



# **30 DAYS TO A MORE POWERFUL, CONFIDENT VOICE**

**Speak better,  
Communicate better,  
Live better.**

**PETER BAKER & MARK LAXTON**

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## VOICEOVER MASTERCLASS

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**This PDF is part of the course;  
30 Days To A More Powerful Confident Voice!**

### **Meet The Voiceover Masterclass Team**



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**Thank you very much for enrolling on the “30 Days” course and I really hope that it helps you enjoy life more with confidence and help you communicate better with others in the world around you.**

**Ideally, you would watch each of the videos in turn, one per day over the 30 days, and complete the exercises in order. This document is really an reminder of the information from the video course and contains transcripts and other useful information.**

Are you making the most of your life? The key skills that us humans need to be able to learn in order to be successful in our relationships with others, in our family, at work and in our leisure time are COMMUNICATION SKILLS. I’m Peter Baker, a professional voice actor and communications skills trainer and the author of many best-selling courses and books on the subject.

I will train you to have a more resonant and deeper voice, so you can command authority. I’ll give you the secrets of training your voice to be clearer, so you can communicate your needs and points of view much more accurately, and I’ll also show you the essential rules of first contact with people who you are attracted to, to save you from a lot of anguish and disappointment. You’ll also learn how to cope with various stressful situations and use your voice to assert your authority. You’ll also develop your breathing skills to enhance your general health and posture as well as learn a whole host of confidence tips and tricks to help people break out of their shells and really enjoy life!

## **SO WHAT'S THE COURSE ABOUT?**

This whole course is mainly about improving your speaking voice, but please remember that the speaking voice is part of the overall communication mix.

Improving human communication skills is absolutely essential to be successful in life.

It will help you in your social life, your love life, and in your commercial life.

If you're a freelancer, great communication skills will help you enormously to get lots of work. If you work for an organisation, solid communication skills will help you bond with your team and impress your bosses, and you'll get promoted quicker, which means more money.

It sounds obvious doesn't it, yet many people don't learn basic skills to get on with people better. Yes, it's great that you've taken this course, which is mostly about improving your own VOICE, but please don't forget the other extremely important human communication skills which you really have to hone and continue to learn about as you go through life.

### **Let's go through the list:**

*Empathy & listening skills*

*Pronunciation & enunciation*

*Tone of voice*

*"Less is more"*

*Projection*

*Confidence*

*Friendliness*

*Respect and Open-mindedness*

## **EMPATHY AND LISTENING SKILLS**

We all speak in different ways to different people.

Each day, we change the manner of HOW we speak when we encounter different people - like the love in your life, the bank manager, the next door neighbour, the stranger on the street, the bloke you really can't get on with at the pub, and so on.

If you speak in exactly the same way to every type of person, using the exact type of intonation, personality, and energy, then you are certainly not optimising your personality and maximising your communication skills with others. It's all about being aware of the other's feelings and position. It's all about being less insular, and in a way being less selfish.

Even though this is mainly a course about improving SPEAKING skills, it's also important to emphasise that you need to try to become a good LISTENER as well, and try to care a little more about other people, and try to work out what their own needs are as they apply in their own lives. In that way, and this may sound really strange, if you put yourself in the shoes of the person you are communicating to, and this may happen of course, many times, even hundreds of times in the day, your communication to them, the way you speak to them, will be much more effective.

You'll naturally say the right sort of things to them, in the right way. This EMPATHY is really important, whether you are trying to get more friendly with someone you're attracted to, impress your boss at work, do a talk to work mates, get on with your kids, or just make more friends.

Let's take your boss, for example, he or she has asked you into their office, to find out how a project you are in charge of is going. In reality, it hasn't been going that well.

Oh dear. So how would you tell them the "truth"? It's a communication skill to be able to attempt to say – in the right way - exactly what listeners want to hear at any time. You obviously wouldn't lie.

However, you need to learn the skills to say any bad news, in a positive way, or a caring way if appropriate. Politicians do this all the time. And you can do far worse than to listen to a good political speech today on the radio or television and analyse what these people are saying. Work out the form of words they use, and the body language they employ, to communicate neutral or bad news, on which they manage to put a positive spin on.

So EMPATHY with the people you are communicating to, changing the way that you communicate to different types of people to be more effective, is what I'm giving advice to you about here.

### **PRONUNCIATION AND ENUNCIATION**

The next important thing to learn, is pronunciation and enunciation. Pronunciation is saying words correctly, and enunciation is making sure they come over clearly. You need to be able to monitor yourself as you go through your day talking to people, to make sure the volume is kept high enough, you don't go into "mumble mode", and you keep reasonable (but not creepy!) eye contact with people that you are speaking to, to make your communication more effective. Make sure it is clear with correct pronunciation and high enunciation, without going over the top, and sounding strange, or patronising.

### **TONE OF VOICE**

The next thing with communication skills to understand, is tone of voice. This is where emotions come across, your feelings, and you can perk up conversations if appropriate with "wonderment" words, and words or phrases that need to be emphasised, and it all comes together under "tone of voice". It's something that you should be aware of as a mature human, but if you have difficulty with this, then let's turn to some acting training.

## **ACTING TRAINING**

I would like you to try to act out lines with different emotions. You can do this by reading anything and saying it in all the ways that newbie actors do when they are training. So they're told to say the same lines as if they are... angry, in love, dying, giving bad news, giving good news, as if they are upset, as if they are in a hurry, as if they are bored, as if they have a dagger in their back, and all the other human emotions that actors need to learn to convey. More on this later.

## **LESS IS MORE**

The next thing to remember in communication, is that often, Less is More. Never pad out conversation for the sake of it. This is not to say that Small Talk is bad, but don't think that you always have to fill in the gaps in a conversation with nonsense. "Cool" people don't do this, do they? Communication is never a one-way thing. Less is more, and once you have said what you want to say, then put your listening ears on, and listen to what the other person is saying. Do not be arrogant, do not waffle too much, do not put padding in where it is not necessary.

## **PROJECTION**

The next consideration is projection, and this isn't just volume. It's a strength of voice, that you can imagine like a force field coming out of your mouth into the ears of the person you are talking to. The super strong radio signal coming from a transmitter to a radio that is fully tuned in. Generally, people speak too softly, and mumble. However, if you are too loud, it can be embarrassing in public situations, and you can come across as arrogant. Get this fully right though, and you become a great communicator.

## **CONFIDENCE**

Finally, the key to great communication skills, boils down to confidence. You need to be absolutely confident that you like the look in the mirror. You should like who you are, you should like where you are in your life, you should like the people you are meeting and talking to. You are grateful for the life you have, you are in control of the situation, and that confidence will come out in your speech.

## **DRESS FOR THE OCCASION**

There are many practical ways you can boost your confidence, and not just by doing some of the so-called tricks I share with you in this course, but simply by dressing smartly, or more appropriately for various situations, can boost confidence enormously. What's more, certain clothing, once used to give you a confidence boost, can help you in the future as well, because say, that jacket you wore for the interview where you nailed it and got the job you wanted, can be wheeled out again next time you have something stressful to cope with or a special occasion that you want to go well. Your mind will associate your clothing with the success you had before, and history may repeat itself!

## **BE FRIENDLY – TRY TO LOVE THE WORLD**

The next on my list is friendliness. You may be a friendly kind of person anyway, in which case, just make sure you don't slip into the things which can erode friendliness, such as arrogance, a little bit of rudeness when you are tired or stressed, boasting, and all these kind of negative personality traits, which can often show their ugly heads when you have lost empathy with the other person. So friendliness should be linked with empathy which we talked about earlier.

## **RESPECT THE ENEMY**

Finally respect and open-mindedness is very important when it comes to communication skills.

Let's say you're talking to somebody, and they have got completely opposing views to you on religion, politics, some project you have at work, or even subjective leisure things like musical heroes, favourite books, or the films you like to see.

You need to develop a sense of respect for the other person, even if you really cannot understand why they like a sport you absolutely detest, or go to see films that you find unwatchable, or support a politician who absolutely disgusts you.

You need to respect that they have a point of view, they have just as much right to have that point of view, and they have as much right to walk this planet, as you. So have respect for people that you are talking to, be open-minded as well, we are all different!

## **SLOW YOUR SPEECH DOWN – THE “SYLLABLE PEN” TECHNIQUE**

One of the faults some people have is that they simply speak too fast. They are low on confidence and think that if they don't gabble everything out as quickly as is humanely possible, the other person will butt in, or lose interest. In effect, of course, the other person will simply not take it all in, or ask you to repeat what you are saying, and you look a bit of an idiot! Here's a great exercise how to make yourself slow down.

It's called the “syllable pen” technique. You hold a pen in your hand, and like a conductor's baton, you move your hand in individual strokes for every individual syllable that you speak out loud. Obviously, you wouldn't do this in real conversation, this is just to teach you to slow down.

You will find, that if you have to beat every syllable, it would be impossible to speak extremely fast, as it would be physically impossible to beat with your hand at that speed! I've known really gabbling speakers use this technique, and after a while, they train themselves, without the pen (or baton if they have one) of course, to slow down in conversation. Using this technique, along with a bit of a boost in confidence, will slow your speech down, and make you far easier to be understood by everybody.

Try it! By the way, don't use a fountain pen, unless you want to spray ink everywhere!

