

HAVE A ONE-TO-ONE COMMON GOOD CONVERSATION

People often ask, if there is one thing I can do, what would it be? Well, if you want to build the Common Good, try to have a one-to-one conversation at least a couple of times a week.

PREPARING THE GROUND



We believe the Common Good happens when we cultivate relationships of mutual respect across our differences.

Any type of friendly conversation is valuable to start with. But an intentional one-to-one has the potential to lead to transformative relationships.

This kind of conversation is a different from a meeting with an agenda or a goal to get something. Instead, we meet with people we don't normally encounter, especially those who may be excluded.

It might require you to hear different viewpoints from those you are used to. but when we do this we begin to overcome polarisation and estrangement. Relationships like this help to immunise against tribalism and make us less vulnerable to ideologies.

The tendency of political correctness has a counter-productive effect of causing people to self-censor, which can lead to resentment and entrenchment. Echo chambers are a barrier to building the Common Good which relies on our freedom to think and express.

Our conversations need to be places where people feel able to talk about difficult things. Rather than starting with where you think people should be, you start where people are.

Above all, you listen. You have the humility to listen first. If you are a person of faith, allow yourself to be moved by the privilege of being with another human being made in the image of God, knowing that God is present in all things.

When you have the honour of hearing someone's story, you receive a gift and they find recognition. This is a simple and powerful way in which human beings find meaning.

SOWING THE SEEDS



Look around your neighbourhood and workplace

- Who don't you know?
- Who in your community is excluded?
- Who potentially knows things that are in your blind spot?
- How many people do you know from a different background or with a different viewpoint or educational experience?
- Who is part of a community or institution you would like to build links with?

Set up a conversation with someone you would like to meet

- Suggest meeting up for tea or coffee, agree a place and time
- Choose an informal setting where you both feel comfortable (such as a quiet café)
- Keep the conversation to under an hour, being mindful of the tried and tested guidelines over the page

A ONE-TO-ONE COMMON GOOD CONVERSATION ...

...IS NOT

An interview or a chat
Prying
You talking too much
Selling a product or an idea
To show off
To make your points
To recruit for your campaign or project
To gather more followers
Let's plant these bulbs!
To impose your great idea
Cut to the chase – get them to do something or extract information
Where one person dominates
Is driving towards a conclusion

...IS

A focused conversation
To hear each other's stories and to understand each other's different interests
70% Listening
To find areas of mutual interest or concern
To share your story, your vulnerability, to tell the truth
To receive the gift of the other
To share what you are involved with, saying how others can get involved, being open to new people and insights
To give respect and foster potential for leadership
"I love this place"
To build your experience and learn about your community
About patience, waiting to hear what someone wants to do that is meaningful for them. Trust that a way forward will come.
About reciprocity and sharing
A conversation that ends with gratitude and agreement to stay in touch and any steps for shared purpose

WATCHING THINGS GROW



You may find that something emerges in the one-to-one conversation which you want to pursue, however first and foremost feel the sense of gratitude for the opportunity to connect and to learn from each other. Stay in touch and see what happens.

You may find the seeds of your conversation bear fruit in subsequent weeks and months. Or, you may straightaway see something you can do now, or you may arrange to meet again, or meet with others, or perhaps take steps together to foster a relationship that has become estranged. You may want to meet again for another one-to-one in a few months.

If those involved have a shared faith, it is good to pray together briefly at the end, asking for God's blessing on each other. If not, be sensitive and express gratitude for the time together.

It may take time, but have faith, things will grow when you step forward in this way.



You may recognise the 'one-to-one' from community organising
....although our purpose is different, we draw from the same roots

You may like to read Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. Without meaning, human beings find it difficult to thrive: Frankl observed that even if people's preservation needs are taken care of, life can be meaningless

See also Matthew 4.4

Explore Common Good Thinking and find out more at

www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk