

The #1 Secret for Improving Your Speaking Voice



(That Most Voice Coaches Don't Know!)

Nancy Daniels

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Just When You Think You Have Your Act Together***...You Hear Yourself on Your Answering Machine!***

Do you believe that the image you project has an impact on your professional or business life? I would imagine that your answer is **yes**. I would also imagine that you have heard yourself on some type of recording equipment – your voicemail, an answering machine, a camcorder, or maybe even an old audio tape recorder.

When you hear your recorded voice, what is your reaction? Are you shocked, maybe embarrassed? How about humiliated? In all the years I have been speaking professionally about the sound of the voice, I always ask that question of my audience. 99% do not raise their hands. In fact, most tend to look around the room uncomfortably, possibly hoping I will not call upon them to speak. The reason for their discomfort is because, in being asked that question, they have an idea of what I am going to say next and they do not want to hear it. It goes something like this:

The voice you hear on your voicemail or other type of recording equipment is how everyone else recognizes you. Let

me say that again. The voice which embarrasses, humiliates, disgusts, or shocks you is how everyone else recognizes you. That sound is your vocal image.

They say that 37% of the image you project is the sound of your speaking voice. How you look accounts for 55% of your image. Only a mere 8% is attributed to your content or what you are saying. Whether those statistics are true or not is debatable but the statistics are not the issue. The issue is that there is no doubt that some percentage of your image must be assigned to your speaking voice. And, over the telephone where there is no visual, the sound of your voice is responsible for the majority of the image you are projecting.

How many times have you formed a mental image of someone over the phone and were later surprised when you met that individual in person? The voice you had heard over the phone was in no way similar to the person you were looking at. One of the most common

examples of this is the person that sounds child-like. I can't tell you how many women I have spoken to, later met, and was nonplussed to discover that they were mature women.

I was holding a presentation in Detroit and a woman phoned me to register. As soon as I heard her voice, I thought she was a teenager. She then asked if she could bring her daughter along and I did not respond immediately. I figured she was talking about an infant and that she was unable to get a babysitter. She heard my indecision and told me that she was 44 and that her daughter was 20.

Another woman who phoned me sounded like a 6-year-old, literally. She complained to me that she was not being taken seriously in her job and would not be getting a promotion even though she was more than competent in her position. What was holding her back? The fact that she sounded like a 6-year-old. It is very difficult to take someone seriously if they sound like a child no matter how good they look or how great their content.

The image you project over the phone is not just a problem for women. The same thing can happen to men as well.

Recently I was working with a man by means of phone consultations. In the weeks we had worked together, I assumed that he was a wimpy, skinny 22-year-old. After discovering his 'real' voice, he sent me a photo of himself and I was stunned to see a well-built, handsome man in his mid-40s. The good news for this man is that he now sounds mature – not too old, not too young – ageless. He now sounds as good as he looks.

The image you project does not always deal with age. Some years ago, a man phoned me and I wrongly assumed he was a woman. He told me that his name was Fernando. I figured that I had not heard him correctly and that his name was Fernanda. After several minutes of conversation, I began to wonder if indeed this individual was a man. So, I asked him and he immediately confirmed that he was male. He further stated that, over the telephone, people were always mistaking him for a woman.

I am not trying to burst your bubble, but if you value the image you project and are looking for various ways and methods towards bettering that image, do you not think it might be wise to consider improving the other 37% or whatever those percentages really are? We take self-improvement courses – we read articles for information – we research how we can improve our lives – some people even go so far as to have their wardrobes designed; yet, little or no value is placed on how we sound.

If you think your voice does not matter, consider this. Some years ago, Barbara Walters interviewed Kathleen Turner and Walters remarked about Turner's low, wonderful voice. The actress responded that she did not understand how a woman could spend thousands of dollars on her clothing, her hair, makeup and nails would be done perfectly, and then she would talk in a nasal, high-pitched voice that sounded like nails on a blackboard. She wondered why a woman would not spend some of that money on voice training, adding, "the power of the voice is exciting as heck!" I could not agree more.

