

Now that you've covered the basics in our white paper by Patrick O'Donnell (pg.tips/questions), here's a list of 31 sample questions you can adapt to your own interviews.

Consider variations on these in the framework of the situation — the interview's purpose, the story you are writing, the donor's personality and life experiences, etc. *Context is everything.* These are not meant to be asked in any particular order, or even in every situation:



What led you to become involved with [ORGANIZATION]?
What is something you'd like to see your gift [and/or the ORGANIZATION NAME] accomplish?
What motivates you to stay involved with [ORGANIZATION]?

What inspired you to make your gift?



Has anyone else in your life played a role in supporting your dedication to us?



How did giving your gift make you feel?



Do you have any advice for people considering a gift to [ORGANIZATION NAME]?



Do you have any advice for people who want to [SOMETHING PARTICULAR TO YOUR MISSION]?



Where did you grow up?



How do you feel your childhood shaped you?



What is something you believed as a child that you view differently today?

Do you have any advice on life, learning, and success that you can share?
What is the biggest change you've see between [START OF PARTICULAR CAREER/HOBBY/TIME PERIOD] and today?
What is the biggest change you've seen in your lifetime?



What do you do to relax?
What are your hobbies?

Can you name something that your parents, or someone else important in your life, taught you that has served you well?

What advice would you offer for someone to follow in your footsteps as a [CAREER, TITLE, ACCOMPLISHMENT, ETC.]? (For example: "As the CEO of a Fortune-500 company, what advice would you give to those who wish to follow a similar career path?" or "As a woman who has balanced both career and family, what advice would you give for other working mothers?")

If you could change one thing about [SITUATION THAT AFFECTS WORLD, MISSION, ETC.], what would it be?
When you experienced [EVENT, VICTORY, TRAGEDY, ETC.], what were you thinking at the time? How were you feeling?
What is your favorite memory of [CAREER, CHILDHOOD, EVENT, ETC.]?

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?

How did you meet your spouse?
Can you tell me a little about that?

Of all the places you've traveled, can you name three that really stand out, and what made them special or different?

What is something you wish [CHILDREN, THE CURRENT GENERATION, ETC.] learned today that you learned as a child?

What's your favorite food?
What's your favorite drink?



Where did you go to school as a child?
What were the circumstances that led to your attendance there?

What's your favorite color?
What's your favorite smell?

What one piece of advice would you give to future generations?
Can you think of any questions I missed? Are there any questions you would have asked if our roles had been reversed?