

UNITED WISDOM

Conversation Between People with Different Information Worlds

Relationships and Intimacy

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R-21-N04 · EN

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Conversation Between People with Different Information Worlds

Epigraph

> *news and truth*

Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, XXIV, web 1885, the author's own prose. These two concepts occur in a sentence distinguishing their functions; the fragment does not identify them as equivalent.

What this article is about

In a fictional scene, Anna and Denis prepare an invitation for a local historical walk. Anna reads a museum announcement: the Saturday walk will take place. Denis has seen a residents' message saying a bridge on the route is closed. He proposes cancelling the invitation; she thinks he trusts a casual chat more than the organiser. Both want to avoid misleading people, but they are already arguing about the overall quality of each other's information world. Meanwhile, the messages may concern different dates, places and questions. They have one matter to decide, rather than immediately establishing whom to believe about everything.

This article examines a conversation between two people who need to act with differing information and grounds for trust. It does not explain algorithms or measure the effects of information bubbles. A common subject, a message's origin, the limit of checking, the decision criterion and the cost of error are distinct. The question is not how to make another person read the correct list. A shared action can be clarified while retaining different interests and unknowns. With restricted access, unequal power or unsafe discussion, precise wording alone does not guarantee agreement and does not require the conversation to continue.

I. An identical word can conceal different subjects

Anna is speaking about a walk, Denis about a bridge. They hear opposite answers to one question without yet establishing whether their subjects coincide. The walk might follow a changed route; the bridge message might be old; the announcement might overlook a new closure. These possibilities remain unchecked. It helps to name the exact claim: what is available, where, when and for whom. A convenient possibility need not be chosen in advance. Nor does arguing about sources' general integrity resolve a difference in dates or locations that might explain why the two messages disagree.

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The purpose of the conversation matters too. Do they want to understand whether a closure occurred, assess the announcement or decide what to tell participants? These tasks are connected but have different endings. They can establish that a bridge is closed without knowing whether the route has changed. They can find a new route while retaining a question about the earlier message. If every particular answer requires recognising one entire information world as correct, the inquiry becomes too large. The present invitation needs a particular ground, although the wider dispute can continue separately if both actually wish to discuss it now.

Not every difference in wording means different content. Denis might call the walk a meeting and Anna a tour while referring to the same event. A detailed dispute about words would then add no information. Proportionality matters: clarify what changes an assessment or action without turning the conversation into an examination in identical vocabulary. A concept that affects a promise to participants should be explained. An invitation to the full historical route differs from a short gathering outside the museum, for example. A common name should not conceal a change in what people expect.

In our scene, the participants can provisionally write down one question: can we accurately invite people to the specified route this Saturday? This is not an agreement about the world or a requirement to read identical channels. It bounds the work. Answering will require information about the date, access and the organiser's present plan. If someone wants to discuss another question, that should be named rather than automatically treated as evasion. A common subject emerges through an accepted task, rather than one person's permission to declare a personal agenda the only reasonable one for the whole meeting.

II. Where a message was encountered is not its source

Denis remembers a chat, but it may contain a personal observation, a photograph, a retelling or a link to a notice. Anna remembers the museum website, but it may carry an earlier plan, a new organiser's reply or an automatically retained announcement. The important claim's origin needs finding where access permits. A channel's familiar name identifies where the message was encountered, rather than its whole chain of knowledge. People can ask who makes the claim, on what basis and about which time. Where an answer is unavailable, retaining the unknown is more useful than assigning another circle general unreliability from its name alone.

The chain may lead to a single item. Denis finds two residents' messages, while Anna finds several cultural outlets' publications. All may repeat one old notice, however. Repetition does not create independent confirmation. The collected work should not be dismissed; its actual result can be named: one original item and several retellings were found. If an independent participant emerges, what that person actually saw needs clarification. Observing one

entrance does not necessarily describe every passage. Independent origin and sufficient content remain different questions when choosing a shared action.