## PUTTING THE BRAKES ON CERTAIN PARTS OF YOUR SPEECH

The point of this exercise is to show how important sections of your speech can be slowed down **ONLY IN CERTAIN PARTS**, to make sure people understand what you are saying little clearer. Whereas on **OBVIOUS** parts of your sentences, you can speak normally. Using speed together with pitch and also emphasis, really makes any monotone voice really come to life!

I have gone to work as a presenter or trainer at many conferences and seminars from really big companies, where people are on the stage, droning on and on at same speed all the time as well as virtually the same tone of voice, with hardly any inflection, no particular emphasis on words, or any passion or even understanding at all of what they were talking about, even though to my mind often the subject matter seemed to be important.

Here is a typical boring “conference” speech. I have marked in bold the words that I feel should be read a little slower and more care, as they are the important parts of the speech, and not just filler or “link” words.

*“I want to welcome you to the conference, thank you very much for attending. Speeches will continue until coffee time at **11 o’clock today**, and then the senior presentations will start. I want to start off by talking about something that is **very important**. The fact that we all have a **very important decision to make about the future of our company**. We have until the **23rd of this month**, whether to accept the deal from our competitors to take over our organisation. At the moment, we are asking for **3 million extra dollars as a booster and sweetener for the deal**, and also for them to take on our **considerable pension fund debts**. I would like you to **think very carefully** about the document that you were given last night, I want you to read it and **come back to us when you have made a decision**. I’ll send an email to you, your advisers and your assistants as well, along **with details of the deadline that is looming**. The next part of the conference is about to start, please make sure your phones are off, the next presentation will begin in about five minutes. You all should by now have completed your lunch choice forms and returned them to the team at the back desk. Thank you.”*

## KILLING MONOTONE SPEECH

Monotone means, of course, on the same tone, or note, so variation in tone is good, but you’ve got to realise **WHAT** sounds good going up, and what sounds good going down.

This comes from understanding what you are talking about, and the understanding is reinforced when you have passion about what you are talking about. Then, you will be able to understand when to slow down your speech on the important parts, and when to get back to a normal speaking voice on parts of what you are saying, that most people will have a full understanding of already. Then you will put emphasis on words that are very important as well, or on new words, or people’s names that are unfamiliar to your audience. Also, you can sprinkle the whole of your speech, if appropriate, with the magic stardust of “wonderment” words, so you would say certain adjectives, in a colourful, and attractive way, to make your speech come alive.



## **THE RULE OF THREE IN SPEECH**

Particularly if you are about to give a speech, or a presentation, maybe in a business context, is to remember the rule of three. Three is a very powerful number.

The rule of thirds is used in art and graphics, and three in telling jokes where the laugh comes on the third element, and also in speeches saying three things, particularly at the ends of sections of words, where you are looking to get a good reaction from the audience.

Next time there's a political conference on TV or radio, listen carefully to the speeches, where you will see many people using the power of the rule of three in their scriptwriting when they want to get applause.

## **DON'T GIVE A DAMN**

Okay, one more quick confidence tip for you! Just think of this easy to remember, well not quite, acronym, D-GAD! D-GAD stands for don't give a damn. Confident people don't give a damn what other people think about them.

If you are in unconfident person, you worry about all sorts of things not just the things you say, the way you say it, the way you dress, and the things you enjoy, but be confident in the fact that most other people have got their own lives, their own likes, dislikes, and mostly they won't really care about you.

And even if they did, you shouldn't worry about it anyway. So wear what you like, listen to whatever music you like turned up loud in your car, and enjoy the hobbies and activities that give you pleasure, and D GAD about anyone else!

## **MORE ON ACTING**

In a way, all parts of the communication skill equation are rooted from acting. When you were growing up, you copied and followed and, yes, acted what your parents were saying, their language, their tone of voice, their phrases, and so on. And then you got influenced by people around you, people you heard on the radio or saw on the television. And we continue to be influenced in these ways!

Now, I'm not a classically trained actor, although, I do get a lot of work "cod acting" for a whole host of stereotypical video game characters, and I also put on voices for various audiobooks I narrate.

But I wouldn't say I was a professional actor; I certainly can't remember lines for stage work! But I have taught myself over the years, with training from others and greatly influenced from people I have admired, to be able to be very flexible in my voice.

So to be able to put on character voices, particularly those that are outside of someone's comfort zone, can be particularly useful. If you are self-conscious, and nervous about this, make sure you are locked away somewhere where no one can see or hear you, but you never know, you may actually enjoy this experience, and go on to do some amateur dramatics, or actually get into the professional world of acting!

Here are some phrases and I want you to say them – and record please - in various ways. It's all self-explanatory. Here we go, and I hope you enjoy it; just don't be self-conscious!

**I can't believe I didn't get that job, I really thought I was the best candidate.**

SAY THIS: a) Disappointed b) Very angry c) Reflecting, accepting, neutral

**If you really cared about what I thought, you would have gone to that meeting last night!**

SAY THIS: a) Bitter and furious b) Sad, dejected c) Under your breath

**You told me, it was all over between you and him, how could you do this to me?**

SAY THIS: a) In tears b) Angry c) Trying to accept and understand.

**Are you always this stupid, or are you making a special effort today?**

SAY THIS: a) In a sarcastic voice b) Smiley, not meaning to poke fun c) Neutral, dead pan!

Just think about different types of emotions; and today, when you're with people who know and like you, try and over exaggerate these emotions for effect, and just see what happens, but go easy on the negative and angry ones, won't you!

## **MORE ON CONFIDENCE**

Here is another confidence tip, that may help you. As I've mentioned before, feeling confident about yourself is extremely important when you are going to use your new positive, powerful voice in public, or when chatting up people who you are sexually attracted to.

A great tip is to get practising on people that you don't know, or maybe don't even like. Start chatting to people at bus stops, without being weird about it, or waiting in line at the bank, just a few words, see what happens. Try and read their body language before you pipe up, catch a glance with their eyes and smile first, see what you get back.

If you mess up completely, don't worry, you haven't lost anything, you've just learnt something for the next time. You can adapt this technique. Let's say that you are attracted to someone and you want to start a conversation.

Just practice on other people you are NOT attracted to! If your "chat up" lines and techniques don't work, you haven't lost anything! Just make sure you don't play with their feelings, and don't make it look like you're really seriously interested in them, when actually you aren't. So just keep it on the friendship and everyday small talk level, rather than get into the heavy romance stuff, eh?!

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING? EXERCISE

It was the same question for every situation., “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

So you need to ad-lib a reply; it’s the style of speech and tone of voice that’s important here, not the actual words you chose to use.

I’m your best friend who has called you up and asked that question. So, “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

So, record your short reply to this.

Okay, keep recording! I want you to answer the same question, but this time, pretend you have a rather disgruntled boss who has telephoned you about something at work, and finally says “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

Think up something, and then record it.

Right it’s the same question again this time, but now it’s your life partner, wife, husband, flatmate, somebody like that who you are very relaxed with. “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

Record your reply .

And finally pretend you’re talking to a complete stranger, maybe the teller at the bank or your hairdresser. So here’s the question again, record your reply. “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

Well, you now have four recordings. Do this weekly as you progress the course and gain in confidence. Hopefully you’ll immediately realise how much extra confidence you have, and the voice sounds much more flexible with discernible differences in each voice style.

Here is how I like to categorise the recordings.

VOICE RELEVANCE. Did your voice change at all between the different imaginary characters you are talking to?

CONFIDENCE. How confident did you sound? It was all made up, but were there gaps between each sentence, or in the middle of sentences, while you are thinking of what else to say? Did you fade out at the end, or end at full, confident volume?

STUTTERING. Do you repeat any syllables? Question four. CLARITY. Could you understand everything that you were saying? Were some words slurred into each other? Were there some words that you could have actually pronounced better? Give yourself a score.

SPEED. For all four recordings, do you feel you are speaking too slowly or too fast for the situations? Were you just gabbling away, or were you may be speaking too slow?

RESONANCE. How resonant did you feel your voice was?

## A DEEPER VOICE

Many people doing this course, I know, will want to have a deeper, more resonant voice.

A deeper voice, whether male or female, exudes authority, and confidence, and that is absolutely a fine thing to aim towards. If you have access to a piano, or a guitar, any musical instrument, a useful way to know your own capabilities is by using this musical instrument, to check the lowest note you can possibly speak at. Now, we've done humming exercises before, but speaking and humming is a little bit different. Humming is great for general relaxation, and developing a gorgeous resonant sound, but that's no good if it can't be converted into words.

**“This is the lowest note I can speak comfortably”.**

I would like you to say that in a monotone, in other words all at the same note, and choose somewhere fairly reasonable on the piano, somewhere deep, but somewhere that is comfortable for you to speak at. And then keep on repeating the line, going down a semitone at a time.

Now please don't worry if you are not musical in any way, I am fairly musical, but I certainly can't sing, but that's not important! Let me show you exactly what I mean. So, find yourself a musical instrument, the maybe an app you can find on your phone if you haven't got a piano to hand, and write down the lowest possible note that you can speak comfortably at without hurting, and without the voice breaking up.

And note that down somewhere, and as you continue your daily exercises you will see this note go down and down until you get to the lowest note you could possibly speak at comfortably.

