

Whose Interpretation Is It?

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Over the years, I have been involved in many discussions and debates. Because of those many debates, I have come to conclude that many people's opinions are often not really their own. Most people I have debated with simply parrot, or repeat what they have heard from others. This is especially true if the person debating has little or no first-hand knowledge of the subject that is being debated. Most people do not like to admit they that they are naive concerning some issues so they resort to simply repeating what they heard someone else say that agrees with the way they "feel" about the issue of the debate. We have to be very careful when we say we agree with someone unless we are very familiar with that person and what they believe...not to mention, why they believe what they believe.

I have been surprised many times when I quoted someone I had heard who sounded knowledgeable, only to find out that they ultimately took a position 180 degrees opposed to that which I had surmised based on other statements by that individual. This happened because I only heard what I wanted to hear, and I didn't take the time to learn more about the person to whom I was listening. I learned the hard way that sometimes someone else's opinion or belief can get me in trouble or at the very least cause me great embarrassment if I had not investigated for myself what their beliefs really were before quoting or indorsing something they had said. It is because so many people make the same mistake as I have, that over time, the truth about many issues can be severely distorted and sometimes lost completely. As a result, I have learned over the years that it is okay to say, "I don't know or I'm not sure." It is much better (and safer) to investigate issues for yourself, rather than to simply repeat what you have heard from someone else. Take the time to make your opinion - **Your** opinion, not someone else's.