100’s of Table Topics Questions for You!

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Ian Cunliffe, Public Speaking Coach and Keynote Speaker
www.publicspeakingwisdom.com

Animals

• Do you think people who have pets live longer than people who don’t have pets? Why?
• Are there any animals that make you uncomfortable?
• Is a dog really man’s best friend?
• What is the worst possible pet a person could have?
• Lots of dog owners do a good job of picking up after their pets. Other’s… not so much. If you were the municipality, how would you deal with this problem?
• Dressing pets up – adorable or demented?
• Should there be stiffer laws for people who abuse or neglect animals?
• How many cats is too many cats? When do people cross the line from cat lover to become that crazy cat person down the street?
• When might it be ok for a person to have an exotic or endangered animal as a pet?
• We are now at the point that there are more tigers in captivity in the USA than there are wild tigers in the rest of the world. Is this a measure of preservation? Or is it something else?

Art
• It has been said that commercials are the most powerful form of art in the modern age. What are your thoughts on that?
• What country has made the greatest artistic contribution to mankind?
• Tell us about a painting you admire.
• Which does life imitate more – art? Or bad TV?
• Tell us about your favorite artist.
• Art takes many forms ranging from poetry and dance to painting and sculpture. What artistic form do you most enjoy?
• Hold up a print of a famous painting, then ask the speaker to talk about it.
• Jackson Pollock was best known for his abstract expressionism style of paintings, which involved splattering paint on canvas. Is this really art? Explain your point of view.
• What is art?
• Do art ‘experts’ really have a greater insight into the nature of art? Or is beauty something that resides in the eye of the beholder?

Bad habits

• Do you have any bad habits? Would you care to share them with us?
• What habit do you have that drives your significant other crazy?
• What’s one of the worst bad habits that people do in public?
• If you’ve ever been stuck in traffic, you may have noticed someone in the car beside you picking their nose.
• Double dipping a chip – endearing idiosyncrasy or unforgivable faux pas?
• What habit do you have that you would most like to give up?
• Do you have any bad habits that you are actually ok with?
• Which is worse: people who always talk about themselves, or people who always talk during movies?
• Some bad habits you can try to ignore. Others demand that you say something. What are some bad habits that you feel compelled to point out?
• What’s the best way to break a bad habit?

Books

• Who is your favorite author? What do you like about their writing?
• Tell us about your favorite story.
• What is your favorite genre of fiction?
• If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring 3 books with you, which ones would they be?
• If you were to write a book, what would it be about?
• Who is the greatest villain in modern literature?
• What’s the worst book you ever read?
• You find yourself trapped in a library, in the middle of the worst snow storm on record. Your only chance to survive is to burn books for warmth. What’s your selection process? What do you burn first, and why?
• If your life was a book, what book would it be?
• What’s your most memorable book from childhood?
• Tell us about the scariest story you ever read?

Bosses

• Tell us about the worst boss you’ve ever worked for.
• What are the essential elements of being a great boss?
• What are some of the worst mistakes employers make when it comes to treating their employees?
• If you were the boss, what’s one thing you would do differently?
• Tell us about the best boss you’ve ever worked for?
• Put yourself in the other person’s shoes: If you are a boss, try to articulate the challenges that your employees face. If you are an employee, try to articulate the challenges that your boss faces.
• What’s the best way to fire someone?
• If you want to get fired, how could you creatively encourage your boss to fire you?
• What should an employer look for in a good employee?
• Who has it harder – employees or their bosses?

Cartoons

• What was your favorite cartoon growing up? Why did you like it?
• There are many famous cartoon heroes like superman or batman. If you had the chance, what superhero would you be?
• Despite being considered childish, cartoons are one of the most powerful forms of political commentary. Why is that?
• Are children’s cartoons harmless entertainment? Or are they thinly veiled 30 minute commercials for soon to be launched toy lines?
• The Simpsons has been hailed as some of the most effective social commentary on television today. What are your thoughts on this?
• Are TV shows like the Simpsons appropriate for young viewers? Why or why not?
• Every time Charlie Brown goes to kick the football Lucy just pulls it away from him and he goes flying. Should Charlie Brown finally wise up, or there something of merit in his quiet optimism?

• Every good superhero needs a good super villain. Who is the best super villain and why?

• Betty or Veronica?

• Snoopy or Scooby do?

**Childhood**

• Kids have funny beliefs about how the world works. How did you see the world when you were a child?

• What’s a powerful memory that you have from your childhood? Why is it important to you?

• Do we over protect children these days?

