



We need to talk more

## Description

Levern Reddi, Personal Assistant at National Assessing HPS, has strong feelings about human rights, which she shares here in her special message for South Africa's Human Rights Day on 21 March.

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I feel that, as South Africans, we just do not seem to be able to talk to each other any more. The quality of our interactions has degraded, and we are unable or unwilling to cross racial and cultural boundaries. We have lost the ability or never learnt how to have disagreements that result in resolutions. We interrupt each other or we sideline those we disagree with.

We speak of a diverse society, but do we truly acknowledge our differences as part of each other's humanness? Instead, we use these differences as a blanket cover to simply ignore, push aside or cancel those we disagree with.

I believe that if we follow just a few guidelines, we can achieve resolutions instead of infinite disagreements:

- Name the disagreement, so that it doesn't become about everything each person disagrees with.
- If you intend to have a conversation with another person, ask yourself why you want to have the conversation and what you want to get out of it. Both sides have to agree on this.

- Most importantly, to be heard, you must **first listen**. Listening is not a passive process – it is an active process. When you truly understand an argument from the other side, your own humility and empathy will naturally grow and the person you may be in conflict with will feel listened to. Only together can we find real solutions.
- We are bigger than our political affiliations, religious commitments or ideological beliefs. Inevitably, actively engaging with each other will expand the scope of what we are able to talk about and improve our ability to address even contentious issues in humane and compassionate ways.

Stronger Together will require work.

## Category

1. Our People

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