

Voice for the Actor - Workshop 3 Expression and Meaning

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Lesson 3: Expression and Meaning: Intent, Subtext, Emphasis, and Timbre

Intention: What the Character Wants

Intention is what the character *wants* in the moment. Every line has a goal behind it.

Examples of intentions:

- To express love
- To annoy
- To impress

“Notice how your voice changes when the *want* changes. Before you speak a line, always ask: **What do I want from the other person?**”

Subtext: What's Beneath the Words

Subtext is what's *really* being said underneath the words.”

Example line:

'I'm happy for you.'

Possible subtext:

- 'I'm jealous.'
 - 'I don't believe you.'
 - 'I'm pretending to be supportive.'
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Emphasis: What Word Matters Most

Emphasis is which word you stress.

Say this line:

'I didn't say you stole the money.'

Now stress a different word each time:

- I didn't say you stole the money

- I **didn't** say you stole the money
 - I didn't say **you** stole the money
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Timbre: The Color of the Voice

Timbre is the *color* or texture of your voice.”

Think:

- Bright vs. dark
 - Smooth vs. rough
 - Light vs. heavy
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Wrap-Up & Challenge

Let's review:

- **Intention:** what the character wants
- **Subtext:** what they really mean
- **Emphasis:** which words matter
- **Inflection:** how the voice rises and falls
- **Tone:** the emotion
- **Timbre:** the color of the voice”

Challenge:

- Pick a line from your song and give it 3 different meanings.