

## **TONE WORDS**

**absurd** logically impossible, ridiculous  
**abhorrent** – loathsome, hateful  
**accusatory** charging of wrong-doing  
**acerbic** harsh, severe  
**admiring** approving, holding in high-esteem  
**aggressive** hostile  
**ambivalent** mixed or conflicting feelings  
**animated** lively, passionate  
**apathetic** indifferent due to lack of energy or concern  
**apologetic** expressing regret  
**ardent** intense, passionate  
**arrogant** aggressively haughty  
**assertive** positive, overbearing  
**audacious** bold, daring  
**awe** solemn wonder  
**awestruck** fear mingled with admiration  
**bantering** witty teasing, good-natured, playful, joking  
**befuddled** muddle or confuse  
**benevolent** desiring to do good, kind  
**bitter** exhibiting strong animosity as a result of pain or grief  
**callous** unfeeling, insensitive to feelings of others  
**candid** outspoken, frank  
**caustic** intense use of sarcasm; stinging, biting  
**cautionary** warning of danger  
**celebratory** praise, honor  
**choleric** hot-tempered, easily angered  
**cold** deliberate disregard  
**colloquial** ordinary, everyday speech  
**compassionate** sympathetic, merciful  
**compliant** yielding to the will of others  
**complimentary** positive  
**conciliatory** pacify, overcome  
**condescending** a feeling of superiority  
**confident** full of conviction, certain, self-assured  
**contemplative** thinking, reflecting on an issue  
**contemptuous** showing or feeling that something is worthless or lacks respect  
**conventional** lacking spontaneity, originality, individuality  
**critical** finding fault  
**cynical** questions basic sincerity and goodness of people  
**defiant** full of antagonism, challenging  
**demeaning** degrade, speak low of someone or something

**depressed** hopeless  
**derisive** ridiculing, mocking  
**detached** impartial, aloof, not engaged  
**didactic** author attempts to educate/instruct reader  
**diplomatic** tactful, good judgment  
**disdainful** scornful  
**disheartened** losing spirit or courage  
**disparaging** speak poorly of, discredit  
**dispassionate** impartial, lacking emotion  
**docile** easy to manage, get along  
**dramatic** striking in effect, provoking emotions  
**earnest** intense, a sincere state of mind  
**exalting** - praising  
**egotistical** conceit  
**elegiac** ode, expressing sorrow from past  
**empathetic** understanding of another's' emotions  
**erudite** learned, polished, scholarly  
**evasive** escaping understanding  
**fanciful** using the imagination  
**faultfinding** placing blame  
**fawning** showing immense affection  
**fervent** - enthusiastic  
**flippant** to lack proper respect or seriousness  
**forlorn** – hopeless, inconsolable  
**formal** conventional, sticking to form  
**forthright** directly frank without hesitation  
**frank** candid, undisguised  
**frivolous** silly, not serious  
**fuming** angry, furious  
**gentle** easy-going, accepting  
**giddy** frivolous, silliness  
**gloomy** darkness, sadness, rejection  
**grim** uncompromising, frightful  
**gullible** easily deceived  
**hard-hearted** unfeeling, insensitive  
**haughty** proud and vain to the point of arrogance  
**humble** modest, unimportant  
**humorous** with humor, comical  
**impartial** equitable, not biased  
**impassioned** filled with emotion  
**imploring** requesting urgently  
**inane** without sense or intelligence  
**incredulous** skeptical  
**indifferent** no interest, apathetic  
**indignant** marked by anger; aroused by justice  
**informative** instructive, to impart knowledge  
**intense** strong, vehement  
**intimate** very familiar

**ironic** sarcastic  
**jaded** unbelieving  
**jeering** - mocking  
**jovial** happy  
**judgmental** authoritative, often having critical opinions  
**laudatory** praising  
**learned** knowledgeable, wise, educated  
**macabre** gruesome, death-like  
**malicious** purposely hurtful  
**matter of fact** accepting of conditions; not fanciful or emotional  
**misanthropic** – antisocial, distrust of mankind  
**mocking** treating with contempt or ridicule  
**morose** gloomy, sullen, sourly, despondent  
**mourning** regretting loss, expressing sorrow  
**naïve** unsophisticated, innocent  
**narcissistic** full of oneself, conceit  
**nostalgic** sentimental, remembrance  
**objective** an unbiased view, able to leave personal judgments aside  
**obsequious** polite and obedient in order to gain something  
**optimistic** hopeful, cheerful  
**outraged** disgusted, angry  
**passive** – lifeless, inactive  
**pathetic** exciting pity  
**patronizing** air of condescension (see condescending)  
**pedantic** condescending, ostentatiously learned  
**pensive** reflective, thoughtful  
**persuasive** trying to get other to take their opinion  
**pessimistic** seeing the worst side of things  
**petty** small minded, doesn't like the big picture  
**philosophical** pertaining to philosophy  
**placid** – calm, mild  
**placating** appease, calm  
**poignant** affecting, biting  
**pompous** showy, bragging, ostentatious, pretentious  
**pragmatic** practical, matter-of-fact  
**pretentious** showy, bragging, ostentatious,  
**provocative** incite, arouse, stir up  
**quizzical** odd, eccentric, amusing  
**reflective** innermost thoughts and emotions  
**regretful** sense of loss, looking back painfully  
**resentful** angry at having been injured, bitter  
**resigned** relinquish, endure with patience  
**restrained** held back, controlling emotion

**reticent** reserved, silent  
**reverent** treating a subject with honor or respect  
**ridiculing** slightly contemptuous banter; making fun of  
**righteous** virtuous, devout  
**sanguine** optimistic, cheerful  
**sarcastic** sneering, caustic  
**sardonic** scornfully and bitterly sarcastic  
**satiric** ridiculing to show weakness in order to make a point. teach  
**scathing** severely criticize  
**scornful** expressing contempt or displeasure  
**sensationalistic** intended to thrill  
**sincere** without deceit or pretense, genuine  
**skeptical** doubtful, questioning  
**solemn** deeply earnest, tending toward sad  
**somber** depressing, melancholy, serious, grave  
**subjective** not objective, biased  
**submissive** obedient, yielding  
**tolerant** patient and fair, endure without complaint  
**tragic** very unhappy  
**trepid** – fearful or apprehensive  
**unbiased** without predetermined judgment  
**uneasy** not resigned to belief  
**urgent** requiring immediate action, pressingly important  
**vexed** angry, annoyed  
**vibrant** full of enthusiasm  
**vindictive** seeking revenge, bitter  
**virtuous** moral, upright  
**whimsical** odd, strange, fantastic, fun  
**wistful** - longing  
**wonder** - in awe or amazement  
**zealous** diligent, earnest

**Other tone words:**