



Understanding How Words Work

A. Symbols + Meanings

A word is a symbol or group of symbols with an attached bundle of associations, and those associations are a product of the Source's culture, time period, geographical location, and personal experiences.

1. The Source is the person that wrote the words and the Receptor is the person that read or heard the words.
2. The primary symbols are the letters of the alphabet, and other symbols are linked to punctuation.
3. The meanings of words are generated from the attached Bundle of Associations.
 - A. The date the Source wrote or spoke the words.
 - B. The place the Source wrote or spoke the words.
 - C. The Source's culture
 1. *The whole behavior and technologies of any people that are passed on from generation to generation.*
 2. *Languages, knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, religion, customs, concepts, habits, skills, institutions, and any other capabilities of a given people during a specific period of time.*

3. *More than a set of rules to guide behavior; it is a comprehensive worldview and way of relating to one's fellow human beings.*

4. *Everything is not spelled out literally; much is left to inference. Its strength lies not only in what it says, but also in what it chooses not to say, and this too must be learned.*

D. Personal Experiences of the Source

B. Examine the Context as well as the Content

1. Context is defined as the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and throw light on the meaning. It is also the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs – environment: sentence, paragraph, section, etc.
2. Content is the substance or gist. A part, element, or complex of parts.

C. Guard Against Ethnocentrism

1. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own group, race, society and culture is good, normal, right and superior to other groups, other races, other societies, and other cultures. It is a historical fact humans display their own interests, value systems, cultural patterns and normative orders as right, normal, and superior to others.
2. We cannot possibly understand the words or actions of other groups if we analyze them in terms of our motives and values. We must interpret their words and behaviors in light of their motives, habits and values if we are to understand them. We are usually quick to recognize ethnocentrism in others and slow to see it in ourselves.

D. Pledge to Follow this BHC Guideline in Discussions & Interactions

*My belief system will be large enough to include all facts,
open enough to be examined and questioned,
and flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are discovered.*