Then there is Mike, a website owner from New York City, who phoned me and asked me in his nasal, high-pitched voice if we could do some affiliate marketing. We talked about Voice Dynamic and what my business was about. His first remark was that I taught speech. I corrected him and told him that, although I do teach presentation skills, I was a voice coach. He questioned me about voice and I asked him if he had ever heard himself on his voicemail or some type of recording equipment at which point he immediately interrupted me and said that he hated to hear his voice that way. His next statement was the clincher however. He 'qualified' himself by remarking that, although he did not like his voice on his voicemail, he thought he had a good voice. His statement was an oxymoron. If you find the recorded sound of your speaking voice revolting, how can you possibly like your voice?

You have both an outer ear and an inner ear. All sound – music, words and any other noise that is not coming from your mouth – is recognized by your outer ear because of sound waves which travel towards it. Those waves are collected by means of the pinna or

fleshy part of the outside of the ear and are then directed into the auditory canal to the ear drum, causing the latter to vibrate. Amplified by the bones in the middle ear, these vibrations are then converted into electrical impulses which are sent to the brain where the brain translates them into recognizable sound.

Naturally, when you talk to someone, your voice leaves your mouth and bypasses your outer ear. Remember, it is sound going away from your physical presence, not sound coming towards you. What you hear when you speak, however, is sound that is vibrating inside the solid and liquid of the brain – sound that is being heard by means of your inner ear. Essentially what you hear when you speak is distorted sound and is similar to what happens when you talk to someone under water. The sound under water is garbled and muffled because it is sound waves traveling through a liquid.

The only way you can hear your own voice, aside from using recording equipment, would be to stand in a corner, directly facing the corner where the two walls meet. Your mouth should be about 6 inches from the

corner. In speaking, your voice will hit the corner and then bounce back past your outer ear. When I teach voice, all of my clients have had to stand in the corner at one time or another! It is definitely one of the best methods for finding your 'real' voice.

***So What Is Your 'Real' Voice?
(And Here You Thought You Were Using Your Real Voice!)***

When I talk voice, teach voice, or think voice, I am referring to your 'real' voice. You have a better voice inside. It is richer, deeper in pitch, warmer, resonant. It vibrates in your chest and is able to be projected without hurting your throat or your listeners' ears.

► *Pitch is the highness or lowness of sound, not volume which deals with the loudness or softness of sound.*

The reason I call it your 'real' voice is because presently you are using your habitual voice, the voice you have made a habit through all your years. In fact,

when I talk about voice, I try to avoid the phrase 'changing your voice' because my approach does not deal with working with the voice you have. The goal of The Voice Dynamic Approach is to find the one that you do not know you have, the one that is hiding inside of you just waiting to come out.

James Earl Jones, Kathleen Turner, Cher, George Clooney, Sean Connery, Julia Ormond, Peter Coyote, Vin Diesel, Ashley Judd, Ron Perlman, and Diane Sawyer all have voices that are resonant. They are like music to your ears even though they are not singing. Each voice is distinctive, has depth, and is warm.

When Ms. Sawyer speaks, it is like a blanket around your shoulders; Darth Vader's voice is authoritative; and, Vin Diesel commands your attention. The only way this is possible is because they are using their chest cavity to power their sound.

And, given the appropriate tone, each one of these great voices can be sensual, sexy, alluring, seductive – hot. One of the most sensual, lush voices of all times was that of the late, great Barry White. What this man possessed was both a singing voice as

well as a speaking voice that exuded sensuality. His sound was the ultimate in hot for the baby boomer generation.

The difference between the voices of those I mentioned above and the voice that has not had training is in the actual placement of the voice.

►The voice that has had good training is being powered by means of the chest cavity.

What you will notice when you listen to those actors (or in the case of Diane Sawyer, a media personality) is that none of them have voices that are tinny, weak, strident, harsh, breathy, throaty, wimpy, nasal, childlike, quivering, cracking, shrill, or whispery.

***What Does Your Chest Cavity Have to Do With Your Voice?
Everything!***

We have 5 cavities in our body responsible for the resonance found in the speaking voice. They are referred to as our resonators.

► Resonance is the intensification and enrichment of a voiced sound by supplementary vibrations in the chest, throat, voice box, mouth and nasal cavities.

Each of those 5 cavities should vibrate to some degree when you speak. Unfortunately, most people are not using their chest cavity to power their sound. Instead, they rely on their other 4 resonators which result in voices that are higher in pitch than they should be as well as displaying a host of other traits or characteristics that can make the voice most unappealing.