• What was the best gift you ever got as a child?

• Do we rush children to adulthood too soon?

• When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

• What’s worse – a bratty older brother or bratty younger sister?

• What’s the craziest thing you ever did when you were a kid?

• What was a defining moment of your adolescence?

• What could you tell your parents today about your childhood that would make their hair stand on end?

**Christmas**

• Worst Christmas gift you ever got

• Worst Christmas gift you ever gave

• Tell us about a Christmas tradition

• Christmas shopping – a merry excursion to the mall or last minute panic attack?
• Should Christmas still be considered a religious holiday?
• A stranger with a sack slips down the chimney and tip toes around your house while you are sleeping. Is there something wrong with this picture?
• Christmas turkey or Christmas Ham?
• What’s the right amount of money to spend on a present?
• What was the most thoughtful Christmas gift anyone ever gave you?
• This list was written by Ian Cunliffe
• What does Christmas mean to you? What would you like it to mean?

Communication

• ‘If you cannot say what you mean, you will never mean what you say’ - Explain what I mean when I say that.
• Which invention had the greatest impact on humankind’s ability to share ideas?
• Should telemarketing be illegal?
• Today’s technology has allowed us to increase the amount of communication that we engage in. But has the quality of that communication suffered as a result?
• Cell phones and smart phones have allowed us to access to other people in ways never dreamed of even 20 years ago. Is that a good thing?
• Tell us about a time that you chose to lie instead of communicating your true feelings.
• Would the world be better off if we all spoke just one language? What would be lost?
• How can people become better communicators in their daily lives?
In a large geographical country like Canada, what are some of the merits of allowing just a few organizations to control communication networks? What are some of the problems?

Do you think you could go a whole week without lying? What would be some of the challenges?

**Contradictions**

Some people would illegally download a song, but would never steal a CD. Why do you think this contradiction exists within the same person?

Can a person be right to life and pro death penalty without facing a measure of contradiction in their views?

Why is it that some people only seem to be happy when they are unhappy?

People say that dreams really do come true. But aren’t nightmares dreams too?

Fredrick Nietzsche once said: “Only idiots fail to contradict themselves at least 3 times a day.” What might this quote mean?

For an alcoholic, one drink is too many and 1000 drinks is never enough. Does this logic apply to other areas of life as well?

“Do as I say and not as I do.” Is it ever ok to give this edict?

Where is a case where people tend to contradict themselves in daily life?

Tell us about a contradiction that you wrestle with.

Most of us agree that speeding should be illegal, yet many of us speed. Why is that? Should we just raise the speed limit? And would that work?
Co-workers

- Good co-workers are like good neighbors. So... what are your work neighbors like?
- Tell us about the most difficult co-worker you’ve ever had to work with.
- What are some of the traits of a really irritating co-worker?
- Are you a good co-worker at your job? Explain.
- What makes a co-worker someone you’d like to work with?
- Is it a good idea for co-workers to date?
- Can you ever really be friends with your boss? Or does the power imbalance get in the way?
- Do you like working in open spaces near other people? Or do you prefer having a quiet, enclosed working space?
- What do you do if a co-worker takes credit for work that you’ve done?
- Is it ever ok to gossip with your fellow co-workers? Have you ever done it?

Culture

- What culture seems most mysterious and interesting to you?
- What culture has the best food?
- Is French really the language of ‘l’amour?’
- Support and argument that western culture is bankrupt.
- Which culture has made the greatest contribution to humankind?
- Celebrity culture – why are we so fascinated by it?
• Today’s society has been described as a youth culture. Why do you think that is, and is it a good thing?
• Tell us a little about your own cultural background?
• What are some of the challenges of dating someone with a different cultural background?
• If you wanted to go on a cultural excursion, where would you go and why?

Customer service

• “Your call is important to us, please stay on the line and our representative will be with you shortly.” Really? If my call is so important, why have I been on hold for the last 20 minutes? When it comes to customer service, do some companies think that customers are stupid?
• Is it ever ok not to tip?
• Tell us about a bad customer service experience you’ve had.
• Is the customer always right?
• What’s the secret to great customer service?
• What has to be one of the hardest customer service jobs a person can have?
• How would you deal with difficult customers?
• Has customer service gotten better or worse in recent years?
• What’s one way companies could improve customer service?
• Tell us about a great customer service experience you’ve had.

