

THE POWER OF VOICE!

USING VOCALICS TO INFLUENCE AND PERSUADE

RUTH'S TRUTHS

Vocalics refer to the way we use our voices to convey meaning. Also known as paralanguage, it involves tone, volume, expression (inflection, modulation), pitch, volume, rate, pausing and silence.

1. Your voice is a unique and one-of-a-kind way to connect with your audience.
2. Vocal production consists of 3 overall parts: **Tone**, **Breath** and **Rhythm**.
3. **Tone** refers to how your voice sounds.
4. Vocal **tone** sounds different to you than it does to others.
5. **Variety** is the ability to adjust and modify your pitch within sentences, phrases and even single words. It's what gives your words *meaning*.
6. **Variety** is completely dependent on the passion you feel for your topic. The more passion, the more vocal variety.
7. Avoid the "corporate monotone." It is common, virulently contagious and guaranteed to put people to sleep. *It is the opposite of vocal variety.*
8. **Resonance** refers to the quality of your tone. A resonant voice can be described as rich, ringing, booming, round, warm or all of these things.
9. **Resonance** makes it easier to find your Optimum Pitch Level (OPL).
10. Your OPL should be comfortable and never feel strained.
11. Your HPL (Habitual Pitch Level) may not be your OPL.
12. A too-high, too-nasal HPL is common today, so *beware*.
13. Proper **breath** support gives your voice power and energy, which allow you to **project**.
14. **Projection** is about vocal energy and intensity, not volume.
15. **Rhythm** refers to the "percussive" aspects of speech such as your rate, pace and articulation (aka diction) and heavily influences comprehensibility.
16. Accents and dialects are problems **ONLY** if they make it difficult for your audiences to understand what you are saying—thus, your message—thus, your ability to connect.
17. Rate and pace have to be adapted to your audience. Change just enough to enhance connectivity.
18. **Record** your voice and **LISTEN** so you can hear yourself as others hear you. Shakespeare monologues and the daily newspapers are both good resources for reading aloud.
19. Damage can occur, but usually heals easily **IF YOU TAKE CARE OF IT**. Stay in tune with your voice, particularly the way it feels physically.
20. Keep your voice lubricated. Water is best.

BREATHING EXERCISES

1. Bring your hands to the level of the bottom of your rib cage. Position them so they are directly one over the other, palms facing, elbows out to the sides.
2. Hook your fingers (minus the thumbs) together and pull but do not let go. You should feel the pull in your shoulders, upper arms and upper chest wall.
3. As you pull, take two or three deep breaths, very slowly. Take a few more and look down. You should see your abdomen expanding and contracting. Concentrate on keeping your shoulders steady. Do not allow them to rise with each breath.
4. Now, take a deep breath and exhale, this time saying "ah...." Stay on the "ah" for 5 seconds. Then repeat and hold it for 10 seconds, then for 15. Finally, breathe and say "ah" for as long as you can. You should feel a strong contraction in your abdomen as you run out of breath. Relax.