

Better Conversations

Part 3

Connect with humor

<i>The Problem</i>	Sometimes we're thrown into situations with people who find us unrelatable. Humor is one of our best tools for building a relationship in these awkward situations.
<i>The Premise</i>	<p>Storyteller Geraldine Buckley had several barriers to overcome when she started to teach workshops at a maximum-security men's prison. Chief among them was that the guys she was working with didn't find her relatable. She was a female pastor with a chirpy British accent. They were not.</p> <p>One day, when three of the prisoners were complaining in her office, she saw the opportunity to make herself more relatable.</p> <p>"They were going on about how I have no idea," she recalls. "<i>You have no idea how humiliating it is for us when we have to go and see our family. We have to be strip-searched.</i>" Well, Buckley had just the story for them: the time she was cavity searched by police at a Spanish airport during a bout of catastrophic food poisoning. It's a romp, as you can imagine.</p> <p>"I tell you, we bonded after that," Buckley says. "When you tell stories, you see that other people are terribly similar to you underneath." Sometimes literally.</p>
<i>The Application</i>	"Laughing together is a unifying experience," says storyteller Elizabeth Ellis. "The more people laugh together, the more they feel like one people. They put aside their differences. They suddenly have a shared history." This is true of an audience as much as it's true of two people in conversation.
<i>How It Works</i>	A little humor, especially self-deprecating humor, goes a long way. A willingness to laugh at yourself is a form of vulnerability, so it helps deepen a relationship quickly.

Find the full toolkit on the [More than One Story Resources](#) page.