When I work with a client, either privately, in group sessions, or by means of my DVD training, I show them how to use their chest to power or amplify their voice.

We then work on finding the optimum pitch of their voice (again, pitch is the highness or lowness of sound). Most people are speaking somewhere above their optimum pitch. That is one of the reasons their voices lack depth and fullness.

It is important to understand that a truly warm, rich, resonant voice is only possible if you are:

1. using your chest cavity to powering your sound;
and,
2. speaking within your own individual optimum range.

Once my clients are speaking within their optimum range (the area which centers around the optimum pitch), they then practice a drill in which they read something in their new or their 'real' voice. Then they read the same material again in their 'old' or habitual voice. The results are quite dramatic.

Not only do they hear the difference but they feel it as well because they are able to feel vibrations in their chest cavity which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a resonant speaking voice.

Some of my clients are able to visualize their lower sound as well. They 'see' it. But everyone is able to hear the difference. And, everyone is able to feel the difference. I explain it this way. When you discover your real voice, it is like the cogs of a gear. Everything falls into place. It feels right; it sounds right; it is right. And, it is so much easier to speak when you allow your chest to do more of the work than

previously when your throat and voice box were doing most of the work.

When I was living and working in London, Ontario, Canada, I had a contract with London Life in which I would meet with their executives privately on a weekly basis. One of the men with whom I was working was an executive vice president. He came into our third session, having most successfully found his real voice at our prior meeting and remarked that he was mad at me. My first reaction was, "Oh, no, what have I done?" He proceeded to tell me that he could not believe that I had taken something so simple and made a business out of it. What Jim was referring to is that finding your real voice is easy. And, once you have it, your job is then to make it a habit.

Recently, someone asked me if you need to be able to carry a tune or to sing on pitch in order to find your 'real' voice. Absolutely not. I have people who can't sing worth a nickel but are well able to distinguish their old voice from the new. Please understand, I am

not teaching singing and I never ask a client to sing; however, in working with the voice, you are still dealing with sound that has a musical note value. All sound has a pitch on the musical scale.

Incidentally, if you do sing for pleasure, you will discover an improvement with your singing voice. You will have a greater range and more depth in quality.

If you haven't already seen Craig's 'before & after' video clip on the homepage of my website, you should check it out. What a tremendous difference. This young Canadian had taken every course conceivable into order to be accepted into the police academy. The change in his voice is so profound that you might be tempted to think it is two different people. But the true justice was when his father told him it was the best investment he had ever made! Watch Craig at www.voicedynamic.com and see if you do not agree.

What Happens After You Find Your 'Real' Voice?

◀Volume▶

After you discover your 'real' voice, we then work on volume. Remember, volume is the loudness or softness of sound. Volume is one of the buttons we all covet on our remote controls! While some people use the word **low** to describe a softer volume, I prefer the word **soft**. Because I deal with both pitch and volume in teaching voice, it is less confusing to use the words **high** or **low** in discussing pitch.

▶The Soft-Spoken Voice◀

If you are soft-spoken, the first part of this session is invaluable. One of the phrases most often heard by those who speak in a soft voice is, "Speak up, we can't hear you." The other common phrase is, "What did you say?" If you are tired of not being heard the first time you say it, this session will show how to determine what is a normal volume of sound.

When it comes to the speaking voice, I have found that being soft-spoken is much more common than the opposite extreme, speaking too loudly. It also requires retraining your inner ear to accept the increase in volume and to appreciate that you are not speaking too loudly. Done properly, your increase will be a normal amount of sound. In fact, the good news if you are soft-spoken, is that you will never be too loud. Of the thousands of people with whom I have worked, those who spoke softly learned to increase their volume correctly. Never, and I mean never, did I have one client who resorted to speaking too loudly.

Why are some soft-spoken and others not? Generally, it is because of how you were raised. Let's say, for example, that you grew up in a home in which one parent worked nights and had to sleep during the day. You learned to be quiet. Possibly, you were raised in a large family and to keep order, you were told to speak softly. If you are a woman and your mother was soft-spoken, then it is most likely that you speak softly as well.

Wendy came to me because she was not being heard giving presentations during her home clothing

shows – her customers would talk among themselves which lessened the impact of her sales presentation. When I worked with Wendy, she told me that her father had a big, booming voice which she found threatening. Why was Wendy soft-spoken? Because she didn't want to sound like her father. We discovered a big voice in this petite woman; but, because she learned to power her voice from her chest, she never spoke loudly, just in a normal volume level.

