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Going beyond words

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Why it's not just the content of a message that matters

I have been writing a column for some time now, where I share the experiences that I encounter, many of which expand my appreciation of life. I recognise that I am impacted, as so many others are, by what touches me, and attempt to make meaning of the experience as well as I can.



In doing so, I offer instances that I have faced. While several persons have written back sharing their understanding of what I am attempting to communicate, some have only commented on content. I reckon the content of my message does not have to find an echo in

those who read the column, and so I write back to some of them asking them if they resonate with the feeling or thought that I share. I realise that if I dwell on content and not recognise the intent of what is being said or shared, I will possibly lose the import and even the disguised message that is being given.

A teacher, friend and scholar recently helped me understand this better, when he said, "Life is like a poem; it reads differently for each person. If you read the poem 'Daffodils' by Wordsworth you will find a different resonance in it than I will. I have lived in that part of the world and when I read the poem so much of the countryside comes alive for me. Yet for my wife the music in the words, the lilt of the flowers become real. Do not be obsessed," he said, "by the words, for words limit. Go behind the words and you will sense the depth of the poet's sharing."

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