

# 4 Ways to Get Beyond Superficial Conversation

Several weeks ago, Intellectual Takeout posted a piece about the exhausting nature of [superficial conversation](#). According to this piece:

*“Human beings are those whose nature is to ask deeper questions, and we primarily do this through our relationships with others. When these relationships are dominated by superficial conversations, we are not acting according to our nature. We are wasting our time.”*

But while most Americans would love to move beyond the superficial and have meaningful discussion with others, it's sometimes difficult to figure out what tools are even needed for this venture. In his book, [Confident Conversation](#), Mike Bechtle provides some thoughtful insight on what these tools are and how to use them:

## 1. Map and Compass (Planning)

Before entering a conversation, Bechtle suggests thinking about what you already know about a person, and then develop several questions off of that information that might suggest avenues for deeper conversation. Keeping current with a few news events can also provide further fodder for discussion which goes beyond the weather.

## 2. Binoculars (Observing)

As Bechtle notes:

*“We're so caught up in making a good impression that we forget to look at the conversational clues all around us. It's a matter of using all of our senses to listen, see, and sense the environment. When we're talking, it's easy to focus*

*on what we're going to say next. Good conversationalists observe the little details and use them for direction.*

*People tell us what they want to talk about. Listen closely and you'll hear snippets of things they're volunteering to explore with you."*

### **3. Shovel (Digging)**

The move from superficial to meaningful conversation begins happening as one makes observations and asks others to expand on them:

*"Start with a mind-set of genuine curiosity. Instead of worrying about how a conversation is going, focus on finding out what the other person knows that you don't. Everyone is an expert in something; they've had life experiences or knowledge that you haven't discovered. Make it your goal to find out what those things are."*

### **4. Pest Repellant (Preventing Problems)**

While these "bugs" don't need to be left out of a conversation forever, discussion which leans too heavily on controversial opinions, occupation, and jokes from the get-go can be problematic and uncomfortable for both participants.

Judging from these tips, is it safe to say that the best way to avoid exhausting, superficial conversation is to focus on the other person in the conversation instead of ourselves?