

FIND YOUR VOICE

The 10 steps
from anxiety to
confidence for
aspiring speakers



ELISA JAMES Th.M., M.Mus.
Holistic Vocal Coach



Testimonials

"The results I have had within just 6 weeks from working with Elisa have been incredible. As a business consultant, my communication skills and confidence to clearly deliver my knowledge to clients has risen to a whole new level, all thanks to Elisa's unique methods of coaching. I only wish I had done it sooner. So, if you're thinking of improving your communication, take it from me, step off the fence, and call Elisa now"

Lewis Haydon, Business Coach/Speaker, UK

"Elisa has really helped me gain confidence performing as a singer and actor onstage. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge to share about the voice (and how to look after it!), stage presence, posture, technique, range, projection and control. From audition preparation to long term coaching, I highly recommend her programs."

Adam Jon, Actor/Singer, Australia.

"Elisa is a truly fabulous teacher. Not only is she an expert on the technical side of voice training, she is also extremely motivating and adapts her teaching style to the learning style of the student. Truly amazing. And then she is also an exceptional performer and brings that rare experience to her teaching."

Peter Lowe, Motivational Speaker, USA

"The Elisa James HAPS workshop was great fun! I felt tiny shifts in my confidence for days! You are an amazing teacher!"

Bea Solya, Hypnotherapist/Speaker, USA.

"I had very little understanding about my voice before your training. Now, I know SO much more about my speaking voice and you covered a lot of material that will be extremely helpful moving forward with my ministry. I also found the section on how to deal with nerves and anxiety helpful ... I think we all did. I would absolutely recommend this workshop to anyone."

Ann Tabor, Unity Church Minister, USA.

"Elisa James' HAPS programs brings awareness of just how much there is to learn about using your voice. It's not all just "nature", it is learned."

J.M. Unity Church Minister, USA.

"HAPS is more than just a vocal technique. The program provides a way for us to learn how to better our voices, our health, and our confidence. Elisa has created a program which encourages students to be honest with themselves, as well as increase their strength as speakers or vocalists. What I've found brilliant about the technique is that unlike many other vocal techniques that preach "right" or "wrong" ways to use one's voice, HAPS provides a number of options for using one's voice to the fullest extent. As an actor, this has been instrumentally helpful for me, as it provides an excellent foundation for confidence as a performer and as a person."

Alex Blair, Actor, USA

"HAPS training with Elisa covers understanding the physical mechanisms that control sound and vibration. Because it did, I am now able to manage on stage nervousness, deliver confidently and now know ways to protect my vocal "instrument" over time. HAPS training is ideal for anyone who will speak in front of groups (including small business environments or sales presentations), people who are looking

for a confidence building environment. Elisa James is a gift to anyone wanting to hone their public speaking abilities and in particular their voice. She is extremely skilled, knowledgeable, patient, supportive and inspiring. I learned more about the mechanics and ways to strengthen and use my voice in one session with her than I ever would have dreamed possible – along with practical exercises and a personal recording to keep me going! She has made an enormous difference in my public speaking.”

Paula Coppel, Public Speaker, USA.

Copyright (c) 2016 by Elisa James.
First Australian paperback edition 2016
info@hapsevoicepro.com

For interviews with Elisa James both in print and TV, contact in Australia
info@hapsevoicepro.com
www.HapsVoicePro.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher. Written permission is not needed for brief quotations in reviews.

DISCLAIMER:

Copyright © 2016 by Elisa James. All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, reproduction or utilization of this work in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying, and recording, and in any information storage and retrieval system, is forbidden without written permission of Elisa James. No information in this book is meant to diagnose, heal or take the place of proper medical advice.

The ideas, concepts, and opinions expressed in this book are intended to be used for educational and reference purposes only. Author and publisher claim no responsibility to any person or entity for any liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly as a result of the use, application, or interpretation of the material in this book.

www.HapsVoicePro.com

FIND YOUR VOICE!

*The 10 Steps from Anxiety to Confidence
For Aspiring Speakers*

Elisa James Th.M., M.Mus. (vocal pedagogy)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	ix
PART ONE: Where to Begin?.....	1
Chapter 1: Opportunities For The Speaker/Entrepreneur In The 21st Century	3
Chapter 2: My Journey	7
Chapter 3: What Successful Speakers Have in Common	17
Chapter 4: Do I Need a Speech Coach or a Voice Coach? What's the Difference?.....	19
Chapter 5: Do you have what it takes?	23
Chapter 6: Public Speaker: Born or Bred?.....	27
PART TWO: The Nitty Gritty	31
Chapter 1: How do I develop the best vocal sound for the job?	33
Chapter 2: Common Concerns from Speakers-in-Training	35
Chapter 3: The 3 Most Common Issues Affecting Speech.....	39
1. <i>Using the Wrong Onset.....</i>	<i>39</i>
2. <i>Lack of Articulation</i>	<i>42</i>
3. <i>Lack of Support Muscle Activation.....</i>	<i>44</i>
Chapter 4: Solutions For Some Of The Most Common Vocal Faults	47
1. <i>Glottal Onset: Correcting a Weak Voice.....</i>	<i>47</i>
2. <i>Personality and the Glottis - Correcting a Harsh Glottal Tone.....</i>	<i>49</i>
3. <i>Articulation Issues Broken Down:.....</i>	<i>52</i>
Chapter 5: Diagnosing Your Own Vocal Issues: Where to Start	57
1. <i>Jaw Tension</i>	<i>58</i>
2. <i>Throat Tension.....</i>	<i>58</i>
3. <i>Airy, or Soft Sound</i>	<i>59</i>
Chapter 6: Reducing Tension in the Larynx and Throat Muscles	61
1. <i>The Tension Test</i>	<i>62</i>

PART THREE: Building Life-Long Confidence.....	65
Chapter 1: Losing Anxiety, Gaining Confidence.....	67
Chapter 2: The Secret	73
Chapter 3: The Confidence Equation: A 10-Step Daily Plan	77
1. <i>Negative Mind Chat.....</i>	<i>77</i>
2. <i>Mindset of Abundance and Worthiness.....</i>	<i>81</i>
3. <i>Personal Growth.....</i>	<i>84</i>
4. <i>Meditation.....</i>	<i>86</i>
5. <i>Bodywork</i>	<i>90</i>
6. <i>Breath Work.....</i>	<i>92</i>
7. <i>Health and Nutrition</i>	<i>98</i>
8. <i>Sharpening the Sword.....</i>	<i>101</i>
9. <i>Practice Space</i>	<i>105</i>
10. <i>Scheduling and Planning.....</i>	<i>106</i>
PART FOUR: Bringing It All Together.....	109
Chapter 1: Stage Presence: Playing the Game	111
Chapter 2: Character Actor: Different Hats.....	115
Chapter 3: Milking It Stage Presence of the Stars.....	119
Chapter 4: Authenticity is KEY	125
Chapter 5: Hand-Held Microphones for Speaking and Singing.....	129
Chapter 6: Do's and Don'ts of Microphone Technique	133
Chapter 7: Food Consumption: Do's & Don'ts Before a Presentation	139
Conclusion.....	145
Resources	147
About the Author	149

INTRODUCTION

Over the years as a voice coach to hundreds of professional speakers, actors, singers and celebrities, I have amassed thousands of notes on every single voice issue that has been presented to me by my clients during their sessions in my studio. I have learned more regarding voice and psychology as a teacher than I ever did in my 30 years on the stage as a professional entertainer. My life as a performer and coach has been both wild and fascinating, and I am excited to be sharing information with you about my favourite topic – the voice.

Although my students present themselves to me with varying issues, I've found that there is always a common underlying thread: lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities. This

lack of confidence seems to have no relation to how talented or capable the student is, but more to do with how they grew up, where they were raised, and under what circumstances.

There are essentially two types of clients I assist: professional speakers, who need practical tools to ensure their voice is working properly for their job and that they are presenting with confidence and authority on stage; and individuals who find themselves at a crossroads, ready for change and compelled to become a speaker because of an innate, burning desire to share their message with the world.

A lack of confidence and the inability to speak up for one's self, especially when it is important to that person, always manifests as some sort of physical voice issue. For some people, it will be partial loss of voice function, manifesting as a croaky or 'froggy' sound. For others, it may be an unstable or 'wobbly' tone that comes and goes, coupled with a fear of having no control over the voice.

Another symptom I often see is an ‘airy’, or weak tone that lacks power and authority. This often occurs with shy or insecure people lacking in self-confidence and self-esteem, but it’s also common in people from other cultures that have accents that are more oral or throaty-sounding. For example, some of my Japanese and Thai students have quiet voices, attributable in part to cultural environment, and it can be quite unfamiliar for them to speak clearly and loudly. The same often applies to British and other Europeans: there seems to be an inherent difference in the way the oral and nasal cavities are used to make sound. Some accents naturally sound more resonant, (an American accent is a good example), while others sound more ‘rounded’ and ‘open’ (like a British Upper Class accent).

A similar voice pattern is often seen in victims of abuse, bullying, and trauma. These individuals tend to develop a sound which usually manifests as a ‘wobbly’, unsupported

tone that ‘breaks’ often and is unreliable for public speaking.

The type of specialist that singers and speakers often initially consult for voice issues is called an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist, or ENT. The term used by ENT’s to describe the voice issues mentioned above is *Muscle Tension Dysphonia*. This is basically a general label applied when an examination of the vocal folds reveals no pathological reason for the issue. In other words, the doctor cannot see any physical or medical reason to explain why the voice is not sounding clear and resonant – no nodules, polyps, or any signs of visible damage on the vocal folds. The default action then taken is to refer the client to a voice coach or speech therapist in order that they may learn better control over the muscles of their vocal instrument.

All these voice issues can be corrected with time, patience and practice, but an experienced voice coach or speech therapist coupled with an effective daily practice regime is essential. This book can get you started in the right direction and

will help you improve the quality of your life, increase your confidence and give some important insights into the psychology of the voice.

Everything we think, feel and do has an impact on our sound, and in my experience I have found that more than 90% of voice work begins with a psychological component that needs to be addressed. Even though this book will be invaluable for those looking for a breakthrough and can immediately assist with facilitating change, there is no substitute for one-on-one voice coaching with a qualified professional.

I hope that you will learn a thing or two about yourself, improve your life-balance habits, and begin speaking in a healthier way using the information in this book.

PART ONE

WHERE TO BEGIN?

CHAPTER 1:

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE
SPEAKER/ENTREPRENEUR IN
THE 21ST CENTURY

There has never been a better time to become a speaker. Many people today are starting their own business, beginning a career as an entrepreneur or sharing their wisdom and experience with the world. We have on-line platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, podcasts, and dozens of others which we can use to teach, inspire, and share knowledge, and the best part is that they are accessible and free! There are also many in-person opportunities with new Meetup groups appearing every day, and business networking events are ubiquitous. Anyone can

join “Toastmasters” to learn how to craft and shape a speech and gain valuable experience in front of an audience. There are endless possibilities if you simply start looking for them.

