



Questions to Build Hope

Questions That Promote Hopeful Conversations about Existential Thoughts

Having the conversation—the power of being there.

While Christians believe in the hope that comes from Jesus Christ and the vision that God is working toward a fulfillment of all creation—a consummation—those who no longer believe in God might need other ways to regain hope in their lives. Research shows that mentors, family, and the broader community are vital to well-being. We need others to know us and accept us for who we are. We can also ask questions that can help our loved ones process their feelings and we can model how to live.





Question 1: Who am I?

- Tell me who you are at this moment. What are some ways you would describe yourself?
- What are you good at? Can you recall when you were doing something that you liked so much you lost track of time? What was it?
- What do you care about?
- How are you similar and/or different from your parents? Siblings? Best friend?
- What influence do your peers have on how you see yourself?

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Question 2: What is the meaning of life?

- At the end of your life, what would you like people to say about you? What kinds of contributions would you like to have made? How would you like people to talk about how you showed up for them?
- How do you understand suffering in the world? How do you make sense of it? Do you think we have a responsibility to try to help others who are suffering?
- Do you think humans were created for a purpose?

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Question 3: Are we really fundamentally alone?

- Who are the people who are most important to you? How much time do you spend with them each week? Tell me a little about what you talk about. Do you feel like they know you? Are you able to be truthful with them?
- What are the things that get in the way of your ability to be fully open and honest with trusted friends or family?
- When you feel lonely, what are you most longing for?
- Do you think it's important for people to have values about how they treat other people? For example, do you think being honest is important? Do you consider other people's values and ideas when you make decisions about your own life?

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Question 4: When I die, where will I go?

- Do you think humans have souls, or something in us that longs for spiritual connection?
- What do you think happens to that part of us when we die?

Helping people to answer these existential questions can help them regain hope. Figuring out how we want to live and create meaningful lives can direct people toward purpose. A reassurance that feelings of happiness will return and that we can adopt practices to access positive emotions can help us become more resilient to suffering. Living in the present and experiencing a sense that we are all deeply interconnected can provide a profound source of hope.