## THE TELEPHONE EXERCISE

Over this course, I have been teaching you all sorts of various exercises, for various parts of the equipment that are amazing bodies have for creating the voice. As well as breathing, we have exercised the full face, the tongue, and other parts of the vocal folds. This one is simply to help to perk up the lips. They may not seem that important to you, but I think you will find that your voice will be clearer and perkier once you have done this. It's called the telephone exercise, for obvious reasons once you hear it.

You purse your lips and blow over your floppy lips! and that simply all it is! If you find making this sound difficult, you may be breathing too hard, or not enough, to make a decent sound, you don't want just air coming out. You can hold your cheeks very gently if you have difficulty in making the sound, as this will hold the lips in the right position for this trill sound. You can also combine this exercise with a nice deep diaphragmatic breath as well, so that you can see how many telephone rings you can get after one big breath! After you've done this, your lips will be tingling and really will appreciate the little work-out you have just done with your lips. Combining this with our other clarity exercises, this will really help in reducing mumbling to a minimum and get that voice of yours as clear as possible for other people to appreciate. Trill! Trill!

## **BREATHING**

For this next section, I just want to remind you about all the things were said about breathing. It's something that is so important, I don't want you to forget what has been said. So, in summary, what we have worked on so far is the importance of deep breathing. If you see your shoulders rising, that's a shallow breath, make sure you breathe all the time from the diaphragmatic area and fill up your lungs completely. And you need to do this throughout the day, so make mental checks, set your alarm if you like four or five times in the day, to remind yourself "have I gone back to shallow breathing?"

As well as helping your voice sound better, decent deep breathing also is much more efficient from the point of view of bringing oxygen into your blood supply, and simply makes you feel healthier. Secondly, generally you should always be breathing through your nose, as well as filtering nasty particles from the air, it also warms any cold air coming in much more effectively than it going straight into your mouth, and your vocal folds would appreciate that.

So generally, breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth, although there are exceptions, if you happen to be speaking faster need a gulp of air, it's okay to take a gulp through your mouth now and again!

The other thing to say about breathing, is that you shouldn't think about too much, or else it will, well, freak you out! Your body is perfectly capable of doing everything automatically, so once you have got into the habit of deep diaphragmatic breathing, your body should automatically take over. It's only if you got into a really bad habit of shallow breathing, that you need to reprogram your body again. Breathing, is simply to supply oxygen to the blood, as well as providing the air to create our voice. It's all very clever.

When the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood stream reaches a certain level, those breathing muscles contract automatically. It is, of course possible, to stay alive keeping the residual air inside your lungs and doing very shallow breathing.

But if you're using your voice, this is where it's essential to use full diaphragmatic breathing, and when you do it even when you are not speaking, when you are sitting quietly, reading a book for example, deep breathing, done automatically, would just make your head clearer, and you will simply feel better. Try it!

## **THE DRINKING STRAW**

Putting a drinking straw sideways in your mouth, helps to improve clarity. No, you don't do this when actually speaking to others – it's just when doing the exercise! In fact, doing this does more than simply make the voice clearer. It also helps to project the sound forward because you are forcing yourself to change the way that you make the sound - because your mouth isn't allowed to open as much.

So by doing this, it's a really good exercise to get rid of any nasal sound your voice may have. It helps to project forward. It is impossible to speak through your nose or back of the throat with this impediment in your mouth, and so basically, this exercise retrains your vocal mechanisms to project forward.

So we can take this exercise a bit further now, by using different things to put in your mouth. This may seem really silly, but it does work, I assure you. Here are three objects, thin drinking straw, a pen and a thick carrot.

By using these in between your teeth, held gently, your mouth will be trying to overcome the difficulties in speaking. It will help to exercise muscles that probably don't get exercised in your mouth, but it's important to do these things for at least two or three minutes at a time, even though you might be having laugh, and think it's a waste of time. Please take this seriously, and read anything you like, with these three objects between your teeth.

By having the different widths of objects between your teeth, you are going to exercise different muscles, in different ways. This is not one you need to record at all, it's simply an exercise for your mouth muscles, and to help to project forward.

Okay, I may have looked and sounded ridiculous there, and you will as well, but it is an extremely good exercise and it's been used by voice trainers for many years. If you haven't got a thick carrot by the way, your finger may do, but it's up to you whether you fancy biting your finger or not!

#### **LOW HUMMING**

You need to hum and start with a high hum gliding down to the lowest note you can manage. Please hum fairly high - not too high to strain your voice, and in one deep breath, what you need to do is to gently glide all the way down to the lowest possible in one breath, and keep your hand on your upper chest to feel if those vibrations come about when you glide low. You should feel a "sweet spot" of resonance at a certain lower note. I want you to do this at least four or five times please. Remember to relax as much as you can; get rid of any tensions. Do some gentle head and shoulder rolls and calm the mind.

#### **COLOUR WORDS**

Find an audio recorder and read these words. Before each one, read it, STUDY IT, admire it, see what image comes up in your mind, and use your imagination to really "colour" it to the max. Re-watch the video to get the idea of what I mean here, for example for "adorable", pretend you're a person seeing a cooing new baby of a friend, so you'd emphasis ORA: . "Oh he's ad-ORA-ble!!"

adorable  
alive  
bang  
bash  
bark  
bawl  
beautiful  
belch  
blurt  
brilliant  
bonk

boom  
burp  
cackle  
chatter  
chomp  
clash  
clatter  
click  
crackle  
crash  
crunch  
drip  
elegant  
fizz  
flick  
flip  
gigantic  
giggle  
glamorous  
groan  
gushing  
handsome  
hiss  
hum  
magnificent  
meow  
moan  
ooze  
pop  
powerful  
rattle  
rush  
screech  
sizzle  
sparkling  
snap  
snarl  
striding  
swoosh  
torrent  
trickle  
vast  
whack  
whirr  
whisper  
yelp  
zoom

And finally, let's put some of these words into a couple of sentences. Let's pretend you are talking to somebody, and the way that you can really capture the imagination of the other person, is to colour your speech, make it come alive with interesting nuances like this. Pause the video again and have a go at these sentences.

Just lose your inhibitions!

You're not going to speak like this all the time in real life, unless you really ARE a theatrical dandy, but you're just exploring your voice's boundaries and pushing the envelope out. Pause the video and say these sentences please:

**What a magnificent day to stride out to that gushing waterfall in all its brilliance!**

**The screech of brakes, the hoot of horns, the adorable urban sounds of a city that is alive!**

### **GARGLING**

Gargling is not just good fun, and helps you to relax a bit, but if you are about to give a talk, it's important to make sure your throat is completely clear of any food particles that could get caught and cause you to cough. It's all part of vocal hygiene.

Before a big live voice session, for professional voice-overs like myself, we brush our teeth, but we also gargle as well, to make sure there are no pesky crumbs from toast from breakfast lurking down there!

So, have a gargle, but instead of gargling on one note, gargle a tune, anything you like. Why? Because by gargling at different frequencies, the folds of the throat will move around so they'll be cleaned effectively of food particles. It's fun as well!

### **LOW CHANTING**

OM, OM. Remember what we've said about breathing really deeply, from the diaphragm. If your shoulders are going up when you breathe in, you are breathing shallowly.

So put this book down now and do at least two or three minutes of low chanting, really relaxed, and project your voice as deeply as possible, with one OM for each deep breath. Pause the video now and start it again when you are ready.

### **SINGING BASS LINES**

One of my favourite bass lines is at the start of 1975 hit Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons called The Night. A great tip is to learn a few bass lines from any songs you like and hum them when you are out and about. It will help to develop resonance and depth.



## LETTER AND WORD ARPEGGIOS

An arpeggio is a musical term, which means going up and down the notes of a chord, and we use letters for this exercise. You will speak one syllable on each note, to make it easy, and as before, the reason we are doing this, is to help train the voice in becoming more musical, to get rid of any monotone tendencies, and to generally work out the vocal muscles in an effective way.

As with all our musical exercises, it doesn't matter if you really mess up, or are not in tune, just try and do at least a couple of minutes of these a day. Just start on any note, and then repeat with the whole arpeggio starting at a lower note each time, going down the scale until it becomes uncomfortable.

Try doing this with:

*"I HAVE A WONDERFUL VOICE"*

Notice the choice of words there, there's a bit of psychology at work here as well, in that if you tell yourself aloud, that you have a wonderful voice, a part of your brain will start to believe it!

## GLIDING HUMMING

This is where you simply put your hand on the upper part of your chest, and you hum gliding down to your resonant note. I think you know the drill here, let's do this right now. I'm sure your good at this now, aren't you? But it's important to get a reminder to do this regularly. So put this book down and do some gliding down humming to your resonant note. Make sure your hand feels that resonance with the vibrations.

## DIAPHRAGMATIC HUMMING

A lot of what we have been training, has been based around the good use of breathing. I have mentioned diaphragmatic breathing, as the keystone to improving your voice quality, resonance, and depth.

So, just to be absolutely sure you know where your diaphragm is, it's just below the rib cage, and above the stomach area. In fact right now please, place one hand on the diaphragm and just punch out some "oh" sounds and make sure that you can feel the diaphragmatic muscles moving in and out you need to feel this and you can be sure then you are using your diaphragm.

Every day, on your warm-up schedule, in your daily routine, you must make sure that your diaphragm is engaged, and that you are using the full amount of lung capacity, in and out. In a previous module, I mentioned that you could blend both diaphragmatic breathing, to other forms of cardiovascular exercise.

