

A SPAM FILTER IN MY BRAIN

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HI
HW U?
OK
SRY AFK BK NOW, PTL UR OK.
COOL
YUP
C YA
OK CIAO

CAN I LEND YOUR PLAYSTATION?
TO WHO?
HUH?
WHO DO YOU WANT TO LEND MY
PLAYSTATION TO?
HUH?
DID YOU NOT ASK ME IF
YOU WANTED TO LEND MY
PLAYSTATION?
NO
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN NO?
I MEAN NO, I DID ASK YOU IF I
COULD LEND YOUR PLAYSTATION.
I KNOW.
SO CAN I?
TO WHO?

How are we really supposed to know what anyone else is saying nowadays? Sure we think we know what people are saying but do we really? So what are we to do? How do we communicate effectively? And how do we become discerning when we are “communicated to”. Well here are one or two points that I’ve learned in my life.

Zzzzzzzzz I can already see some people nodding off saying, “yeah, yeah communication schlommunication blah blah”. But wait, listen? Are we ready to be communicated to by the media, politicians (elections are coming up), even pastors/ministers etc. I mean some people are gifted speakers but do we make the effort to think about what they’re really saying. I’ve heard some really gifted speakers which make you feel “wow” after a sermon but upon reflection they haven’t said much more than, “The cat sat on the mat.”

One of the points that I’ve learned in life is critical thinking. Huh? “What does that mean?” you ask. “Am I supposed to criticise my thoughts?” “Hmm that ice cream looks nice... no! Stupid thought! You’re worthless, get out of my head!”

No, that’s not what I mean. Critical thinking is kind of like putting a spam filter in your brain. It sorts out the good from the bad, the wrong from the right. It engages your brain into gear as opposed to parking it in neutral. I mean the basic rule is – don’t believe everything you hear/read. There’s a good start, put that one in your brain and your spam filter’s working already. You see this even goes for when you’re hearing a sermon. You don’t disengage your brain just because it’s a Christian thing or just because the Dominee is saying it. On the contrary think about it. That doesn’t mean be sceptical about everything...no... just think about it. The big test is does it measure up with the Bible? Is it in line with what God is saying in the Bible? Because remember I can quote Bible verses that seem to back up what I’m saying about just about anything. But is the scripture I’m quoting in the right context? In other words is what the person is saying/preaching about lining up with what God is saying in those verses? But this

doesn’t only apply to sermons – that’s just an example. What about the media (what music, movies, TV etc say to us), politicians, friends/family etc?

Another big thing I’ve learned about communication is making sure I’m being understood when I say something. I can’t even tell you how many times I’ve been misquoted and misunderstood. Not always my fault but there are many times where my less than phenomenal communication skills have led to me being misunderstood (hopefully that’s not happening now). And I’ve had to learn how to make myself clearer so people know what I mean when I say something.– so I need to be clear when I say something and careful how I say it. TV shows – especially sitcoms use this idea to great effect. Often they will use situations of miscommunication to make a scene funny and one of the main reasons its funny is because we know that that kind of thing happens. Picture this: two people are in a room, a third person is outside listening to the situation and misunderstands what is going on. Which either produces funny or disastrous consequences. We’ve all seen it.

I read about a survey recently where people did a test with emails. In the survey 90% of the people thought they were clear about what was said and meant. However, when tested only about 50 % had actually understood the messages. Makes you think, doesn’t it?

So let’s be more proactive in our communication – remembering that communication is a two-way thing. Let us have our spam filters turned on at all times. We need to be wise...even us young okes. Another thing is making our and everybody else’s lives (especially our parents) easier by being careful about what we say and particularly how we say it. Miscommunication can cause unnecessary problems in our lives with our friends, family, girl/boyfriends etc. On the other hand good communication can ensure we do not mislead or are not misled by others. One of my favourite verses on communication especially as a Christian is 1 Peter 3:8-18. Well...go on, look it up...I’m not going to just give it to you...don’t be lazy. ▣