

## THE TOP TEN 'MUST KNOWS' ABOUT OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION

1. Inaction has a consequence. The void created by the failure to communicate is soon filled with drivel, misrepresentation, disinformation and destructive stories.
2. We must *confront* issues in order to *avoid confrontation*. That means it's inevitable that we enter into the *discomfort zone*; only then can you get to the *breakthrough zone*.
3. Being open, being straight is not be confused with being nice or being troublesome; it is neither. Being straight is being neutral and separating the person from the issue or their behaviour.
4. The oft-quoted 'good reason' for not communication and withholding the truth is; "*So the relationship does not get damaged.*" The irony is that the withheld conversation has *already* damaged the relationship.
5. Honesty is like pregnancy – you either are or are you are not. However, successful transparency isn't simply letting it all hang out; you must acquire a fine sense of how much and what information others can handle effectively, and how to deliver that information in a honourable, caring and respectful way.
6. It's natural to fear 'real' conversations and what that might cost. What should really scare us are the unreal conversations. Unreal is expensive for the individual and the organisation.
7. If I was to say we have been trained tell lies you may feel a little alarmed or aggrieved. The point. We don't mean to lie but we're all just so accustomed to embellishing or withholding the WHOLE truth that it becomes habitual. This habit is reinforced socially (as in "Yes dear, you look great in that outfit"), or politically correct ("Yes, Mister Client that's OK, that's not a problem to us").
8. The conversation is not about the relationship; the conversation *is* the relationship. Projects succeed or fail gradually, then suddenly *one conversation at a time*.
9. The rule of thumb. If you have the same thought about a person or a situation *three times* you need to have that conversation – its got your name on it.
10. Begin every letter or email "*Further to our conversation...*" That way there are no surprises and we are compelled to talk things through. (Interestingly, by having that commitment paperwork is automatically reduced and dialogue increased).

*Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony.*  
Mahatma Gandhi



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