

Ask Open-Ended Questions Exercise

Also available as a card deck or mobile app

The next step in knowing your partner is to ask questions that deepen your understanding of them.

“Did you call the plumber today?” is not a question that tells you much about your partner’s internal world.

Try asking, “If you had all the money in the world, what would your dream house be like?” You’d find out something entirely different. Open-ended questions have stories for answers—and layers of meaning that can help you understand the heart of who your partner is.

Instructions

Look through the list of questions below and choose an open-ended question to ask your partner. Take turns asking your partner the question you selected and listen to your partner’s answer to that question. If your partner does not want to answer that question, please pick another question to ask your partner. Do not be judgmental or critical as you listen to your partner’s answer. Instead, be supportive and empathetic. Alternate roles as Speaker and Listener.

Ask Open-Ended Questions Card Deck

1. What do you want your life to be like in, say three years from now?
2. How do you see your work changing in the future?
3. How do you feel about our physical home? Any architectural changes you'd like to make?
4. How would you compare yourself as a mother (father) to your own mother (father)?
5. What kind of person do you think our child(ren) will become? Any fears? Any hopes?
6. Is our child like anyone in your family? Who?
7. How do you feel about your family right now? Have these feelings changed lately?
8. How do you feel about work now?
9. How are you feeling now about being a mother (father)?
10. What do you find exciting in life right now?
11. What are your biggest worries about the future?
12. How do you think we could have more fun in our life?
13. Who are your best allies and close friends right now? How have they or you changed?
14. Have any of your friends drifted away or become a bit weird?
15. Who in your life is most stressful to you? Why?
16. What do you need right now in a friend?
17. What things are missing in your life?
18. How have you changed in the last year?
19. Have your goals in life changed recently?
20. What are some of your life dreams now?
21. What goals do you have for our family?
22. What goals do you have just for your self right now?
23. What is one way you would like to change?
24. What legacy do you want our family to take from your family? From your culture?

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25. What are some unfulfilled things in your life?
 26. What would you change about our finances right now?
 27. Where would you like to travel?
 28. What adventures would you like to have before you die?
 29. Has your outlook on life changed in the past two years?
 30. If you could live one other person's life, whose life would you choose and why?
 31. If you could live during any other time period in history, when would you choose to live and why?
 32. What do you imagine your life would be like if you lived 100 years from now?
 33. If you could design the perfect house for us, what would it look like?
 34. If you could choose any other career or vocation other than what you do now, what would you choose and why?
 35. What were the highlights and low-lights of your adolescence?
 36. If you could wake up tomorrow with 3 new skills in which you excelled, what would they be and why?
 37. If you could re-do any decade of your life, which decade would you choose and why? (example: your first 10 years, age 10–20, 20–30, etc.)
 38. What kind of year has this been for you? Tell me the story of your proudest moment.
 39. How have you changed as a daughter or son?
 40. How have you changed as a brother or sister?
 41. What relatives have you felt closest too and why?
 42. Who has been the most difficult person in your life (other than a partner or spouse) and why?
 43. If you could change into any animal for 24 hours, what would it be and why?
 44. Who was your childhood hero or heroine and why?
 45. If you could live in any other country but your home country, which would you pick and why?
 46. If you could experience being any other person for 24 hours, who would you pick and why?
 47. If you could be a genius in any art, music, drama, or dance, which talent would you choose and why?

48. If you could be a superstar in any sport, which sport would you choose and why?
49. If you could be the richest person in the world, what would you do with your money?
50. If you could look like anyone else in the world, who would you pick and why?
51. If you could change one characteristic about yourself, what would it be and why?