



Connecting Generations Through “Talk Story”

Rhoda Yoshino, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences



Ka 'Aha

Weaving Generations to
Build Healthy Communities

An Intergenerational
and Aging Program

Fun, daily activities that focus on strengthening connections between different generations help to build strong, healthy communities.

For more information about the Ka 'Aha program and other intergenerational programs, visit www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/kaaha

We often think nothing of beginning a conversation with a complete stranger on an airplane or while standing in line waiting at a store. So how is it that we may find it difficult to begin a conversation with a neighbor or relative that is older or younger than us? Conversations are always easier if we know the person or have common interests. How do we begin a conversation with someone we haven't seen in a while, have never met before, or is “way” older or younger than us?

Begin with a subject in common, such as name, how we are related to a mutual friend or friend's parent, where we live, or where recent travels. Remember to ask questions that require more than “YES” or “NO” answers. Comfort level while “talking story” increases the more we practice! As we “talk story,” make a list of common topics of interest. Take turns choosing the talk-story topic.

Talking story helps us find out interesting things about a new friend, share interesting events, and make connections with another person. For a kupuna who is homebound or unable to get out of the house often, this may be his or her only conversation all day long.

How to begin to talk story?

Find a partner!

Ask your parents or friends if they know someone who would like talking story.
Ask your parents if your neighbor would be someone you can talk story with.

So why talk story with someone? What can we gain from this exercise? We can:

- Improve conversational skills
- Learn about different places
- Learn about history, dances, fashions, folk tales
- Share new skills with others
- Build self esteem and self confidence
- Make someone feel needed and valued

Tip

Write down at least five questions that will begin a great talk-story session. You can develop these questions many ways:

Ask several people their favorite talk-story questions. Write them down and choose the best.

Listen to family and friends as they talk story. Write down some of your favorite questions that they ask.