

Relational 1 to 1 Handout

What is a relational 1 to 1 (1-1)?

The relational meeting is a short (30-45 minute), memorable, one-to-one, in person conversation meant to uncover, explore, and share the animating stories, core values and motivating interests of each conversation partner. The goal of a 1-1 is to figure out the “why” of the person you are talking to by inviting them to tell you what motivates them, carries meaning for them and connects them to the community they live in. In community organizing this conversation is a significant piece of building public relationships that increase participation and power of diverse people in a community in order to generate collective will for change.

On an average day we spend a lot of time in “what” conversations: we exchange pleasantries, rehearse our resumes, report our track records, seek or provide advice, etc. That is all well and good, but the relational meeting is not any of those things. It is not a commercial for our new project, an interview, or a pastoral counseling session either.

How to actually do a 1-1

Here are the basics: a blend of what has been learned over years of ministry from community organizing (adapted from a Trey Hall).

1. Setting up the meeting
 - o **1 - A: Make a list of everyone you know in your city, town, village, or whatever your ministry context is.**
 - That is right: why not start with everyone? Put everyone you know on your list. These will be the people you will start with first.
 - Make a list of leaders in the community, people who lead in politics and those who lead organizations that have influence in the community - schools, social service providers, businesses, cultural groups, etc.
 - If you have a core team already assembled this would be a great activity to do at a leadership team meeting. Have people bring a list of names, build on that list at the meeting, see where there is crossover, etc.
 - o **1 - B: Choose ten of those people and email (or call) them to ask for a meeting.**
 - Invite a range of people. Offer your credential and your connection, clarify what you are inviting them to and why, and ask them to respond if they are available. Some of them will immediately respond; some of them won't. It is totally fine to follow up on an email invitation a week later. Schedule the meeting and the location.
 - It is best to pick a public location that feels neutral but not a space that is so crowded or loud that you will not be able to have a conversation.
 - Example of an email: Hello _____. I would like to introduce myself.

My name is _____ and I am [*new to the area, starting a church, pastoring in a local congregation, etc*]. I was given your name by _____ [*or connect your reason for contacting them to their role in the community*]. One of my priorities as I serve in my role is to get to know the community, listen to what people are passionate about and find ways to form partnerships to make our neighborhood a better place to live. I was wondering if you would make some time to have a one on one conversation with me. I promise the conversation will last no longer that 45 minutes. I would love to meet you somewhere in the neighborhood and I am available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-11 and 3-5 (if those times don't work I am happy to find a time that does). Let me know if those times work for you or if we need to set something else up. I look forward to getting a chance to connect and hope you have a great day. Talk to you soon....[sign here].

2. During the meeting

- **2 - A: At the beginning of the meeting, restate your credential and context, an due lear that you will honor the time set aside.**
 - *Remember the 5 questions in people's minds: 1)Who are you 2) Who sent you 3) Why me 4) What will this cost me and 5) What is next.*
- **2 - B: Then move into the main part of the meeting: the conversation itself.**
 - Resit the temptation to default to the aforementioned conversation patterns that the relational meeting is not. Your goal is for the conversation to be memorable, to stand out from the hundreds of other conversations that happen in a week. So, ASK GOOD QUESTIONS! Then, follow up with more good questions that invites folks to consider the "why" of the answers they just gave, and gives you an opportunity to share meaningfully about your own commitments. At first, navigating the balance of deep listening, probing questioning, follow-up and story sharing will feel clunky. But don't worry. The more relational meetings you do, the more natural they will become.
 - *You are looking for the "Why?"...you are looking for what makes people tick. Where does their passion, knowledge and experience all converge?*
 - Here are some potential starter questions...
 - Tell me the story of how you became a _____.
 - Biography is the best place to start, but push hard on the particulars; don't let it be superficial.
 - What does that mean for your life now?
 - What is the main thing you are up to in your organization?
 - Who are your hero's?
 - You seem angry/passionate/convicted about that. Where did that come from?
 - What are you going to do about that anger/passion/conviction?
 - If money were no object what would you do?
 - What would you love to spend your life doing even if no one paid

you for it?

- What is next for you?
- What you drew you to this particular neighborhood?
- What do you love most about living/doing business in this neighborhood?
- What is your favorite part about living here?
- What is something you love to do and wish you had more time for?
- What is one thing about this community that you would like to be a part of changing/growing/enhancing/etc?
- Go for a spark or a probing questions that risks troubling the easy information exchange that people are used to. For example, someone might risk asking a pastor: *“I’ve read some studies that say the church is increasingly irrelevant to young people and will be dead in another generation. do you think that is true?”* Ask big questions that have punch and verve. Don’t forget: during the conversation you should find natural places to speak about your story, interests, values. The 1-1 IS NOT AN INTERVIEW!

3. Ending the meeting

- **Five minutes before the end of the meeting you will want to finish meaningfully.**
 - It is ok - actually great - if you have to finish a really good conversation that could go on for hours. **RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO STAY AT THE TABLE FOR A LONG TIME.** Finishing the meeting on a high note increases the likelihood that you’ll meet again in the future.
 - Ask your conversation partner if they have any last questions for you.
 - **THIS IS ESSENTIAL:** Ask your conversation partner if they know anyone else that you should be talking to. Ask the question and then be quiet and wait. More often than not, they will suggest a couple people. Then ask if they would be willing to connect the two of you. This is how you get more 1-1’s for the future.
 - If you sense a connection and think that there is potential for future connection with your conversation partner, mention how interesting the meeting has been and then ask if you could follow up for another conversation.
 - If they seem like an obvious partner you can also invite them to join you on a team or for an event...this is up to you and how you “feel” the conversation went.

4. After the meeting

- **4 - A: Record your conversations partner’s basic information with whatever technology you use to keep track of contacts.** Make a few notes of any compelling things or important resonances that came up in the 1-1.
- **4 - B: Follow up with an email the next day** to thank your conversation partner and see if anyone else has come to mind that you should reach out to. if they

haven't yet e-connected you with the people they mentioned at the end of the 1-1 ask them directly to do that.

- o **4 - C: As you are doing 1-1's regularly, figure out how to scan and organize the increasing data** your getting from the meetings in order to discern next steps for current and future projects. This goes back to the database we discussed in Rhythm 1.
- o **4 - D:Repeat** - Keep reaching out with more invitations for more 1-1's. You should never run out of people to talk with.