As a business owner or entrepreneur, you need to network and expand your reach to a broader audience to increase revenue and improve the bottom line. Speaking, teaching, and presenting on your area of expertise is a great way to do that, but first you need to understand your vocal instrument and have complete control over its function. Only then will you be able to speak in any situation, at any time, with a clear, resonant, projected tone and with authority and confidence.

There are many situations that we are presented with as speakers. For example, a small intimate group seated reasonably close to you will require a certain energy and projection, but no amplification. However, a larger room with more than 50 participants will require a microphone and amplification for you to be easily heard and avoid potential vocal abuse. Types of microphones

available may include a hand-held microphone with a cable, a cordless microphone, or the headset-type. Headsets are a great tool, because you don't have to worry about things like regulating the sound, your arm getting tired, or needing to place a microphone in and out of a stand (a noisy, awkward, and cumbersome manoeuvre for those not experienced as rock singers!)

Towards the end of this book you'll see a chapter on Stage and Microphone use, so if you need to purchase a microphone for professional speaking jobs this will be a good resource for you.

CHAPTER 2:

MY JOURNEY

I am both a late bloomer and an early bloomer when it comes to the voice!

As a late bloomer, I've enjoyed a fantastic 30-year career as a singer, speaker and performer, but I did not get sufficient training for my job until after I had retired from full-time performing. I always just sang, gaining my knowledge from 'on-the-job' training combined with private tuition from various teachers along the way. I soon discovered, however (the hard way) that the techniques I had employed on stage and had also learned from my (classical) voice teachers were significantly inadequate for the

vocal commitments my career demanded – that of a contemporary singer and recording artist.

So, after 30 years of performing I thought it was time to search for better information on the use of voice in a contemporary setting for both speaking and singing. After retiring from a full-time career on the stage, I finally completed a Master's degree in voice production – a late bloomer indeed! Investing in my education was the best decision I ever made and I wish I had done it earlier. Better late than never!

I was an early bloomer in the way that I always knew what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to be a performer from the youngest age I can remember, and as a child I would continuously fantasize about being on stage or acting in MGM musicals with Hollywood film stars. I sang, danced and 'acrobated' my way through each day, dreaming of the exciting life I would have as a professional performer.

It all happened quickly for me, and at a young age – a classic example of the Law of

Attraction in action! My first professional performance was at 13 years old, starring opposite Australian actor Mel Gibson who, though not yet hugely famous, had starred in one or two local films.

Some of Mel's acting friends were stars of a soap opera called *The Young Doctors*, and together they ran an acting school in Sydney where I regularly attended classes. I was chosen as one of the lead roles in their first professional play, we had no microphones, and since we were performing in a huge hall we were told to use our "big voices" so we could be heard - in other words, shouting at your fellow-actor who was standing only 3 feet away!

With proper training and experience this would have been much easier, but at such a young age and with no understanding of support muscles or voice projection techniques I found it incredibly difficult to confidently yell my lines at my co-star, especially since I was a painfully shy little girl standing in front of a devilishly handsome young man!

It was an interesting and challenging first job for an actor, and I'm sure Mel enjoyed making movies much more than being "Demon Discontent" to my "Fairy Tranquil-heart"!

Although I appeared in many stage shows, TV commercials and TV productions throughout my teenage years, I must admit I've always enjoyed the more intimate work of being on camera as opposed to shouting at people on stage.

At 15 I quit school after successfully auditioning for a national touring musical, then promptly proceeded to live in tour buses and hotels for the next 6 months, performing shows at 150 different venues across Australia. This was far more interesting to me than learning stuff like trigonometry at school, and I have no regrets of quitting high school to become a full-time performer.

The next 30 years was filled with many adventures, hiccups and disasters along the way, and brought me to live and work on three continents.

When I first began my professional career as an actor, acrobatic-dancer and singer, it was necessary to be a “triple-threat” performer (singer, dancer, actor) to get cast in shows. I performed in many musicals, reviews, plays, films and TV shows during the early days, but due to the instability of theatre work, soon decided to focus on singing and presenting full time instead. This decision led me to work with the best players in town (Sydney, Australia), and was a wonderful opportunity for me to get the very best “on-the-job-training”.

As a freelance session singer, I recorded many jingles for radio and TV which I absolutely loved doing. As much as I also loved being on stage, being in the studio had far less pressure, because I could record many times over until I (or the client) was satisfied. As a session singer, I also got to record with many pop stars on their singles and albums in the ‘80s and ‘90s at the wonderful studios of record giants EMI and BMG.

In 1995, after getting married and having a son, I left my Australian career behind to follow

my dream of becoming a Euro-Pop star. The record deal I signed led me to record with Pop, Rock, and Trance artists all over Europe, and I spent many years touring, recording and performing. After 9 years in Europe though, and with “fame and fortune” somehow always *just* out of reach, I decided I was getting too old to be a pop star and it was time to move on.

The next stop on my journey was performing on luxury cruise ships, which is a great way to get paid and see the world at the same time! So, after a rather daunting audition for a grumpy old man in a London studio on a rainy day, I was pleasantly surprised by my first cruise contract offer: Tahiti!

At sea I spent the next few months developing theme shows, lounge acts and One-Woman Cabaret shows, and performed each night for a select audience in the most magical of settings: Bora Bora and Morea.

I ultimately completed dozens of contracts all over the world for the next seven years, and

sailed in and out of the most amazing places. Getting paid to travel the world is a wonderful way to see it, and I carefully noted for future reference that there were always professional speakers flown on and off the ships each week. They usually held two presentations per week for the passengers, and spoke on every conceivable topic from history to archaeology, to health and war stories. Cruise ships are always looking for new speakers!

The final stop on my 30-year performance journey was the USA - a place I had never planned to live in or visit at all. In fact, it came about rather unexpectedly but I embraced the opportunity for a new adventure.

I wrote and produced a new cabaret show, and after holding a showcase for American music agents was soon solidly booked for the next 7 years. I found solo cabaret a great way to get over stage fright, and it was a huge challenge for me at first. As an unknown artist in the USA, I started with performances to small audiences of around 100 people, but that soon grew to 350, 500 and

then finally 2,000. I am so grateful for this experience, as it taught me to hold my own as a performer and to be able to confidently perform to an audience of any size.

I wanted to share my (rather long) story for one reason only, and that is this: If I, the shyest girl in the country, can build a successful career as a performer and make all my dreams come true, then you can too!

All my students now benefit from my 30+ years of experience, and I can show you shortcuts along the way to get better results, faster. The last thing I want is for others to go through the pain and time-wasting mistakes I went through.

All these crazy experiences shaped me as a person, performer, coach and speaker, and gave me invaluable training that helps me help others reach their goals. I now use every tool that I have learned from both my performance experience and the two totally different Masters Degrees I have gained along the way: one from the USA in Holistic

Health/Spiritual Counselling, and the other from Australia in Vocal Pedagogy (voice science).

I use a complete holistic approach with every client to help them break through any blockages to self-expression, and to help them develop a strong healthy voice and dynamic presentation style to use every day, both on stage and off.

CHAPTER 3:

WHAT SUCCESSFUL SPEAKERS HAVE IN COMMON

I listen to speakers differently than most people, and sometimes don't even pay much attention to what they are saying – I'm more interested in *how they are saying it* and what their body language is telling me. I listen and watch for the following things:

- Vocal tone and quality
- Articulation and vowel shapes
- Clarity and projection of voice
- Breathing patterns and support muscles
- Assertiveness and confidence
- Resonance and 'ring' in the voice
- Use of stage area and microphone

- Stage presence and charisma
- Connection to the audience
- Use of emotion and emotional triggers

I have discovered that the best speakers use all the above aspects to their advantage, and can be great manipulators when it comes to entraining an audience to achieve a certain emotional state. Tony Robbins is a great example of a speaker who has mastered this art.

There are many speakers taking their careers to the next level by hiring voice coaches, NLP trainers, speaking coaches and performance coaches. If you don't incorporate all the above attributes to your presentation, you may not be as effective and memorable a speaker as you would like to be.

CHAPTER 4:

DO I NEED A SPEECH COACH OR A VOICE COACH? WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

It depends on what you need... There are many trainers out there who call themselves “Speaker Trainers” or “Speech Coaches”, and their task is to help you craft the body and flow of your speech. They help you write your speech, show you how to put it together in a coherent way, and assist you in preparing a speech of a certain length. Toastmasters are a great example. Speech Coaches usually come from business and marketing backgrounds and are often speakers themselves. They may have no knowledge of voice production or the physiology of correct speaking

technique and rarely have an entertainment background.

A “Voice Coach” or “Vocal Coach”, on the other hand, is usually a qualified expert in voice production. They should have a voice degree and good training in speech pathology, vocal pedagogy, acting, singing and voice mechanics. A good coach will be able to hear and immediately see where your voice, breath and support system is letting you down, and will be able to prescribe a proper plan of action to get your voice working optimally.

Some technical aspects of voice training include:

- Respiration patterns for speech
- Activating support muscles for clear speech and projection
- Vocal Fold Closure patterns
- Tension patterns
- Resonance
- Finding an optimal pitch for speaking

- Accent reduction if it is negatively impacting your life
- Prosody, or melodic patterns during speech
- Pacing
- Volume
- Registers
- Stage presence and microphone technique

My goal as a Voice Coach is to make sure my clients can speak effectively in any situation, and that they are well understood. A speaker's voice should be clear, resonant and strong, and have the muscle strength to project when needed, without strain. I have worked as an MC and speaker myself, and performed on thousands of stages worldwide, so I also assist my students in learning stage presence and developing the charisma needed for a memorable presentation.

To find out whether you're a good candidate for Voice Coaching, take the quick quiz at:

www.HapsVoicePro.com/Resources

CHAPTER 5:

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Let's start by checking if you have the right tools before you even begin with a coach:

- Do you have a voice box?
- Does it make sound?
- Can you speak okay?
- Do you breathe?
- Do you use your lungs?
- Do you have articulators with which to form words? Teeth, tongue, lips and jaw?

If you have answered everything above in the affirmative, then you are good to go! Go find a good coach, and get started on your dream!

If you think I'm over-simplifying this, you're right. I certainly am, and for good reason. It's usually not just the mechanics or lack of vocal knowledge that holds us back from living our dreams of becoming a speaker - it's our psychology!

Think about what it is that is holding you back. What belief systems are you holding onto that made you buy this book instead of getting out there and giving it a go? Is it fear? Fear of not being good enough, knowledgeable enough, or educated enough?

A huge fear of public speaking holds many people back, and that is usually tied into some of the other fears mentioned above. If you're worried about criticism and judgment, you will always set yourself up for failure as it will always be an excuse for you.

I am assuring you that if you have the physical tools for speech as outlined above, you can do this! Use this book and the information in it to help you get there, and start taking

actionable steps towards your goal. I will give you everything you need to know to get past the belief systems holding you back, and help you move forward in the direction of your goals. This book is focused more on getting over your blockages than on the physiological mechanics of speaking. This is because more than 80% of my clients are held back by their psychology, NOT by their mechanical voice issues.

CHAPTER 6:

PUBLIC SPEAKER: BORN OR BRED?