[By the way, size of body has no bearing on size of voice. There are a lot of big men with small voices and a lot of little women with big voices!]

One of the greatest benefits if you are soft-spoken is that learning to speak with your 'real' voice will automatically increase your volume naturally; however, I must add a qualifier here. If you are extremely soft-spoken, the increase may not be quite enough to bring you up to what I consider a normal volume of sound for most situations. In these extreme cases, we work additionally on retraining the inner ear to accept a larger volume.

►What is a normal amount of volume? The amount of sound necessary to be heard comfortably at the kitchen table, in the car, in the grocery store, and over the telephone without being asked to repeat yourself.

The difficulty for the soft-spoken person is understanding and recognizing what is normal. If you are soft-spoken, you have spent your entire life talking at a particular volume level. You are comfortable with that level and so is your inner ear. When asked to increase your volume, your inner ear will revolt because you will think you are shouting. It is only after you have heard yourself on a recording, speaking in a normal volume of sound, that you will be able to appreciate that indeed your larger volume is not loud. It is a bigger voice but it is not a loud voice. It is normal.

Here is another way to understand what is happening with the soft-spoken voice. If Volume 1 is what I have labeled as the normal, everyday volume that most people use at home, at work, or in some social situations, then you have been speaking at a .8

or possibly .85. So, you are 15% to 20% below what is normal.

► If you expect to be heard, you must learn to increase your volume. There is no other way around it.

If you are tired of repeating yourself over and over, you learn to increase your volume to a normal level of sound. Your listeners will thank you.

Remember, too, that being soft-spoken is not a strength: you are not being looked upon favorably. Continually being asked to repeat yourself is not an asset but a liability. You may be considered shy or insecure, incompetent or weak – the list goes on and on. Now any one of those adjectives may describe you; however, just because you are soft-spoken does not guarantee that those words actually do describe you.

One man with whom I worked by the name of Bill told me that in his company's weekly conference, every time he opened his mouth to speak, someone else would interrupt him and take over the

conversation because he never spoke with enough power. After his session on volume, he returned to my class beaming. During his company's meeting earlier that week, he offered his opinion and was given the opportunity to express himself without interruption. Everyone was able to hear him. When you consider that this had never happened before to this man, you can appreciate what a confidence booster that was for him! And, all he had to do was speak in a **normal volume level of sound**.

◀◀◀*The Loud Voice*▶▶▶

While not as common as the soft-spoken voice, a loud voice is just as problematic and needs work. Recently I ordered a new laptop over the phone and the man on the other end of the line spoke so loudly that I had to move the phone at least 6 inches away from my ear! It took everything in my power not to remark on his volume but in my business, telling someone they need voice improvement is like handing

them a bottle of Scope! (If I knew him better, I would have said something.)

If you have been speaking too loudly, your volume will decrease naturally once you allow your chest to power your voice. Bear in mind, your habitual voice is being pushed from your throat and voice box, as well as by your mouth cavity and possibly your nasal passages, all of which can create a strident sound especially when speaking in a loud voice. By changing the placement of your voice, however, the loudness, the edges, the stridency will be gone because your voice will be resonating in your chest.

Attending a 3-day Mega conference a few years ago, I listened to a man who served as the host. This man is well-known on the public speaking circuit. Because I had listened to him at various times throughout the three days, when it came time for him to give his own 50-minute presentation, I chose not to attend. His voice was loud and obnoxious to my ears. Listening to him speak into a microphone with too much volume would have given me a headache. When I had a chance to meet him later, I told him about his voice and what I felt he needed. He

explained to me that he had a cold and that he knew all about voice training.

Some months later at another conference in New York City, that same man was speaking once again. You would be surprised to see how many people got up and left the room after listening to him for just a few minutes. It was embarrassing. If he actually did have voice lessons, he definitely studied with the wrong voice coach!

Incidentally, just as you can be labeled improperly if you are soft-spoken, the same can happen to the loud individual. The words overbearing, demanding, arrogant, bossy, and domineering come to mind. If you have a problem with volume, powering your voice from your chest is the answer, whether you are too loud or too soft. It is truly amazing to see how one technique can normalize the two extremes of volume.