Firsthand knowledge has limits too. A resident might have seen a barrier in the evening, misunderstood its purpose and reported a broader conclusion. An organiser might have had an accurate plan that subsequently changed. Direct observation does not remove date, scope or possible error. Yet a guess should not be equated with an established document simply to make people comfortable with each other. Supported content needs comparison. One person's incomplete knowledge does not prove the other's complete correctness. The conversation retains unequal information where it exists, without appointing a general winner because one source has a more familiar appearance.

Information may be private. Denis does not have to copy someone else's personal conversation to qualify for being heard. He can describe the limit of his available grounds without exposing people and clarify what permitted confirmation a public invitation needs. If that confirmation is unavailable, joint action must account for the limit. Privacy does not make a message automatically true or automatically false. It limits checking in this encounter. Respect for access boundaries and assessment of sufficient grounds can remain together, even where a final answer has not been found.

III. Trust has a subject and a scope

Anna trusts the museum because she knows its historical work. This is a meaningful reason to consult it. But the quality of its historical account does not confirm every current passage. Denis trusts a resident who regularly goes near the bridge. That is a meaningful reason to ask about an observation, but not to settle the museum's entire plan. People can establish where a source has access or knowledge. Such precision does not require abandoning familiar voices. It prevents a name being asked to confirm something its competence or actual involvement has not yet established.

Official status likewise does not imply an identical function for every question. An organiser can decide whether its meeting will take place without controlling another site's condition. A resident can know today's entrance well without having authority to change the promised route. Accuracy, competence and decision authority are distinct. Combining them makes every powerful institution's reply look like final truth and every observer's objection like improper interference. The reverse error is possible too: a personal observation is declared sufficient to direct the whole event. The scene needs particular information and authority, rather than one victorious type of authoritativeness.

A source may actually have a systematic problem in the relevant area. Known mistakes and how they were corrected can be considered. But a general impression of a channel needs its

own grounds, especially where it leads to rejecting a relevant message. Denis can ask whether the museum updates announcements; Anna can ask whether dates are clarified in the chat. These questions should not become predetermined accusations. It is better to check a particular item and an accessible history where proportionate. One success does not make a source infallible, and one mistake does not establish the inaccuracy of every future message.

Personal trust can also have a place. Anna can say she feels more comfortable starting with a familiar organiser; Denis can say the local observation concerns him. This describes a personal ground rather than proving the message. It helps explain why participants begin in different places. But the next step towards a shared invitation concerns content. Identical feelings about a source need not be demanded before checking a date. People can reach one limited answer while retaining different degrees of general trust and a separate question about how they will choose materials in future.

IV. Different information and different criteria are not identical

Suppose the current route is found and does not include the bridge. The factual discrepancy has diminished. Denis still does not want to invite people: they were promised the full route, and he considers the reduction significant. Anna is willing to invite them to a changed version with an accurate description. They now differ in more than information. They have different criteria for an acceptable invitation. Continuing to argue about which channel is right will conceal this question. They need to name which promise counts as fulfilled and which change requires separate consent or abandonment of the event's original form.

A criterion can relate to role and cost. Denis answers participants' questions; Anna edits the historical material. One anticipates dissatisfaction with a changed walk, the other the loss of an available meeting. Neither perspective establishes the entire result. They can examine who was promised what and who bears the consequences. This does not treat feelings as equivalent to evidence. It explains which conditions matter for the decision. If a criterion affects other people's time or resources, it cannot be selected only for the authors' convenience. The people whose participation the invitation seeks should remain in view.

Different values cannot always be reduced to one measure. One person prefers advance certainty, the other accepts a change with a clear warning. A limited arrangement can be discussed: what will be reported, what remains unknown and what response the recipient can make. Agreement cannot be promised after enough information if the difference concerns choice itself. Nor need every disagreement be declared a fundamental incompatibility. A revised text might satisfy the participants. What matters is discovering what would change each person's assessment and recognising when the issue concerns a preferred action rather than an unfound fact.

