

Six Reasons Why People Talk To Each Other

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Anytime you're engaging with someone, there are two conversations going on.

There's the conversation you're having with the other person and there's the conversation you're having with yourself.

If you're really listening to the other person, the conversation you're having with yourself is all about analyzing what's being said to you and why it's being said to you at this particular time.

If you understand that there are really only a limited number — six, to be exact — of reasons people say anything, you'll be able to speed up that process and get to the core of any conversation immediately.

Ages ago, a very wise man taught me that there are only six reasons why anyone ever says anything. If you think there's something that doesn't fit any of these six, think carefully... You'll find that it undoubtedly falls under one of these reasons.

Here they are.

1. To give information.

This includes expressions of emotions and discussions of intent, as well as simple task-oriented requests — "I'd like a large coffee" — that also pave the way for #3, as you will see.

Knowing when someone is giving you information is important because it leads to the question of what they want or expect you to do with the information. In the case of your boyfriend telling you he's unhappy, he may be signaling that he wants something to change...

Or he may just be venting and wanting to be heard.

2. To get information.

Someone who says something in order to get information won't necessarily pose it in the form of a question. "Tell me about..." is one way that a request for information can arrive in the form of a statement.

The information being sought may be your opinion, your assessment, or your best guess. It's not always going to be hard and fast facts that someone wants. They may be gauging your mood to ascertain your willingness to act before they ask you to do something.

3. To get someone to do something.

Now we get into the guts of why people say things: to create actions on the part of other people. Many times these actions are created by giving information, but in those cases, the desired actions may not be readily apparent. The person asking may be counting on a certain response.

Other times, the speaker's motivations are obvious: "come here," as a parent might say to a child or "kiss me, fool" as someone might say to a lover.

4. To stop someone from doing something.

This doesn't have to be a direct command. It can be something subtle, perhaps even in the form of a question ("do you have to go right now?" or "why are you still dating him?")

5. To make someone feel good.

Compliments are the simplest manifestation of this. Trying to make someone feel better is another.

6. To make someone feel bad.

This isn't always as obvious as it seems. If you can't figure out why someone is saying what they're saying, this is the question you should get to: "Are they trying to make me feel bad?" If they're trying to extract guilt, invoke shame, or cast harsh judgement. If they seem to be giving you information that doesn't seem relevant...why are they giving you information?

In the Internet age, however, there is one more reason why people speak. Veiled in anonymity, people you've never met and probably will never meet often leave comments throughout the internet. The reason? To amuse themselves. Avoid engaging with them. It's not your place to be anyone's free source of amusement.