



The First Question To Ask Everyone

Suppose you truly want to connect with other people. What's your best strategy?

Most of us start off with questions like: what do you do for a living? And: where did you grow up? We ask for facts and then try to extrapolate a living person around the data that we gather. But that doesn't tell us who that other person is, and it represents polite conversation rather than a genuine attempt to connect. Research shows that connecting with people is far more valuable than gathering data on them. It's also more interesting.

A better strategy, proposed by New Zealander Bernadette Logue, is to see everybody you encounter as a story, and to ask: What's your story? She points out that all stories are unique; your upbringing, challenges, your hard-learned lessons, experiences, achievements and gifts all communicate far more of relevance than your job description.

When you ask for someone's story, you learn what they've learned, and you have an opportunity to connect on a deeper, more profound level. A win-win. Logue says that each person is like a new blockbuster movie, and the tickets are free. She calls this "The question you should ask everybody you meet."