

## Conversation Guide: Gratitude

Living Room Conversations offers a simple, sociable and structured way to practice communicating across differences while building understanding and relationships. Typically, 4-7 people meet in person or by video call for about 90 minutes to listen to and be heard by others on one of our nearly 100 [topics](#). Rather than debating or convincing others, we take turns talking to share and learn, and be curious. No preparation is required, though background links with balanced views are available on some topic pages online. *Anyone can host using these italicized instructions. Hosts also participate.*

### Introductions: Why We're Here (~10 minutes)

*Each participant has 1 minute to introduce themselves.*

- Share your name, where you live, what drew you here, and if this is your first conversation.

### Conversation Agreements: How We'll Engage (~5 minutes)

*These will set the tone of our conversation; participants may volunteer to take turns reading them aloud.*

- **Be curious and listen to understand.** Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. You might enjoy exploring how others' experiences have shaped their values and perspectives.
- **Show respect and suspend judgment.** People tend to judge one another. Setting judgment aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.
- **Note any common ground as well as any differences.** Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- **Be authentic and welcome that from others.** Share what's important to you. Speak from your experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.
- **Be purposeful and to the point.** Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
- **Own and guide the conversation.** Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed. Use an agreed upon signal like the "time out" sign if you feel the agreements are not being honored.

### Question Rounds: What We'll Talk About

*Optional: a participant can keep track of time and gently let people know when their time has elapsed.*

#### Round One: Getting to Know Each Other (~10 min)

*Each participant can take 1-2 minutes to answer one of these questions:*

- What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or the country?
- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your life?

## **Round Two: Exploring the Topic -- Gratitude (~40 min)**

*One participant can volunteer to read this paragraph.*

If you were offered a simple way to improve your mental health, tap into happiness, and better your relationships, would you do it? Gratitude is a simple concept inviting people to notice and appreciate the world around them, from sunsets to a child laughing, to a kind gesture. While simple in nature, gratitude relies on our attention and intention as we go through our lives-- lives full of tasks, emergencies, responsibilities, and other worthy causes that demand our attention. In his film, *Gratitude Revealed*, Louie Schwartzberg celebrates beauty and wonder in its infinite forms, "Gratitude is the umbrella that includes feeling connected to something larger than yourself, to having the courage to open your heart and feel compassion..." Savoring a moment and gratitude for each day can make lives happier and more fulfilled. How do you approach gratitude? What impact has it had on your life?

*Take ~2 minutes each to answer a question below without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, the group may take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions/responses. Continue exploring additional questions as time allows.*

- Describe a good day.
- What moves you to feel gratitude? What, if anything, gets in the way of you feeling gratitude?
- How do you experience or express gratitude? What impact does it have on you?
- When has gratitude led you toward wonder and compassion? What happened?
- What does gratitude look like each day for you? How does it change or shift?

## **Round Three: Reflecting on the Conversation (~15 min)**

*Take 2 minutes to answer one of the following questions:*

- What was most meaningful / valuable to you in this Living Room Conversation?
- What learning, new understanding or common ground was found on the topic?
- How has this conversation shifted your perception of others or yourself?
- Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the conversation you just had?

## **Closing (~5 min)**

- *Give us feedback!* Use [livingroomconversations.org/feedback-form/](https://livingroomconversations.org/feedback-form/) or QR code
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- *Join or host more conversations!* With a) this group by exchanging your emails; b) others in person and/or by video call online. Get more involved or learn how to host at [livingroomconversations.org/get-involved/](https://livingroomconversations.org/get-involved/)



***Thank you!***