The answer is: both! Some people start singing and dancing and attention-seeking the minute they're born, while others enter the world more quietly. As a young child, I wished and hoped and dreamed of becoming an entertainer, but was too scared to show people what I could do. On the other hand, my niece is the complete opposite and from a very young age she was singing and dancing all over the house shouting, "Look at me! Look what I can do!"

These are two very different personality types, one being introvert and the other being extrovert. Most people who have seen me

perform on stage or on camera conclude that I must be an extrovert to be able to perform with such confidence, but nothing is further from the truth. I was simply determined to change, and have worked hard over the past 30 years to become more confident and self-assured.

I will never be an extrovert, though, as I love my time away from the spotlight just as much as I love performing. It was a long journey for me to grow inner confidence, and if I had known back then what I know now I could have gotten here much faster! This is the very reason I am passionate about helping you – I don't wish anyone to suffer through the angst of being painfully shy. It hurts, and it doesn't achieve anything!

So, if something is holding you back right now, you can probably push through with determination and will power. One thing you need to remember is that good voices take time to build. It takes many weeks or months of ongoing voice work and continual attention to your training, just like it does if you want to be a body

builder. To have a buff, strong body with a great six-pack you need to work out daily with weights and a good personal trainer. Voice work is no different, because you're training and building the muscles of the larynx and vocal tract and creating new muscle memory. It takes time and practice. But rest assured, whether you are an outgoing person, or introvert, either way you CAN learn the skills you need to become a successful public speaker.

Regarding the psychology of speaking – well, that takes time, determination and practice. You need to plan for practice, implement daily challenges that will move you out of your comfort zone, and hire a voice coach to help you move forward. You also need to pay attention to planning some dates into your agenda for speaking opportunities to work towards a definite goal.

Although this book doesn't go into the mechanics of voice training too deeply (please see my Voice Fundamentals program for that), I have included some important information for

common voice issues that bother many speakers. The most common problems tend to be physical tension patterns that manifest due to fear, anxiety or stress. Below are some great tips on how to spot your tension patterns and how to move through them to speak more freely.

PART TWO:

THE NITTY GRITTY

CHAPTER 1:

HOW DO I DEVELOP THE BEST VOCAL SOUND FOR THE JOB?

The bottom line is that there are no shortcuts to a great voice. The vocal instrument consists of muscle, ligament and cartilage and requires building and shaping with time, patience and practice. Building a good instrument is like building any muscle: you need to do some heavy lifting and repetitions for the muscles to grow, change and gain strength. I have developed voice exercises for my students to help them build strength, resilience and flexibility for speech and the whole system is available for you in the **HAPS Voice Fundamentals program** (see resources section for details).

The goal is always the same: build the sound and technique correctly and you will have a strong, clear voice for life. A student of mine said to me recently that during a 4-day training event in Los Angeles (Tony Robbins Leadership Program) he was one of the few coaches present that managed to not lose his voice after four days of yelling and yahooing. By using my vocal coaching techniques, he could be more mindful of the way he spoke, and he maintained his voice throughout long days under difficult circumstances.

So, if you have no pathological voice issues you can start building your voice for public speaking today. Visit the link below for my free voice warm-up and vocal tips E-booklet:

www.HapsVoicePro.com/Resources

CHAPTER 2:

COMMON CONCERNS FROM SPEAKERS-IN-TRAINING

Many speakers pick up bad habits from family and/or cultural influences, so there may be a few issues you currently experience that make it difficult for you to speak in public. Below are several questions I ask every new student to pinpoint exactly where the issues occur. Check any box that applies to you:

- My throat feels sore after I speak too long
- My voice hurts when I try to talk loudly
- My voice breaks sometimes, especially if I try to talk loudly
- People say they can't hear me well or can't understand me when I speak

- People always ask me to repeat myself
- I run out of air when I talk
- My voice wobbles when I get nervous
- My voice shakes and chokes up when I try and speak in public

These are all very common issues, and it doesn't mean there's something necessarily "wrong" with your voice. It just means that you have picked up bad habits from somewhere, and you need to make some changes. It's time to take action and build some better speaking habits so you can move forward in life with ease and confidence.

Nerves and shaking are often a sign that some personal growth issues need to be addressed, and even though good mechanical changes will help enormously, the personal growth work is imperative to change the psychology affecting your voice production. You need to stop beating yourself up and worrying about what other people think. There will always be critics in the world, and the more you put

yourself out there to shine, the more they will appear. Just remember, if a critic has a problem with you, it's their problem, not yours. Critics are usually unhappy with themselves and their life, and that's why they criticize others. It makes them feel better about themselves if they bring someone down and point out their faults. It's such a sad way to be. Don't fall into that trap. Start celebrating your successes, and stop berating yourself for any failures. Failures are just mistakes that are stepping stones which lead us to the path of growth. It's only by making mistakes that we learn!

CHAPTER 3:

THE 3 MOST COMMON ISSUES AFFECTING SPEECH

1. Using the Wrong Onset.

Onset is the way we begin the sound of each tone. There are three main ways we all begin to make sound:

1. Glottal, or ‘kick start’
2. Aspirant, or with an airy start as in “h”
3. Balanced, or simultaneous onset, such as voice and air at the same time.

I work with speakers from all over the world and the two most common problems I encounter with my students is either their lack of glottal onset (i.e., too aspirated) or their abuse of glottal onset (i.e., too forced, or pushed). Both habits

often cause vocal issues because they set up a sentence incorrectly, which can lead to vocal problems in some situations.

For example, if you're using an aspirated onset the sentence that follows is usually breathy and weak. This causes issues when presenting because when speaking in public you normally need to be enthusiastic and energetic. However, if you think that your voice is not loud enough (because you're sounding 'breathy'), you'll find yourself "pushing" your voice too hard. This will result in a sore throat and potential loss of voice, especially if your vocal folds are slightly open and letting out too much air during speech.

If, on the other hand, you're using a harsh glottal onset you're already pushing your voice too hard, tensing your vocal folds too tightly and squeezing them together. This will cause a tight throaty tone which leads to pain, scratchiness, and a rough-sounding voice: even potential voice loss over time.

Many of my speaker students are outgoing A-type personalities that love presenting, coaching and teaching, and their energy far outweighs their vocal capability. Over time, and with bad habits in place, they push their voice too hard for too long using the wrong muscles which often causes vocal fatigue and vocal damage.

I'm sure you can think of such a person in your field or circle, and we only need to look to our local politicians and motivational speakers to find a good example of how not to use the voice correctly!

So, what onset should you use? Well that's a tricky one to answer. The best thing to do is first go and record yourself reading and speaking for one minute with a good quality microphone. Listen to the recording, and write down what you hear in your own voice. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I sounding airy at the beginning of each sentence?

- Is the entire sentence airy and weak sounding? Or, is it clear and strong?
- Do I sound nasal? Throaty?
- Do I sound forced?
- Do I sound gruff, or rough, or scratchy?

Once you have objectively written down a few words describing your sound you will have a better understanding of whether you need to practice more glottal onsets or simultaneous onsets. See below on solutions and exercises for each issue.

2. Lack of Articulation

This may seem obvious to many people, but you would be surprised at the number of clients that come to me with voice issues that primarily stem from lack of proper articulation.

Proper, clear articulation involves ALL the articulators – the lips, the tongue, the teeth and the jaw. Many of my shy students have a weakness in one or more of the articulators, and it shows up when they speak publicly or attempt to speak up for themselves. People who do not feel

confident tend to swallow their words, trail off the ends of their sentences, hold their tongue tightly backward in the throat, don't shape their mouth correctly for each vowel, and don't open the jaw enough to let sufficient sound out.

Articulation issues usually stem from familial conditioning and cultural influences. We all tend to mimic and copy the people we grew up with, so if the people around us spoke in a particular way, we just learned to do the same. Remember though, just because we grew up speaking a certain way doesn't mean we'll always have to speak like that.

Once you're aware that you're not articulating efficiently enough to be heard and understood, you can implement changes. It will feel a little weird and perhaps even 'fake' at first, moving the articulators in a way that you are not accustomed to, but you'll feel more comfortable over time. I had to learn this very quickly when I moved overseas to a non-English speaking country in my 20's and realized that no-one understood what I was saying. I developed a way

to speak more clearly, with better articulation and minimal accent, and then I no longer had that problem.

Sometimes you need a problem, or a sticking point, in order to find a better way of living your life. Problems are great challenges that help us grow stronger and more resilient as we overcome them.

3. Lack of Support Muscle Activation

The third issue I often see in my studio is students exhibiting a lack of proper support muscles when speaking. This is purely because most people have not been taught how to use them, and don't even know where they are.

I have an entire module in my Voice Fundamentals Course dedicated to this subject as it is an important issue for most speakers. I find that even seasoned and experienced speakers don't know or understand how to use their support muscles properly, but when they do it's a game-changer for them.

To give you an example, I train some of Tony Robbins' coaches and one of them said to me recently:

"I just coached at "Date with Destiny" for a week and I used all the techniques for support that you taught me. I was so excited that it worked! And I was one of the very few that didn't lose my voice over that 6 days.!"

Working with dynamic and energetic motivational speakers like Tony requires energy and enthusiasm in your voice and body language for 10-12 hours per day, especially for the coaches! So, knowing how to use the correct muscles to keep up the energy required for proper supported voice function is essential!

Go to the below web page to access my YouTube channel for Support Mechanism Training:

www.HapsVoicePro.com/Resources

CHAPTER 4:

SOLUTIONS FOR SOME OF THE MOST COMMON VOCAL FAULTS

1. Glottal Onset: Correcting a Weak Voice

If you find that your voice is weak and airy at times and you find it hard to speak up for yourself in loud places, you will need to practice a firmer closure of the vocal folds to allow for a cleaner vocal sound with less air. In other words, begin with a glottal onset then follow on with simultaneous onsets for the rest of the sentence.

An example of this is to say the vowels one at a time:

A! .. E! .. I! .. O! .. U!

Say them loudly and assertively, with a slight pause in between each one so the vocal folds close again with each sudden sound. Imagine you are angry and trying to make yourself heard across the room. That way, it will be loud and crisp but with no forcing, just an assertive attitude.

Say with authority, and start each vowel with a glottal stroke:

I! .. AM! .. ANGRY!

Each sound is separate, and you should feel the glottal stroke coming from the back of the throat where the epiglottis originates. This “glottal attack”, or glottal stroke, can be practiced on all vowels to get a stronger, more energetic sound if you tend to speak too quietly.

Then try saying the words:

I! .. am going OUT!

The first time you say this, create a strong glottal stroke on every vowel so you can feel and experience the closure and energy, and where it comes from. Then, start only the FIRST vowel

with a glottal stroke, and then flow the rest of the sentence on together smoothly.

If this was a sung phrase, we would call it legato: smooth and connected. So, start “**I!**” as a glottal, then smoothly connect the rest: “.. **am going out**”, with no hard onsets but a smooth flowing tone instead - no breaks or stops. This last part is called a simultaneous, or balanced, onset.

2. Personality and the Glottis - Correcting a Harsh Glottal Tone

If you’re someone that experiences voice loss due to speaking too much, too loudly or incorrectly, then it’s possible you may be using too much tension and force at the beginning of each sentence.

