FIELD GUIDE

OUR HUMAN VOICES

An initiative from the NEST Foundation.

www.nestfoundation.org

ARE WE AS DIFFERENT & DIVIDED AS WE BELIEVE?

Research shows that a majority of Americans believe we are more divided and different than we actually are.

This is a perception gap, and it matters.

When our understanding of others is shaped more by headlines, stereotypes, and assumptions than by direct human experience, we lose sight of one another's humanity. We begin reacting to the idea of them instead of listening to who they really are.

But the perception gap also tells us that building bridges is possible!



Curiosity is the Key!

Curiosity is a skill and like any skill we can train it.

When you're genuinely curious about someone, you send a powerful message: you matter, and you're worth my time. By making people feel seen and valued, and it strengthens a sense of belonging on both sides. That's how we can build genuine connection.

In Our Human Voices, we practice this directly through interviews, using real conversation to build our "curiosity muscle" and building bridges across our differences.

64% of people believe we are incapable of having constructive conversations about issues we disagree on.

2022 Edelman Trust Barometer

neuroscience!

Our brains hold roughly 86 billion neurons, more than the stars visible in the night sky, capable of over a trillion connections. Every new thing you try forms new neural connections. The more you practice it, the stronger those connections get, and the easier it becomes.

Let's test a theory...

Read the following story about James, a 12-year-old boy. Reflect on his actions and what kind of person you believe him to be. Then read the second version.

Version 1

James lives a few houses down and is new to the neighborhood. You wave in passing, but that's about it. Lately, you've noticed his car parked outside different neighbors' houses at odd hours, sometimes late at night. When you mention it to him, he says he is in a rush and doesn't explain.



Version 2

James lives a few houses down. You've known him and his family for years, he even used to mow your lawn as a kid. Lately, you've noticed his car parked outside different neighbors' houses at odd hours, sometimes late at night. When you mention it to him, he says he is in a rush and doesn't explain.

Did you notice a difference in how you felt about James depending on whether you knew him well or barely at all?

This is called in-group favoritism. We naturally extend more warmth, patience, and benefit of the doubt to people in our "in-group," those we see as similar to us or close to us. The flip side is that we're quicker to judge, or fall back on assumptions about, people we see as outsiders.

HOW COULD OUR COMMUNITIES BENEFIT IF WE MADE EFFORTS TO CONNECT ACROSS GROUPS AND MORE WITH OTHERS WE DON'T AUTOMATICALLY IDENTIFY WITH?

GETTING STARTED

CHOOSE YOUR SUBJECT

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Who do I want to hear more from? What do I want to know more about them? Who does my city need to know more about?

Document it!

Before your interview, record yourself sharing your assumptions. After the interview, record yourself again and reflect.

You are also part of the story!
How does connecting with others change ourselves?

Reflect!

What are three assumptions I currently have about this person or group?

HOW TO INTERVIEW

- Ask **one** question at a time
- Ask open ended questions
  "What was that experience like for you?"
- Refrain from leading questions
  “That must have felt lonely...”
- Follow-up!
  Don’t be afraid to go off script.
- Let silence run
  The three seconds after someone stops talking is usually where the real answer lives. Count to five before you speak.

HANDLING HOT BUTTON TOPICS

This is not about debating. This is about listening. **Remember, curiosity is key!**

When someone gives you a position, ask how they got there.
"How did you come to that?"

Never argue, never agree too fast. Try instead...
"Tell me more about that"

This turns a potential argument into a story every time.



Reflect!

Which of these tips will be the easiest for me?

_____

_____

Which of these tips will be challenging for me or push me out of my comfort zone?

_____

_____

THE INTERVIEW

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ask them to say their name and where they live, in one sentence, the way they'd want a stranger to know them. Then remind them, and yourself: there are no right answers, and nothing is being graded.

Take me back to the street you grew up on. What did that place teach you about people? How did that shape your view of the world?

Let them land somewhere real before they answer. The people who shaped them will walk in on their own.

What do people assume about you before they know you? And what do they get wrong? What would surprise them? What do you wish people understood about you?

Then ask it again, a different way: if someone who had already made up their mind about you were sitting right here, what would surprise them? The first version gets the practiced answer. The second gets the true one.

Tell me about a moment you felt most loved. Where were you? Who was there?

You are asking for a scene, not a category. Stay in it with them.

Who is someone you love that you don't understand or agree with? Tell me about a time someone changed your mind.

Ask what they disagree about, then what keeps them at the table. The second answer is the whole campaign in one person.

If you could relive one moment of your life for eternity, what would it be?

No one has a rehearsed answer to this. Ask it last, then let the silence work.

Add your own!

FILMING YOUR INTERVIEW

Before you begin, have your interviewee fill out the consent form.

bit.ly/ohvconsent

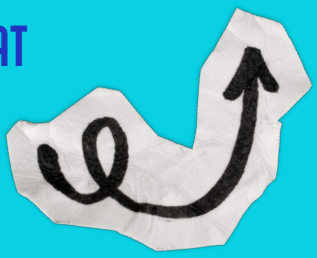
- [ ] **Use the iPhone camera, not social media apps.**
  Film in the phone's regular camera app for better quality.
- [ ] **Film vertically**
  For social media, vertical usually works best.
- [ ] **Find quiet light.**
  Avoid loud restaurants, traffic, wind, or music. Natural light is great. Have the person face a window or open shade.
- [ ] **Keep the camera steady**
  Use a tripod, or prop the phone on something stable.
- [ ] **Frame them simply and get close**
  Keep their face and upper body visible. Avoid messy or distracting backgrounds. Get close to record clear audio
- [ ] **Hold shots longer than feels natural**
  Count to 10 before stopping. Editors need extra seconds before and after a moment.



LISTENING IS WHERE WE BEGIN!

NOW SHARE YOUR INTERVIEW SO THAT OTHERS CAN HEAR IT TOO.

Upload your video via the QR code or go to ourhumanvoices.org



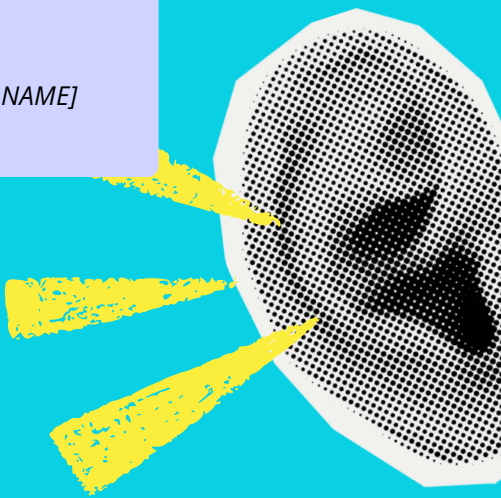
YOU CAN ALSO SHARE YOUR INTERVIEW YOURSELF!

Step 1 *Follow @OurHumanVoices on Instagram*

Step 2 *Share your interview on your profile*

Step 3 *Tag us and use the hashtags #OurHumanVoices and #OurHumanVoices_[YOUR CITY NAME]*





Keep it moving!

Challenge a friend to film their own interview next.

Share the Field Guide available at ourhumanvoices.org