When you are running, your body will naturally want to get the maximum amount of oxygen in, so your body will use your full lung capacity there.

So one thing you can do now is to do some jogging on the spot. So no excuses about you don't like running round the block, you're not a member of the gym, or it's wet and cold outside! Simply do a minute of running on the spot and make sure that you are breathing fully from the diaphragm.

### **THE SILENT LAUGH**

It's exactly as it sounds. Loads of actors, and singers do this before they perform. It also puts you in a good mood. Laugh without making a sound! The exercise opens the voice box, it also helps you to relax, and works out all sorts of strange muscles, as well as hopefully getting yourself outside your comfort zone. Why does it have to be silent? It's simply because it's not important that you exercise the muscles that make the actual sound here... it's working out the auxiliary muscles - the ones around the whole of your upper body, that go into action when you laugh, and laughter is a kind of semi-paralysis, where your body sporadically stops breathing, and you go into a state of semi collapse.

Laughter is a very weird thing us humans do, and for this SILENT LAUGH exercise, you don't need to think of anything particularly funny, just look at yourself in the mirror, and enjoy seeing that you can go outside your comfort zone. Basically, the silent laugh exercise, widens the voice box, and the vocal folds, and is a nice wake-up exercise as well, especially if you have to give a talk or do any voice work first thing in the morning.

### **MORE ON LOWERING THE VOICE TONE**

Lowering the picture of any voice helps to improve diction, and you have more air to work with, as we found out with a previous exercise. High voices sometimes are squeaky and don't give an impression of authority. So lowering your voice gives you a stronger projected vocal sound, and certainly gives you more authority.

So if you have a naturally high, like voice, how do you train yourself to get into a deeper voice, without straining?

Some people find this technique very helpful. It's called the 321 technique. So before you speak any sentence, you simply have a mini countdown; go three, two, one, and then you start speaking on that lower note. It's because when you are about to start a sentence, you're thinking more about what you're about to say, than the actual musical note you are about to hit.

So by saying the 3 to 1 and going down in tone before you hit that first word it helps you to get into that lower note for your first word.

Now, obviously you're not going to say 321 all the time in everyday conversation, but people who have used this technique have told me they use it in their head, and it's their

mental buffer before they start speaking, so this kills two birds with one stone, in effect, in that they don't blurt the first thing out they think of, so it gives them thinking time, while automatically the brain is going 3 2 1... lower down so that when the first word of what they are saying comes out, it is at that deeper note. I hope I have explained that well enough, basically you need to do exercises actually saying out loud 3 2 1, when you're not with anybody, and then you would think mentally the 321 in your head, and then you hit the lower note when you start speaking. Try it out!

## **STAMMERING AND STUTTERING**

There are many psychological techniques for reducing these issues. Obviously, there can be some physical problems for speech issues such as a cleft palate, or dental problems. But a stammer usually is psychological, and many people who stammer, have a lack of confidence, even if they think they don't. So if you have a stammer, there are three things I would say to you.

First of all, leave a little gap before you answer anything. You may feel you are under pressure to answer straight away, but this is simply a confidence thing. Use that small gap to THINK before you answer, or if you're using the voice deepening technique of 321, use that before you start speaking, but leaving a gap after someone says something to you, and before you reply, will help you hit that first word cleanly, and without any repetition, or stammer.

The second thing I would say to you is to try that pen, straw or carrot-in-the-mouth technique. Because when you do exercises with something between your teeth like that, you are so concentrating on keeping that between your teeth, it takes your mind off repeating any syllable. It's really hard to speak badly generally when you are focusing your mind's attention on keeping whatever is in your mouth in place!

And finally, general psychological confidence techniques do work, in that you have to convince yourself that you don't want to do it anymore. In the same way that Forrest Gump, in the movie, just stopped running as he decided not to do it anymore, you will ALSO tell yourself I am now going to stop stuttering. "I don't need to do this anymore". Absolutely, 100% believe that you can do this.

Say to yourself this is a habit, I REALLY don't need to do this anymore. Just look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself this.

Close your eyes, and picture yourself speaking clearly, positively, in a deep resonant voice, without a stutter, see other people listening to you, listening to your every word, and appreciating what you have to say, see their smiles and appreciation on their faces. Hear yourself speaking clearly, starting every sentence firmly without any repetition of syllables. People have been cured from lifelong stammering and other defects, simply by using the power of the mind, so try it!

## **SING IT! LIFE IS A MUSICAL**

This whole course is about the SPEAKING voice, but there are so many of the exercises and techniques I have talked about, which are also applicable to improving the singing voice.

And in fact, singing can also help the issues spoken about in the last section, stammering. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible to stammer singing a song. Just think about your favourite song right now, and sing out loud the chorus, I bet you will not stutter at the start of it, because the music of the song has to be followed, doesn't it! The backing track won't wait for you.

So find some old karaoke CDs, and in the privacy of your home, start singing some karaoke songs, or sing along to songs on the radio, and remembering all the other things we said about breathing techniques about projection about resonance, and by having fun by singing, not only will it help to develop your speaking voice, it will also diminish any issues such as stuttering or stammering.

Plus by singing songs you hear on the radio as you do your housework, or whatever, or when you're driving in your car, it'll improve your confidence, and your mood as well.

## **POSTURE**

You may remember the puppet on a string technique, but it's a bit more complicated than just being pulled up. Although you see many people on the streets slouching around looking at their phones all the time, and if your body gets stuck into this position, it does not help you generate and project a solid, powerful voice!

The way that we stand, or sit, has an absolute important and direct effect on our speech. If you have a go at talking deliberately looking down at your shoes, you will find yourself ending up mumbling, the matter how loud you try to project, so always look directly forwards make sure your chest is pushed out with your shoulders slightly back and remember the hold yourself tall.

You need to give your airways fighting chance to push that air through your vocal folds and to project a good, strong, resonant voice. So today, think good posture. If you find it's very difficult to keep good posture without getting a bad back, or you simply can't hold it, go to an expert at a Pilates or yoga class, or there are various gym techniques, using those huge exercise balls and so on, to improve your posture.

## **TWIST THAT TONGUE**

I want to give you a very simple tongue twister along with the clue of how to crack these things! On the Internet you'll find lists of various tongue twisters - some are long, and some are quite short. But they all are infernally difficult to say fast. Just take the two words of "Toy boat". Try repeating that again and again and you will end up twisting your time!

It's because the sounds of both words are very similar to each other, and it's one of the reasons we find it hard to separate, but, what if you had a technique to separate those words? And here is where I bring back a technique for teaching people to slow down then their speech! Remember the syllable pen technique? This is where you have to beat a pen for every syllable, meaning you cannot physically beat faster than this, so you cannot speak faster than this! People teach themselves to slow down their speech by mentally thinking they have to beat for every syllable. Well, if you use the syllable pen technique with tongue twisters, it makes them easier.

By making a physical action, it helps to separate every syllable, or in this case words, and so it sort of resets your mind for every syllable. Try this technique with any tongue twister, and I bet you will find it easier. Then, you simply transfer this technique into your mind, so you don't have to actually beat for every syllable. Then you will find yourself speaking clearer, and not tripping up on certain phonetics that are similar to each other, which is the basic principle of the tongue twister. So pause the video, find any tongue twister, and use the syllable pen technique to help you crack them!

## **LOVE YOUR VOICE**

You need to learn to love your voice, and to really look after it. With all self-improvement, it's important to improve what is good about what you can do, rather than worry about what could be wrong with it. Your speech is part of your personality, and identity, and it's important to improve and maintain its beauty. One way you can do this, is by oral hygiene.

Make sure you brush your teeth at least twice a day, and drink loads of water, as I keep on going on about. By staying healthy, getting loads of healthy sleep, and by eating well, you will reduce the possibility of getting a throat infection that will be devastating for your voice.

There are all sorts of throat lozenges and sprays you can buy, but generally, unless the doctor has prescribed things for you, avoid these things, just look after your mouth and health generally, and drink lots of water. Keep yourself hydrated. DRINK WATER!! DO IT NOW!!

## **VISUAL CONFIDENCE**

This whole confidence thing goes hand-in-hand with an improved voice to help your communication skills dramatically! You may not care at all what you look like, and you may get annoyed when people come up to you and say you would look better with a different hairstyle, or wear different clothes, or shoes, or whatever! However, you must agree, that you DO feel different, when in a smart suit, or an outfit you would wear at a wedding, than in your pyjamas, or a sloppy T-shirt with stains on!

So, all I am saying here, is that you need to give visual confidence clues to other people, and they are more likely to talk to you, and to respect you, and this goes hand-in-hand with your new improved voice! So if you have no interest in clothes, go out with someone who does, and make sure they advise you on getting dressed, so you look your best. Then you will go out with a new-found confidence, and you may even get other people, people that you are attracted to, actually starting a conversation saying, hey, nice shirt, jacket, or whatever, you'll soon be interested in clothes then!

There are loads of other confidence tricks, you might like to try, for example just saying hello to a random stranger on the street... and if you do that every day, it will increase your confidence a lot. Many people have a real fear of talking to strangers because they lack confidence. They fear that the other person isn't interested in them or might even be rude to them. However 99.9% of the time the other person is just going to smile and say hello back, and in a worst-case scenario, which isn't really going to happen, you never going to see them again anyway. So boost your confidence by saying hello to a random stranger every day!

