

# We Unconsciously Add Into What We Read

Believe it or not, it's true – we unconsciously add into what we read. It's automatic. We can't help doing it. By “add in” I mean we make assumptions about characters, events, reasons, etc. so that we read into what's not actually there. Then, on top of that, we unknowingly believe what we assumed is true.

We do the same when we are listening to others speak, because it's built into us through life experiences which have programmed us to protect ourselves from others. Bad experiences teach us to always try and understand the real intent behind what others say and do just in case it affects us. After a while this ‘reading others’ becomes instinctive and we do it with everything we see, hear and read, and we don't know we're even doing it.

The problem comes when we misinterpret or misunderstand what someone is doing or saying to us, because we put more credence on what we think, rather on the other person's intentions. We often jump to conclusions, and that's where a lot of problems arise, especially in family and other relationships.

To make our assessment of what the other person's really saying we learn to read tone of voice and body language at all times. That's effective (in most cases) because it provides 93% of what's communicated.<sup>1</sup> The other 7% only comes from the actual words spoken, according to Albert Mehrabian's research.<sup>2</sup> Mehrabian's model only applies to the communication of attitudes and feelings, not straight knowledge transference.<sup>3</sup> However, apart from a knowledge-conveying lecture, whenever a person says something, there's always an attitude or feeling involved in it. This is also what they want to convey when they speak.

Tone of voice and body language are lost many times when we read a quoted statement made by someone, and we can often get it wrong. This is the never-ending problem with text messages (SMS), emails and social media comments, which results in so many friendship breakups and stoushes. In these types of communication, we don't know anything other than the words, so we add in the missing tone of voice and body language. Then we form our own impression of what the person meant by what they wrote.

Here's an example from a local newspaper yesterday:



How did the child express what's in this headline? The way he was feeling and the circumstances he was in would have determined how he spoke. We have no idea, because we only have his words in the newspaper. He could have said it these ways, as described by the adjectives at the front of each:

- Fearfully because the killer was in the room with him.
- Gleefully because he was pleased that his father was dead.
- Calmly because he was telling his friends at school.
- Urgently because he was talking to a bystander and was wanting their help.
- Etc. etc.

All those adjectives would have been detected by a hearer when the boy was actually speaking the sentence. However, it's lost to us through being just written text.

1 – “Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Communication model says that 7% of the meaning of feelings and attitudes takes place through the words we use in spoken communications, while 38% takes place through tone and voice and the remaining 55% of communication of these factors take place through the body language we use (specifically our facial expressions).”

[worldofwork.io/2019/07/mehrabians-7-38-55-communication-model/](http://worldofwork.io/2019/07/mehrabians-7-38-55-communication-model/)

2 – [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Mehrabian#Attitudes\\_and\\_congruence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian#Attitudes_and_congruence)

3 – [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Mehrabian#Misinterpretation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian#Misinterpretation)

In novels or within news articles, of course, the surrounding sentences can be constructed so that readers would pick up how a person spoke. Tone of voice and body language is circumvented in such cases because the prose has it descriptively built in. However, that's not so in documents or books which are historic, legal or theological, to name just a few.

Here's a couple of biblical examples of how we read into text.

1. Jesus cleared the temple by overturning commercial tables and driving out the sellers and money-changers. He then stated, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you've made it a den of thieves." – How did he act? How did he speak to them? We instinctively picture him as being in a rage and aggressively speaking to those he kicked out. But did he? That's our assumption because there's nothing in the 3 gospel records to let us know. That is, with the exception of one reference which states: "Then He taught, saying to them". So we can infer from then that he taught the bystanders and temple clergy, rather than screaming 'blue murder' at them.
2. Jesus spoke to the Pharisees using the expression, "Serpents" and "Offspring of vipers". – How did he speak? Was he angry? Was he in a rage? We don't know. We read into the record if we think that. Interestingly, according to one modern rabbi, what Jesus said was a rabbinical technique that they used when having an theological argument. It's similar to the jousting that goes on in our parliament sessions between the Government and the Opposition. That puts a different light on it!

I have written and taught on the errors we make when we read into scriptures which are 2,000 years old or more. So I won't continue on that train of thought right now.

My concern is how we can also read into (add to) prophetic messages, either ones we hear or ones we read. This is vital, because being able to accurately receive downloads, so that can be passed on to other, is vital for corporately increasing our bank of Kingdom knowledge. However, when we read into a prophetic message (a download), we can get it wrong, and we can even get offended.

Here's an example. In a recent CCOP download that was distributed around Australia, the following statement was included in it:

*"...you need to get rid of your legalism and all religious activity and thought patterns..."*

Those who read the message – those who didn't receive it and experience the King's heart as it was conveyed – could quite easily see that as a negative statement. They could even think that it's offensive. However, all messages must be assessed in comparison with his heart for his people, rather than from an emotional or theological perspective.

In reality, the message was for sons, so as our older brother, he was counselling us to make changes. That's his heart. In addition, we're in partnership with him in the Kingdom, so he has a duty to oversee us and keep us on-track. That's why he spoke it lovingly and as a directive that we need to comply with for our own spiritual wellbeing. He didn't speak like a frustrated earthly father or boss. Instead, he spoke as our Beloved.

From what I've covered, can you see how easy it is for us to read into things and believe what we think is correct?

Laurence

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