

Election conversation etiquette, anyone?

It's election season where the climate is heavy with political discussions—at your home, in WhatsApp family/friends' groups, at parties, or even weddings. So far so good. "Intense political discussions are indicative of a healthy and functioning democracy. Now, Indians of all age-groups,

including teenagers are engaging in political discussions," says political and social commentator Santosh Desai. However, when political discussions turn into fights and unending arguments, it's not healthy. To have a civilised election-related talk, keep this manner manual handy. After all, politics can be ugly but living room conversations need to be decent.

Don't know what to say and how to deal with confrontational conversations on politics? Here's the know-how you need to navigate the choppy waters of political 'chit-chat'

Read before you speak



Interested in discussing politics? First, pull up your socks and read up – from reliable sources such as national newspapers, journals, books. Besides news updates (those 2-liners coming on your cell phone and other online platforms), you need to be acquainted with the historical events of the past and present. You can't debate rationally on a subject until you have a clear idea of the events and narratives related to the topic at hand. Reading surely is one way to make yourself more knowledgeable.

Listen, even if you disagree

Disagreements are fine but courtesy is important during debates and discussions. "Try not to end conversations with hard feelings and negative emotions as it leaves scars of discontent and affects interpersonal relationships," advises psychiatrist Dr Jitendra Nagpal.

Don't be a flag bearer

You may have a fixed political orientation and that is alright. Maybe your ideas on politics are influenced by your family's opinion on national politics or what you hear from your friends. Do absorb all that is said around you, however, try to cultivate your own opinion eventually. Overall, whatever is your opinion on national or international politics, do not talk about it all the time, and don't force others to agree with you. Democracy is about different opinions co-existing.



What can you do when you don't want to take part in political discussions?

We all have been in situations when people want your opinion on a certain political situation or a politician. If you don't want to engage in heavy-duty political banter, then subtly, steer

the direction of the conversation towards the person who is asking the question. People usually love to talk about themselves, their struggles and their highs and lows. So, if someone asks your point of view about a political topic and you'd rather not answer, just turn the focus back on them.

Avoid sweeping statements

This may not be easy in the current volatile situation of the country. "Currently, the lingo of any political discussion has become more aggressive and less tolerant," says Desai. However, do try your best to not use words that could come off as condescending.



Change the subject

A political conversation that starts on a good note, can become

heated with people taking sides and sticking to their points aggressively. If you notice this happening at the dinner table in your family or a party at a friend's home, steer the conversation towards neutral and non-controversial topics like weather, movies, the menu of the dinner and so on. This may ease up the tension of the conversation and people may also realise that there are other subjects, too, that need attention – and they should just mingle and have fun.



5 SMART TIPS FOR THE ELECTION SEASON

- 1 While discussing politics, care to listen with patience. Hear others out.
- 2 Express your point of view with respect. Don't be disrespectful of others' political views or orientation.
- 3 Be assertive, not aggressive. Attacking others' opinions in favour of your own is aggression. Assertiveness means being not afraid to express your opinion, even if it won't be liked by others.
- 4 Target the topic of discussion, not the person you are talking to.
- 5 Lastly, remember that a conversation should be a celebration of knowledge and ideas and different opinions, and not a battlefield of personalities.

By Dr Jitendra Nagpal, psychiatrist

LIFE SKILLS

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD

We all have our remedies of dealing with a bad mood. But a study published in the 'Journal of Happiness Studies', suggests that another way of lifting our spirits is by wishing others well. As part of the study, a team of researchers tested the benefits of three different techniques intended to enhance well-being.

also gives a sense of self worth.

DOWNWARD SOCIAL COMPARISON:

By having gratitude for what you have by thinking yourself to be more blessed than others. For instance, if you compare your life to the underprivileged you'd be more grateful for your life, *TNN*

LOVING-KINDNESS: When you look at people, say to yourself, "I wish for this person to be happy." This attitude is self healing.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS: Look at the people around and think about how they are connected to each other. Thinking about the hopes and feelings they may share increases empathy in people and



MAKE JOY YOUR GPS

It's as important to be joyful as it is to be productive in life. It's a skill to be learnt and mastered. Life coach Robin Sharma tells you how...

5 am as a life philosophy

The world is feeling tired, depleted and distracted. If you want to be in control of your life, get a hold of your mornings. If your mornings are good, you will have consistent good days. They will be creative and productive, you will feel happier and better. An hour of quietude can be very profound.

Let negative people go

A lot of times people find it difficult to let go of negative people or things. Following the joy GPS also means doing away with energy vampires, who prick your happiness.

How to handle a bad day...

