

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 17 October 2017 15:36 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 October 2017 05:26



Saving the Date

Dear Aunt Bossy,

Someone recommended I use the Proust Questionnaire as a way to make conversation on a first date. Do you know what that is, and what do you think?

Wondering

Dear Wondering,

OOOO, I LOVE the Proust Questionnaire. Marcel Proust reportedly developed it to help himself get inside the heads of his characters. *Vanity Fair* magazine made it part of popular culture when they started featuring it on the last page of the issue, and used it to interview famous people.

Here it is: I'm supplying my own answers. As for your date, it is a great idea, but ease into it. You could say, "I found this fun questionnaire. Did you ever hear of it? Wanna do it?" (Make sure your date understands you are talking about doing the questionnaire.) The other thing you can do is throw these individual questions in whenever appropriate. The questions make people

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think, and you can tell a lot about their answers, even when they lie.

Once someone answers, don't just drop it, but delve deeper by using probes like, "I'm so curious, how did that come about?" or "Sounds like you've really thought this through." Sometimes, just an echo will encourage the other to tell more. "Reading? Tell me more."

Here is Proust's Questionnaire:

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Bossy: Sitting on a porch in un-humid weather with a good book and a glass of vodka.

What is your greatest fear?

Bossy: Kidding myself about who I am and what I am good at.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Bossy: Insecurity

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Bossy: Encouraging others to think of themselves as victims.

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Which living person do you most admire?

Bossy: My Sister, Genie

What is your greatest extravagance?

Bossy: Trusting that others mean well.

What is your current state of mind?

Bossy: Overwhelmed with love.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Bossy: Academic and Corporate "□□ success."□

On what occasion do you lie?

Bossy: If there is no other way to avoid hurting someone's feelings, and there is usually another way.

What do you most dislike about your appearance?

Bossy: My belly.

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Which living person do you most despise?

Bossy: The minute I hone in on a name, I feel sorry for the person.

What is the quality you most like in a man?

Bossy: Ease

What is the quality you most like in a woman?

Bossy: Openness to others.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

Bossy: Fabulous! Gorgeous!

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

Bossy: It's a multi-person tie.

When and where were you happiest?

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Bossy: Now. Here.

Which talent would you most like to have?

Bossy: To sing and dance like Tina Turner.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Bossy: Laziness.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Bossy: Happiness and self-confidence, which are joined at the hip.

If you were to die and come back as a person or a thing, what would it be?

Bossy: Tina Turner

Where would you most like to live?

Bossy: On the water.

What is your most treasured possession?

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Bossy: Animals aren't possessions, so I would have to say, our house in France.

What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

Bossy: No options.

What is your most marked characteristic?

Bossy: Positivity

What do you most value in your friends?

Bossy: Authenticity

Who are your favorite writers?

Bossy: Ellen Herrick, Joseph Dobrian, Margaret Shinn Evans, Laura Packard, Debbi Covington, Bruce Bendersen, Sally Handy. My friends who write.

Who is your hero of fiction?

Bossy: Nancy Drew

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Which historical figure do you most identify with?

Bossy: Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Who are your heroes in real life?

Bossy: Ullrich Klamm, Camille Paglia, Ben Carson, Jack Murphy, Milton Kelly

What are your favorite names?

Bossy: Louise, Agnes, Ulysses, Charles

What is it that you most dislike?

Bossy: Negativity.

What is your greatest regret?

Bossy: Not spending a year abroad when I was young.

How would you like to die?

Bossy: With Grace and Ease.

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What is your motto?

Bossy: "Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. Oh, and say 'hi.' To everyone."

Have fun on your date, and be sure you prepare by taking the quiz yourself.

Best,

Bossy