Many people with “A-type” personalities speak loudly and rather harshly, and are usually gung-ho about life and goals. They are high achievers and expect a lot from themselves and their staff. The problem that individuals with this

type of personality often have is that they can be vocally abusive, which could lead to voice loss.

So, make sure you've listened to your recording to find out whether you produce harsh, throaty tones that don't sound clear and resonant. You will instinctively know whether it is clear or not by carefully listening with your eyes shut and wearing headphones to pick up vocal nuances. Your ears and your kinaesthetic feedback are your best guides for analysing the voice.

Use these guidelines to correct a throaty, or harsh glottal tone:

1. Start with the Vowels:

“Ah” (as in father)

“Ey” (as in hay)

“I” (as in hit)

“OH” (as in bother)

“U” (as in you)

Use a glottal stroke on each sound to feel the kick start clearly in the throat.

2. Then, begin each vowel with an “H” in front:

Hah

Hay

Hit

Hot

Hu

3. Now say the same vowels as though you are saying the “H” silently (in other words, not using the “H” at all, but just using the gentle breath behind the tone)

(h) Ah

(h) EH

(h) I

(h) OH

(h) U

You will notice that this can be quite tricky for someone who is used to using force to make a sound, and can be quite challenging to learn for some people.

The best way to practice this is to sing a simple song like the Alphabet Song in one flowing breath line, and then flow one word onto the next with no stop, breaths or pauses. Once you get the flow of singing the words, go back to speaking them in a sing-song fashion and keep the whole sentence flowing smoothly on the breath for a long sentence. The goal is to have a clear, strong tone with no forcing and no pushing, but also no excess airflow.

3. Articulation Issues Broken Down:

THE TONGUE: The tongue needs to be relaxed and forward during speech and not pulled backwards in the throat. If you pull your tongue in tightly backwards towards the back of the throat you can find that you can imitate a “Kermit the Frog” sound quite well, but you might also break out into a coughing fit! The tongue is a huge, strong muscle and can literally choke us if we let it tense up and travel backwards too far.

THE TEETH: I have found that some of my students underuse their tongue against their teeth, which can be clearly heard when they say sounds with an “S” or a “TH”. The sound will be airy and weak instead of strong and hissy-sounding.

If you place your hands on your waist (support muscles), like Peter Pan standing up tall with his hands on his hips in a confident pose, you will notice the side muscles either switch on by giving a “kick” underneath your fingers, or they will be asleep and completely un-active during a “SSSS” sound.

The goal is to have these muscles switch ON for clear projected speech when using the articulators, as they are helping regulate airflow and activate better breath support.

THE LIPS AND CHEEK MUSCLES: Make a “kissy” shape with your lips, and pretend you’re going to make a kiss imprint onto a paper or glass with lipstick on (guys, just use your imagination). Now keep the shape of that kiss, and say the vowel “OO”. You will feel not only your lips engaging

and coming forward, but also the cheek muscles in the side of your face helping make the nice rounded “OO” shape.

These muscles are often under-utilized and cause a nasal or throaty sound if the placement of airflow is not moved forward enough. This nasal harsh sound of “eww” instead of a nice forward rounded “oo” is particularly common in Australians when they underuse their muscles for articulation.

Practice shaping your vowels by looking in the mirror and using your mouth muscles a little more. You don’t need to look silly or unnatural, but chances are you are probably underusing them when you are presenting anyway, and a little more articulation always helps your audience understand you more clearly.

THE JAW: The main issue with most people seems to be a *lack* of jaw use, not *over*-use. The only person I have ever seen overusing their articulators was the character Hermione Granger from the first Harry Potter film. She was so over-articulate and prim and proper that she alienated

herself from the very person she was attempting to get close to (Harry, of course).

For most of my students, the jaw needs to move downwards just a little further to let a more rounded sound out of the mouth, and to make sure the soft palate is lifting upwards to allow for more airflow out of the mouth and less into the nose.

The most common side effect of a lazy jaw is a nasal sound. A good example of a pointy, focused nasal sound is an Australian with a strong “ocker” accent like Crocodile Dundee. Everything sounds like a harsh “Eh” sound because the mouth shape does not change with the vowels but stays the same wide, stuck shape that manifests in a harshness of tone.

The bottom line is that we all have been given articulators to be heard and understood, and if you have an important message that you wish to share with the world, be sure to use them to your advantage!

CHAPTER 5:

DIAGNOSING YOUR OWN VOCAL ISSUES: WHERE TO START

I have found through decades of teaching speakers in private sessions that most physical voice issues have a psychosocial component. I have worked as a professional voice coach for more than twenty years and as a spiritual counsellor/vocal therapist for over ten, and I have found that when students delve deep enough they can discover the psychological catalyst for the physical affectation (muscle tension habit). This brings awareness to the issue and helps change to a more efficient way of making sound.

Some examples of physical issues are listed below. Please read them carefully, and ask yourself whether you experience any of these problems.

1. Jaw Tension

If you have an overly tight jaw during speech, it could affect the sound in the following ways:

- Tight pinched sounds that fatigue the voice (and your audiences' ears!)
- Too nasal (which can also be annoying for your listeners)
- Due to tension, may be uncomfortable/painful to speak for long periods
- Problems with singing voice (if a singer) and more.

2. Throat Tension

If you are hearing or experiencing a throaty sound, it could be affecting the sound in the following ways:

- The tone will be scratchy and unclear

- The speaker will feel the need to clear the throat often
- The speaker or singer will feel hoarse very quickly and experience throat pain
- The speaker may lose his voice frequently from having unhealthy vocal habits
- The pitch of the speaking voice is very low and throaty

3. Airy, or Soft Sound

If you feel that your voice sounds weak and airy, it could be affecting your sound in the following ways:

- The tone will sound ungrounded and may wobble when speaking louder
- The tone may sound high, thin and unstable, almost like a voice in falsetto
- The voice tends to 'break', especially when nervous or excited
- The tone will not go louder when projecting and the speaker cannot be heard properly

- The speaker may get a sore throat when speaking for too long, and trying to project unsuccessfully

CHAPTER 6:

REDUCING TENSION IN THE LARYNX AND THROAT MUSCLES

When you start private coaching, it will only take a few sessions for you to gain a good understanding of where your issues lie. You will soon be able to begin the process of healing any voice damage by instigating better vocal habits while being guided by an expert.

Many people pick up unhealthy vocal habits during their lifetime, but these can be easily changed once the speaker understands what the problem is and where the habit originated. The rest is practice, repetition and building new muscle memory.

1. The Tension Test

Follow these three easy steps to find unnecessary muscle tension:

- Begin by checking your jaw for tension. Pretend you're chewing a large invisible apple and take an overly large bite. Drop the jaw down and feel the jaw joint move slightly apart as you open your mouth downwards.
- Take big chews of your invisible apple and feel the jaw and tongue dropping down and stretching the jaw muscles in a downward motion. If this is slightly painful, it will show you how much tension you hold in this area and may alert you to the fact you are probably holding your jaw tightly throughout the day, or grinding your teeth at night.
- Next take a big long sigh – like a yawn. Open the mouth, take a deep breath in and **SIGHHHHHHHHH** loudly as you allow the air and sound to escape. Allow the air to flow gently with the sound of a relaxed and

soft “AH” sound as you sigh in a downward scale fashion (from high to low). This will loosen and stretch the vocal chords along their full length and relax the muscles in the throat and jaw area.

Awareness of tension in the face, jaw and neck will be paramount to your vocal progress and success. If you are using too many muscles unnecessarily, you will feel vocal fatigue much more quickly. The object of good vocal production is to be effective and efficient with energy systems for the best sound possible with the least amount of strain.

Another good test is to feel the striate muscles in the back of the neck with your hand. Voluntary control over these neck muscles will allow us to use our voice properly without overstraining the neck or throat area.

To test this, place your hand over the back of the neck and speak clearly for a few minutes. Notice when you raise your pitch and volume that you may feel more tension. By placing the vocal

sound into the mask area in the front of the face, you will notice that the tension is far less in the neck than if you use a throaty sound.

PART THREE:

BUILDING LIFE-LONG
CONFIDENCE

CHAPTER 1:

LOSING ANXIETY, GAINING
CONFIDENCE

This topic is very dear to my heart and was a driving force behind my 30-year career as a full-time performer. Throughout my career, there have been times when I felt a complete lack of confidence, followed by bursts of confidence that uplifted me, only to fall into the depths of darkness and despair again when self-doubt crept in.

After performing for so many years and listening to hundreds of stories from my students struggling with this issue, I discovered one important thing: confidence is tied to our genetic personality, and is affected enormously by our upbringing and cultural heritage. Unfortunately,

we're pretty much stuck with our genes, but we have much more control over the environmental aspects of our lives.

Another thing I want to share with you is that true confidence has very little to do with talent. Everyone may tell you that you're talented, but when you just use your gifts and don't think too much about them, you end up taking them for granted. It doesn't really feel like 'talent'.

Talent is also sometimes overrated. On the one hand, there are many examples of people who reached the top of their field through various personality traits, but not so much through talent. On the other hand, there are amazingly talented singers who never reached great fame or fortune or ever became full-time professionals, probably due to lack of confidence or belief in themselves.

The only reason that I could live solely from performance income for over 30 years was due to my persistence and determination to fulfil my dream of being a professional full-time

entertainer, nothing more. In other words, I was more confident and determined than talented.

Walt Disney is my favorite example of someone lacking the necessary talent but who succeeded nonetheless. In his biography, he confesses he was not good enough as a cartoonist to draw the way he dreamed about – in fact, he was fired due to his lack of drawing skills at his first illustration job.

When he started his own company with his brother Roy, he was smart enough to hire people more talented than he was. His real gift was his vision, passion and ability to enrol others in his dream. Disney was a very smart man who never gave up on following his dream.

In my case as a singer, even though I never had the vocal talent of someone like Whitney Houston, I was always passionate and determined to be a full-time performer, and I was not going to let anything stop me from fulfilling my dream. I decided at a very young age that this was my path

and there was nothing else I could do, or was even interested in.

Luckily for me, sheer persistence and lack of a “Plan B” paid off because I had a 30-year career, signed multiple record deals, toured all over Australia, Europe and America and performed thousands of shows worldwide. I had many wonderful opportunities to shine as a performer, but unfortunately, some of those early opportunities were ruined due to my lack of self-esteem and confidence in myself. Even though the audience would never have known, at times I was not singing anywhere near my best due to tension, anxiety and self-criticizing thought patterns.

I’m telling you this because this type of behavior causes pain and heartache, and it almost ruined my life on many occasions. I don’t wish it on anybody, so if you are feeling any lack of confidence or lack of belief in yourself right now and can relate to this whole story above:

STOP IT NOW!!

I waited far too long to get help and make changes. I was too proud and too stubborn to confess to anybody how much I was suffering. I suffered in silence for decades with panic attacks, anxiety, and worry over not being able to perform to my best ability. And of course, the more you worry, the worse your anxiety gets!

CHAPTER 2:

THE SECRET

In this chapter, I'm going to give you the secret to finding your inner confidence so that you can shine your gifts to share with all the world, no matter what they are. However, you may not like what you are going to hear because I am going to force YOU to take responsibility!