Hard is good. When you are going through pain, suffering, disappointment, frustration – journal your feelings. Writing is a great way to get it out of the system. Also, go for long

HOW TO HAVE A GOOD LIFE

- ▶ Take daily voyages into awe and regular adventures into wonder
- ▶ Dedicate time to personal mastery; it will increase your self love
- ▶ Celebrate private joys. Look for everyday magic and joy
- ▶ Don't delay finding peace
- ▶ Display kindness
- ▶ Listen to joyful music every single day
- ▶ Be around flowers, nature – they raise your frequency
- ▶ Visit art galleries
- ▶ Read fine books
- ▶ Eat delicious food

How to heal yourself

There's a hurt well inside us. It has anger and sadness that blocks us from being amazing. To heal yourself, do this:

- Build intimacy with yourself.
- We are not our fears. Trust yourself completely.
- Seek abundance. Laugh more.
- Dance more – regularly if possible.
- Forgive yourself for your flaws.

3 things do do daily

- Make strong human connections
- Be focused and creative in work
- Purify your emotional life by cleansing toxic feelings

APRIL 2, 2019 MUST SEE MUST DO

TELEVISION



■ SUPER SENSES, ANIMAL PLANET, 3.30PM: Animal species including bat-eared foxes, bilbies, deer and proboscis monkey, with their sharp sense of hearing, never miss an auditory trick.

■ THROUGH THE WORMHOLE, DISCOVERY SCIENCE, 4.00PM: The stability of any global power depends on high-speed digital communication. Human dependence on global interactivity may be placing mankind in grave danger.

■ THE PACK, NAT GEO WILD, 5.00PM: A portrayal of the tactics used by a pride of lions as they hunt three distinct animals in the Singita Game Reserve.

■ SCIENCE: STREET GENIUS, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL, 6.00PM: Tim Shaw takes science to the streets and conducts a series of jaw-dropping experiments.

■ DEADLY DINOSAURS, SONY BBC EARTH, 9.00PM: The presenter talks about dinosaurs and tries to explore the life of some of the deadliest dinosaurs that existed in the world.

MOVIES ON TV

■ JURASSIC WORLD, MNX, 2.45 PM: A theme park showcasing genetically-engineered dinosaurs turns into a nightmare for its tourists when one of the dinosaurs escapes its enclosure. An ex-military animal expert steps up to save the day.

■ FANTASTIC FOUR, STAR MOVIES, 5.12 PM: Four youngsters gain unique superpowers after being teleported to an alternate universe. They must unite and use their powers to fight against an evil doctor.



■ ZOOTOPIA, &FLIX, 6.25 PM: Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde team up to uncover the mystery behind the fourteen missing predators. They end up finding out that the conspiracy is larger than it seems.

■ JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, SONY PIX, 8.57 PM: Trevor and his nephew Sean travel to Iceland to find the boy's missing father. During their search, they discover a strange new world in the centre of the Earth.

THIS DAY THAT YEAR

1513: Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon discovers Florida.

1792: The Coinage Act is passed, establishing the United States Mint.

1800: Ludwig van Beethoven leads the premiere of his First Symphony in Vienna.

1902: The First Permanent Movie Theater Opens In Los Angeles.

1912: The ill-fated RMS Titanic begins sea trials.

1917: President Woodrow Wilson asks Congress to declare war against Germany in World War I.

1917: Jeanette Rankin, first woman ever elected to Congress, takes her seat in the US Capitol as a representative from Montana.

1968: '2001: A Space Odyssey' by Stanley Kubrick premieres.

1972: Charlie Chaplin prepares for his return to the United States after two decades.

1982: Argentina occupies the Falkland Islands.

1989: Iconic Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev visits Cuba to make peace and patch up relations.

Expert SPEAK

Q I get the same gift from a friend every year, and it's not something that I really like. Is it okay for me to convey this to my friend in any way?

– *Pensive Birthday Girl*

A. Hi, I am glad you are asking this question and are keen to know the appropriate thing to do in this situation. Till you seek answers, how will you get any. Here are some tips to help you sail through, and enjoy your birthday.



START A NEW TRADITION: Suggest starting a new birthday tradition that is interesting and not always typically about shopping. For example, you can request this particular friend to bake you a cake or watch a movie with you instead of buying you a gift. Convey to her that you are asking for it as you want to do something interesting and off-beat this year.

SUBTLE HINTS WORK: You could also try dropping subtle hints about your wish list to your friends and family members ahead of time, like, "Oh, I've got a closet full of dresses and handbags. It would be nice to get some accessories or new technology this year." Hopefully, people around you will get the hint. Good luck! By Sunalina A Hak, etiquette guide