

COMMUNICATION. Proper communication is a requisite for a functioning society; without it we can't run our economic, cultural and judicial systems, or - for that matter - our relationships. But surprisingly, we're ill equipped for adequate communication. **A**s we listen to others, we often only hear what we want to hear. We do not ensure that what we may think to be the core of an issue is indeed what the other party intended to communicate. **T**he point to bear in mind: of importance is not what you SAY, but what the people you are communicating with actually HEAR. **D**uring my divorce, our counsellor taught me a valuable lesson: My wife and I had to put in simple terms what we thought about our marriage; but once she had made her point I was not to reply - instead, I was to repeat what I thought she had just said. **I**t was extraordinary to realise how badly we communicated; it took a half a dozen repeats - a whole counselling session - for both of us to work out what the other wanted to communicate.

An important concern with successful communication is to not mix issues.

If your partner says "you never do any housework," it could be tempting to reply, "and you spend hours on the phone."

This is not helpful - it is crucial to deal with just one issue at any one time.

COMPASSION. "I promote the value of love and compassion. Compassion and tolerance - especially towards our enemies - are a sign of strength; we should be grateful to our enemies. **O**ur enemies help us to a tranquil mind. My greatest teacher in life was Mao Zedong (the architect of the Tibetan holocaust). He taught me patience and understanding in the face of evil."

*Tenzin Gyatso (1935)
the fourteenth, current Dalai Lama of Tibet*

COMPREHENSION. For the life of me, I just cannot comprehend this: humans fight wars; we kill one-another. When asked about it, we say, 'oh, it's in human nature'. **A**nd from there it only gets worse: we justify killing. Our killings are just; as we fight a war, ours is the 'just war'. Some of us even kill gleefully ... incomprehensible.

see also SOLDIERS, WAR