

## **Intolerant**

*An intolerant person finds that there are many people, or many behaviors, which he or she has difficulty putting up with. These sources of irritation or hatred can be political, societal, or highly personal, matters of pure dislike—such as intolerance for shiny Mustang cars or loud noises in the street. Intolerance can be a negative, in evolutionary theory, for the intolerant person can suffer from inability to adjust to circumstances. On the other hand intolerance can on occasion be useful, in protecting a person from toxic substances, toxic ideas, or unclear thinking.*

### *Examples*

#### **1 Intolerance and ideology**

Ideological/religious/political intolerance is common in our age, and enables zealots with weaponry to do harm to others. It is as though the 'bad ideas', of the scorned group or individual, can be beaten (or imprisoned or mocked) to death. Ideas, however, cannot exactly be overcome by intolerant attitudes. Those attitudes, with their weapons, can cause fear, and temporary silence, among the bearers of untolerated attitudes. Heroes of conscience may refuse to buckle under to intolerant ideologies, but heroes are rare and in the long run the ideas scorned by the powerful often have fresh ways to re-establish themselves after violence. Ideas are action platforms which can be handed down for generations, reemerging healthily after military, social, or personal setbacks. One such idea, active from ancient Athens to the western democracies of our time, is that the individual has inalienable rights, and that those rights include the freedom to inquire into the foundations of freedom.

#### **2 Gay rights**

I was brought up in an atmosphere of intolerance for what today we call gay rights. To my parents and friends, this set of rights was unacceptable. Throughout my life I have remained intolerant of those rights. Though my opinion, on this moral question, is hardly in high demand, I find it hard to leave the issue alone. One side of me says, what the hell, people are people, lead your own life and enjoy it. Others will take care of themselves. (My children assure me this is the way to go.) The other side of me says, what's wrong is wrong, and one should not buckle under to the trend of the times. That side of me remains intolerant of gay rights. Intolerance, usually given a bad name in our culture, may if used carefully prove to be a weapon for discerning, as well as stamping out, the truth.