



Conversation Café Festival

2016 - 2017

**Free. No registration is required.
Open to audiences and participants of all
ages and all backgrounds.**

How it works

Each conversation cafe takes place from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Mahtay Café - 241 St Paul St, St. Catharines, Ontario. Cafés are launched with a guest and managed by a moderator. No formal training in philosophy (or anything else) is required.

Fall Conversation Cafés

What are we doing well in the world and what should we change? October 4

Across the globe more people are pursuing education than ever before. People are traveling, finding work, and living longer, healthier lives. At the same time there are reports of growing obesity, increased social isolation, and building concerns over climate change. In this conversation we discuss the positive changes we are seeing today and consider ways to expand upon these. We will also discuss what we want to change and how can we personally move talk to action.

What should education look like today? October 11

We will start this conversation by discussing the purpose of education. Is it to train for the workforce in a competitive world? Build citizenship skills and a sense of social responsibility? Develop self-awareness to lead a balanced and happy life? Or perhaps something else entirely? We will then discuss what we liked and disliked about our own education, and finish by exploring our ideas for redesigning education in the 21st century.

What should health care look like today? October 18

We begin this conversation by asking what it means to be healthy. Questions we will then consider include: Is healthcare a basic human right or is it merely a privilege? Is there a risk to human advancement if we restrict everyone to the level obtainable by the least fortunate? And how should we think about other aspects of health such as food, physical activity, spirituality, medicines and alternative health services?

What is our responsibility to future generations? October 25

What is imagination? How does it develop? Does the ability to imagine decrease as we grow older? What role does imagination play in your real life?

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Winter Conversation Cafés

How do you choose between making others happy and making yourself happy? February 7

Making someone happy can be very rewarding. Being a good listener, being supportive, giving just the right gift, complimenting others, staying in touch, and giving back all sound like honorable desires, but can it ever be too much? How do we ensure our own happiness when we are busy focusing on others? In this conversation we begin by discussing the meaning of happiness, and will then discuss whether making others happy and being happy ourselves is a complementary or a contradictory concept.

Why do we want to live 'simply' and where did it get so complicated? February 14

Technology is meant to make things easier but many people feel that life has gotten more complicated in recent years. Do you agree? Do you want to live more simply? Have you taken steps to get control of your "stuff", thoughts, or time? In this conversation we discuss whether the world has gotten more complex, and reflect on the barriers we face to living the life we want.

What does "home" mean? February 21

Maya Angelou once said, "The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." Is home the same or different than belonging or feeling safe? Is home a place, a possession, a feeling, family or something else entirely? In this conversation we explore the many meanings of home.

How do you choose between living in the moment and planning for the future? February 28

Some say that living in the moment brings appreciation, gives us peace, and makes our mind less anxious for the future. Others suggest that it is important to pursue our passions and goals in life and this requires planning. They say it is enjoyable to anticipate the future and watch our signs of progress along the way to our goals. In this conversation we discuss the tension between present and future, and share ideas on what works best for each of us.

Spring Conversation Cafés

What do relationships mean in the 21st century? April 4

Today it is easy to connect at all times. We see the lives of others unfold through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. We are constantly tied to other people, our workmates, the media, and the world. We are never alone...or are we? We begin by discussing what relationships mean and then look at where we find relationships, what they do for us, and how we maintain them in the 21st century.

What does it mean to be Canadian? April 11

Marshall McLuhan once said, "Canada is the only country in the world that knows how to live without an identity". In this conversation we ask, do we have an identity? What does it mean to be Canadian and has this changed in our increasingly interconnected world? We will also look at what makes us most proud to be Canadian, and share those personal moments when we felt most Canadian ourselves.

What do we lose when we lose touch with nature? April 18

Not only is our wilderness shrinking, but the time we have available to enjoy it is dwindling too. Do we actually need to experience the silence of a lake at dusk and smell the scent of a pine forest, or is it possible to get the psychological benefits of wilderness in other ways? What is it exactly that nature gives us and what are we missing when we go without these experiences?

What does it mean to raise a child well? April 24

Everyone wants their children to live a good life but there are many definitions of what that means. Some want happiness, wealth, recognition or influence for their children. Others want their children to have love, a connection to family, or a desire to pursue service to others. Is it possible for our children to have it all? In this conversation we talk about our goals, values, methods, and concerns for raising children. We also reflect on how much control we really have on how our children turn out in the end.

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