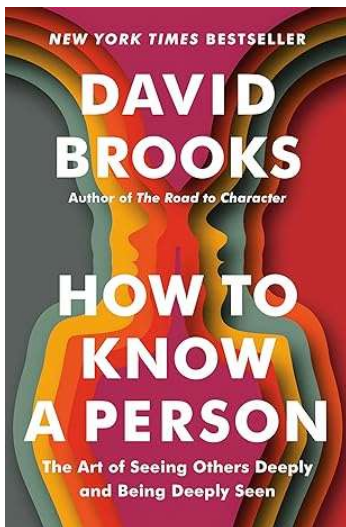


How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen

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In *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen* (2023), best-selling author and New York Times journalist David Brooks calls for a re-thinking of how much true influence we can have on others if we do not take the time to genuinely know them and hear their perspectives. In a time of distrust and uncertainty across our American culture, Brooks argues that perhaps a key part of the answer involves investing more in authentic relationship building. We need to go deeper than what has become the norm in an era of warp-speed rushing of work and play, business and worship, family and friendship.

Brooks’ challenge is especially timely for the present-day university, as we need to look no further than in the mirror in identifying a key reason too many students either drop out of school, transfer, or come to the end of their higher education journey unfulfilled and wondering what actually is the call on their lives. Four or more years of expensive education—often missing the mark as too many courses fail to help the student learn to more fully explore their inner self by connecting with the professor and classmates in an incubator of generative intellectual but also relational space.

Brooks poses these questions as examples of inviting another person to engage in more than mindless politeness, even if thinking, “I don’t want to be rude, but I need to get out of this conversation as fast as I can—I am extra busy today.”

- “What crossroads are you at?”
- “What would you do if you weren’t afraid?”
- “If you died tonight, what would you dread not doing?”
- “If we meet a year from now, what will you be celebrating?”
- “If the next five years is a chapter in your life, what is that chapter about?”

- “Can you be yourself where you are and still fit in?”
- “Tell me about a time you adapted to change.”
- “What’s working really well in your life?”
- “What are you most self-confident about?”
- “Which of your five senses is strongest?”
- “Have you ever been solitary without feeling lonely?”
- “What has become clearer to you as you have aged?” (Brooks, 2023, pp. 90-92).

How do we grow our college and university institutions in healthy ways? David Brooks would say a huge part of the solution is to start small. In our individual lives, at the end of the day, it comes down to one question: Did I really know, and without judgment listen to and authentically connect with the people in my life today? If we can answer in the affirmative, then that has been a life-changing day.

Brooks, D. (2023). *How to know a person: The art of seeing others deeply and being deeply seen*. Random House.