Yes, only YOU are in charge of your confidence and growth as a person: no-one else. If you are an adult or a teenager reading this book it means that you have a mind of your own and you are looking for change. I applaud and congratulate you for taking this step towards becoming a better version of YOU. I am SO

excited for you because staying stuck sucks, and doesn't get you anywhere.

So, for those of you still hanging on for the secret, here it is:

Personal growth and choice.

Yep, that's it. I can assure you 100%.

The answers don't lie in a magic pill, anti-depressants, anxiety medication or beta blockers. The answers are within you *NOW* and you have everything you need to make the change.

Below I will take you through some concrete steps to achieve more confidence, and considering the fact that everyone tells me these days that I am "full of confidence" in both life and during performances, I can tell you unequivocally that they work. Even when I don't feel confident and feel that old fear creeping in, I can put on my "performer" hat and make it seem like I'm confident and comfortable.

The most wonderful news for you, though, is this: after a few minutes on stage or in front of

the camera, I start to feel just that: confident and comfortable. The great thing is that the approach “fake it till you make it”, actually works, and I will explain that more below. But for now, have faith that things CAN change, and start putting these steps below into a daily action plan.

CHAPTER 3:

THE CONFIDENCE EQUATION: A 10-STEP DAILY PLAN

1. Negative Mind Chat

This is the most important place to begin. It tends to affect everyone to some degree.

Many of my clients have very high expectations of themselves, tend to live mostly in their head, and have constant “negative chat” going on in their brain. The wonderful thing about our brain is that it is malleable and can grow new neural pathways over time. We all build these neural pathways when we are learning something, and mindset patterns are no different. We are training the brain every minute of every

day, so how can we guide that action more mindfully and with purpose?

The Buddhists call the untamed brain a “monkey mind”, and they even have a meditation style for it. A person who practices this style will do crazy, silly, monkey poses as though they are doing a ridiculous form of yoga for 5 to 10 minutes before they meditate each day. The reasoning behind this is that when you move your body, you focus on the movement, your balance, breath, posture and strength, while tiring you out physically at the same time. This in turn helps the mind and body stay more calm during the still meditation phase. Meditating after exercising is always the best time to mediate – you’re ready for a break, and you have the time and focus to train your mind with intention.

One great way to retrain the brain is to buy some hypnotherapy tracks which you can download from the internet (see “Resources” section at the end of this book). Letting your mind just chatter away and ruin your life is huge waste of our electrical resources and not a good

use of brain power. It is like letting an unruly child run wild and cause havoc while you are trying to get on with work. All you must do is acknowledge the negative thought, say “thank you for sharing”, and then change the thought to something else that is life-affirming and positive.

It’s a good idea to make sure you have your negative belief systems and worries written down so you can write an opposite and positive affirmation next to it. This way, when the negative chat enters your mind, you will have a go-to list of positives to read out aloud to offset the negative one.

I don’t know why we all seem to suffer from this negative mind chat, but it seems to be very common and takes a lot of will power, patience and practice to get on top of it. I suffered from anxiety, panic attacks, depression and similar disorders for decades, and the major change and transformation began when I stopped feeling like a victim and started to take control by beginning brain training.

I do not believe in turning to drugs to fix anxiety, and I have seen dozens of my clients, friends and family take back control of their lives by changing their diet, lifestyle and mindset instead of reaching for pills. If you turn to drugs you are giving away your power to someone / something else. The only reason you may need medication is if you have a mental health disorder that needs to be controlled by certain types of medication, but luckily that won't apply to most people. I assure you it can be done if you find the right help and guidance to get there. Even if you are on medication right now, the steps outlined in this section will help you feel more balanced, calm and in control of your life, you're your emotions.

My arsenal of tools includes:

- Exercise
- Lifestyle changes
- Holistic nutrition
- Positive Affirmations
- Personal Growth

- Constant reading and education about mindset
- Surrounding myself with people with the same values.

Don't hang around people who are negative and complain all the time as it rubs off, and you can't help absorb some of that energy. Distance yourself from people who you make you feel wounded, and start looking for a new, up-lifting and positive tribe. If you live in the USA I highly recommend Unity Church as it teaches positive mindset and positive Christianity mixed with some eastern traditions such as Buddhist meditation, chanting and mind training to improve your life. Look up some of the live you tube video feeds of the Sunday Unity Church Services.

2. Mindset of Abundance and Worthiness

Imagine a tiny, perfect little baby in your arms right now . Does that baby deserve to live a full, happy and fulfilling life? Do you wish that baby joy and happiness? Do you want that baby

to find love and acceptance in its life? I think that we all have a natural awe about the miracle of birth, and we're wired to go ga-ga over babies so that they are nurtured, loved and fed, in order to survive to adulthood.

So, what happens along the way?

We learn things that don't serve us from people who have gotten off-track, and it gets locked into our belief systems. Once you become aware of your mindset and belief systems you can begin to assess whether they're serving you or bringing you down.

I use a chart (see "Resources") that helps identify core beliefs. You need to meditate on the belief that you would prefer to have or are leaning towards. For example, being broke right now doesn't mean you should always believe in lack and limitation. There are plenty of inspiring people that have turned their lives around completely by changing their mindset. I personally have met many of them, and having

these inspiring people as mentors helps me shape my life in the way I want it to go.

A great example is the Australian man who was born with no legs and no arms and became a famous inspirational speaker. His name is Nick Vujicic, and he moves people to tears with stories of the challenges he has had to overcome due to his physical disability. Those of us with arms and legs can barely begin to imagine the hardships he has endured. It is all about attitude and mindset.

Nick had an abundance mindset and believed not only that he could make a difference in this world, but also that by making that difference he would also greatly enhance his personal life and live it with fulfilment and happiness. Instead of living in assisted care and feeling sorry for himself he somehow found a way to get around, drive, speak, teach and travel, and he is happily married with a young family. What a mindset this young man has!

Yes, it all begins with the mind. If you're reading this book, you probably have a

wonderful, capable brain that can conjure up all sorts of thoughts, ideas and creative ways of doing things in this world, so start using that power for good – for your sake, your family’s sake, and for the good of the world around you. A negative, lazy mindset is a huge waste of your natural electrical resources!

3. Personal Growth

Personal growth includes everything mentioned above and more. I have dedicated many hours over the past 30 years to personal growth training by reading books by inspirational new-thought leaders such as Louise Hay, Wayne Dyer, Eckhart Tolle, Maryanne Williamson, Brian Wise, and Bryon Katie. Once you start searching the internet for authors like these, similar authors will be suggested by your search engine.

Commit to reading one book a week, for one hour each morning before you start your day, As you read, make sure you highlight important passages, and write down any affirmations or

phrases that jump out at you, and place them all over the walls of your home. I had affirmations on every surface around my home so that eventually I knew them all and could rattle them off when I needed them most.

Affirmations really help, and sometimes simply affirming the pure potential that we had as a baby to be loved and fulfilled will be the most important one for you to remember. We are all whole, complete and loved on the inside and we need to love and accept ourselves as we are and nurture the positive changes along the way. Hold that baby in your mind and remember that you as an adult are solely responsible for nurturing, loving and accepting that baby, that tiny spark of pure potentiality, and no-one else.

I believe that we are pure, loving energy at our source, and we all have the ability to tap into that light within and experience love, peace and harmony at any time.

4. Meditation

The practice of mindfulness and meditation has changed my life for the better, and I have spent time and effort paying attention to these two practices for many years. Like anything worth doing though, we need to be patient, persistent, and learn along the way.

I used to be one of those people that said “I can’t meditate! I tried, and it doesn’t work for me. I can’t keep my mind still for a second”. And now, when a student says that to me my response is always the same: “That is the very reason you should be meditating every day, for twice as long as anyone else”.

Meditation can take many forms and I am certainly no expert. In fact, my meditation technique is most probably not technically correct at all, but I do know that when I practice daily to still my mind, chant, breathe and focus for at least 20 minutes, I am calmer, more reasonable, easier to get along with, more focused, organised, and balanced.

It is no accident that my life has changed. This is a practice that I have been attempting to master for more than two decades. In my 20's and 30's I was terrible at meditating, and could not still my mind for more than a minute or two. But even one minute of peaceful nothingness was bliss to me! What a huge gift. Then I worked on extending that into more and more time until I could experience the blissful nothingness for more than twenty minutes. Due to traumas, accidents, and head injuries my brain may never be completely 'normal' again, but I feel I have good control over it now, compared to when I was younger and extremely out of balance.

Before I started meditating and practising mindfulness I used to bump into things all the time. I was constantly covered in bruises from banging into tables, furniture and even doorways. I have lost balance and banged into doorways more times than I can remember. When I am out of balance, it still happens occasionally, but at least now I recognize that I need to slow down, breathe and do some meditation to get back on

track. As a young girl, I just accepted that these weird things were part of me and that was it. I had no idea that there was a better way to live.

The simplest form of single-pointed focus meditation is a breathing exercise. If I have a really stressed student that comes to me for voice issues, the voice won't respond if there is tension somewhere in the body as the breathing pattern will be incorrect and full relaxation can't take place. So, the first thing I do is ask the student to lie down on a yoga mat into the Alexander Semi-Supine position (knees bent, hands over the belly button), and lead him/her through the following basic focused breathing exercise as follows:

- Lay on the floor with knees bent
- Allow your breath to settle by relaxing all your muscles one by one
- Once you feel your body relax you will notice your tummy rising and falling
- Once you can see and feel your tummy rise with the IN breath, breathe in for a count of 3
- Breathe out for a count of 5

- Breathe in for a count of 3
 - Breathe out for a count of 6
 - Breathe in for a count of 3
 - Breathe out for a count of 10
- etc.

There's no need to build too much tension by forcing yourself to hold the outbreath for too long, since this exercise is designed for focus and relaxation only.

After we've done this for a minute or two, I ask what it is they've been thinking about during the exercise. The usual response is "counting", or "nothing".

BINGO! We have achieved our goal of stilling the mind and achieving relaxation and focus!

It's not rocket science, but it takes time, patience and practice, and it's SO hard for some people, that they won't even try it!. But I can tell you from experience that the rewards in life and mind-balance are well worth the effort, and I can't even imagine going back to my old life where I

had chaotic thought processes, was depressed, anxious, moody, unbalanced, and always tired. I have more energy at 50 than I ever had at 20. I was always exhausted, overwhelmed and scatter-brained!

I encourage you to go and buy some books on meditation and mindfulness, and start implementing some practice into your life. I will add some good titles into the resource section at that end of this book.

5. Bodywork

For me, bodywork includes multiple modalities but above all it means “honor and look after your best resource in life – your physical body”.

Thanks to the marvellous machine we have all been gifted, we can run on the beach, play with our kids, make amazing things with our hands, play music, walk through a forest, climb a mountain, and enjoy life to the fullest. The body is a work of art and an incredible machine, and it needs nurturing, respecting and loving every day.

So, if you engage in habits that are not respecting this miracle we have been given, STOP THEM NOW!

