

# Cecil and Lucy: the pillar of communication falls



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Every year, incredible amounts of time and money are spent on court cases for sexual harassment and divorce. Perhaps a male supervisor made an unwanted advance on a female employee because he thought that her body language or clothing invited a sexual encounter. Or maybe a married couple couldn't understand each other's wants and needs, so their relationship didn't work out. In the end, it all comes down to one simple observation: since the beginning of time, men and women have had troubles communicating with each other. Whether through spoken words, written words, body language, song, or another method, sometimes messages cannot get through from one person to another. Although these problems are not specific to communication only between males and females, they do tend to occur most between the sexes. Actually, difficulties in communication are so common that writers frequently include them in novels written both in the past and the present. E. M. Forster's early 20th century novel, *A Room with a View*, is no exception. In his novel, Forster does much more than merely present a lack of communication between two specific people. In fact, through his inclusion of the failed musical communication between Cecil and Lucy, he ultimately proves that communication is an essential part of a healthy relationship between a man and a woman in general, and without it, love simply cannot develop. To begin with, Cecil was the primary cause of the communication failure with Lucy in *A Room with a View*, ultimately causing the breakdown of his relationship with her. Cecil always saw Lucy as a work of art, and to him, she was an object, not a living person; she was always a something, not a someone in his mind. Because of Cecil's selfishness in his relationship with Lucy, he never truly understood the connection that she had with her music,

<https://assignbuster.com/cecil-and-lucy-the-pillar-of-communication-falls/>

especially Beethoven. Music had the incredible ability to clear Lucy's mind of all her troubles and to see and evaluate her life more clearly. Music played a huge role in the communication between Cecil and Lucy at Cecil's mother's dinner party. "The grandchildren asked her to play the piano. She played Schumann. 'Now some Beethoven,' called Cecil... She shook her head and played Schumann again. The melody rose, unprofitably magical. It broke; it was resumed broken..." (Forster 140). Cecil simply could not see that the music Lucy played on the piano was her passion, and as exemplified in the passage, Cecil asked Lucy to play something that was very dear to her: Beethoven. Lucy couldn't expose herself to people at the party; she could not let the strangers see her true self and her passion for music. In fact, she could hardly play the lesser-invasive Schumann piece at the party. Thus, Cecil's failure to understand Lucy's main method of communication, music on her piano, showed that he did not understand her as a person. This made Cecil the primary cause of the communication failure between the two because a relationship, much less love, cannot flourish without understanding one another, and understanding cannot come without ample communication. Not only was Cecil the primary cause of the communication problems in his relationship with Lucy, his failure to see these problems ultimately damaged their relationship beyond repair. In talking with his mother after the party, Cecil unknowingly proved that he did not understand that Lucy's small act of defiance by not playing Beethoven for his friends was actually a communication problem: "'But her music!' he exclaimed. 'The style of her! How she kept to Schumann when, like an idiot, I wanted Beethoven. Schumann was right for this evening. Schumann was the thing'" (Forster 141). Clearly, Cecil believed that Lucy simply avoided playing

Beethoven because she knew that Schumann would be more appropriate for the occasion. If he understood that Lucy's music was her main outlet and the key to her passion, he should have known the reason for her disobedience. In talking to his mother, Cecil almost tried to make himself feel and look better about Lucy's direct defiance of his request to play what he wanted at the party. Again, because Cecil could not identify that he even had a problem listening to and understanding Lucy through her strongest method of communication, he could not take any steps to fix the problem. Her piano playing was her strength, her existence, and most importantly, her outlet. Cecil simply couldn't understand the importance of Lucy's music, so in effect, he was unable to understand the true essence of her. This ultimately ended their relationship because Cecil couldn't see that Lucy needed to be a free and independent woman. She needed to be more than the "woman of Leonardo da Vinci's, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us" (Forster 102). This is what Cecil clearly wanted her to be, but it was not the life she wanted for herself. While most people can express themselves through words, whether written or spoken, Lucy is not able to express herself fully using words. Had Cecil realized how Lucy was able to communicate best, and had he understood what she was trying to convey to him, he could perhaps have avoided the failed relationship between the two of them. One of the pillars in a solid relationship is the understanding of one another, a pillar that Cecil and Lucy clearly lacked. Although the communication failure between Cecil and Lucy resulted in the failure of their relationship, Forster used the couple to represent men and women in general, proving that communication is a main pillar for a healthy, functioning relationship. Since Cecil and Lucy did not understand each other,

<https://assignbuster.com/cecil-and-lucy-the-pillar-of-communication-falls/>

they had little basis for a relationship besides of the fact that they were in similar social classes. Otherwise, Cecil knew little about Lucy's ambitions and need for freedom. Communication can come in various forms, but the point of true communication in a relationship is to convey feelings, hopes, dreams, and to build trust. The key to trust and understanding, and ultimately love, all starts with getting to know the other person through communication. An important aspect to communication in general is that one person understands the other's preferred mode of communication, or that if there is a problem, it can be recognized. This important characteristic was lacking between Cecil and Lucy, which, again, resulted in a failed relationship between the two. In his novel *A Room with a View*, E. M. Forster ultimately proves that communication is an essential part of a healthy relationship, and without it, love cannot exist. Through Cecil's failure to understand Lucy's need to communicate through her music and his failure to recognize his problem with communication, he lost a relationship with an incredible young woman whose passion and outlet in music he could never truly understand or appreciate. Works Cited Forster, E. M. *A Room with a View*. New York: Vintage International, 1989.