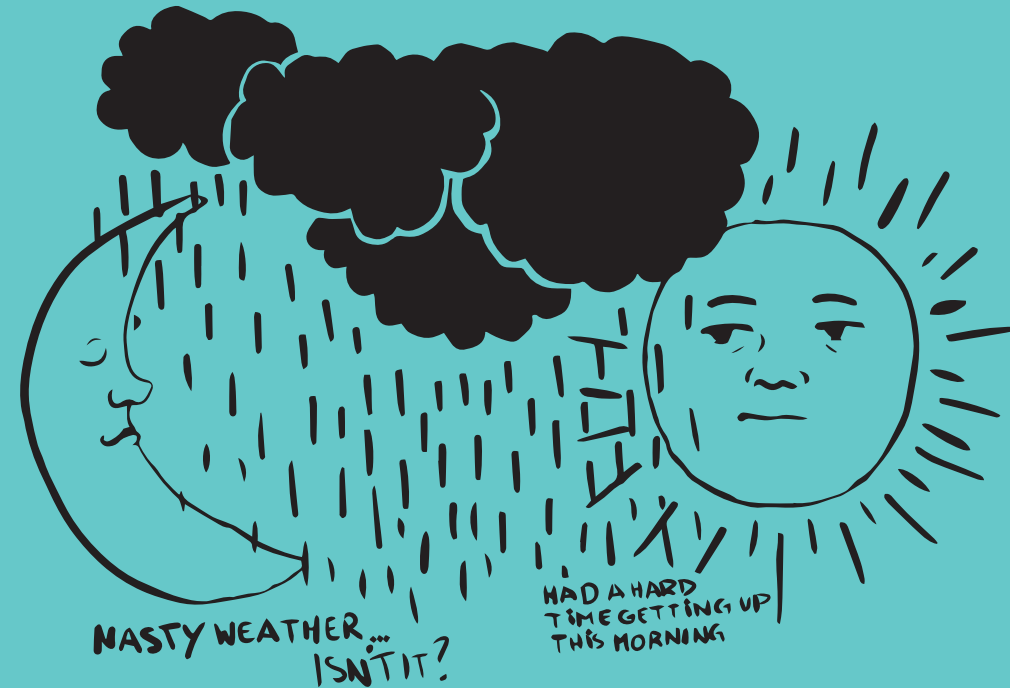
**Family:** Sharing about family members or matters can create more closeness in a conversation.

**Occupation:** This is an often talked about topic with strangers and most people feel comfortable sharing information about their daily job.

**Recreation:** Ask people about their interests, hobbies or passions. Find out why this activity is so exciting for this person.

**Dreams:** You need to have built enough rapport with someone to start talking about their secret dreams. It creates a bridge to move from small talk into a deeper dialogue.

Keep FORD in the back of your mind and you will never run out of things to ask and keep the small talk flowing.



**05**  
**—**

**WHERE  
TO  
ASK  
QUESTIONS  
?**

# Happy birthday!

Invited to a birthday party where you only know the host? Why not ask the birthday boy or girl some quick questions on the type of people that will be there, the party location and whether you should bring something specific? This way you can prepare yourself a bit.

Before stepping into the party mayhem realise that you already have one thing in common with the other guests: you've all been invited to celebrate this birthday. Start your conversation about your relationship and experiences with the host. Where did you meet? How long have you known each other? What do you have in common? What do you appreciate in them?

Other topics to talk about are the food and drinks: "What do you think of the cake Maria made?" or "Can I pour you another drink?" You can also move the focus of the conversation to the location of the birthday party and comment on the things you see in the room: "Justin has a pretty nice place; I really love the brick wall! What kind of house do you live in?"

By touching upon these easy topics, you will find out quickly enough which people at the party you relate to the most. It's fine to stay with them for a bit, they are probably relieved they have found a likeminded person at the birthday bash too. Cheers!



# Ask questions like a pro



Congrats! You've finished this book. Now you know why to ask questions, how to get into the question mood, what type of questions there are, how and where to ask these and how to handle responses.

Put your newly acquired knowledge into practice to become more skilled in asking questions. What are you going to do in the next few weeks to have meaningful conversations full of questions?

For example, you can push yourself to chat with a stranger at the bus stop, organise a question storm at work or for a study project and ask more open questions at your next dinner date.

Write down the type of activities you want to do for training purposes. Make them specific by adding when and where you will do these.

## QUESTION PLAN

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Go get 'em, question tiger!



# Did you ask someone a question today?

Asking questions makes us human, it helps us to establish connections and understand each other. This book sheds light on the craft of asking questions.

Learn from the best in class, like Socrates, a hairdresser, Einstein, a police investigator, Confucius and a therapist.

Use the practical tips and fun facts in this book to your advantage during birthday parties, networking events, a first date or at the bus stop.

Are you ready to turn the focus to the other, ask questions and create deeper connections?