## **DESTROY TENSION AND STRESS**

Tension can creep up on you, and that's why it's important to do warm up exercises before any vocal performance. As a voice-over, I start every morning before going into the studio, doing shoulder rolls, by doing the yawning exercise, and clarity exercises like saying Q-E-Q-R. But it's not just reducing tension in the whole of your body but of course in your mouth area as well, and you can adapt other exercises we have done, for example the lip trill.

Now something about legato and staccato. These are Italian music terms but can also be applied to speaking. You need to be able to work out how to separate your syllables and words, and also to smooth them together so it sounds nicer to the ear. The problem is, that smoothing out too much, runs one syllable or word into the next, so it's hard to work out what you are saying.

For example, you will know if you have a dictation system on your computer, or if you speak to a computer whether at home or in your car, if / you / separate / your / words, it makes it easier to understand, however you sound like a robot! If you slur your words together, quite often it doesn't know what you want. So here are some letters on the screen, and I want you to speak them as fast as you can, in a staccato way, and then in a legato way.

For the staccato way, ensure every letter ends very cleanly so there is no sound at all and imperceptible gap and then you start the next letter. This is a great exercise to control your lips and tongue. For the legato way, the key is to drop the volume in between each letter, but without leaving a gap at all. The breath continues and does NOT shut off. However enough of a gap so every letter does seem psychologically separated.

## MORE ON CONFIDENCE

Well, we are going to start today, with a quick confidence tip. It's a set of three affirmative phrases that you need to convince yourself are true. I know actors have used this technique for many years, and if they are feeling nervous before they go out on stage, they tell themselves these three things.

**I am beautiful, I have a secret, and everybody loves me.**

These three things are easy to remember, and the technique doesn't work for everybody, but the mind is a wonderful thing, and if you tell it something quite often it will change your mood, and boost your confidence enormously. So try it and see if it works for you.

Saying "I am beautiful", means that people will be attracted to the way you look. That's kind of obvious, the second one is interesting, "I have a secret," and this works because if you know something that nobody else does, it boosts your confidence enormously.

Let's say you work somewhere, you've heard some amazing gossip or news about your company, for example a takeover, that everyone's going to get a pay rise, or that the boss is going out with the receptionist, that sort of thing! Because you have a secret, it boosts your confidence enormously. So just pretend you have got something that other people are desperate to know. This is a great confidence booster if you are about to give a talk at a conference and you are really scared about it. If you think about it logically, because you know something important that everyone else doesn't know, they should desperately want to hear what you have to say. After all, that's the reason you are giving the talk!

The final thing, "Everybody loves me", is the icing on the cake for this trio of confidence boosting affirmations. So once more, say to yourself, and look in a mirror if you like, I am beautiful, I have a secret, and everybody loves me.

## RESONANCE

A nice resonant voice is so important, to sound authoritative and powerful, and uses the natural cavities of your body simply to sound better! I want you to give me at least 2 to 3 minutes of low resonant humming, and feel the vibrations in your upper chest, and ensure that you do deep diaphragmatic breathing, to ensure maximum efficiency of air usage.

## THE 1-4-2 BREATHING EXERCISE

The first number is the number of seconds you breathe in, the second number is the number of seconds you hold it for, the third number is how many seconds you exhale for. The great thing about this, is that it's a ratio, so you can increase the numbers by the same amount, and you can make it more and more difficult! Now in the times we've done this, I don't know how well you've done it, and how far you've gone with it. Just look in your notes and look at the maximum time you've done, so do that for me right now. It may be four seconds inhalation then 16 seconds hold then eight seconds exhalation, it maybe even more ambitious than that. So this is your reminder, to do your 1-4-2 ratio breathing exercise again right now please.

## DEALING WITH PROBLEMS IN LIFE

Now – this is very important - if you are going to sound good in the world, with a great voice, with all the things we've done together on this course, you need to be able to think positively, and feel good about yourself and your life. Now that's easy for me to say, you are saying, but for everyone in life, whether you are a pauper or a king, stuff happens. Life isn't always easy.

So here are some tips for you. First of all when you have a problem, anything you like in life, there are two outcomes that can happen, first thing is that you can solve the problem, or you can get over it and move on with your life. That's it. There are no other alternatives. Yes, there is, you say. "I can complain about it" you'll say. NO!! When you have a problem in your life, don't complain about it, put it into perspective with the rest of your life, and the world in general, and either solve it, or get over it!

Yes, you COULD complain about it, but how often have you ever complained, particularly to a company or organisation about something where the issue has been resolved? Never, I bet, and you just stay in a negative frame of mind, stay angry, and it affects other areas of your life.

So just get on with your life and enjoy the good stuff. Try to think positively in your life, try to get rid of negative thoughts, try not to complain about things, "count your blessings", which may sound a bit naff, but honestly, you will enjoy your life enormously more if you put what you consider to be bad things in perspective. Think positively, and that with your new resonant, powerful voice will help you enormously in your life to enjoy it more!

## MAKING FRIENDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Now, one of the reasons you may be doing this course on improving your voice, is that you want to improve your chances of communicating well with people that you are attracted to. Now, I'm not about to turn this into a "how to chat up people" type of course, but what we are doing together is basically learning good communication skills. Voice improvement is an important part of the mix. And once you have improved the physical capabilities of your voice, it's important to understand human communication skills, so that you can make the most of your new voice!

Now, we all agree that a strong, authoritative voice will command respect, and interest from people you that we meet. But this could go to waste, unless you're very careful. So let me go through some pointers now that might help you when you find someone that you are attracted to, and you want to take the relationship a bit further.

First of all, let's talk about questions. And no, the first question you ask of your new friend is not *"Do you want to drink?"* Because, unless you have a "wing man" to hand to actually physically purchase the beverages, you'll have to go to the long queue at the busy bar, while your potential new friend is left on their own! But the problem with a question that has a closed answer, like *"Do you want to drink?"*, or *"Nice bar this isn't it?"* And the awful *"Do you come here often?"*



All these types of questions are likely to end in either a yes, or a no, or don't know. Closed questions like this don't lead to very illuminating conversation. So you need to ask an **open** question.

If you DO want to talk about drink, say something like "What you think about the crazy names of cocktails that they've got here?" or "How did you end up with this lot here tonight then?" Or anything, that won't need a yes or no answer.

Now, this is where confidence comes into it. Once you've asked this question, you must have the confidence to know that the other person is thinking about it and will respond to you. So you got to make sure that question gets across to them clearly and confidently.

Remember everything we've said about making your voice 20% louder, and all importantly, keep your eye contact. Shy people, or people generally lacking confidence, say questions to people they admire or want to get on with, but then nervously flip their gaze away from the other person as they are embarrassed.

I can quite understand why people do this, but you've got to learn to keep that eye contact with the other person and keep a look on your face as if you are waiting for an answer. Just look cool with a little smile on your face, and just keep eye contact, and I bet you the other person will give you a decent reply which will help you move on to the next part of conversation.

So many people fall at this very first hurdle, but this whole situation falls under the category of **"If you going to do anything, do it properly!"** So don't do anything half-heartedly with your first question, and make sure it's an open question, and not a closed question!

But what if the person that you really are attracted to, is with a group of other people, in a loud situation, like the back of a concert hall, a bar, a business conference at lunchtime, that sort of thing?

The old trick you could use, is to pretend that the noise and bustle is getting to you more than it really is. You'd say something like, *"Sorry, I can't hear you. Oh! It's so busy and noisy here isn't it? Shall we go over there where it's quieter, or outside?"* This method will help you score on many different levels, because you get the person you want to talk to alone, away from his or her friends or colleagues, and you'll go to a quieter more intimate situation, where your new friend will be able to admire your new improved voice!

An important reminder here, is that you need to stay relaxed, as much as you can so your voice remains resonant and authoritative. One way to do this, is to think "Next Time Guaranteed". The "next time" mode of thinking, is a clever idea, that takes all the pressure off your current situation.

Imagine if the next time you met that person would be the big breakthrough, when they said they would go out with you, or go back to your apartment, or whatever is your plan! So, you tell yourself "It's next time guaranteed", not this time! This time, you are just laying the foundation of your new friendship. In a way, you're playing "hard to get".

If you knew that you definitely would have 100% success with this new person the next time you met them, it would take all the pressure off you this time. So thinking “next time” takes all the pressure off you. Obviously if it’s a complete stranger you’d need to make some overtures to meet again or get their contact details, but that’s fine. The weird thing is, thinking this way, often gives the right body signals out, so that you do get a positive result, not “next time” but “THIS time”...try it!

Okay, what if you are lacking the confidence even to say that first question? Some people have found success in wearing something that the other person would almost certainly ask a question about, to open up a conversation. Maybe it’s an unusual badge, from a club you are a member of, or a charity you support. Maybe you could wear a shirt with a weird slogan on, or an unusual hat, it all depends on what your personality is, what your background is, what your genuine interests are. I’m not saying that if you are a keen amateur astronomer, you go into a social situation carrying an 8-inch reflecting telescope, but you know what I’m talking about. Try and give the other person a bit of a clue, something for them to mention, to oil the wheels of conversation.

The final thing in this section that I’d like to say is to remember the power of the pause, that we have spoken about before. Don’t think that you have to fill every gap in conversation. You’re not on a radio show where “dead air” is not permitted! If the other person is attracted to you, they would be happy in your company, and happy just to be near you.