Checking criteria applies to one's own side too. Anna might require complete confirmation of an inconvenient message while accepting a convenient announcement from a headline. Denis might apply the reverse standard. These are possible arrangements in our scene, rather than diagnoses of character. People can compare what information is considered sufficient and why. A difference may have grounds: the documents concern different questions or the cost of error is unequal. Where no ground is named, that question can remain open. Equal attention does not mean mechanically equal assessments; it requires an explainable relationship to relevant evidence.

V. Historical reference distinguishes a message from the organisation of knowledge

In XXIV of Public Opinion, Lippmann distinguishes an event report from the broader work of establishing relationships. He also connects news quality to available records and institutions. This is historical reasoning, not a modern experiment or proof that every conflict arises from an information environment. His wider institutional programme does not become our conversational procedure.

The scene benefits from a limited question: what is missing for a decision even after the messages have been gathered? Perhaps the current route is unpublished or no one is responsible for updating the invitation. A dispute between two readers cannot create a missing document. They need to see how the matter is organised: who knows the plan, who can change it and where a permitted current answer can be obtained. This retains Anna's and Denis's responsibility for their own words. It also does not require them to derive all reality from retellings. Sometimes the next step involves an accessible organiser rather than another dispute between information preferences.

An event, its picture and a response to that picture can also be distinguished. Denis actually read a troubling message; his reaction is understandable as his own. It does not yet establish the condition of the whole route. Anna actually received an announcement; her willingness to continue does not prove changes were considered. This distinction does not declare impressions useless. They show the question a person brought to the conversation. An accurate answer requires a separate ground. Checking cannot finish merely because both better understood the other's feeling, although mutual understanding can be a valuable result of the encounter itself.

The historical reference retains its own limits. We do not use Lippmann's old psychological characterisations to assess current participants or carry over his political language as a norm. A selected part of I and all of XXIV were read, rather than the whole book. Our inquiry between two people is editorial work through a fictional case. It allows actual mistakes, private

information and different authority. The question concerns available knowledge for a present action, without compulsorily concluding that someone lives in a false world merely because they encountered a different message or rejected our familiar source.

VI. Checking needs a proportionate limit

Anna and Denis could seek confirmation indefinitely, but the invitation has a preparation deadline. It helps to name which question significantly changes the action and which source can answer under available conditions. Checking need not encompass either person's entire information world. If today's plan needs clarification, the history of every museum publication may be unnecessary. If a current document contradicts an earlier promise, that particular difference requires attention. The limit follows the task, the cost of error and competence, rather than the number of links found or the wish to prove complete caution to another person.

Failure to find confirmation is not definitive refutation. People can receive a limited answer, receive no answer or discover a contradiction. These states should remain distinct. Anna should not write that everything is known merely because no new information reached her. Denis should not write that the meeting is cancelled merely because he could not find the route. Sometimes a permissible action is to postpone the invitation, change its scope or ask the responsible person. These are editorial possibilities; the article does not determine a real route's safety or replace professional assessment of a particular event's conditions.

Available checking is not necessarily independent of power either. An answer may come from someone interested in a particular result or controlling publication. That does not prove it false. It shows what ground and scope can be checked additionally where consequences matter. Participants need not construct a complete investigation before every conversation. But permission from a powerful participant cannot be presented as a fact that the permission does not establish. Precise wording helps retain responsibility: an organiser's reply about its plan was obtained, rather than universal confirmation of every condition for every person.

When time or access is insufficient, uncertainty becomes part of the decision. People can report only what they are prepared to answer for, making the unknown clear. This will not always allow an event to proceed. Sometimes insufficient grounds require a particular promise to stop. Yet uncertainty should not automatically become a total verdict on another circle. People can differ about action while acknowledging an identical limit of knowledge. The next discussion then concerns acceptance of costs and distribution of responsibility, rather than a compulsory search for a fact that will secretly make everyone's choices identical.