Projection

Increasing your volume without shouting or yelling is known as projection and is only possible if

you are powering your voice from your chest cavity. Those who use their voices heavily for extended periods of time, such as teachers, trainers, coaches, aerobics instructors, politicians, ministers, as well as public speakers, would be well-served to learn this technique. It not only saves your voice and your listeners' ears but it is also not as tiring as yelling. It takes much less energy to project your voice than it does to yell or shout.

One of my favorite comments in teaching or guest speaking is to explain that in raising my two sons, I never yelled at them; I projected. Kids do not listen if you yell or shout at them; but, they will take notice and obey when you project.

Yelling is loud – I do not use the word loud when I talk about projection because a projected voice is just a bigger sound and it does not hurt your listeners' ears. If James Earl Jones were standing in a room with you and projected his voice to a level of volume that was obviously too great for the size of the room you were in, it would not be painful to your ears. On the other hand, if Fran Drescher were to do the same, beware. The result would be torturous.

James Earl Jones resonance is primarily in his chest and because of that quality, his larger voice will not hurt your ears; Fran Drescher's resonance is in her nose. The harshness and stridency of the nasal voice being increased in volume is loud and the results can be ear-shattering!

One of the marvelous benefits of projection over speaking loudly is that it will not hurt your throat. How many times have you rooted for your favorite team or spent the day yelling at your kids and noticed a sore throat by the end of the day? Yelling or shouting is definitely not good for your larynx or voice box and can leave you with permanent damage to your vocal folds (cords) which I will be discussing a bit later.

Even calling to someone in a different room of your home, for example, takes projection; yet, many people never bother to increase their volume to compensate for the extra distance the voice needs to travel. Then they wonder why their spouse, their child or whoever did not hear them.

A few years ago I was working with Ulf Samuelsson, the former NHL defenseman; and, after our session on projection, he returned to my class, amazed by the

difference he had experienced when coaching his son's hockey team that week. He said that he did not lose his voice by the end of the practice and remarked that he wished he had known how to project his voice on the hockey rink when he was playing professionally!

► Yelling is out. Projection is in.

What Ulf Samuelsson had been experiencing after an hour of coaching his son's team was something very common and something problematic. It is called vocal abuse.

Vocal Abuse

The Truth about Chronic Hoarseness, Sore Throats or Even Loss of Voice...and You're Not Sick!

If you have been to an Ear, Nose, & Throat Specialist and been given a clean bill of health, why are you suffering from chronic hoarseness or persistent sore throats? Some people even lose their voice by

the end of the day and yet doctors are telling them that there is nothing wrong.

In truth, there is something very wrong because vocal abuse will not go away on its own. In fact, over time it can get worse and lead to permanent damage of the vocal folds. Caused by misplacement, misuse and/or overuse of the voice, vocal abuse affects those who use their voice heavily throughout an extended period of time. What is fascinating about vocal abuse is that it is very individual. Some people can yell all day long with no side effects whatsoever and some people cannot.

It is also a problem for singers. One of the great Broadway 'Belters' from the 20th century was Ethel Merman. Truly an anomaly, this woman could sing (although in my opinion she was yelling) every day for 60 years and never develop nodules or any other problem with her voice. Julie Andrews, on the other, a legitimate singer, starred in **Victor/Victoria** on stage for only one year before she developed nodules on her vocal folds. The result for Ms. Andrews was that she had surgery to remove them. Sadly, she has never been able to sing again. In addition, her speaking

voice changed because of the surgery. While Andrews was supporting her voice properly, her mistake was attempting to take on a physically demanding role on a daily basis when she was in her 60's.

Nodules are growths of tissue very similar to the calluses you may develop on your hands or feet from constant rubbing and irritation. In layman's terms, your vocal folds are like puffs of tissue rapidly opening and closing which create changes in air pressure. The result is speech. If nodules are present, they interfere with the folds' ability to open and close successfully which limits voice production.

In some cases, the nodules will go away on their own if you stop talking and singing for several months. For most people in business, however, having no voice is not good for business.

While both Merman and Andrews were singers, the same damage can happen to the speaking voice as well. Whether you have nodules yet or not, if you are experiencing chronic hoarseness or persistent sore throats and you are not sick, neither will go away on its own until you change the placement of your voice. (This advice is good for both speakers and singers.)

