

## 5 Virtually Useless Questions

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Research proves what conventional wisdom says - questions are a great discovery tool and an important part of a conversation. There's just one catch, you won't get real answers unless you ask thoughtful, strategic questions. You can't ask any old question and expect to build a relationship, get the information you need or start a productive conversation.

In fact, questions that lack intentionality and focus can lead to more misinformation than real communication. Common courtesy dictates most people will provide an answer to your question, even if it's a lazy or poorly asked question, but that doesn't mean it's the answer you need to further any of your objectives.

To that point, here are five virtually useless but commonly asked questions that you're better off skipping.

1. **How are you?** Your intentions might be good, but how often have you gotten a real answer to this question? Better yet, how many times have you offered a real answer to this question? Showing care and concern for another person is a good way to start a conversation, but "How are you?" has become a conversation crutch that rarely leads to a nugget of real information much less an interesting conversation.
2. **How does it/you feel?** Unless you are asking about a physical ailment don't expect to get much out of this question for two reasons: the answer is usually obvious, and many people won't talk about their feelings. (Including: the athletes I cover, introverts and people you don't know well.)
3. **Tell me about.** While technically not a question, it gets used with that intent. Essentially it's a catch-all and it's not going to lead to the answer you hoped for – unless you were hoping for a rambling, unfocused catch-all type answer.
4. **Is there anything else to add?** On the surface this question sounds accommodating and thoughtful by giving the person, or group of people, you're speaking with the chance to talk. In reality this question makes it sound like you haven't done your homework, and if you pose it during a meeting it's a good way to get people off track by bringing up topics that aren't on the agenda.
5. **Is there something I missed that I should have asked?** This is a CYA (cover your ass) question. Don't expect the other person to fill in the gaps of what you might have missed. If you haven't done your homework, prepared for the conversation, asked the right questions or communicated clearly that's on you, not them.

You can revise each one of these questions to improve the quality of the answers and the exchange. Discover the process veteran sports broadcaster and sideline reporter Jen Mueller uses in strategizing questions for live TV and radio interviews and learn how that applies that to the questions you ask every day in a [new video series Asking Better Questions](#). The on-demand series takes you through the steps of asking better questions so you can get the answers you want.