

My voice is a monotone... What can I do?

Color, that which gives life and emotion to the voice, is one of the most important characteristics in a dynamic delivery. You can have a wonderfully resonant speaking voice but without vocal variety, you will bore your audience. Being expressive is also seen in your face and in your body language.

I urge you to look in a mirror and record yourself with the following exercise.

Say the words, *She said yes*, in the manners listed below.

Delight

Disbelief

Fear

Worry

Sarcasm

Did your face express any emotion? Did your voice display variety? You should have seen and heard 5 different interpretations of *She said yes*. You may have had a hard time with fear – most of my clients do. Even those with good expression find it difficult. The descriptions below are just one possibility of what you may have seen or heard.

Delight: you may have smiled

Disbelief: a questioning look

Fear: eyes open wide

Worry: your brow may have furrowed

Sarcasm: Maybe a lip curled up.

Remember, these are only suggestions. There is no right or wrong. Color is individual; color is how you feel at the moment; color is being yourself. The only thing that is wrong in color is the lack of it!

Many people are quite colorful in conversation but at the lectern, their voice loses all color, all emotion because their nervousness is in control: they can't even begin to think about an expressive delivery. What consumes this type of presenter is a rapid delivery. GET IT OVER WITH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! And, that is not the answer. Your audience is there to hear you speak; they are not there to hear you rattle off a pile of words as fast as you can.

If you can be expressive in your delivery, you will discover that you will speak more slowly in order to allow that emotion to be. Color allows you to pause, to add interest to what you are saying, which in turn keeps your audience's attention.

Harrison Ford does not display a lot of variety in his voice; his strength is in his facial expression and body language. No matter what movie you watch of this man, his face and body tell you exactly how he feels: he doesn't have to speak. You knew he was petrified when he was hanging over the pit of snakes; you knew he didn't kill his wife in *The Fugitive* when you saw his anguish as his wife's murder was described. For an actor, good facial expression and body language are strengths; for the individual on the podium, it is of little value, if the voice is a monotone.

Whether you are in conversation or standing at the lectern, concentrate on visibly and orally expressing the emotion that you are feeling. Let's say, for example, that you have discovered a new drug that can cure cancer. This is tremendous news! Why shouldn't your voice and your face show your excitement, your enthusiasm, and your hope? Enthusiasm is contagious. If your audience sees it and hears it in you, then they too will experience that enthusiasm.

What if your talk is of a somber nature? The same advice applies. Your feelings, be they sorrowful, worrisome, or anguished will come through in your

voice if you allow them. By no means am I advising you to act: don't overdue it. Good delivery displays the emotion you are experiencing at that time. If you can share that emotion in speaking, be it in your professional life or in your personal life, you will find your listeners paying more attention to you.

So, the next time you open your mouth to speak, take a breath and express yourself with color. Supported breathing is the first thing we do in ***The Voice Dynamic Approach*** and it is the secret, not a trick or a tip, but a physical activity that allows you to **be more dynamic in your delivery**, control your volume, eliminate breathlessness in public speaking, project without shouting, control nervousness on the podium, improve the sound of your speaking voice, and handle stress much more effectively.



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