

SUMMARY OF SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS:

In the attitude towards those whom we contact, we should show the utmost friendliness and a sincere interest and concern as to their opinions, problems, needs and current circumstances, allowing them to explain and express their current beliefs. This means we must have a willingness to listen to, to assist in, and gain a sympathetic understanding of the inadequacies of each individual's life.

Listening will enable us to discover the individual's need; there is always something in the teachings which will answer this need; we must be quick to perceive it and apply it for them.

We must show respect for whatever Faith the individual is professing, matching it with the points of similarity in our own Faith. Build bridges to the place where the inquirer is standing, rather than batter down his position abruptly. "We cannot assault a soul, but we can proffer the cup."

Be sensitive to the individual's response. We must not go beyond the point of his interest. We must answer his questions. If we do not have the answer from the writings, we must not try to "figure it out," and perhaps give a wrong impression of our Teachings. We should tell him we will search out an answer (and resolve to know the teachings so well, in time, that we CAN usually give the answers).

We should teach the Faith as the fulfillment (not the abrogation) of the previous existing religions. If we are teaching the religious, we should give this aspect of the Eternal Covenant, and Progressive Revelation strongly, but do NOT in the first discussion (unless it is eagerly sought for) overwhelm the individual with a detailed history of the advent of this Message; indicate it, and name the figures, but leave detailed history for a keener interest. If we are teaching a materialist, it will be a help if we are so thoroughly familiar with 'Abdu'l-Baha's explanations of the Existence of God, both in Some Answered Questions, and in His Tablet to Auguste Forel, the scientist, that we can convert His proofs to a casual conversation.

We should know some brief quotations to point up the principles of the Faith; know a few quotations as to leading prophecies from former Scriptures, and their fulfillment in this day; we should know a few which will appeal to those who have rejected the "superstitious" aspect of religion, such as the command that Science and Religion must agree, and 'Abdu'l-Baha's statement that the Truth is one point, which the ignorant have multiplied.

We should watch for current events which show the impact of the Baha'i Teachings, even though indirectly, on the thinking of mankind.

If we read the teachings deeply, and free ourselves as to any concern about "making an impression," and turn our hearts to God in prayer, remembering that He promised this Ocean of Wisdom would be "closer to us than our own Life-Vein," - we should, God-Willing, be helped to find the right words!