You must have seen couples really in love, who don’t seem to have much conversation but seem completely content just to sit and look into each other’s eyes! So, with conversation, don’t worry about the pause. Just make sure you don’t look bored, look away, become fidgety, just relax as much as you can and let that power of human bonding and communication takeover.

### **EAT HEALTHY FOOD**

It is important to keep yourself physically and mentally healthy, to help your voice develop, and remain strong. Eat good fresh foods, and of course, regularly drink pure water to hydrate the vocal folds. But just a word about some foods that could be unhealthy for your voice. Everyone is different, and some professional voice artists swear that giving up any milk products, anything dairy, helps to reduce the mucus, and makes their voice clearer. Now for me, it makes no difference whatsoever. In fact I love a couple of milky latte coffees during the day and eat tons of yoghurt! It makes no difference for my own mucus levels. But dairy products might be making a negative impact for yourself, so check it out, by keeping off the milk and other dairy products for a few days and see if it makes any difference.

One thing that does affect me is acidic drinks. If you drink any acidic fruit juice, and also alcoholic drinks, these will dry the voice out, and you won’t be able to perform at your best.

There may be some foods and drinks that simply irritate your vocal folds and throat area. For some people this is coffee, particularly with the granules not fully dissolved. Some people find hot spicy foods also irritate the throat.

Also - Don't drink anything that has carbon dioxide in, you don't want a lot of gas in your stomach that will come up at the wrong moment!

So at the end of the day, water is the best thing for any voice artist or actor to drink. And, this means water without any ice cubes in it, or chilled in any way. The last thing you want is for your voice mechanism to cool down too much, so room temperature water is absolutely fine.

## REPETITION

Now anything we do in life, is a result of repetition. Once you learn to walk, you carried on walking and then you learnt to run - you know what I'm talking about. For example, if we repeatedly talk about how sad we are, we eventually convince ourselves we ARE sad and become sad permanently.

If we repeatedly practice a musical instrument, we could become a virtuoso! If we repeatedly go to the gym and work out well, we become fit and strong! But repetition becomes a little bit boring, so for the first thing today, we are going to repeat the invisible straw technique, with an activity that gives very similar results, by using a real straw! Remember, in the invisible straw technique, you are strengthening your muscles around your mouth area, that will help to tone them, to promote clarity in your voice, or so it helps you to take deeper breaths, from the diaphragm.

I want you to take a straw, and an empty matchbox. You need to put it on the end of a table, and with a straw blow it to the other side of the table. Yes, you can cheat, and take the matches out if you like. Take really good deep breaths from the diaphragm and see how many inches you can blow that matchbox across the table with each single breath. If you really want to, you can measure how many inches you do, it's your own tabletop Olympics!

If you do this exercise regularly, you will see how much your lung capacity increases, and at the same time you will learn to improve the muscles in your mouth and throat area, that will improve your voice. If you want to turn this into a real game, ask a friend to blow in the opposite direction, and you have your own tabletop football game!

Secondly today, here is another variation of the theme that you might like to add to your warmup session. It is called the "toffee technique". There are two sections of this. Imagine you have taken not just one, not two, but three or four lumps of toffee.

Oh yes, it was a bit of a mistake to take so much, and you are so greedy, and now you've just got to chew that toffee. So chew that imaginary toffee right now - really move it round. Make sure that your mouth and jaw moves in every direction. That toffee just won't melt will it? This is a wonderful warm up exercise, especially if you have had a nap or a full sleep. Don't worry about the look on your face, pulling funny faces also helps the get the muscles toned up in your face and throat area.

The second part of this is that imagine that you've taken the toffee, but it's a pretty horrible flavour. Imagine the nastiest flavour you can think of. Maybe you really don't like cinnamon say. You've suddenly discovered its cinnamon toffee. So you have spat it out, however the taste of the nasty toffee is still in your mouth. So point your tongue out of your mouth and make an "eeegh" sound.

Make sure that tongue is pointed out - waggle it around ! Be careful not to strain your tongue, but if you do this regularly, I absolutely assure you your voice clarity will be improved in your everyday life, as well as in presentations and any professional voice work you do.

Thirdly today, it's another exercise that uses your imagination. You're at the hospital, and the doctor wants to look in your throat, and you open up your mouth wide, and you say "aaah". You need a stopwatch, or a stopwatch on your phone if it's more convenient. Also you will need to get a piece of paper and write down your results.

The idea is you are going to find out more about your own capabilities, just like we did on day one. This time it's about lung capacity. First of all I want you to sit down. And then open up your mouth, pretend the doctor is looking down it, take a really deep breath from low down in your diaphragm areas and go "aaah". The tone of your voice should be about a medium note. Note down how long you could sustain this "aaah" for with the stopwatch.

Now I want you to repeat this but this time the note of the "aaah" must be as low as you possibly can. If you can remember the resonant note exercise we did in an earlier module, on day seven, if you can remember what that note was, and if you're musical, you may actually have a note to play on the piano or guitar or whatever, then try and hit that. Take a deep, deep breath, and see how long you can sustain the "aaah" for. Is the deeper note longer or shorter than the medium note? Try this a few more times, in fact the best-of-three would be more accurate.

Then I want you to repeat this exercise saying a medium tone "aaah" and a very deep "aah", but not sitting down, but standing up. I want you to stand up, relax the shoulders, feel good about yourself, look to your posture and feel like you are being pulled up like a puppet on a string and simply do the exercise again.

Now at the end of this I want you to look at your results. What does it tell you about your lung capability?

Usually people have greater lung capacity standing up than sitting down, and usually people can sustain a higher note than a lower note, with the same amount of breath. In other words if you want to speak with a deeper, more resonant voice, it uses more "fuel". So that's why, it is more important than ever, to learn decent breath control, and get the maximum amount of air in your lungs, in the most effective way possible. OK?

## LET'S TWIST AGAIN

It's time for another tongue twister. This particular one is very useful for people who have the tendency to say the letter R as the letter W. There are various names for this tendency, some call it a speech impediment. It can be quite endearing, but people do, unfortunately, make fun of this tendency, and famously it was even featured in the Monty Python film the life of Brian with Michael Palin. "We-lease Woderick" No matter what you call it, it IS an impediment to good solid communication, and along with any very strong regional accent, it's something that you should try and tone down to maximise the strength of communication you have in your speech. So here is a great tongue twister - see how you get on with it.

**Around the rugged rock, the ragged rascal ran.**

It is an impediment to solid communication if there are certain words you say that are different from how most people say them. Like some people say the letter R sounding like "W". Also, any strong country accent or regional accent should really be toned down a little for general conversation. But - it all depends where you are. Maybe you grew up in the countryside, and when you talk to people who have very similar accents, there's no need to change.

However, in most countries, if you go to a big city, and if you are meeting up with people at say, a business conference, or a big social event, and you want to give a good impression, you do need to tone down your own accent to be more neutral, to fit in more, and to help to make communication more effective.

For example, in the United Kingdom, if you are trying to make an impression in London, you don't really want to have a strong regional accent, unless you are of course representing that particular region in whatever capacity. You may totally disagree with me here, but you must admit that there are some nasty people, who will make fun of you, or make a judgement about you, just on your accent which may be different from most other people. So, you need to learn how to "click" into a more neutral accent, when you need to.

So how do you do this? The first thing to do, is not to worry. The reason you have the accent you have, is that you grew up surrounded by parents, other children, and people in the town you grew up in, all speaking in that way, with this accent and speech patterns, and so was the established norm for you. You have established a speech habit. Habits can be broken. Plus, just like you are learning a new language, you can learn a new accent, it is quite easy. All you will be doing, is establishing a new speech pattern, that will become a new habit that you will be able to click into. You will be fully in control, and don't worry, you won't lose your original identity! It's all about fitting into society.

Just like you wouldn't wear scruffy shorts and flip-flops at a funeral, your voice also needs to conform in certain situations. Impressions are important, and your voice is a huge part of your overall impression. Now, there are some accents, which tend to originate at the back of the throat, or in nasal areas. There are certain exercises to correct this. Maybe you have an accent where you draw out word endings in certain ways, again there are

exercises to help you correct this. Plus, of course there are some words said completely differently. In the UK, people in London would immerse themselves in a “baaath”. In the north of England, people may say “bath”, with the “a” sound like in “access”.

So, all I am saying, is that it’s difficult for me to give you precise instructions, because I don’t know what your particular issue is, even if it is an issue! If you are really worried about it, you need to find a qualified speech therapist who will offer you advice and specific exercises to help to neutralise your strong accent.

Quite often quite often it’s identified certain ways you see things, it’s identifying certain ways you say things, and if you compile a list of words that you actively pepper your conversation with, and say them in a neutral way, quite often your brain will then put your speech patterns completely in that manner, it’s all very clever.

For example, if you are in the United Kingdom, and you wish to tone down your northern accent, write down a list of words that are obviously different from Received Pronunciation, or a BBC southern accent. Obvious ones are grass, bath, scone, etc. Then try to speak with someone weaving a “R.P.” version of one of these words in conversation and see if that gives you confidence to continue to do this.