Everyone needs exercise, and I don't mean just running after your kids or walking around the office during work hours. Proper exercise requires commitment and focus, and needs to be at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week. If you're not a gym junkie then walk, run, cycle or rollerblade multiple times a week around your neighborhood.

With thousands of programs available on the internet, bad weather is not an excuse to not exercise. I personally prefer a combination of on-line training sessions ("Daily Burn") and walking in the park, rollerblading and bike riding. Due to major back and neck injuries after having been hit by a car in my teens my body can't deal with too much at one time, so I mix it up but never let the pain hold me back. I am grateful for the movement I can do, and I will always commit to doing something.

Yoga is a wonderful practice, and YouTube has great programs for beginners. Even with pain and injuries on a bad day, I can do some yoga, so I believe most people could manage this no matter what their age or fitness level. Just start slowly and patiently, and listen to your body every step of the way. Your mind is strong and will give you the motivation when you need to push through.

For those people who are not well or stressed or unbalanced, bodywork like massage, acupuncture, Rolfing, or Feldenkrais's are great additions to your life/work balance. Two other great tools are massage chairs and Qi Machines which add vibration during their cycles and therefore improve circulation and blood flow when you can't walk too far.

6. Breath Work

Breath work is extremely important and is the foundation of all voice work. Without learning how to use the breath correctly for singing and speaking, the voice simply does not

respond the way it is designed to. Long-term mismanagement of breath will likely lead to many vocal problems during your career, and this is completely avoidable with better education.

Many singing schools and online courses would not agree with the above statement as they place no importance on breathing at all! In fact, I know of two extremely famous online singing courses that do not teach breath management or breath control at all. However, I know from experience that their opinion stems from lack of proper scientific knowledge of the respiratory function, and this lack of knowledge can lead to many physiological and psychological issues.

Many speakers, singers and performers have run into serious trouble with their voice due to their lack of proper breath management training - and I was one of them! In fact, for many decades the tension, stress and physical problems caused by improper breath management nearly ruined my career. My life has completely turned around since I have been properly trained in better breathing and phonation technique thanks to

highly skilled and knowledgeable professors with the proper qualifications, experience and wisdom to teach.

Always ask your teachers about their knowledge source and training, something I regretfully never did in my youth. This is so important – many teachers simply teach what *their* teachers taught *them*, then ride on the back of that older and more successful teacher to carve out a teaching career for themselves, often with very little performance experience themselves.

So, if you need convincing, simply go to YouTube and search for “Respiratory Function” – you’ll find many instructional videos by respected universities that teach the anatomy and physiology of respiration and phonation.

I teach breath work the way that our body was physiologically designed to breathe, and I do not teach anything unnatural or strange. I always begin with the student lying on the floor and getting acquainted with their own natural pattern of breathing-at-rest. This pattern usually allows

the abdominals to rise for one second on the inhalation and lower back down for about 2-3 seconds on the exhalation. All you need to do is sneak in and watch someone sleeping to notice that this happens naturally to all of us, even if we are unconscious.

Correct breathing requires the diaphragm to contract and lower to enable enough room for the lower lungs to expand for a deep, relaxed breath. Once you begin breathing this way, your mind calms down, your thoughts become clear and you will start to feel much more relaxed and balanced.

Some people have said to me, “I can’t breathe like that, it’s impossible!”. This is because they are so tense and stressed that they’re constantly holding their abdominals in tightly, which prevents the diaphragm from descending. Thus, they’re not getting the oxygen they need into their lungs, cells or brain to function optimally.

The neo-cortex at the front of the brain is where we process thoughts and analyse problems.

When we are stressed, or in a state of “fight or flight”, the blood drains away from the thinking process and goes directly to the muscles and organs that help us run and fight, such as the heart and legs. Think about a time when you had to run away from something – a loud noise, a snake, or danger of some kind. We instantly find strength and speed when we need it and react from pure instinct. Remaining in this state will never allow your lungs to operate efficiently.

If you tend to be highly strung or suffer from anxiety and tension issues, then breathing practice is going to change your life completely. I can assure you: if you really want to start living, start paying attention to your breathing.

Once your breathing has calmed and is back to the natural breathing-at-rest pattern, you may then proceed onto the breathing-for-phonation pattern, which is exhaling for a longer period. Kim Chandler’s “Funky and Fun” CD set has some great breath work exercises that can be used just as effectively for speakers as it can for singers. I use the breathing exercises on her CD

for all my speaking clients since we use our phonation/breathing function in the same way whether we are speaking or singing.

During a speech, for example, we take a quick, deep sip of air in and then proceed to talk for 15-30 seconds. Singing pop or contemporary styles is essentially the same: quick sip in of air, then long exhale out during singing. This pattern can be practised and learned, but proper foundational breathing must be taught first before any other training moves forward. Bad habits can set in quickly, and most of us breathe in a way that is most inefficient for professional speaking or singing.

To learn proper breath management, correct vocal fold closure for the task at hand, and correct support during public speaking, presentations and singing performances you will need a lot more information than is contained in this book. The best way to train is to find a one-on-one voice coach, and you are welcome to book in for a session with me personally. See the website below for bookings.

If you prefer learning online, my new Voice Fundamentals course will be released in 2017 and is designed for building the proper foundation for a better, stronger voice for life. The course will soon be available at:

www.HapsVoicePro.com

7. Health and Nutrition

This was a huge part of the puzzle for me when it came to turning my life around. I had a wake-up call at the age of 25 after I had been speaking, singing and performing for a living since the age of 17.

Growing up in the Industry too fast, I fell into many negative behaviors, and ended up smoking, drinking, eating badly and having unhealthy lifestyle habits from a very young age. Late-night dinners, drinking alcohol after performances, talking over loud music, eating on the run, eating heavy meals late at night, not eating for 8 hours at a time, eating fatty foods, many carbs and fried foods, no exercise, no meditation or calming my mind down, and not

getting enough sleep or rest all led to voice abuse, weight gain, illness, and vocal nodules.

During my 20's, I was sick about once a month and on antibiotics 10 or more times per year for various infections and recurring disease states that kept cropping up due to the imbalance. When I lost my voice, I was faced with losing my career and my income. I had to do a complete lifestyle re-set, and so I started on a completely new journey towards health and balance.

I began by researching proper nutrition, eventually completing a degree in Holistic Nutrition. I became much stricter with the way I lived my life and even became an aerobics and fitness instructor to make sure I stayed on track with my own fitness goals. I made healthier food choices, spoke less during the day, listened to my body more and eventually got down to a weight I was happy with. I could finally eliminate all prescription drugs and antibiotics from my life because I was finally able to heal my ailments with natural herbs, foods and naturopathy. I no longer got sick as often, and thankfully all my rashes and

weird symptoms disappeared over time. Now, more than 25 years later, they are all still under control when I stay balanced, rested, healthy and calm.

Nutrition, health and lifestyle choices can make or break your life. I truly believe this. If you are like me and are unlucky enough to have inherited a bunch of allergies and weaknesses throughout the body, you must be even more diligent than the average person. I am sure we all know people who are healthy and strong and rarely get sick, even though they don't look after themselves at all. They may be lucky enough to have strong genes, but I assure you this type of unhealthy behaviour will eventually catch up with them and cause them to take a long hard look at how they're are living their life.

Make the assessments now, before it's too late, and start making solid plans to get YOU to a better health and life balance. You will need an accountability buddy to help you through, so pick someone that is honest with you and will call you on it when you slip up. We all need a

helping hand along the way, so find a partner and get to it.

8. Sharpening the Sword

This is a great phrase taken from Stephen Covey's books and trainings, and it means "work on your skills and gifts".

The way I sharpened the sword as a singer was by learning music theory, basic piano, attending band practice, daily singing scales and attempted new and challenging pieces that were difficult for me to sing. Anything that gets you out of your comfort zone will help you improve your skills.

As a speaker, I would suggest you sharpen the sword and improve your skills with the following:

ACTING CLASSES: This will improve your self-confidence and allow you to access deeper emotions which are an essential part of giving a powerful speech or presentation. Let's face it, you won't make an impact unless you make the audience FEEL something.

IMPROVISATION CLASSES, GAMES AND EXERCISES: This includes attending group lessons with others where you are given exercises in improvisation to complete in front of the class. This requires you to think on your feet, make fast decisions, and improve your communication skills with both your body and your voice.

TOASTMASTERS: This is a great way for new speakers to practice speaking in public in a supportive environment. Toastmasters structure their meetings into levels of competency, and you can make your way through the levels by completing speaking tasks and entering competitions. This helps build skills in speaking, writing speeches, and helps you gain confidence in yourself as a public speaker.

VOICE WORK TRAINING COURSES: It is vitally important to complete a course in Voice Work to make sure you understand how to correctly use your instrument, and to use it to your advantage no matter what the situation. Your voice is the first thing people notice about

you after your appearance, so you really need to be a master at controlling your voice for the task at hand whether it be an on-camera presentation, small group with no microphone, or a large audience of thousands with microphone and sound system.

I have worked in every imaginable situation, and the more the experience and training you have, the more you become comfortable with the great unknown – every speaking engagement will have an element of unknown quantity. When you are trained well, you can deal with anything thrown your way and make it work, even in unusual and uncomfortable circumstances.

TRAIN WITH A PRIVATE VOICE AND PRESENTATION COACH: Sometimes an on-line training course at home may not be enough: you may need the watchful eye and feedback of an expert voice coach. I teach all sorts of people over Skype, and see all manner of strange vocal habits appear even with my clients that have completed an On-Line course. So there is really no substitute for one-on-one coaching.

When you find a coach with experience, training and proper qualifications, he or she should be able to identify any problem quickly, and write out a plan for improvement. Some voice issues are just aesthetic qualities that could do with tweaking to make the sound more international and articulate, while other issues like throat tension and misuse of the voice will take more time and attention to rectify fully.

ATTEND SEMINARS AND WATCH OTHER SPEAKERS: By watching other speakers, both good and bad, you'll gain a better understanding of what works and what doesn't. Very quickly you will notice whether you like the sound of the voice of the speaker along with their physical presentation and appearance. If none of those things annoy you too much, hopefully you will take in the information they are sharing and begin listening to the way they are imparting that information.

So, take note of the following things:

How is their pacing? Their musical tone of voice? Their articulation, their volume, vocal pitch and voice quality? These are all things we need to take into consideration when practicing and performing our speeches, and these elements can make or break a speech.

9. Practice Space

Once you have begun to master all the elements of presenting included above, you'll need to start writing your speech and begin to practice. When you have a few short speeches mapped out, you'll need to find a place to present them to an audience.

A great idea to begin with is to record yourself on video, then watch it back and critique it either alone or with a mentor/voice coach. This way, you can improve your skill as you go and will continually grow as a speaker. Even the top speakers I know watch themselves back on video often to improve their skills even further.

A different idea is to begin speaking at small functions such as business meetup groups, or

volunteer to be a Master of Ceremonies at a local event, or offer to speak at a charity function. There are lots of ways to get involved, but you need to start looking BEFORE you think you are quite ready.

