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How intention is misinterpreted

T. T. SRINATH

The willingness to be upfront may spare individuals heartburn and disappointment

A friend was invited by another to visit his home for a quiet family meal. Apparently, the inviting host was unwell that evening, and yet did not communicate this to the intended guest.

When the guest arrived, the host received him and his wife at the door with what the guest read as disinterest.



The evening thereafter seemed to lack warmth and camaraderie, and the conversation apparently was mostly superficial and insipid.

The guest returned home and sent a short message to the host, thanking him for the dinner yet adding that he wished the host 'had smiled a little more'.

The host read this message as indictment, and at the next opportunity, confronted his guest.

The resultant conversation revealed several assumptions that both the host and the guest had carried about self and the other.

I was struck by the misinterpretation of intent, and realised that often times, in not stating upfront, in a manner which is not judgemental nor controversial, what I am feeling in the moment, I carry away from conversations discontent and unhappiness.

Trusting one's own intent and willing to be upfront may spare individuals in a conversational transaction heartburn and disappointment. It also reveals our willingness to be open and transparent and also considerate to those we engage with.

If therefore we truly value each other, it would be helpful to attempt and state what is happening to us, particularly uncomfortable emotions if we are so experiencing such, for that will dispel misinterpretation of our emotions and intent, and create avenues for healthy engagement.

(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at ttsrinath@gmail.com)