VII. A shared conversation can occur under unequal power

Suppose Anna can publish the invitation alone, while Denis answers to participants but does not control the text. Their conversation appears joint, but their capacities differ. Anna can hear an objection and still attribute the final decision to both of them. The issue then concerns authority rather than only sources. It helps to establish who actually chooses the content, who agreed to be named and what refusal is available. Accurate checking of a date does not automatically authorise a shared name. Information accuracy and permission to speak for another retain separate grounds even after full agreement about facts.

Denis can limit participation without declaring the entire project false. He can decline to sign a text making an unsupported promise and report the known circumstance separately. If he previously undertook to answer people, withdrawing requires consideration of that agreement. The right not to assert the unknown does not erase responsibility for a promised action. The reverse case matters too: Anna can reject his criterion and honestly present her own decision if she has the authority. Every disagreement need not deprive her of action; a personal publication needs distinguishing from a statement of joint choice.

Where punishment is threatened, a precise conversation may be unavailable. A person need not prove openness through a risky objection or disclosure of private material. Available support and another way to limit a personal promise can be considered. The article supplies no universal escape from unequal relations and does not guarantee that calm words will be heard. Significant consequences of refusal need attention. But coercion does not correct a statement's truth: a forced signature may occur while actual agreement about content remains absent. These states cannot be combined for an attractive report of joint checking.

Even with equal opportunities to speak, people need not discuss everything now. Tiredness, lack of time and another accepted purpose of the meeting can limit a conversation. Declining a broad dispute does not prove the person's general closedness. People can name what answer is needed for this matter and which question will remain separate. Yet a time limit cannot be used to silently impose a previously rejected shared promise. Proportionality retains both the right to finish the conversation and responsibility for the particular text that subsequently reaches people under one or two names.

VIII. Shared action and an identical information world are different

A related United Wisdom topic examines a personal information environment: what someone reads, how they react and what they pass on. Here the subject extends beyond a personal record while remaining narrower than discussing everything: two people must agree on a checkable public action. Another topic shows shared life amid different worldviews; this scene adds the origin of particular information and a criterion of sufficiency. Closeness does not automatically make facts shared, just as shared facts do not make beliefs identical. These thematic connections help distinguish the questions but do not prove a psychological mechanism in Anna and Denis.

They can accept a clarified invitation while continuing to read different materials. That is a possible result. It need not be declared a defeat because source lists remain different. Joint work requires particular clarity about grounds in the relevant place. Yet an unresolved fact cannot be hidden by an attractive agreement to publish. If someone signs out of trust in the other person, this should be named as trust and an accepted role. Another person's checking can help, but transferring responsibility has a particular scope. A signature does not establish that everyone personally read all materials or independently established every circumstance.

Another result is possible: the fact has been clarified but there is no shared text. Denis considers the shortened route unacceptable; Anna retains her own invitation. They need not continue until choices coincide. Use of names can be limited while the known answer is retained. Disagreement about action does not cancel an established date. Joint action may fail to occur although the information work was done. This result should be named honestly. Otherwise the encounter is judged only by unity, and the accuracy of the knowledge obtained disappears wherever it failed to produce a convenient common decision.

If the conversation improved trust, that too can be noticed without a general law. Anna saw Denis willing to check his material; he saw her willing to clarify the announcement. These are observations in our scene, rather than a measured effect of a procedure. Information may diverge again next time. The way of naming a subject, access and a criterion can be retained without promising lasting closeness. Shared language helps where it makes a particular answer clearer. It should not become a new obligation to always feel alike, accept familiar names or confirm maturity by agreeing with someone else.

