

THE SECOND LOOK CLUB

The Dinner Table Deck

Fifty-two questions worth asking a child, one at a time, with food on the table.

PRINT · CUT · KEEP IN A JAR

One card. One meal. That is the whole method.

This deck exists because a skill that only lives inside a book is not a skill — it is a memory of a book. These are the questions that get it out.

1 **Print on card, cut along the dashed lines.**
Nine cards to a sheet, six sheets. Any home printer will do it; 160–250gsm card is nicer but ordinary paper works.

2 **Keep them somewhere they will actually be seen.**
A jar or a box on the table beats a drawer. The deck only works if drawing a card is easier than not.

3 **Draw one. Ask it. Then stop talking.**
The silence after the question is where the thinking happens. Most adults fill it in about two seconds. Try four.

4 **Answer it yourself, first, at least half the time.**
Especially the uncomfortable ones. A child who watches a parent say "I was wrong about that" learns more from the watching than from the card.

5 **Never use a card to win an argument.**
The moment these become a way of catching somebody out, they stop working, permanently. They are for curiosity, not for scoring.

If you only remember one thing

The single strongest question in the deck is **"what would change your mind?"** — and the single strongest answer to it, from anybody at the table, is **"actually, I think I was wrong about that."**

When that sentence arrives, say **"good catch"** and move on. Do not say "I told you so." Make changing your mind cheap, and everybody at that table will do it more often for the rest of their lives.

Four suits of thirteen

The colour strip across the top of each card tells you which kind of question it is. If you want a gentle start, begin with the green ones; if you want the one that changes the most, use the purple.

The Second Look

Thirteen questions about deciding too fast. Drawn from Book One.

Who Gains?

Thirteen about the people who want something from you. Book Two.

Numbers & Proof

Thirteen about how much, out of how many, and how anybody knows.

Saying It Well

Thirteen about being right in a way the other person can accept — which is worth more than all the rest.

The line under each question

Every card carries a second line, under the rule. That line is for you, not for the child: it says what a good answer sounds like, so you know what you are listening for rather than waiting for a particular sentence.

There are no right answers on these cards, and no scoring. A child who says “I don’t know” and means it has done the exercise correctly.

THE SECOND LOOK

What did you actually see — and what did you fill in?

Listen for the gap between the picture in the eye and the picture in the head.

01

THE SECOND LOOK

Who is missing from this list?

The people nobody wrote down are still people. Works on teams, invitations, photographs.

02

THE SECOND LOOK

What would have to be true for you to be wrong?

If the honest answer is *nothing*, that is not a strong opinion. It is a closed one.

03

THE SECOND LOOK

Does your theory carry every fact, or only the easy ones?

One fact left lying on the floor is enough to sink it. Ask which fact is being stepped over.

04

THE SECOND LOOK

Did the second thing happen *because* of the first — or just after it?

Together is not because. Good answers name a third thing that could explain both.

05

THE SECOND LOOK

Is every sentence true and the whole picture still false?

True sentences can be arranged into a lie. Ask what was left out rather than what was said.

06

THE SECOND LOOK

If you start at the end and walk backwards, does the beginning still work?

Run the story in reverse. Listen for where it stops making sense.

07

THE SECOND LOOK

How many times did it fail? Nobody counts those.

Four wins out of four *told* is not four out of four *tried*.

08

THE SECOND LOOK

Could that person actually have known that?

Certainty is a feeling. Position is a fact. Where were they standing?

09

THE SECOND LOOK

What would change your mind — and has it just happened?

The best answer in the deck is “actually, I think I was wrong.” Say “good catch”.

10

THE SECOND LOOK

What is the most boring explanation for this?

Usually the true one. Most shut doors are noise; most patterns are habits.

11

THE SECOND LOOK

Who was there, and who was told?

Being present and being informed are different kinds of knowing.

12

THE SECOND LOOK

What did you expect to find, before you looked?

Written down beforehand, a guess is evidence. Held silently, it quietly changes shape.

13

WHO GAINS?

Somebody just gave you something free. What would they like you to do next?

Take the free thing. Then name the feeling out loud. Naming it is the whole defence.

14

WHO GAINS?

Take the word “because” out of that sentence. Is a fact still standing?

“Because I need to go first” is the request, said twice.

15

WHO GAINS?

Would you have said yes to this if it had been the first thing they asked?

Look back down the staircase. If the answer is yes, you have now chosen it on purpose.

16

WHO GAINS?

If you had a week to decide, would you still want it?

You do not need the week. Only the question. Most painted clocks die instantly.

