



## CONVERSATION-STARTERS

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS**

#### FIRST, NEXT MEETING

Some Common Grounders have learned to schedule their next conversation while they are face-to-face with each other, and to take care of this first, before discussing the questions below. So get out your calendars and set your next meeting—

Date:                      Time:                      Place:

#### NOW, CONVERSATION

Don't feel like you have to work through these questions systematically; just use them as a springboard to honest discussion. Feel free to ask additional questions as well.

1. Do you find it easier to give compliments or receive them?
2. The term “affirmative action” comes from an Executive Order signed by President Kennedy in 1961. The order required government contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated [fairly] during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin.” (In 1968, gender was added to the list.) What personal or family experiences can you share that are connected to affirmative action?
3. Read the following statements with your partner, and give each other a chance to respond to each one:
  - ▶ Affirmative action policies have helped some institutions become more representative of the populations they serve.
  - ▶ Affirmative action is simply another form of discrimination.
  - ▶ Affirmative action was necessary for a time, but America no longer needs it now.
  - ▶ It's important to have some kind of affirmative action, but the preferential treatment should be based on economic class rather than race.
4. Is it possible to affirm people who need affirming, without making such affirmative actions a national law? Why or why not?