Some people are so perfectionistic that they are their own worst enemy – they’ll always find an excuse for why they are not yet ready. If you book something before you think you’re ready, you’ll force yourself to DO IT! You will not get it right the first time, and I certainly would expect you to make some mistakes, but that’s how you move closer to your goals and improve your skills.

You will NOT gain the confidence by practicing more. It is only by DOING more speeches and presentations in front of a live audience that will help you reach your goals.

10.Scheduling and Planning

I have noticed that when I don’t schedule something into my agenda, no matter how good my intention is, it won’t get done! So, if something is important to you, make an

appointment in your calendar and do it at the allotted time.

Practice needs to be locked in, voice work with your coach needs to be booked, research for your next speech needs to be completed, your blog needs to be updated, live speeches need to be scheduled and video shoots need to be recorded. Then, all this needs to go live to the various social network sites in order for you to move forward in your career or business.

If you really want to speak, then sit down this weekend and spend a few hours planning the next few months and how you are going to move towards your goal. Only YOU are responsible for designing your life. You are in charge, and if you want an amazing life, you must go out and build it! Start now, because life goes by way too fast to waste, and one day you wake up and its almost over. The worst thing I can ever imagine is getting to the end of my life and having regrets about things I wanted to do, but never got around to. Don't let that be you.

So, there you have it. If this seems like a lot to do in order for you to feel more confident, you are right. You will need to overhaul your entire life and start operating day to day in a completely different way. If you start TODAY, you will get there faster and be on your way to living the life of your dreams.

If you are honestly ready to step into confidence and improve your quality of life, you will summon the willpower and determination to do this! I did, and you can too.

PART FOUR:

BRINGING IT ALL
TOGETHER

CHAPTER 1:

**STAGE PRESENCE: PLAYING
THE GAME**

I honestly thought my friend Rachael was wrong when she said to me, “Fake it ‘till you make it!” That was her reply when I complained about the lack of confidence I had when I was younger. I was convinced I wanted to be real, to be fabulous and to have confidence oozing from every cell like other performers that I admired so much. I didn’t agree that you should ‘pretend’ to be something that you are not.

There were a lot of things I ‘knew’ and had learned from reading personal growth books in my twenties, but I certainly was not yet living them or integrating the principles into my life as

a performer. I was stuck in a rut of my own making and desperate to get out, or give up. There were many times when my personal growth failures were so painful that quitting performing for good seemed like the only option – that, or jumping off a bridge. Luckily for me, I am too stubborn and determined, and valued life too much to let any of that happen.

Decades after my wise friend told me “Fake it ‘till you make it”, I finally got it. It took me 30 years to fully understand. This book is dedicated to those people who are much younger than I am and who have a chance to grasp this sooner than I did. If that’s you, thank God, I reached you early enough to make a change.

In case you’re experiencing now what I was going through back then, here’s what the phrase now means to me:

Take action and step into the character that you want to become. This stretches the muscles of the mind, body, and personality, and helps you

practice to become the person you are meant to be. And I can tell you, it actually works!

I don't believe that anyone in this world needs to be shy or insecure. What does that achieve? I wasted so many years believing this was truly who I was, that I missed many opportunities by being too cautious. That was the story of my life. However, this part of my personal growth journey also brought me to where I am today. As a child, I was extremely shy, insecure and hurting all the time, and it was so painful to be trapped in that limited side of my personality. I am so grateful for the journey and for growing out of that part of me that kept me captive from being my true self.

If you are an adult, you can make your own decisions and pave your own way in the world: there is no reason to stay trapped in a personality that you don't want.

So, what do you do to change it?

I believe we are all born with inherent character traits, and while genetics certainly tend

to guide parts of us strongly our family conditioning, culture and circumstances during childhood also affect our personality enormously. If that's the case with you, if you have developed shyness, insecurities and lack of confidence due to trauma, PTSD, or sexual or physical abuse then that is another book entirely. I, however, have personally suffered through all those things but have managed to piece my life back together through dedicated personal growth work, and now I feel truly whole, fulfilled and at peace with myself. I did this without the assistance of drugs or medications and with minimal counselling. It took time and dedication, but I did it. So, you can too.

Mostly though, when it comes to wanting to be confident, a lot of people believe that they are just shy by genetic disposition, by birth, and that's the way it is and will always be. I agree that genetics plays a part, but I don't agree with having to stay stuck in shyness. Everyone can change - it's a choice we make.

CHAPTER 2:

CHARACTER ACTOR: DIFFERENT HATS

Every person has multiple facets to their personality, and that is the very reason actors can do what they do. They can take a part of their personality and ramp it up for a specific role requiring that particular emotion or quality. It is a learned skill, and it takes actors many years of dedicated practice to fine-tune it and have it available whenever it is needed. The thing I most admire about actors is their dedication to their craft and growth by continually taking classes, even when they are famous and busy working on film projects.

The action you as a speaker can take, is similar to that of an actor: you need to identify the parts of your personality that you wish to ramp up, and give yourself the opportunity to flex that personality trait. It's just like any other form of exercise: it may be hard at first, but it does get easier over time.

Actors do certain types of exercises in classes with each other through script reads and improvisation games, and also on set during film work or stage shows. The problem with shy people is that we tend to shy away from confrontation and situations that make us feel uncomfortable. I hear often from my clients, "I could never be an actor", but that is exactly what you need to be sometimes. You must become proficient in changing hats/changing emotions whenever you need.

A great speaker, like a great actor, can make the audience feel an array of emotions during the duration of their speech. They can take us from feeling curious, to surprised, invigorated or uplifted, then to sad or filled with empathy. If a

skilled speaker is telling a heartfelt story, he will guide you through the emotions he wants you to feel for him to convey his message effectively – to learn something, to sell something, or both.

You only need to observe and take notes on a few top speakers to realize they are masters at persuasion, manipulation and entrainment. They know how to make us react and feel, and they do it en-masse. Their skill is like that of a famous enigmatic rock band or an evangelical Minister leading a church: the whole room feels electric and engaged and the crowd sings, sways, dances and claps simultaneously, as one.

It is a magical gift to be able to affect so many people with just one voice. It takes practice, but can be done by anyone willing to learn how.

CHAPTER 3:

MILKING IT STAGE PRESENCE OF THE STARS

When I was singing on luxury cruise ships and sailing all around the world, I was fortunate enough to watch many other speakers and performers at their best. I would watch from the back of the theatre and take notes on everything from the flow of the show, to the lighting and sound cues, topic of choice, story-telling and emotional curve. What surprised me the most was the obvious way the performer ‘milked’ the big emotional moments for maximum effect. I will give you examples from both speakers and singers to illustrate my point.

The singer was doing all the old-school hits that were perfect for the type of audience we had that night - older, sentimental people. I personally thought the songs were too overdone and obvious and was bored by the whole show, but then I was also a good 20-30 years younger than the average age of the crowd. The performer told us stories of his grandma and shared how much she had meant to him. He then took us through the emotions of sympathy, empathy, sorrow and loss as he weaved his tale and then launched into his “Grandma’s favorite song. ‘Danny Boy’.”

Later in the show he recalled a story on how inspired he was by someone and how it led him to become a singer and performer overcoming some great obstacle, and then launched into some uplifting sing-along type song that had the audience on their feet in the end. On the last big high note, he stood there with arms outstretched above his head, revelling in the glory and magic of the final moment as though he had just completed some huge Olympic feat. He kept this

posture for just a little too long, and it kept the audience clapping and engaged. This my friends, is called “Milking It”!

Another trick a Musical Theatre friend of mine from the West End in London does is this: During the bows, he’ll walk all the way past every audience member in the front row with hands outstretched towards them as he sweeps across the front of the stage. This walk takes more time than a regular bow, milks the audience reaction even further and encourages them to keep clapping. This usually results in a standing ovation, which is every performers’ end-goal. That’s the Gold Medal for all performers. That is playing the game and milking it for all its worth.

Many motivational speakers work in a similar manner, and it’s popular these days to be trained in hypnotherapy and NLP. Motivational speakers use these skills to their advantage, and I have watched many experienced speakers navigate their way through multiple stories with full emotion beautifully matched to each story. Some of them are so raw, so real, they touch your heart, and it is very common to have audience

members brought to tears by feeling strong empathy and connection to the person telling the tale. This of course is exactly what the speaker wants.

We must remember, though, that this is not the first time that the speaker has told that particular story. The speaker, just like an actor, needs to become very skilful in crafting the story well and repeating it every time he gives his speech, all with the same emotional engagement. Anyone who has a sad story will know that the story runs out of emotional juice after it has been relayed many times. However, the speaker's job is to call up that emotional juice each time, and make the audience feel something!

Emotional impact is KEY for all speakers, actors, and singers for that matter as well. Speakers can lift their audience to another emotional level by sharing with them the catalyst that caused them to make a change. Something "made them snap", or made them become determined to succeed "no matter what", and this moment in the speech is the catalyst to bring the

audience on the path to becoming excited for new possibilities and ready to make a change.

These types of speakers are true masters at their game, and Tony Robbins is the master of all masters. He is real, he is caring, and he feels the emotion every time, and he makes you feel those emotions right along with him. He changes lives and makes a huge impact on the world, and many other speakers are doing the same. They are real, authentic speakers and coaches that know how to make people instigate a change in their lives. If you want to learn how to speak and coach in a bigger arena, watch and learn from others and take notes.

Now, please don't think I am cold and calculating because I am the "wizard who has just drawn back the curtain". I have great admiration for these types of professionals, and spend a lot of time and money attending events and workshops to learn and educate myself even further. I truly appreciate their skill in the game of life and their dedication to helping others. But, I also know that any of us can learn this - with time, patience and commitment.

CHAPTER 4:

AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

Just because a professional actor or speaker can call up any emotion that is right for the moment, doesn't mean it is disingenuous or fake. When I am acting and doing a scene on camera for a TV Commercial or film shoot, I call up the emotion I need for the task at hand by delving into my past and recalling a feeling or situation that is similar to the one I am playing at the time. When speaking, the situation or story you are recalling is actually real, and therefore you can easily access the emotion from your own experience and share that with the audience as honestly as possible.

Keep in mind, though, that when speaking your goal is not normally to make your audience

feel uncomfortable or sorry for you. You'll need to practice presenting stories with enough light and shade to encourage some emotion, but not so much that the audience gets embarrassed for you. When recalling a horrible past event, for example, some speakers work to make light of the situation to ease the tension for the audience.

The main thing I can't hit home enough is this: you need to learn to be yourself and just be authentic. As simple as this sounds to some, I am constantly surprised to see people rehearse and polish their speeches too much so that when they deliver them in public, it comes across as fake and plastic instead of authentic. It feels to me as though they are hiding behind some mask or shield that they have built for themselves and their real self is not allowed to shine through. If someone can't allow themselves to just be authentic, it tells me immediately that they have a lot of personal growth work to do! There is nothing wrong with being you. People LOVE it when you can be real and just be yourself. It really

can help and inspire others and that's what life is all about – especially a speaker's life.

If you have issues, worries and hang-ups that you don't want to expose and feel you can't be your “true” self, I want to share with you something important: your shadow and those negative traits are NOT the real you. They are layers of baggage that you have built up around yourself to protect your heart from being hurt, and once you learn more and grow more, you won't need them anymore.