Vocal abuse is seldom a problem for those who have had the proper training in vocal techniques – either for the singing voice or for the speaking voice – and abide by those practices of support consistently. There is no doubt, however, that age certainly has an impact on the voice. A young voice can withstand much more abuse than an older voice. Had Julie Andrews played in **Victor/Victoria** when she was in her 20's, she probably would have done no damage.

Others who have suffered serious abuse are Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, and Elton John, to name a few. In each of these cases, had their voices been supported by means of their chest cavity, they most likely would have been able to avoid the nodules on their vocal folds.

[Please understand that I am not disparaging any of these singers. I happen to think they are very good; however, training to support their sound could have prevented this type of abuse. And, when you consider what their livelihood entails, not supporting their sound is certainly not the smartest move they have made!]

I worked with an elementary school teacher by the name of Beth. In her mid-30's, she was extremely hoarse and had been to an ENT specialist who had diagnosed nodules on her vocal folds. She did not want surgery and came to see me in June, seeking help for her chronic hoarseness. I told her that without surgery, she would have to stop speaking for several months. It worked. Beth got back in touch with me in September; her nodules were gone; her voice was much improved; and, because she had learned how to speak within her optimum range, she was able to resume teaching. By using her chest to power her sound, she was taking the excessive pressure or 'wear and tear' off her throat and still had her voice by the end of the day.

Another aspect of vocal abuse is actual loss of voice. This is certainly not as common as chronic hoarseness or a persistent sore throat, but it does happen and, again, it is the result of overuse and misplacement.

A woman I met at a business conference was proudly showing her display on website design. The

expo had opened at 10 am. By 11 am, this woman, named Kathy, had no voice. Literally. She could not speak. Unfortunately for her, the conference was not ending for another five hours! She had to close down her display early because of her lack of voice.

As my booth was next to Kathy's, I spoke to her about vocal abuse and what she should do to end it. To this day, the woman has done nothing about the problem. In Kathy's situation, I am confident that the difficulty lies deeper than the physical. There is an emotional problem that is holding her back.

If you are suffering from vocal abuse, do not ignore it because it is not going away on its own.

► Only when you take the pressure off your throat and vocal folds –

► Only when you learn to power and amplify your voice by means of your chest cavity –

will you hear and feel the difference. And, it will happen quickly.

Color – Speaking with Expression

The next area we work on is color. You can have the greatest voice in the world but if your delivery is not colorful then you are boring. There is no other way to say it. Speaking in a monotone does not sell, no matter what your business is.

From all my years of experience, I have found that there are primarily three types of speakers.

1. Those who are colorful both in conversation and at the lectern.
2. Those who are colorful in conversation but not at the lectern.
3. Those who are boring both in conversation and at the lectern.

No matter what your level of delivery is or is not, everyone with whom I work will cover this final session of my program because there is much to learn in speaking with color, be it vocal variety, facial expression, or body language.

Color is as individual to you as are your fingerprints and there is no right or wrong except having no color. Some people exude passion and enthusiasm; others may exude a little less but are still colorful. Personality certainly has much to do with your expression; but, if you are afraid to allow your emotions to be seen and heard, then you are doing a grave disservice to your listeners. If you do not express yourself with some degree of life, then you may be considered cold, snobbish, indifferent, shy, withdrawn, and, of course, the most common adjective, boring. None of these words may honestly describe you, but if your voice is saying such, then that is the impression you are giving to your family, your friends, your colleagues and to the people you meet.

Don't ignore color in your search for voice improvement. Expressing yourself with life, with emotion, is one of the most important traits of dynamic speaking as well as one of the reasons others want to listen to you.

***What You Need to Know...
That Most Voice Coaches Don't Know!***

And finally, the time has come for me to tell you what the #1 secret is that most voice coaches do not know.

- In order to find your real voice,
- In order to allow your chest to power your voice,
- In order to speak within the optimum range of your voice,
- In order to increase your volume without shouting,
- In order to eliminate vocal abuse,
- In order to discover the best means of controlling your nervousness in any form of public speaking,
- In order to actually like your voice on your voicemail,

you must learn to do something that presently you are not doing.

I would like you to go stand in front of a mirror without your shirt or blouse and take a deep breath. Watch yourself in doing this.

