#1. What makes someone an “insider”? Give one example of an insider from our culture at large (news, entertainment, etc.)  
Now, do the same for an “outsider.”

#2 How do we feel about people who “move up” from similar circumstances to our own? Does it make us mad? Why?

#3 Back in Shakespeare’s day, people thought that being from different social classes meant you were BY NATURE, a person of a different kind of character (just like they thought men and women were different). Do people still think that way? How does this kind of thinking keep us from becoming successful?

#4 How dangerous is it to become obsessed with how much you are stuck in a situation that you can’t change? How bad would it be to be Iago, who is smart enough to know he could be awesome and powerful, but also smart enough to know that the system will never let him?

#5 How do you react when you feel guilty about something and someone calls attention to it? Do you get angry at the person who is pointing it out, or even merely witnessing your guilt/humiliation? Why does your guilt become anger at someone else?

#6 Iago says that love is “just a lust of the blood and a permission of the will.” I suppose we can’t control our attractions, but how much do we give ourselves permission to run with our feelings (love or otherwise)? In other words, how often do we hide behind the excuse “I couldn’t help myself?”

#7 Why do people intentionally wreck other people’s happiness, when it’s really none of their business? Comment on this, and relate it to Iago’s character.

#8 How easy is it to confuse good manners with flirting? Even if you know the difference, is there pressure on people to get jealous when someone shows attention to our girlfriends/ boyfriends? Explain.

#9. How much of falling for someone’s lie/deception is something we tell ourselves? In other words, a really successful con is one in which the sucker does most of the convincing, and the con artist just sets it up. Comment on how this happens in real life.

#10. How easy is it to “find” evidence of what we fear most? Relate a time when someone you know saw evidence of their fear in everything around them (that wasn’t actually there).

#11. Being jealous without proof is a reason to not only cast doubt on someone you care about, but also a reason to question who you are (to be so afraid, to be so untrusting, to be so overly-sensitive, etc.) Comment on how this is affecting Othello. What kind of person did he think he was? What is he like now that he’s jealous?

#12 How important are gifts (like the handkerchief) as symbols of the relationship between the giver and the recipient? How do you feel when someone doesn’t like a gift you have given them? Why?

#13. So, Othello gets the word from silver guy (nice hair) that he’s fired, and Cassio is the new boss (white, upper class, not Venetian—hey, 2 out of 3 is not bad). How does our society feel about people we no longer need (old people, veterans, d-list celebs, etc.)? Comment.

#14. How does social class (Rich, middle class, poor) impact the way people judge other people? Relate an example of people using social class to unfairly judge others.

#15. One of Shakespeare’s great themes is about how people can say things that others completely misinterpret. Comment on how this happens to us in our world today.

#16. It seems that the kind of jealousy that Othello feels breeds hatred, but does not kill love, leaving both at war within him. Comment on how both feelings come from “evidence” that Othello perceives.

#17 When asked why he did what he did, Iago says:

“Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.”

Comment on

a) How not “telling” is part of Iago’s revenge/evil

b) How he points to the fact that the characters should look to themselves for why they did what they did.