

## What You Can Learn from the Sound of Your Voice

It is wonderful how much you can discover about a person by the voice, insight and subtle understanding that words could barely convey. How does she feel about herself, how does he feel about you, does he believe what he is saying, is there something she cannot say, are tears just under the surface, or cynicism and anger, or is she somewhere else mentally, disconnected. Voices can be arrogant, booming, breathy, brittle, confident, croaky, dead, demanding, disappearing, dismissive, flat, grating, gravelly, gruff, guttural, high-pitched, hoarse, honeyed, husky, loud, low, matter-of-fact, monotonous, nasal, penetrating, petulant, quiet, raucous, rich, rough, seductive, shrill, silvery, singsong, small, soft, smoky, stiff, strangled, strident, suspicious, taut, thick, thin, throaty, toneless, tremulous, wavering, wheezy, whiny, whispery and more.  
([www.macmillandictionary.com/us/thesaurus](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/thesaurus))

Any of these vocal qualities carries a nonverbal message to the listener, a message about the state of mind and the emotions of the speaker. Often we can sense from the undertones whether this vocal quality represents the authentic self or a mask.

As much as others are a mystery revealed through interactions verbal and non-verbal, so we are more often than not a mystery to ourselves. And just as we learn the moods and thoughts of others, their authenticities and masks, we can learn our own mysteries, moods, thoughts, authenticities and masks by listening to our verbal and non-verbal communication with the world. Listening, just listening, produces surprising unfolding insight and wisdom. But the words are less important than, and often belied by, the sound of the voice. Listen to the voice.

This is an exercise to help you know yourself better, to untangle your own mind and moods, and better navigate the difficult areas of your life.

You can gain emotional insight, understanding and wisdom by listening to the sound of your own voice as you speak. This is a form of mindfulness: you will be actively listening with your observing consciousness while you take part in a conversation, answer the phone, give directions, pray or chant, whatever you are doing. You will

find this much more enlightening than listening to your internal dialog! Pay no attention to the words, just listen to the sound! You are watching yourself as you be yourself.

This is a form of mindfulness and as you practice it you will develop mindfulness, the purpose of which is to know yourself and navigate the intricacies of your own mind and emotions with increasing satisfaction and joy. "Conquer your mind and conquer the world."

You will not be hearing your voice as others hear you. Others hear you through the air. You hear yourself through the air but also through your bones, with the lower frequencies transmitted through the denser medium of bone. In your mindful practice of listening to the sound of your own voice, you are not listening to hear what others hear. You are listening to know who you are in this moment, to know yourself.

I hope you will try this and write me what you discover.

Melissa Owens LPC