

CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS

You have been conducting one-on-one conversations for most of your adult life. The difference is that now we want to encourage you to do it intentionally – to build relationships in your institution and to build your public life to live out your faith and/or values.

There are four reasons for conducting one-on-one conversations:

1. Establish or strengthen the relationship with this person (get to know them better)
2. Understand what motivates them (what is their self-interest and how does it connect to yours?)
3. Help create clarity about values (asking “why” helps do that)
4. Get information.

You are on the hunt for leaders – people like yourself. As you conduct one-on-ones, you want to know three basic things:

1. Is the person relational – what groups do they belong to, what have they done with others, etc.
2. What stories did you hear that give you insight about this person (see above)
3. What do you believe is the self-interest of this person (what do they want, what are they willing to work for, what will benefit them).

Rules for successful one-on-one conversations:

1. You make an appointment. Call each person. If you are part of an outreach campaign being carried out in your institution, let the person know. Tell them it will only be 30 minutes and you would like to meet in a place that is appropriate for the meeting (get a room in your congregation, organization, at their home, at a quiet restaurant)
2. Be on time. Take nothing with you other than your curiosity and courage. You do not take notes during the one-on-one.
3. Be courageous and curious. You will know you are successful if the time appears to fly by and you still want to talk to this person.
4. Thank the person for their time and sharing.
5. Hold sacred what you hear.
6. If you set up the appointment, this is your one-on-one and you are directing the conversation and listening intently. Should the person want to know about you, encourage the person to set up an appointment with you.
7. When you are in your car or at home, immediately fill out the one-on-one form. Keep it in a file.
8. Some possible questions: Don't try to cover all of these in one meeting!

- What brings you joy in your work? In life?	- What accomplishment or project are you most proud of?
- What kind of impact do you want to have?	- What strengths did you bring to that project?
- How's it going — that work of making an impact?	- What did you learn about yourself in the process?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced?	- What has created real disappointment for you in making something happen?
- How did you handle that challenge?	- What were your (especially internal) barriers to success?
- How is that challenge still affecting you?	
- What role has faith [or community, family, friends, or mentors] played in your life and work?	
9. Tell your personal story too, but keep the focus on the other person

Please leave any biases you may have at home. Do not judge. Do not preach. Just be curious (probe), listen (remain focused), and seek clarity (ask “why?”).