17

WHO GAINS?

What does the *other* button say?

The small grey one. Read it aloud, then say what it actually does in plain words.

18

WHO GAINS?

What time did it happen?

Ask before you ask how much. Things that happen at 6.41am are reflexes, not decisions.

19

WHO GAINS?

How does this person get paid?

Four answers: to make it, per sale, in free things, in attention. There is always one.

20

WHO GAINS?

Out of how many?

Eight toppers out of eight is extraordinary. Eight out of four thousand is a Tuesday.

21

WHO GAINS?

Who told you that?

Four words. It dissolves “everybody says” faster than any argument.

22

WHO GAINS?

You have found a motive. Now — how would you find out you were wrong?

Somebody gains from almost everything. A motive is the first suspect, not the verdict.

23

WHO GAINS?

Who is not in this photograph?

Winners are collected. Everybody else is simply never photographed.

24

WHO GAINS?

Is that a real deadline, or a painted one?

Real ones survive being checked tomorrow. Go and look at the sign again.

25

WHO GAINS?

Is anything on this screen already ticked for you?

Whatever is pre-selected was chosen by somebody who is not you.

26

NUMBERS & PROOF

What is the number they did not print?

Almost no advertisement prints the bottom one. That absence is itself a finding.

27

NUMBERS & PROOF

Is that a big number or a big-sounding number?

"Thousands helped" means nothing without how many tried.

28

NUMBERS & PROOF

If it doubled, what would it double from?

"Twice as likely" can mean one in a million becoming two in a million.

29

NUMBERS & PROOF

Who counted this, and what would they like the answer to be?

Not an accusation. Just a thing worth knowing at the same time as the number.

30

NUMBERS & PROOF

Is that an average, and would one very large thing change it?

Average income in a room changes enormously when one person walks in.

31

NUMBERS & PROOF

What is the smallest print on this saying?

It is usually accurate. It is usually the only line that would survive a question.

32

NUMBERS & PROOF

Would this still be true if you asked a hundred people instead of three?

Three friends agreeing is three people, not a finding.

33

NUMBERS & PROOF

Compared to what?

"Faster", "cheaper" and "better" are incomplete sentences.

34

NUMBERS & PROOF

What did it cost the person giving it to you?

₹540 of samosas bought an eleven-lakh contract. Price is information.

35

NUMBERS & PROOF

How would we check that?

The best follow-up in the deck. Some claims cannot be checked at all — that is the answer.

36

NUMBERS & PROOF

Has this been counted, or does it just feel common?

Things that are easy to remember feel more common than they are.

37

NUMBERS & PROOF

Is this one story, or is this a pattern?

One vivid story beats a hundred numbers in the mind, and should not.

38

NUMBERS & PROOF

If you are wrong about this, what goes wrong?

Some things are worth checking hard. Some genuinely are not. Decide which this is.

39

SAYING IT WELL

Can you say the other person's argument so well that they would agree you have it right?

If you cannot, you are not ready to disagree with it yet.

40

SAYING IT WELL

Ask for one thing you could check, instead of saying "that's wrong".

"Can I ring them and ask one thing? If the answer's good, I'll stop."

41

SAYING IT WELL

What is the strongest version of the thing you disagree with?

Arguing with the weakest version is the commonest way to win nothing.

42

SAYING IT WELL

Have you been wrong about something this month? Say what.

For the grown-up to answer first. It costs you nothing and it teaches everything.

43

SAYING IT WELL

What would you need to see to change your mind about this?

Ask it about your own opinion before you ask it about anybody else's.

44

SAYING IT WELL

Are you disagreeing with the idea, or with the person?

Two different activities. Only one of them is thinking.

45

SAYING IT WELL

Is now a good time to say this, or a good time to listen?

Being right at the wrong moment usually loses.

46

SAYING IT WELL

Can you find one thing they are right about?

Say that first. Everything after it gets heard differently.

47

SAYING IT WELL

Say “I don’t know” about one thing at this table.

A house where adults say it is a house where children can.

48

SAYING IT WELL

What is the question underneath the question?

“Can I have a phone” is often really “am I being left out”.

49

SAYING IT WELL

Who else should get to say something about this?

Decisions get made by whoever is in the room. Notice who is not.

50

SAYING IT WELL

If you turn out to be right, how will you say so?

“Good catch” costs nothing. “I told you so” costs the next admission.

51

SAYING IT WELL

What did somebody change your mind about, and how did they do it?

The method is the lesson. Usually it was a question, not an argument.

52