Conflict
• Presently, there are almost a dozen wars or major conflicts going on around the world today. What do you think the reason might be for most of these conflicts?
• Are there any wars that have ever produced good results? Results that ultimately benefited humankind?
• Is the war on drugs a winnable war?
• When is war necessary?
• Is terrorism ever justified?
• Many people believed that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would be the ultimate deterrent to future wars. Has that been the case?
• In cases of armed conflict between 2 parties, can a third party ever be truly neutral?
• Who was the world’s greatest general or warlord?
• Is conflict resolution something that should be taught in schools?
• UN peacekeepers have a formal mandate of keeping the peace between 2 parties that want peace but cannot enforce it. Why then do peacekeepers continually get placed amidst ongoing conflicts where both sides do not agree to ceasing hostilities?

Dating

• Tell us about your first date.
• What’s the worst date you’ve ever been on?
• What’s the best setting for a first date?
• Blind dates – great idea or cataclysmic disaster waiting to happen?
• What’s the secret to being a really good date?
• Where’s the best place to meet other people?
• Describe how you would present yourself in an online dating classified ad.
• What are some things that you should never do on a date?
• The first date is going badly. What’s your exit strategy?
• You had a great first date. What’s next?

Driving

• Should there be tougher penalties for driving while distracted?
• Some of the major car manufacturers are now producing vehicles that allow you to check Facebook via a dashboard screen. Do you think this will increase accidents? And if so, should the manufacturer be liable?
• Should passengers be allowed to play with the radio or climate controls while you are driving? What’s the etiquette on this?
• Should highway speed limits be increased?
• Remember when a child’s car seat was ‘grandma’s lap?’ How have safety features in cars changed over the years?
• We now have cars that can park themselves. How soon until we have cars that actually do the driving? And what will our roads be like as a result?
• If the highest speed limit is ‘x’ why do we allow manufacturers to sell cars that can go well over double that speed?
• What are all the necessary elements for a perfect road trip?
• What are your thoughts on graduated licencing?
• What is your dream car? Tell us about it?

Emotion
• Is the opposite of love hate? Or is it apathy?
• Why is it that the people we love are so good at pushing our buttons?
• Tell us about a time you’ve been in love.
• What makes you happy?
• What are you scared of?
• Is there something you hate? Would you tell us about it?
• When was the last time you experienced unrestrained joy?
• Have you ever laughed till you cried?
• Do you think holding on to anger has serious health effects?
• Could a person ever die from loneliness?

Environment

• If global warming exists, why are some places getting colder?
• There are believed to be 46,000 pieces of plastic per every square mile of ocean on earth. What effect do you think this is having?
• Instead of recycling, how could we convince manufacturers to use less packaging?
• Make an argument in favour of an alternate energy source.
• Are green lawns environmentally friendly?
• What is the cleanest source of electricity?
• What sort of effects do you think consumer chemicals are having on the environment?
• Is car-pooling a realistic option for most members of society?
• What’s one easy thing that most people could do every day to reduce their environmental footprint?
• Why are most people not as environmentally friendly as they could be?

Ethics

• Is it ever ok to lie?
• Tell us a time when you bent the truth a little?
• Why is it that if you steal a $50,000 car you will probably go to jail, but if you steal $50,000,000 from a pension fund you unlikely to ever see the inside of a prison?
• Why are ethics important?
• How important is trust in a relationship?
• Is intelligence a virtue?
• Is goodness a reward in and of itself?
• How important is hard work in life, and is it better to work harder or to work smarter?
• What moral principles do you live by?
• What are some standards of behaviour that you would like to see in society?

Family

• ‘Friends are the family that you would pick for yourself’ – how true is this statement?
• Is it better to be an only child? Or to be a part of a large family?
• In a world where natural resources are becoming scarcer, is it immoral to have more than a certain number of children? And if so? How many?
• As a man, what are some of the possible advantages of polygamy (one man having many wives)?
• As a woman, could polygamy offer any advantages for you?
• What are some of your family traditions?
• “You don’t have to like each other, you just have to love each other - you’re family.” Discuss this quote.
• Are families different today than they were 50 years ago? If so, how? If not, why not?
• What are some good strategies for dealing with your in-laws?
• All families have a history. What’s your family’s history?

Fear

• Feel the fear, then do it anyway. Is this good advice?
• When are some times that fear is a really helpful thing to have?
• What’s your biggest fear?
• Why are most people afraid of snakes, and not say, pigs or birds?
• How do you deal with fear in your own life?
• Tell us about a time you overcame one of your own fears?
• What were you afraid of when you were a kid?
• Why do you think people enjoy going to see scary movies?
• What’s the scariest book you’ve ever read?
• “We have nothing to fear but fear itself!” — Great quote? Or false advertising?

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