

Sound-Bites & Seminars



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Sometimes when we hear ourselves say something new we have no idea what we are talking about. This is how we come up with many of our best and worst ideas. Often we only hear these sound-bites for the first time as they emerge from our lips, and then we have to interpret them right along with our audience. Since we tend to agree with ourselves, we are more likely to accept what we have just said than others might be. If we like what we have just said we are likely to preserve it in our library of things to say again, and with each repetition we take it more and more for granted. In this way it is possible to accumulate a large inventory of habitual statements that have never been seriously considered. You know people whose dialogue consists almost entirely of repetitive and dubious assertions.

This doesn't matter when we are just bullshitting, but habitual sound-bites can pose serious problems for science and for intimate personal relationships. In both cases it is important to recognize habitual statements and to evaluate their truth, consequence, and value. In both cases this is easier to do in discussion than in isolation. This is partly because discussion entails speaking in greater depth about the meaning of some statement, which provides further opportunity for you to hear what you may think. Also you get another point of view and, in relationships, this is the other point of view that counts.

If you understand something you should be able to articulate it at a variety of levels. First there is the humble sound-bite, which might represent a sublime philosophy or which might be gibberish. It is usually just discovered coming out of your mouth or it pops into your head. Then there is the explanation, which is the sentence or paragraph of speech that you get when you say "*What do you mean?*" Then there is the discussion, exploration, and clear articulation of a whole considered thought. If you really understand something you should be able to give a seminar on it, and some of your sound-bites are important enough to warrant that depth of consideration.

It is productive to examine your own transcript from time to time, scanning for habitual sound-bites that call for closer examination. Trust me, call me.

Relief, Recovery, Resolution

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