One question further

A free one-page guide to the video "You Don't Hate People. You Hate Shallow Conversations."

Most of us misjudge how much other people want a real conversation. Small talk is the doorway, not the room. These steps help you get through it.

What the research found

Conversations between strangers felt less awkward and more connecting than people expected. People most overestimated how awkward deep talk would be.

Kardas, Kumar & Epley (2022), Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Less time alone, more time talking, and more substantive conversations went with higher life satisfaction. Small talk wasn't reliably linked either way.

Milek et al. (2018), Psychological Science, 486 people

People who asked more follow-up questions were better liked. Speed daters who asked more of them got more yeses for a second date.

Huang, Yeomans, Brooks, Minson & Gino (2017), Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Forty-five minutes of questions that slowly got more personal left strangers feeling closer than small-talk tasks did.

Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone & Bator (1997), Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin

Try it: the moves from the video

1. **Let small talk open the door.** The weather is a fine start. Just don't stay there.
2. **Ask about what they care about.** "What's keeping you busy lately?" Listen for the thing that makes them light up.
3. **Ask the second question.** "How did you get into it?" "What's the hardest part?" One follow-up shows you were listening.
4. **Go up one notch, and go first.** Share something a little more real about yourself. It gives them room to do the same.
5. **Expect more interest than you think.** In these studies, people's guesses about strangers came out too pessimistic.

One question further today?

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Week 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Week 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your plan

Someone I'll talk to this week _____

A question I'll ask them _____

My follow-up question _____

Something real I can share _____

Keep in mind

These studies show patterns, not rules for every conversation. If social situations fill you with a fear that gets in the way of your life, a doctor or therapist can help.