The other thing you can do, is to identify someone who speaks in a neutral accent and is someone that you admire. Simply play back a video of them talking, listen to one sentence, and repeat it the way they say it. Record yourself if you like and play it back. Repeat the same sentence again and again, record it again and again till you’re attempting to imitate the way they say it. Then do the next sentence.

Some people find this exercise incredibly easy, and they can click into the new voice, imitating the person they admire. It doesn’t work for everybody though! If you’re an actor, or have acting tendencies, this should be very easy, and you should be able to click into it by simply pretending to be that person, keeping their face and even gestures in your mind’s eye. Good luck!

### **MORE ON RESONANCE**

By now you will be an expert at humming, or you should be. Every day you should be humming low down that will help to relax your voice, body, and mind. So for this section I want you to pause the video into your favourite bit of humming right now. The point of watching these videos every day, as I get to remind you of things which may have slipped behind. If you want to get a good, solid, resonant voice, low down humming is an essential part of your exercise regime.

You can either glide down from high to low and find your resonant note, by putting your hand on your upper chest to feel the vibrations, or you can combine a resonance exercise by taking a very deep breath, and by looking at the times you had with the Matchbox football game exercise, and see if you can extend the duration of your low humming using just one breath. I know, that the Matchbox game involved saying “AAh” rather than straight humming, but you need to see if this extends your time. Usually, it will, you need to be able to control the air that you are exhaling, and just like a car that tries to use the

minimum amount of fuel to keep the engine going, you also need to use the minimum amount of exhalation to keep the humming sound solid without breaking up. So pause the video now and do some low humming exercises.

#### **KEEP DRINKING WATER**

This is a simple reminder about your hydration levels. Earlier in the course, in fact on day four, I talked about how important it was to drink water. No, not water mixed with fruit squash, water this is in tea or coffee. And definitely not in alcohol! Just normal tap water, at normal room temperature, not cold that will freeze the mouth. So this part three is just a reminder to ensure you haven't forgotten to drink a small glass of water every hour. Your vocal folds need to be in tip top condition, water really helps with this. Also before you are about to give speech, or any kind of presentation, I recommend not just sipping water during the presentation, but before you give the talk, gargle with room temperature water. This gets any bits of food and other nasty is and gives you a nice clear voice!

#### **VOLUME**

So much of what we are doing, is identifying how our bodies work. The limitations of our voice and understanding where it is good where it could be improved. We've already done work on breathing, understanding how much breath we can actually take in, and using it in the most effective way. So for this exercise, the emphasis is not on breathing, but in how we can adjust the volume control of our voice to maximum efficiency. I am going to put a sentence on the screen now and I want you to start with the softest possible voice, and end with the loudest possible voice.

As we have said before, the softest voice is not a whisper. A whisper actually can strain the voice, funnily enough. People who have had throat operations, who are told not to speak at all for a while, and definitely NOT to whisper. When it comes to the loudest voice, again I am not asking you to shout, it is the loudest voice possible but without breaking into a shout.

So here is the sentence - it doesn't matter about when you are taking your breaths, or even how you are saying it, making emphasis on the right words, although it is good to think of this if you can, I just want you to control that volume control so at the beginning you are at the minimum and at the end you are on maximum. I don't want you to get to maximum before the last word, or not reach your loudest voice before the last word, you understand?

SPEAKING VERY SOFTLY LIKE THE GOSSAMER WINGS OF A TINY BUTTERFLY FLUTTERING AT DAWN IN THE COUNTRY HEDGEROWS. GETTING LOUDER LIKE A TOWN WAKING UP FROM SLUMBER, GETTING BUSIER AS THE SUN RISES IN THE BLUE SKY. THE TOWN CENTRE IS FULL OF PEOPLE STRIDING TO THE BIG FOOTBALL MATCH. AND HERE THEY ARE IN FINE VOICE REJOICING IN THEIR TEAM'S TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!

So, have a go with this yourself. The purpose of this again, is to ensure that you have full control of your volume, don't worry too much about where you breathe and where they you are putting emphasis on the understanding. Pause the video now and have a go yourself.

### **CORRECTING A HOARSE VOICE**

There are two elements to this the physical way of correcting a hoarse voice, and then the emotional or psychological way. If you have a hoarse voice, it could be that you are simply dehydrated, and trying to use your voice when it hasn't been lubricated, and the poor vocal folds are just dry creating a harsh voice.

So drink a small glass of water every hour or two and breathe moist air. Steam comes out of the kettle, but it is very hot, and you can burn yourself from breathing it, but from a pharmacy, you can buy a little pot, with a nose -shaped apparatus, and hot water that is almost boiling will create enough steam to help you here. Another reason people have a harsh voice is that they are breathing in polluted air, and in particular smoke. If you are a smoker, you really have to stop as soon as you can, and not just to improve your voice, obviously.

The other thing to do is to stop the habit of coughing, to clear your voice, as this does harm to the vocal folds. If you really have to clear your throat, a small little "Ahem" will be just as effective as a full out cough yet will do little damage to your throat. The other thing that can do damage, is whispering. That may seem rather strange, but honestly, it's true.

So they are the physical factors that may cause harsh voice, but on the psychological side, as we said when we talked about onomatopoeia in day four, our "wonderment" words, you can colour words and make them sound smoother. Here are three sentences on the screen and I will say them in a harsh way, and then say them in a smooth way. As a voice artist, we are often given parameters like this, where you are asked to say a script in a certain way.

So first of all the harsh way.

IT REALLY IS A LOVELY DAY TODAY

THIS CHOCOLATE IS REALLY SMOOTH

THAT HAIR DO MAKES YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL

And now a smooth way. Can you hear the difference? Pause the video now and have a go at saying these words in the smoothest way possible. THINK smooth. When I was reading those three sentences, I wasn't slowing down for the smooth versions, not at all, they were all exactly the same speed. So identify what it is that makes words smooth, it's really being more legato, words running into another one but still keeping the clarity, as well as lowering the picture little bit as well. So, think smooth, and have a go at the words on the screen!



## **REPEAT THE 1-4-2 EXERCISE**

I want to revisit the breathing exercise we started the whole of this course with called 1-4-2. This is the ratio of breathing in, holding the breath, and then exhaling. This particular ratio is extremely useful to controlling your breath. Remember you are breathing in through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. As long as you weren't breathless last time you did it, this time I want you to use the same ratio, but 3-12-6. In other words I want you to use your stopwatch or "thinking seconds" in your head, breathe in fully taking three seconds to completely fill your lungs from the diaphragm, then hold your breath for 12 seconds, keeping calm, keeping confident, and then when it's time to exhale take a full six seconds to exhale no more no less. See if you can do it - so pause the video now get your stopwatch out or just look at any clock with a second counter and see how you get on.

## **MORE ON BREATHING**

I don't know how physically fit you are, or even able, but let me assume that you can do something which gets you puffed. If you go out for a jog, even if it is just round the block, you are not going to do your shallow breathing, your body simply will not allow it. Shallow breathing, where your shoulders go up and you breathe just from the chest area, is simply a habit some people get into, but when they are out for a run, or doing any cardiovascular exercise, that's when the body insists on more fuel for the work it has been asked to do!

So, today, or the next time you do any exercise like this, try to imagine breathing the way you have to doing this exercise, in everyday life, just think about how efficient it is to get that much air in... with deep breaths, and to use it efficiently. Depending on how fit you are, you may even like to try some low humming while you are doing the exercise. It makes use of the time more efficiently as well. I go to my local gym every other day, and when I use the bicycle, or the cross trainer, I find that's the best time to do my low resonant humming, and it means I walk away from the gym with a really good physical workout, as well as vocal workout! So please keep that in mind today.

## **MORE ACTING TRAINING**

I don't know how you got on with what I offered you before, and you may absolutely hate being out of your comfort zone, but please persevere. Here is a quite well-known love poem. I want you to look at the words, try to understand the meaning, and then imagine you are sat down in a stately home by a crackling log fire, after a good meal, a glass of port in your hand, and opposite you is someone that you really love. If you haven't got anyone like that in your life at the moment, imagine someone who you could really have a deep relationship with. Getting into a frame of mind is very important for your brain to get into the correct voice.

Many people find it easy, but if you don't, using a visualisation technique like I have told you about, will really help you to click into this type of voice. So try to make your voice deep, luxurious, dripping with emotion, and keep that I contact at your imaginary person. Because you will be reading the words, of the screen, you will have that I contact, so imagine it somebody's face, that person that you really are in love with. This is a poem by

Lord Byron, which happens to be extolling the virtues of a woman, and if that is not appropriate few, then find something else on the Internet by searching for romantic poems.

### **She Walks in Beauty**

BY LORD BYRON (GEORGE GORDON)

*She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

*One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.*

*And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!*

### **LEARN A NEW WORD EVERY DAY**

I'd like to give you some tips as to how to make your conversation more interesting. It's one thing having a beautifully velvet smooth, resonant voice, that's fully clear, and you have the confidence to say things, but what actually are you going to say?

I also am very aware that in an earlier module, I said that body language and the WAY you say things is more important than the actual content.

I'm not going back on what I said, but this is just about the content now! My first job was working as radio presenter for a radio station in Manchester England, and I was just 19, I wasn't that brilliant at expressing myself, although it was okay for a music show. When I did more in-depth features that needed more speech, my programme controller boss, the excellent Colin Walters, gave me a great tip. He said get a notebook, and every time I heard a word that I wasn't quite sure what it meant, I should look it up, then write it in the book. Then I should try and use that word somewhere in the day, on my radio programme, to make it stick in the memory.

