



Guide to Starting Conversations

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We created the Aspen Proposal to get people talking about the long-term future of our shared home planet.

In a time of increasing polarization, conflict and global stress, humanity needs to rethink our relationship with our home and with our non-human relatives. But we are a small group living in a small place, and we cannot do this alone. Only you (and millions of other people) starting conversations around the world can make this shift in thinking happen.

Please read the Aspen Proposal, share these ideas in your own corner of the world, and start conversations with people you know about the possibilities of our shared future. To that end, we hope you find the following 10 suggestions useful in discussing the Aspen Proposal with others:

1. The Aspen Proposal is not a prediction, plan, or detailed vision. Instead, you can refer to it in a variety of ways:
 - a framework for a sustainable civilization
 - a list of essential elements required by any sustainable civilization
 - an attempt to speed up the paradigm shift that has already started
 - a long-term goal for human society
2. Other folks may be watching or listening, particularly in online social media exchanges. Demonstrating a thoughtful and considerate approach will garner more positive support. Always strive to be polite, rational and compassionate.
3. Many people have busy lives; they aren't interested in the distant future. Accept that. Don't keep pushing. Instead, find people who are interested in having conversations on this topic. Casual chats at work or social gatherings may provide opportunities to mention some of the Aspen Proposal ideas.

4. We expect that these conversations will include people who have a wide variety of perspectives. We are not anti-capitalist, anti-religion, anti-elite, anti-right wing or anti-left wing. Moving forward will be easier with widespread agreement from people with diverse views – there is no need to alienate anyone.

5. Try not to stray from the basics. We don't make (or let others make) assumptions about the future that aren't supported by the Aspen Proposal. Many political, economic, technological and social systems will be compatible with the basic elements of the Proposal.

6. Don't confuse means with ends. The Aspen Proposal is about the destination. It has little to say about how we get there. Stay focused on building consensus about the long-term goal. We think the Aspen Proposal will stimulate solution-finding for current problems, but the process will work best if all participants first agree on where we need to end up.

7. The need to be clear about where we are going doesn't mean we should abandon action on current problems. The Aspen Proposal is not meant to replace all the great work of activist groups; it is meant to support them. Knowing we have a positive future ahead will energize our efforts and make progress more likely.

8. If people think our vision is crazy or flawed, ask for their vision. We often ask for alternatives. If someone responds with an apocalyptic vision of the future, use the Aspen Proposal ideas as a restorative. If someone doesn't like our population target, ask what they think the number should be.

9. We know we aren't going to convince everyone. It is fine to end a fruitless conversation by saying, "Well, you might be right. Time will tell, but we are going to keep working to change the paradigm." If someone has a vision that is more positive and well-thought-out than the Aspen Proposal, we might want to support that vision.

10. Don't hesitate to refer people to our website (www.aspenproposal.org), in particular the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. We will be adding more questions and answers as we go along, and we welcome your suggestions.

Since we launched the Aspen Proposal, we've had lots of conversations with lots of people. We've heard and responded to all kinds of criticisms and assertions – some thoughtful, some silly. If you run into an argument you need help countering, please drop us a line at folks@aspenproposal.org. We might be able to suggest an approach that helps you make progress.