Contacts [[1]](#footnote-1)

by Winston Evans

There is no mysterious technique that will work for everybody. The few observations and suggestions made here will help any believer who sincerely wants to do a better job with contacts.

Best preparation for successful contacting

1. Study the Teachings

2. Burning desire: “Stop being conscious of your frailties, therefore; have a perfect reliance upon God; let your heart burn with the desire to serve His mission and proclaim His call; and you will observe how eloquence and the power to change human hearts will come as a matter of course.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

3. Pray and act: Say “yes” to the Light.

No one can tell another how to make contacts. One or more of the following suggestions might lead to [an] opportunity for talk.

1. May I give you a message of hope?

2. There’s something going on in the world you should know about.

3. There’s a new spirit of unity operating throughout the world today.

4. Do you know about the Greatest Story being told in [the] world today?

5. Destiny of America? Destiny of the world?

6. Would you like to know about “The great age to come”?

If prospect shows interest, make [it] an occasion of telling the story. Make a date for talk when there will be ample time, etc.

Preparation for talk or interview

1. Pray and act. Get as much background of prospect as possible.

2. Be assured of divine assistance.

3. Prestige literature: “Appreciations of Baha’i Faith”, A *Chicago Tribune* Reprint, *Life Magazine* Reprint, [and] other literature suitable to inquirer. Tell the story with love and enthusiasm, but impersonally and not aggressively. We can be bold and fearless if we have love but never force the issue. Never argue.

Referred leads

If [an] inquirer shows interest and has caught some of the Spirit of the Cause, make a date for more talk or fireside, etc. What is equally important, ask the friend if he knows others who are seeking or might like to hear our story. This is most important and is the technique used by all successful men in the selling or promoting fields.

What can we do now to stimulate our desire and increase our ability to make contacts. Action is needed now. The situation becomes critical when we get in the habit of waiting for people to come to us. A vague longing is not enough. At the present hour, every soul is hanging in the balance. “Ultimately all the battle of life is within the individual. No amount of organization can solve the inner problems or produce or prevent, as the case may be, victory or failure at a crucial moment. In such times as these particularly, individuals are torn by great forces at large in the world and, we see some weak ones strong, and strong ones fail ….”[[3]](#footnote-3) Contacting and teaching at this time, we are told, will produce two effects: First, it keeps the individual who tells the story in the Light and it will shorten the dark period for the world as a whole.

Extracts from teaching
news bulletin—Great Britain

Making contacts

The aim

When a Bahá’í endeavours to make a friend for the Faith, his responsibility as a believer is not merely that of informing the new contact that Bahá’u’lláh came and that the Bahá’í Faith is a living world religion today. Far more than this, his paramount aim should surely be to so impress the enquirer, in the first instance, with the significance of his Faith that the seeker develops a conscious desire for deeper knowledge of the Teachings and of the fundamental verities of the Cause.

The method

To accomplish this end, the Bahá’í must learn to seek first his hearer’s own personal needs and then to introduce the Faith in such a way that it appears to be, as in truth it is, the one thing which will fully satisfy those needs. It is first through this personal interest in the Teachings, rather than a general understanding of the Faith as a whole, that almost every new contact is seriously attracted to the Message of Bahá’u’lláh.

The attitude

If the Bahá’í is to be able to meet and give the Message to every person who crosses his path, it is important for him to manifest a spirit of love, warmth and friendliness to all. In the words of the Master:

*O army of God! Through the protection and help vouchsafed by the Blessed Beauty … ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a centre of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: “This man is unquestionably a Bahá'í, for his manners, his behaviour, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá'ís.” Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and Testament of God.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

His approach to his fellow-men will be one of understanding and appreciation of their qualities, characteristics, talents and potentialities. As a Bahá’í, he will learn to have a sincere interest in the enquirer’s attitudes, opinions, problems, needs and circumstances. And above all, he will become a willing listener to the seeker’s comments and enquiries, and will, from them discover the key to that individual’s spiritual condition and need. Concerning this the Guardian has written:

Every labourer in those fields, whether as traveling teacher or settler, should, I feel, make it his chief and constant concern to mix, in a friendly manner, with all sections of the population, irrespective of class, creed, nationality, or colour, to familiarize himself with their ideas, tastes, and habits, to study the approach best suited to them, to concentrate, patiently and tactfully, on a

few who have shown marked capacity and receptivity, and to endeavour, with extreme kindness, to implant such love, zeal, and devotion in their hearts as to enable them to become in turn self-sufficient and independent promoters of the Faith in their respective localities.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The practical approach

Every Bahá’í individually, as well as every Bahá’í Community collectively, has the responsibility of telling the people of his locality about the Faith. Fundamentally, this fact seems to imply that every person a Bahá’í meets should be given at least an initial opportunity of hearing of the Faith. More still it implies that we must make special efforts to meet, and tell, more and more people about Bahá’u’lláh and His Message. Of these “Special Efforts” the Guardian has written:

Let him also attempt to devise such methods as association with clubs, exhibitions, and societies, lectures on subjects akin to the teachings and ideals of his Cause such as temperance, morality, social welfare, religious and racial tolerance, economic cooperation, Islam, and Comparative Religion, or participation in social, cultural, humanitarian, charitable, and educational organizations and enterprises which, while safeguarding the integrity of his Faith, will open up to him a multitude of ways and means whereby he can enlist successively the sympathy, the support, and ultimately the allegiance of those with whom he comes in contact.[[6]](#footnote-6)

To our family, friends and fellow-workers; at home, at the office and at social functions; by joining clubs and associations; by attending classes and study-groups; by corresponding with people at a distance; and by each of us studying for ourselves our own environment and discovering our own unique opportunities for speaking of the Faith, will we ultimately make the Cause known to all those in our locality.

Conclusion

Believers individually, Groups and Assemblies cannot rely solely on newspaper publicity and advertising, on public meetings and displays, on study-classes, firesides and social functions, to attract new enquirers. Vitally important though these aspects of Bahá’í activity are in deepening the knowledge of the seeker, only a limited number of people will be initially attracted to the Cause through them. It is personal contact and follow-up which has always been, and will probably continue to be, the most fruitful method of drawing individuals into contact with our Faith. It is their unity, and love for each other, which enables them to become channels through which the Divine Love will pour, and it is this Divine Love that, flowing through the teachers, makes the only real contact with the souls of the people they meet.

National Teaching Committee

1. This document is from the Emma Maxie Jones Collection, https://bahai-library.com/emma\_maxwell\_jones\_collection , prepared by E. Jones, M. Thomas, and J. Winters (2021-2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Shoghi Effendi in *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. II, pp. 219–20 & 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. From a letter dated 17 December 1943 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, in *Directives from the Guardian*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 25–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. idem, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)