Well I actually did that; in fact I still have the book. It's full of all sorts of what I thought were very unusual words then, but now I use these words regularly, not to make myself sound

like am posher than I really am, but usually these words are ones that are more appropriate for various situations.

As well as interesting and unusual words, to make your conversation come alive, become more interesting, I highly recommend that you look up some proverb's sayings, or aphorisms. Now the first aphorism was apparently thought up by the Greek philosopher Hippocrates. For example he said:

**Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experience deceptive, judgment difficult.**

Good eh? So once you start remembering a load of these sayings, you will be able to pepper them in your conversation. You will be surprised, how often you can insert one of these things, and you don't need to say the words: "well, you know what they say...." or something similar. Just say the aphorism. Here are some sayings that may be useful to you, but just look them up on the Internet and write out in your notebook, along with your words your favourites, that you would like to remember.

**Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.**

**A penny saved is a penny earned.**

**Don't hide your light under a bushel**

**Don't judge a book by its cover.**

**Doubt is the beginning, not the end, of wisdom.**

**Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.**

**If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.**

**The proof of the pudding is in the eating**

A handy tip is to write the new words at the front of your notebook, and you can start from the back of the same notebook to write your proverbs, sayings and aphorisms. I hope that is useful for you.

Finally, before the end of this course, you may have found in particular the voice exercises useful to help develop a smoother richer and deeper voice. We have had a lot of feedback from our students that they'd like further training in this area. Maybe you have a speaking voice that you wish could be much richer, smoother, and deeper and you'd like further help?

Well, there are many factors that determine the sound and shape of our voices and its far more than the actual body we were born with. It's highly likely that you've become stuck in ingrained bad habits that are restricting your speech's true power and depth.

In response to demand, we've created an exciting new detailed course that looks at specifically developing a deeper voice - and since you have done so well with this 30 day course, we have used a similar format, but this time we believe you will find significant results in only 7 days.

The **Develop a Deeper Voice in 7 Days** course at [www.VoiceoverMasterclass.com](http://www.VoiceoverMasterclass.com) will take you step-by-step through the various stages to help you discover the true rich potential of your own speaking voice. In this course we go into much more detail as to how the human voice is created and how you can improve its sound by fully understanding your own body and how it creates your voice, along with special daily exercises. Each day is dedicated to a major topic and there are videos that we encourage you to watch and learn from for each day with tasks to complete before the next day's videos.

Interested? Maybe you'd like to smooth out your voice to make it more magnetic and intriguing to help attract a partner or to get new friends; or a businessperson who wants to develop an authoritative voice in the workplace.



**Day 1 - Resonance**  
**Day 2 - Tension**  
**Day 3 - Breathing**  
**Day 4 - Posture**  
**Day 5 - Speaking with your whole body**  
**Day 6 - Confidence**  
**Day 7 - Putting it all together**

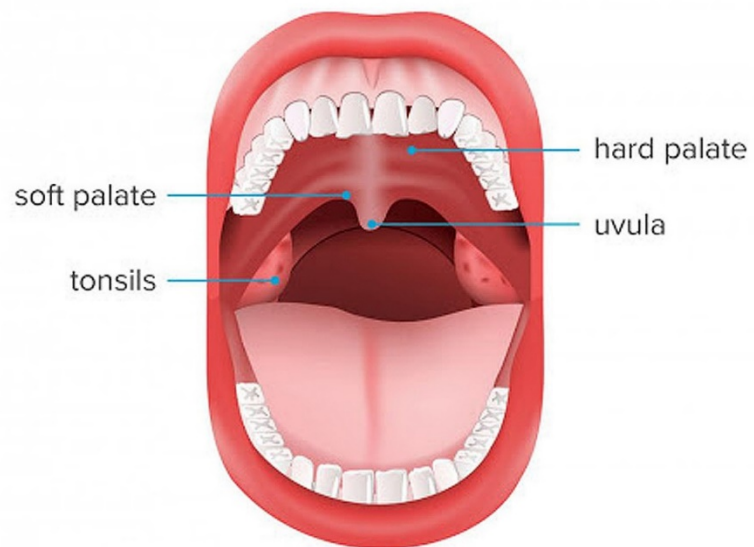
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So I'll hope you'll join me on this 7-day journey and discover the true depth and resonant potential of your speaking voice!

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## 30 Days to A More Confident Voice – Course Notes





Thank you very much for your time, we really hope that this course has been of help to you. Good luck.

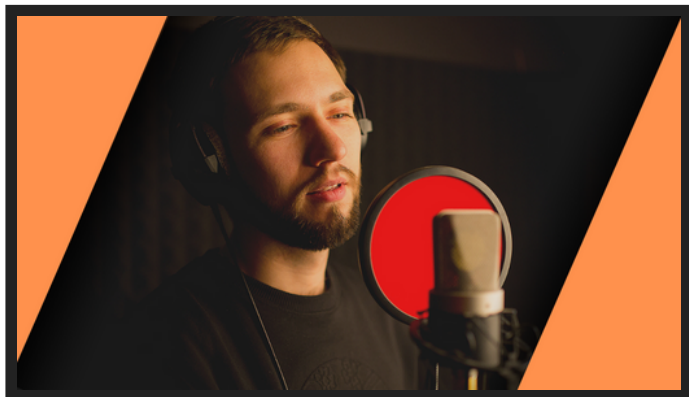


The writer and presenter , Peter Baker is an experienced voice artist and trainer, and is a former BBC News presenter and TV producer for ITV Granada in the UK.

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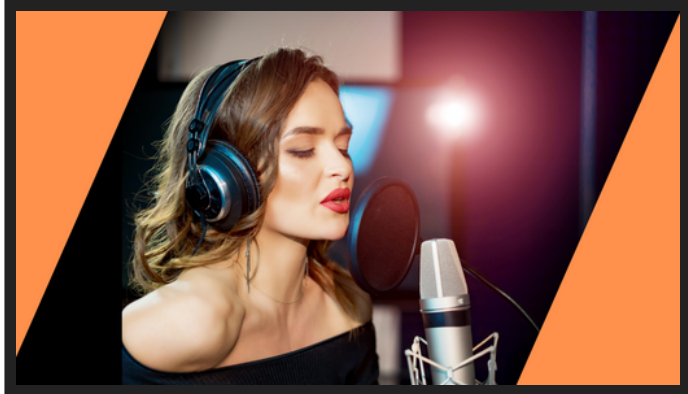


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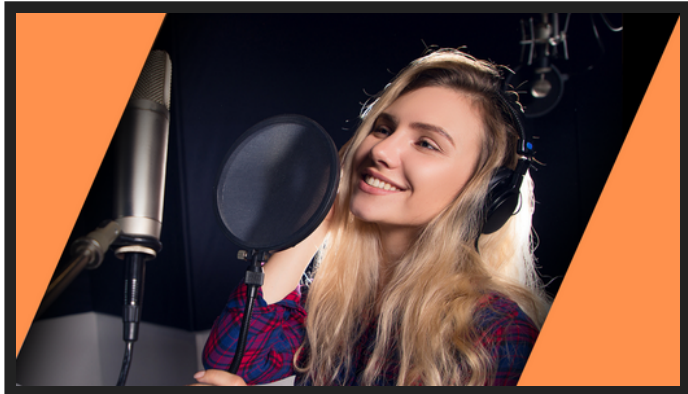




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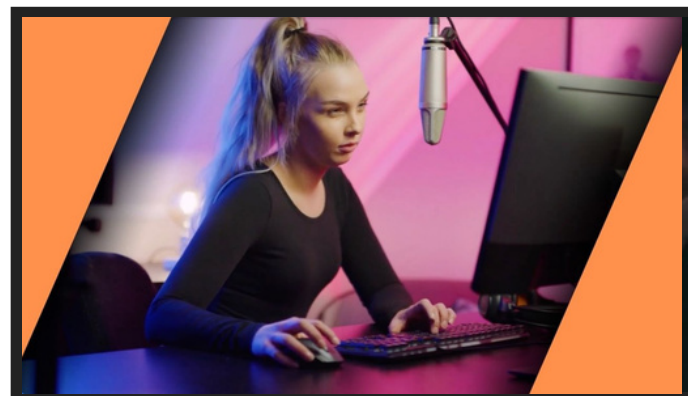
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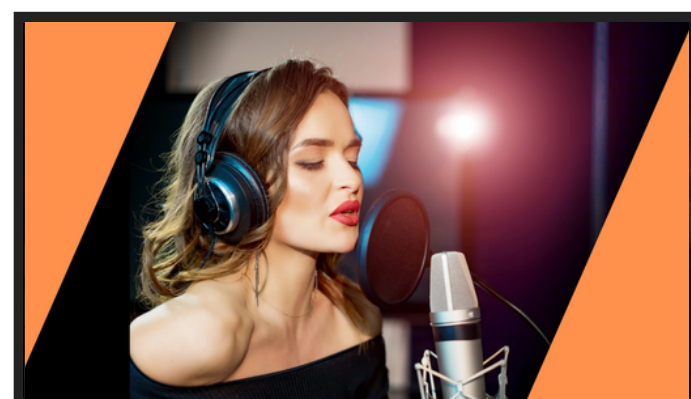
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