

Resource 15

Sentence Starters for Questions and Ideas

This guide will help you translate what you are thinking into clear questions and comments, even when you are feeling nervous or uncomfortable coming up with ideas on the spot. The goal isn't to use all of the starters – pick a few that work for you and memorize them as your “go-to” statements or questions.

Inner Voice	Sentence Starts
SITUATIONS OF CONFUSION	
<i>“I’m confused.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you clarify what you mean by...”• “Can you give me an example of...”• “Tell me more about...”
<i>“I don’t know how to answer that person’s question.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you elaborate on your question?”• “When you ask that, do you mean...?”• “What would be the most helpful way for me to approach that question?”• “I am just answering from my own experience, but when I hear that question I think...”
<i>“Wait...I lost track of what we were talking about.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you reiterate your point?”• “Wait, I didn’t quite catch that. Can you say that last point again?”• “I want to make sure I got that right. Can you recap?”• “So, just to summarize...(state what you do remember and then ask them to fill in the blanks)”

RELATING OR CHANGING THE SUBJECT

<p><i>“That person’s idea makes me think about something similar.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Your point makes me think about...” • “I love what you just said. It brings up something similar, which is...” • “I completely agree. What do you think about situations where...”
<p><i>“I have a different idea that I want to talk about.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What you are saying just made me think about...” • “That’s interesting because _____. On a different note...” • “I hope you don’t mind changing the subject, but...” • “Speaking of....(link to your ideal topic)”

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

<p><i>“I don’t really agree with what that person just said.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why do you think...” • “But what if....” • “To play devil’s advocate...” • “On the flip side...” • “But what is more important: ___ or ___?”
<p><i>“I want to point out a different perspective about the issue.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why would...” • “Why should it be true that...” • “What about situations where....” • “Let’s take a different angle. What about...”