IX. A shared map of the next step can be enough

At the conversation's end, it helps to describe what is actually known, from where, within what scope and for which action. The museum clarified its plan; the observation's date was found; access remains unresolved; the invitation was changed or postponed. These states need not be combined into one assessment of the conversation. Anna and Denis can gain partial clarity without a complete world picture. That is enough if their chosen step promises no more than the available grounds. Otherwise additional work or abandonment of that form is needed. A useful ending follows the subject rather than compulsory agreement on every question.

The next step also needs an accepted role. Who clarifies the plan, edits the text and tells participants about a changed promise? Shared concern does not automatically allocate work. If someone cannot do what was proposed, another available answer is needed, rather than a conclusion about their information world's quality. Lack of capacity can be acknowledged and the process ended without publication. A smaller action can be chosen where facts and accepted authority support it. The article does not demand progress after every conversation; it retains the distinction between intention, agreement and a step actually performed for the present matter.

When a new fact appears later, the earlier answer can be reconsidered in its particular part. This is not necessarily a complete collapse of trust. If information was known and concealed, the question expands to the accuracy of earlier words. If conditions changed, the change in time needs naming. If there was an error, it should be corrected where people acted on it. These cases require different responses. One general label for an information world does not show what occurred. Conversation remains useful where it retains such distinctions and does not make a new correction compulsory proof of one person's complete correctness and the other's total inadequacy.

Living in one reality does not mean having identical access to it. People receive different messages, have different time and answer for different consequences. A shared map of the next step connects only what is necessary and available for an accepted undertaking. Unknowns can remain unknown, interests different and a source disputed in another area. This does not abandon truth. It declines to present a limited agreement as its complete attainment. Conversation becomes more precise when people can name the present grounds for action and leave open everything those grounds have yet to establish for both participants.

What this means in practice

Take one safe shared question. Name the exact claim, date, scope and decision for which it is needed. Separately record where the message was encountered and its known origin. Do not demand another person's private materials or reconstruct a source by guessing. Ask whether the subjects of two answers coincide and what limit of knowledge is already known. The exercise does not assess people's overall maturity or establish the safety of a real event.

If checking is available, choose a significant question and suitable grounds. Distinguish an independent report, repetition, authority and competence. After clarifying facts, consider the action criterion and costs to participants separately. Do not distribute correctness equally for peace. Identical trust in every source need not be demanded. A shared text should show the scope accepted, while permission to speak for another needs consent of its own.

Finish by recording the result and the next role: what was clarified, what remains unknown, what was accepted and what was actually done. A new question, separate decisions or abandonment of a shared promise are possible. Revise the particular part when new information arrives, without declaring a person unreliable in everything. The practice does not guarantee agreement, closeness or the removal of unequal power. It helps two people clarify the grounds of one next step while retaining checking limits, privacy and the option of ending the conversation.

Key quotation

> *more objective criteria*

Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, XXIV, web 1905, the author's own prose. A fragment concerning institutional arrangements and news quality; no universal conversational method is claimed here.

Connections between traditions

Reference	Question	Limit
Lippmann, I and XXIV	How are a message, its picture and available knowledge connected?	Historical thought, not an experiment or compulsory programme
Editorial walking route	What does one shared invitation require?	Fictional case; real route conditions remain unestablished
Personal information environment and shared life	How do a personal environment and joint action differ?	A thematic connection, not proof of the conflict's cause

Primary sources

1. Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, PG 6456, English text of the 1922 work; the precise print basis of the electronic transcription is unestablished. All of XXIV, web 1881–1911, the continuous selected part of I, web 152–206, and electronic metadata 0–115 personally read. Neither all of I nor the whole book is claimed. Embedded voices excluded. PG identifies US public-domain status, without universal territorial clearance.

Tags

information world, conversation, sources, message, truth, fact, date, scope, trust, criterion, decision, checking, origin, repetition, independence, competence, authority, privacy, access, unknown, promise, responsibility, joint action, power, boundaries, Lippmann, information environment, shared life, United Wisdom

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