



Hope-Filled Conversations Reduce Anxiety and Aloneness, Even for Millennials

Serving Leaders in Ministry

This article is from Great Commandment Network. To view more content from GCN click [here](#) or visit greatcommandment.net.



To learn more about WHISPER, visit hearthewhisper.com

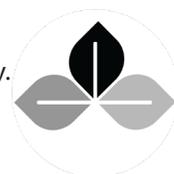
View the full WHISPER training videos by clicking [here](#).

Pastor: In a national survey of more than 20,000 responses to [Barna/Gloo research](#), **emotional stress is the most commonly identified challenge**—beyond immediate health, food, and financial issues—during this pandemic. However, one simple but powerful practice can be used for reducing anxiety and deepening connection, and that is when our conversations move from head-to-head to heart-to-heart. We'll describe this deepening of relational exchanges as we practice “hope-filled” conversations in a pandemic, even with Gen Z and millennials.

Matt Schroeder of the Great Commandment team is helping our friends at WHISPER provide excellent training and equipping in practicing connecting conversations. Below are a few tips from his recent WHISPER training videos. ([click here to watch the video](#))

- The vast majority of the connected generation feels the impact of broad, global trends (77%) more than they feel loved and supported by others close to them (33%).
- Connecting conversations help remove aloneness and social isolation.
- Shift conversations from head-to-head to heart-to-heart.

Below are several principles and actionable “how to” strategies for hope-filled conversations. Everyone has a story, and we need to first listen for it.



You might say for example: *“When this Coronavirus crisis passes, what are you looking forward to? I know I’m looking forward to more time with kids and grandkids and a night out with a couple of friends at a nice restaurant, where they actually wait on you! What about you?”*

Next, we listen for how we respond heart to heart. We listen, so we can care! In this case, we practice responding to what we have just heard in one of three ways through celebration, common interest, or compassion.

1. We can celebrate!

“Matt, I’ll look forward to you being able to do that.” [air high five]

2. We can find common interests.

“I’m also looking forward to seeing a lot more of my family too. Let’s plan to compare stories about our time of reengaging with family.”

3. We can express compassion.

When I asked a friend this, “what are you looking forward to,” question in a ZOOM meeting recently, I was shocked when He said, *“I’m looking forward to getting out of the house to see other family and grandkids since my wife and special needs daughter are quarantined at home with the virus!”*

I had not heard this news. So, don’t be surprised when you ask about hope, if it uncovers pain and a heart-to-heart response. You then respond with compassion.

“I’m very sorry you’re going through that, and I’ll be praying for your safety and getting to see your family soon”

Neither celebration nor anything else but compassion met my friend heart to heart! Now is a great time for hope-filled conversations at home or with friends, while sheltering in place or online. Our heart-to-heart connecting through hope-filled conversations means: you’re not alone, and I care!

Below is a separate faith-based response to “bridge” into spiritual things. Our listening and vulnerable, caring response brings us closer together, so we can be the bridge for sharing Jesus. As we deepen relationships with those who need Him, we look for just the right opportunity—no brainer moments—to bridge into spiritual conversations.

