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Joseph Matarazzo from the University of Oregon was in great demand as a psychotherapist. On one occasion he is quoted as saying: 'more psychotherapy is accomplished between friends over cups of morning coffee than all day long in the doctor's office'. He goes on to stress the vital importance of a good talk with a real friend, and he says that this is most helpful when things need airing.

Even though this applies to sharing between two friends, the same could apply to anyone whose attitude or behaviour is causing distress to others. The monks used call it fraternal correction. This is what the gospel is telling us today: 'If your brother or sister does something wrong, go and have it out between your two selves'. Instead of nursing our anger, why not pluck up the courage and find a suitable time and place to talk things through. Fraternal correction is an act of charity when the intention is to help facilitate a change in another's behaviour and not to punish or get even or put someone down.

If the person is dismissive of what we have to say, then we might need to involve others as the gospel today suggests, but sensitivity to the persons needs should always take priority.

Ongoing disruptive behaviour or latent anger in one's life can often be indicative of a deeper unresolved issue which hasn't been addressed. Psychiatrists often say that a patient's presenting problem is rarely the real problem.

If a person's bad attitude is causing you distress it's best to calm down before you meet because I can rashly say things in these situations which might have been better left unsaid. How many time have we pressed the send button on our email and regretted it later on.

Jesus often had stern words with people who needed correction. But they were always given with a view to bringing about a change of heart in His listeners. Last Sunday he didn't hesitate to compare Peter to Satan for suggesting He abandon the Cross and his Father's will. He was angry with the money-changers in the Temple precinct for publicly defrauding people on holy ground. He told Simon, the Pharisee who invited him for a meal that he omitted the common courtesies normally shown to guests in stark contrast to the unfairly maligned woman who went out of her way to wash his feet and anoint them. He rebuked the Scribes for only cleansing the outside of the cup, leaving the inside unclean. He told the leading men of his day that, if they didn't repent they would die in their sins.

Some people can't accept correction or advice from anyone. That, however, shouldn't stop us from believing and praying that, with the help of God, they may in time have a change of heart and see things in a different light. We must never write people off.

Most of us, if we're honest with ourselves, get defensive when people pull us up on certain matters. The fear of being rejected or straining a friendship can keep us from being frank with our words. But when bringing up difficult subjects it's always best to do it with respect for the people concerned.

Scripture says: 'love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth' - even when it is unpalatable. Timely correction when taken to heart can prove invaluable.