If you truly want to be authentic and you are willing to let the real you shine, you need to start the 10 steps today and weave them into your daily life, forever. Following the 10 steps can change everything and will reveal to you how much control we really have over ourselves, our mind and the way we operate in the world. It's time to design the life you want – so what are you waiting for?

CHAPTER 5:

HAND-HELD MICROPHONES FOR SPEAKING AND SINGING

If you are a public speaker or presenter, chances are you'll be provided a microphone for your speech and it will be monitored by the sound engineer in the room. Most of the time this will be the situation, so the only thing you'll need to be concerned about, is how you will use the microphone whilst on stage.

In the rare case that you are required to bring a microphone to an event, there are a couple of reasonably-priced microphones that are suitable for all speakers. The most popular types of microphone for speakers will either be hand-held, or clip-on Lavalier microphones.

The hand-held type will probably be a “dynamic” microphone, resistant to moisture and often used by singers. The list of microphones below is mostly dynamic.

- SHURE SM58: This is your standard rock and roll microphone, and is very hardy. It can take a lot of beating, and it’s a great mic that will last for years. A sensible idea is to carry around a few different microphone cables with you, one with a three-pronged (“XLR”) end and one with a ¼ inch jack end, just in case the amplification system has one or the other type of input.
- SHURE SM57: This is durable and reliable, and keeps a consistent sound quality. It captures vocals with a natural sound and is equally good in the studio and on the stage. Even past U.S. Presidents have used this mic for speeches.

- SHURE PGXD24/SM58 DIGITAL WIRELESS SYSTEM: This combines the popular SM58 with a wireless transmitter and receiver, which is great for speaking and singing on stage with no cable getting in the way. There are copy-cat versions which work fine as well, but they may not give you the warmth of sound the SM58 gives.

If you would like to purchase a clip-on Lavalier microphone, please see the resource section for more information.

CHAPTER 6:

DO'S AND DON'TS OF MICROPHONE TECHNIQUE

- DON'T ever blow directly into a microphone to see if it is working. It can damage the microphone and makes you look like an amateur. Nothing will annoy the sound tech. more than this!
- DO speak into the microphone at sound check with a normal speaking voice. Say “check one, check two” etc., or introduce yourself and recite some of your speech, or a poem. Just speak normally. There’s no need to shout, unless you are going to shout during your presentation – in that case, alert the sound tech. that there will be

large changes in volume due to speaking dynamics. He will adjust the levels accordingly.

- DONT spit into the microphone, and keep your mouth off the surface. Excess moisture can damage the microphone, and having your mouth too close may distort the sound. If distortion occurs, the sound technician cannot help you regulate the sound as you are simply using the microphone incorrectly as it's impossible to stop distortion after the fact.
- DO keep your mouth at least one to two inches away from the head of a hand-held microphone.
- DON'T wave the microphone around as though you are a Bishop blessing his flock or as though it's some sort of hideous lollipop you hate the taste of. You must get used to having it close to your face. Practice is key.
- DO hold the microphone as an extension of your own arm, and practice moving your

face with the microphone following closely. Pretend that the microphone is attached by an invisible wire to your lips so everywhere your lips go, the mic follows.

- DON'T hold the microphone cable in your free hand or wrap it around your hand when presenting. Let the cable hang freely, and just be aware of it as you move around the stage, so you don't trip. Let your free arm be free to express and do other things rather than tightly hold onto a cable. Doing this makes you look nervous.
- DON'T point a microphone towards a speaker or fold-back monitor, on stage or off stage. Be aware of all the loudspeakers around you, and keep the microphone faced in the opposite direction. Pointing the microphone at a loudspeaker will cause a squealing feedback sound which is extremely disturbing for the listeners. It will absolutely annoy the sound tech. and show your lack of experience.

- DO tell the sound technician if there is a high pitch ringing sound on stage that comes and goes during your speech, even when you are away from the monitors on stage. This means the gain is set too high, and needs to be adjusted.
- DO hold the microphone up closely to the face so that the sound tech. doesn't need to set the gain too high, which may also be the reason you are getting the ringing sound mentioned above.
- DO practice saying your "P's" as conservatively as possible so you don't make large explosive popping sounds into the microphone. Some mics are more sensitive than others, and you may not know which one you have until you say a sentence with lots of plosives. "P's" without the plosive are easy to say, but it takes some practice. Try approaching a "P" with a similar softness to a "B", and you will have mastered it in no time.

- DO walk on stage and own the space. Never make apologies in your posture that show insecurity or nervousness. It doesn't do you or the audience any favors. At home, practice walking onto the performance space with confidence, authority and with your back straight and your chest open.

CHAPTER 7:

FOOD CONSUMPTION: DO'S & DON'TS BEFORE A PRESENTATION

What you eat and drink before a speech or presentation can have a great impact on your vocal ability. Excess mucous production can negatively impact the function of the vocal folds as they move. When we begin speaking, the vocal folds move into a regular, fast mucosal wave and continually close and open many times per second.

When we have mucous getting in the way, the sound can be completely stopped and make us sound croaky. We are then required to loudly clear our throat before we can continue speaking.

This is extremely annoying for the speaker, and equally annoying for the audience.

To keep mucous to a minimum, I suggest the following preparation and precautions before speaking:

- DO warm up your voice properly before you speak, for at least 5-10 minutes. Use proper warm-up exercises designed for speakers, and do some body warm-ups and stretches before you walk on stage as well. A warm body is a ready body.
- DO hydrate properly before you speak, at least two hours beforehand. Drinking water on stage constantly is like crying over spilt milk: it's too late to hydrate once you are already speaking.
- DON'T rely on that glass of water on the stage to magically make you hydrated. However, if drinking water makes your throat feel more calm and soothed, or if nerves are making your throat area dry, then tiny sips are enough.

- DON'T eat dairy prior to speaking, like cheese sandwiches, toasties, melts, ice-cream, or yogurt. For most people, dairy causes excess mucous production, and it's not a great pre-show food.
- DO choose good quality proteins and vegetables that are clean and fresh. No rich sauces or heavy foods before a show.
- DON'T eat right before you walk on stage. You will feel full and uncomfortable, and you'll have difficulty speaking while your body is busy digesting. Eat a balanced meal at least an hour before you perform or present.
- DON'T consume sodas, sugary, or fizzy drinks before you speak as they can be "gluggy" and cause stickiness and mucous in the throat area.
- DON'T drink alcohol before you speak. It dehydrates you quickly, and you need to make sure you replace every glass of alcohol

with a glass of still water in order to rehydrate again.

- DO drink warm herbal teas to soothe the throat area and keep you warm and relaxed. Make sure they are non-caffeinated so as not to cause dryness or dehydration.
- DO avoid speaking if you are sick, but only if you're really sick. You don't have to cancel engagements as a rule, and most people can hydrate, steam, rest, and get through a couple of hours of speaking with careful, proper vocal preparation.
- DON'T try and speak if you are seriously ill with a chest infection or laryngitis. Sometimes when the vocal folds and airways are swollen, infected and inflamed you need to rest them. If you do need to cancel a presentation, try to have a speaker friend on call so you can offer your client a replacement solution at short notice. They

will be grateful for it and know that you have not let them down.

- DON'T take medications that cause vocal dryness just before you speak. If you are suffering from hay fever, for example, and need to take an antihistamine, wait until after the presentation to take it, if you can. These types of medications are designed to dry up mucous, and the lining of the vocal folds are made with a light coating of mucosal lubricant. Antihistamines strip the body of the lubricant, and while taking these medications you may experience more croakiness, dryness and a husky sound.

Note that some medications may always cause dryness, and even lead to voice loss at times. Asthma inhalers are known for this type of side-effect, but if you are an asthmatic you must follow your Doctor's instructions so you stay healthy and alive. I certainly do not recommend stopping life-saving meds for the sake of public speaking.

As a life-long asthmatic, I personally have been able to control my asthma to a large degree with meditation, calm thinking, mindfulness, steam inhalation, herbs and immune system support. I now only take inhalers when I absolutely need them. In the past, though, when I was more stressed and less balanced, I had to take them much more often, and when I attempted to sing during performance it was not a great experience: my voice does not respond in its normal way after inhaling all those steroids. It is quite common to have voice inconsistencies when taking steroid inhalants.

This can be really challenging for actors, singers and speakers that suffer from asthma, so please consult your MD and asthma specialist to try different versions of inhalers. I am sure you can find one that interferes the least with your vocal sound and presentation commitments.

If you have these sorts of respiratory problems and you are also a singer or speaker, please consult your Doctor or specialist for advice on the best solution for your situation.

CONCLUSION

I hope you have enjoyed this book, and have gained some valuable insight into how you can take more control over your life and your voice.

I honestly believe in the phrase I coined, “Change your Voice, Change your Life”. Working on building my instrument and improving my vocal skills has certainly been a positive life-change for me, and being on a continual personal growth journey has only improved my voice along the way.

There are many speakers and singers of a similar age to me that are suffering from voice loss and loss of functionality to some degree, and they tend to blame it on their ‘old age’. I don’t think that is the issue at all. I fully believe it is due to

their life style habits and choices, which have led to deterioration of their voice. There is certainly no reason we should lose our voice with age if we have kept ourselves in good health, taken care of our instrument and nourished our bodies well.

I have seen and heard many singers and speakers speak and perform with clarity and power, well into their old age, so there is no reason we can't do the same! Start now!

Change your Voice, and it will Change your Life.

RESOURCES

- Hypnotherapy Tracks for anxiety
www.liberationinmind.com
- Voice exercises for singers:
www.funkynfun.com
- Voice exercises for speakers:
Elisa James Voice Fundamentals and Voice
Foundation series:
www.HapsVoicePro.com
- Warm-Up exercises before a speech:
Elisa James HapsVoicePro and Voice Gym
on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJhY1juvfZb5-57K5TY119A>

- Videos on vocal fold function:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2okeYVclQo>
- Accent method training for breath function:
Dr. Ron Morris
<https://www.amazon.com/If-Doubt-Breathe-Out-Breathing/dp/1909082163>
- Confidence on camera
Media training for aspiring speakers and presenters
www.HapsVoicePro.com
- Meditation tracks:
A great app I use is “Insight Timer” and has multiple tracks of varying lengths for beginners to advanced.
- Unity Church | The Temple on the Plaza
YouTube channel with wonderful uplifting services recorded each week.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/unitytempleplaza>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elisa James is an internationally-renowned Holistic Vocal Coach and has given workshops and private sessions to clients in Australia, Europe and America for more than 20 years. A seasoned professional entertainer with a career spanning more than three decades world-wide, Elisa shares her vast experience and vocal expertise with her students all around the world.

Elisa's unique HAPS™ Program synergistically combines performing arts techniques with voice science and holistic practices. Elisa holds a Master's Degree in Holistic Health and Counselling, EVTS Levels 1 and 2 in vocal physiology and a Master's Degree in Vocal Pedagogy. This body of work together with

personal experience and decades of research,
aided Elisa in developing her HAPS™ Programs
– *The Holistic Approach to Public Speaking and
Singing.*

www.HapsVoicePro.com