Heartfulness Principles of Communication

From the Heartfulness Institute

Introduction: An urgent opportunity

In the past, India had wise, morally courageous leaders like Rama, Swami Vivekananda and many others. With its unique legacy of inspirational leaders, India has the possibility in modern times, to again, become a beacon for the world - to be recognised and respected for demonstrating wise governance and humane values in practice.

Currently, in common with many governments, India's leaders and parliamentarians are often mistrusted. This unfortunate reputation contradicts the sacred teachings of integrity, respect for all life, truthfulness and moral courage, that are the foundation of Indian culture.

What destiny are we creating for India? This is a country of young people who have to take India and its values forward to become a guiding light for the world. *We have a choice about what influence, inspiration and guidance we want to give them. This will define the legacy we leave behind.*
How will we use our power? Will we, as leaders, continue to function from a low state of consciousness, demonstrating behaviours that, at their deepest human level, degrade and benefit no-one? ***Or will we embrace a higher way of being and interacting - a wise, dignified level of public discourse - that will light the way for people everywhere, at home and overseas?***

Are you, members of the Parliament of India, ready for this challenge and opportunity – to visibly embody and promote yogic culture so that it permeates all aspects of our lives?

This manifesto is humbly offered as a brief introduction to a tried and tested approach, that can be adopted in practice by all who sincerely wish to participate in taking Peace, Dignity, Integrity and Wisdom to new heights within governance.

Below we offer 5 Principles to support achieving 5 Qualities: Clarity, Compassion, Calmness, Courage and inner Contentment, that can transform governance:

Principles and Practices

1. Authenticity and Truthfulness

"*Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything*" – Swami Vivekananda

Patanjali in his Sutras, teaches us that clarity and truth can develop with the practice of yoga, as higher consciousness is awakened.

Patanjali says that how we communicate is distorted because both the speaker and the listener have 'filters', resulting from past experiences. What people actually hear is often different from the meaning that the speaker intends.
But when the mind is cleared and refined through yogic practice and heart-centred meditation, we can understand others and speak clearly and truthfully.
As leaders, are we courageous enough to commit to clarity and truth?

Swami Vivekananda offers us a *"Golden rule: Who is trusting you, don't cheat them."*

2. Style of Speech

Lalaji Maharaj [1983 – 1931], the Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg/Heartfulness states:

"He whose tongue is polite, civilised and cultured, has a large heart, pure and noble, ***and thus has wide sway over the minds of others...***

People can be manipulated and crowds can be swayed, by loud, aggressive speeches, full of emotion and vitriol. But is this uncultured, undignified style that shows a base character, one that we want to show to the world, one that we want our Youth to emulate?
Or will we choose a nobler way that builds self-respect and inspires respect from others?

"The balanced condition of mind is an expression of the right attitude of man in all his activities, under varied circumstances. In a broad sense, it is the reflection of his character. It has a deep impact and a favourable influence on people who are associated with him...
It is soft, cultured and smooth like the harmonious descent of divine grace."

When we take up extreme positions and use extremes of language, we will not be taken seriously by intelligent people. Instead, when we speak with moderation, coming from a calm mind made steady through meditation and discipline, then *"This results in effectiveness: whatever is spoken goes on touching the hearts of persons." [Lalaji]*

Thus, mutual respect and space for healthy constructive dialogues, can be created, leading to diverse views being shared and heard fearlessly.

3. Powerful Poise, Presence and Pause
Through yogic practices like heart-centred meditation and applying the 3 Kriyas [actions] highlighted by Patanjali, lends credibility to our words. **We can acquire the Poise and Presence that attracts, and is reassuring to the people.** This calm, dignified approach, that naturally includes the reflective power of Pause, is so much more compelling than the jingoistic, empty rhetoric that characterises much of our party-political discourse.

Intelligent choices, says Patanjali, will result from sincerely practicing the kriyas of tapas [self-discipline], svadhyaya [self-study], and Ishvara pranidhana [devotion to the divine].

4. Listening to Understand
"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply." — Stephen R. Covey, 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'

Lord Rama was called the perfect man Maryada Purushottam. He was calm, mature and truthful. He listened quietly to the troubles of the people, followed the counsel of his elders and did what was good, or what was Dharma.
Listening in order to understand another perspective, listening with empathy, is known to be one of the most important qualities of truly great leaders.

With the higher consciousness that fosters trust, respect, and wise decision-making, we can drop the debasing habit of only "listening" in order to humiliate another or to win political points. Humiliation has long been recognised as a key cause of conflict.

"Listening was the most important thing I accomplished each day because it would build the foundation of my leadership for years to come."
— Satya Nadella, CEO Microsoft

5. One-ness in word and action
"The real test of the leader, lies in holding widely different people together along the line of their common sympathies". – Swami Vivekananda

If we have the courage to govern with the clear intention to unite, not to divide, then we will re-create an India that our Youth, our future, will trust. We need a peaceful way of reconciling deep-rooted divisions and differences, instead of manipulating them for political gain.
The foundation for this will always be the heart, not the head – a truth embedded in our Yamas and Niyamas - which we disregard at our peril.

Meditative yogic practices combined with the rigorous, learnable processes of "Nonviolent Communication"™, are urgently needed in Government. This higher consciousness and these processes guide us to put "*common sympathies*", ie universal human needs, at the heart of conflict resolution.

How can I feel at peace with myself if my words, decisions and actions violate others? I can only truly be at peace when my words and actions contribute to the needs of my fellow beings.
At the end of each day, can we examine our hearts, and find that we did NOT use fear, judgement and threat? This would be a massive, radical, enlightened shift.

Gita Shloka 16.2: अहिंसा? सत्यभाषण क्रोध न करना संसारकी कामनाका त्याग अन्तःकरणमें रागद्वेषजनित हलचलका न होना चुगली न करना प्राणियोंपर दया करना सांसारिक विषयोंमें न ललचाना अन्तःकरणकी कोमलता अकर्तव्य करनेमें लज्जा चपलताका अभाव।

Can we envision an India where the Representatives of the people are known and loved for their respectful way of listening and speaking - *with all*?
In this land where spirituality and wisdom used to be supreme, can we again, inspire our people and the world?

A final alert to reflect upon:
"*The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women.*" - Swami Vivekananda

Offered by the Heartfulness Institute
Kanha Shanti Vanam
Hyderabad.

The Heartfulness Institute offers introductions and programmes in Heartfulness Meditation and Heartful Communication, both online and in-person, to organisations, groups and teams.