

NON-VANILLA QUESTIONS GUIDE



One of the main challenges that a lot of people have when approaching someone and engaging them in conversation is to set themselves aside from the crowd.

Most people go with the traditional, safe and ultimately boring “What's your name?” “What do you do?” “Do you live around here?”

Questions like these are mind-numbingly boring and ultimately shoot you in the foot in regards to your efforts. The only question in this list that I would actually encourage in any form is “What's your name?” and even then, you can add it a couple of minutes into a conversation to maximise not being like everyone else.

What you have in the rest of this guide are some questions that are different, can provoke great conversation, and can help you find out more about someone than simple boring, vanilla questions.

For many years I had a few questions that I loved asking people as they exposed a lot of information about the person I was talking to and gave the ability to probe deep into who they were. I have included these in the list again in slightly different form.

The first was a simple “If I gave you an open cheque and you could buy any car or form of transport you wanted, what would you get?”

From here you probe into the “what is it that gets you going about ...?” or any other expansion of the question.

My second was “If you could be guaranteed any skill, ability, qualification and you didn't have to worry about the money side of it, what job would you love to do?”

My third question that I enjoyed asking is “If you could have a dinner party for six people and you were one of them, who would you invite, taking into account, they can be living, dead, real or fictional”

Bear in mind that a lot of people are completely unused to being asked questions like these, so they may have to actually stop and think about their answers.

Also bear in mind that you can ask almost any question of people, and I do mean any question, if delivered in the right form. I have actually proven this to numerous clients as well.

What follows are some more of what I call non-vanilla questions, so have fun with them and prepare for your conversations to go where they have never been before.

Use to find out about them, filter and test them as well as show value by not being like all the others that come up and talk, so have fun with it.

If you could wake up anywhere in the world tomorrow, where would you want to wake up? (Shows their sense of adventure, romance, and imagination)

What's the scariest thing that you've done that afterwards you felt really good about having done? (Shows their ability to get outside their comfort zone and take risks)

If you won lotto tomorrow, say, twenty million, which charity or charities would you support? (Shows their level of compassion and empathy as well as seeing their morals and values)

What is a job that, if you could be bestowed with the necessary skills, abilities and qualifications, you would love to do? (Shows their goals and dreams)

Which do you prefer, cats or dogs, and why? (Can show what they want in a partner)

If you could remove one problem from the world, for example starvation or sexism simply by thinking about it, what problem would you remove? (Shows their global view of the world and ability to think about others)

Who do you feel has the bigger challenge in the world, men or women and why? (Can show views, both positive and negative)

If you could be the opposite sex for a day, what would you do with that day? (Can expose victim mentality and negative views of the opposite sex)

What was your favourite toy when you were growing up? What about that toy made it so special? (Can use this question to anchor the positives to you)

If you could learn another language quickly and easily, which one would you learn, and why? (Shows sense of adventure and opinions and beliefs of other cultures)

If I gave you an open cheque so you could buy any car, what would you buy and what is it about that car that gets you going? (Can show spending habits, morals and values)

What is one business idea that you would like to have had recognition for instead of the person that created it? Not the money, the recognition. (Opens up their value system)