Now let me ask you, did your shoulders rise? Did you suck in your stomach and throw out your chest? Did you see and feel tension in your throat and neck areas? More than likely you did because 99% of the population thinks that that manner of breathing is correct.

Unfortunately, that manner of breathing is not correct. And, of course your first response is that it must be correct because it is just breathing, that you that you have been doing it that way all your life, and that you have no control over it. That is the error. In truth, you do have control over it.

► It is a medical fact that the breath you inhaled in which your shoulders were rising, your gut was sucked in and the muscles and ligaments in your neck were tensed is referred to as lazy or shallow breathing.

You have a muscular partition separating your chest from your abdomen. It is known as your diaphragm. Shaped like a shepherd's crook, its primary purpose is to support your air in breathing. All opera singers are aware of and using that muscle which is why they are sometimes referred to as professional breathers. You do not need to sing opera, however, in order to use that muscle.

After his accident, Christopher Reeve was more than aware of his diaphragm. During interviews, he always talked about the fact that he could go for 30 minutes at a time without his respirator. For that actor, being able to use his diaphragm to support his breathing was quite impressive, considering he was paralyzed from the neck down.

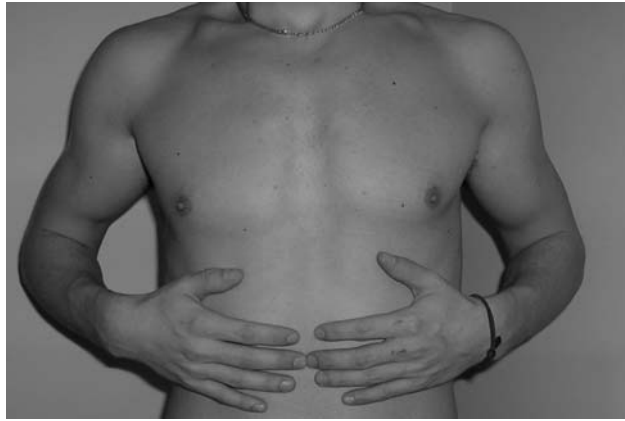
All mammals breathe with the support of their diaphragm. It is only the most intelligent of the mammals that stops this practice and resorts to upper chest or lazy breathing. If you don't believe me, watch your dog or cat the next time it is lying on its side. You will notice your pet taking its air all the way down to its lower torso. If you do not have a dog or cat, a newborn baby will do. If you have none of the above,

you can watch my Lab, Boucher, by clicking on the following link: www.voicedynamic.com/dog.html

You were born breathing properly but, as I just mentioned, sometime during your childhood development, you reverted to shallow breathing. We imitate our loved ones during our early childhood. If the relationship between you and your same-sex parent was nurturing and loving, then it is more than likely that you sound like that parent. The same thing happens with breathing. If your mom and/or dad are lazy breathers, so too, will you be a lazy breather.

To feel your diaphragm, place your hands under your rib cage as in the photo on the next page and cough. Did you feel that muscle kick out? You should have. If not, dig a little deeper and try it again. It is in there!

You may remember that muscle if you have ever been to a funny movie and laughed for two hours. Afterwards, you may have noticed a bit of soreness there. Another time this muscle gets a workout is out is when you have a cold. If you have spent the day coughing, for example, you may remember feeling sore in that area.



Placement of hands under the rib cage

To initiate supported breathing, stand with your hands, again in the same position as in the photograph above, and inhale through your mouth – not through your nose. Take your air all the way down until you feel your hands expanding out, not up. Because I am dealing with the voice, when I teach breathing, I instruct my clients to breathe in through the mouth while trying this exercise.

► I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BECOME A MOUTH BREATHER.

Only in practicing do I advise breathing through your mouth. The reason is because in speaking (and in singing), we inhale through an open mouth, not through the nose. At all other times, I expect you to breathe through your nose.

Liken that area of your body to a balloon.

1. Breathe in, inflating the balloon.
2. Hold it a few seconds.
3. Exhale, allowing your balloon to deflate.

Another way to see if you are breathing properly is by placing your hands on your sides as in the photograph below and feeling the expansion of your rib cage.

