



Inspirational Emails

Communicate More Peacefully:

Use "The Three Gates"

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A wise person once said that **lack of discipline when speaking** "widens the gap between your heart and your words." The same is true for lack of peace: **if we are not in touch with God's peace as we speak, we are not in touch with our heart.** So using discipline in our speaking offers us a place from which to mentally pause and "check in," to ask: What's behind this impulse to speak (or write)? Am I committed to staying in touch with God's peace as I speak or write it?



You may say, "Well what about when we need to express anger or disappointment verbally or in writing?" ***Isn't it healthier to get those feelings out, not hold them in?*** Let's consider another way to look at such situations. It *is* possible to express upsetting emotions peacefully. It is also possible for those emotions to change or even dissolve, if we look at them first, before reacting to them. In other words, **the need we think we have, to express emotions may disappear or change form when we actually look at what they are "made of."** To help us step back and look before we communicate, we can apply a simple, three-question process known as "The Three Gates."

The Three Gates provide an effective way to monitor our speech and writing for peaceful intention; they can bring an amazing clarity to how we choose to verbalize what we are thinking or feeling.

The Three Gates are (in this order):

Gate 1. TRUE ? (*Is what I am about to say or write true?*)

Gate 2. KIND? (*If it is true, then is it also kind?*)

Gate 3. NECESSARY? (*If it is kind, then is it also necessary?*)



If you answer no at any gate, then the idea is to NOT put your thoughts into verbalization (or writing). You stop right there - and either rethink what to say, or choose to remain silent.

Once you have used this process a few times, you will see that it is easy to apply very quickly. With continued practice, the typical tendency to say whatever comes into your mind becomes less entrenched. And as you speak with greater care and discernment, you will not only communicate more peacefully, you will feel more peaceful too!

So get a Fresh Start "out of the gate" (pun intended!) this week by practicing The Three Gates at home, work, school, etc. You might put a post-it or index card by your phone or computer with just the three words - *TRUE ? KIND? NECESSARY?* - as a reminder. Notice how using The Three Gates affects what you say and write (or don't say and write!).

Note that communicating more peacefully doesn't mean you are no longer funny, witty, outgoing, or insightful; it simply means you are those things without diminishing the dignity and worth of yourself or anyone else. *Just think - if everyone spoke from that perspective, we would have a peaceful world tomorrow!*