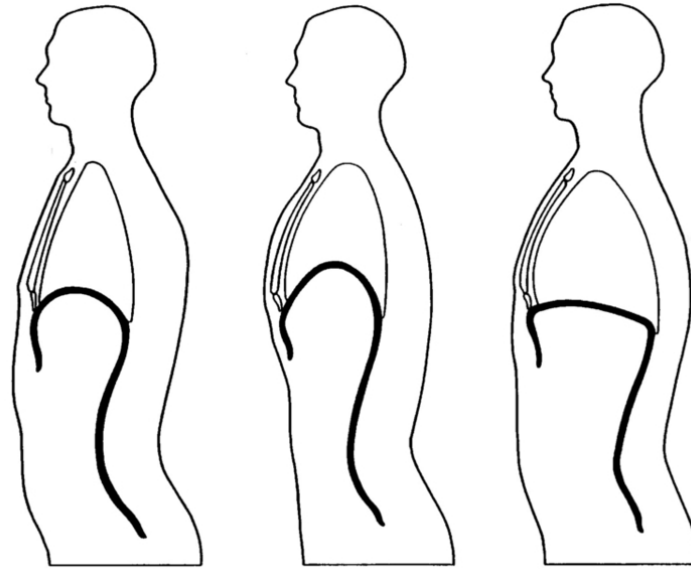


If done properly, your shoulders should not have moved, your neck and throat muscles should be relaxed and your diaphragm should have expanded down and out – not up.

If you look at the three individuals in the diagram on the next page, you will see that the diaphragm is nicely curved in the relaxed position for the individual on the left.

The person in the middle has taken a shallow breath and you can see how that muscle hooks up higher. Notice, too, that his air supply does not increase. There is essentially no additional room in his lungs because of the upward movement of the diaphragm which is crowding his lung area.

By taking a supported breath, however, the person on the right has doubled his lung capacity because of the downward and outward expansion of his diaphragm.



Position of diaphragm
when relaxed

Vertical position of
diaphragm in
shallow breathing

Horizontal expansion
of diaphragm when
breath is supported

***What Does Breathing Have to Do with Your Voice?
EVERYTHING!***

Throughout this ebook, I have been talking about using your chest to power and amplify your

voice. Think about all that you have just read as well as the diagram above. In order to take advantage of the capacity of your chest cavity to power and amplify your sound, you must learn to breathe in this fashion. Vin Diesel is doing it and so is Julia Ormond as well as the others I mentioned earlier.

In addition to voice, breathing with the support of your diaphragm is the most important thing you can do to control nervousness in any form of public speaking. We are all nervous standing at the lectern (or should be). Imagine being able to use your nervousness to work for you and not against you. How is this possible? Deep, supported breathing eliminates the toxins in your body that shallow or lazy breathing cannot. In fact, shallow or upper chest breathing actually increases your stress.

And, once you make supported breathing a habit, you will discover a host of other benefits that have nothing to do with the voice or presentation skills – from better sleep to the lowering of your blood pressure – from the elimination of minor pain to increased endurance during physical workouts, to the riddance of much more of the stress in your life.

A professional golfer with whom I worked came to me for presentation skills and finished the weekend with a better golf swing because she started breathing when she addressed the ball. She was more relaxed; thus, she hit the ball further. I can tell you story after story of the difference voice training has made in the lives of the people with whom I have worked. And, it all boils down to the breath.

- ▶ Imagine captivating your audience just by the sound of your voice.
 - ▶ Imagine controlling your nervousness the next time you give a presentation.
 - ▶ Imagine speaking more clearly, more distinctly.
 - ▶ Imagine being heard the first time you say it.
 - ▶ Imagine an end to vocal abuse.
 - ▶ Imagine being able to project your voice without hurting your throat.
 - ▶ Imagine speaking with color, with life, with emotion.
 - ▶ Imagine eliminating much of your daily stress.
 - ▶ Imagine feeling and sounding more confident.
 - ▶ Imagine enjoying hearing yourself on your voicemail
-

If you are serious about finding your real voice, it is not going to happen if you do not change the way you breathe. The difference between my approach and most other voice courses is that they work with the voice you already have – by making diaphragmatic breathing your first priority, I work with the voice you don't know you have.

Without a doubt, you will sound better, you will probably look better and you most definitely will feel better about yourself...and all it takes is a breath.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry David". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Henry" and the last name "David" clearly distinguishable.