

# Power Tips for Improving Vocal Variety

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Learning how to take advantage of the full range of vocal expressions will bring added power to your speech and greater enjoyment to your audience. There are three powerful techniques that can greatly enhance your vocal variety: speaking with emotion, improving your voice quality, and articulating your words. These can add power and persuasion to your speech and will keep your audience attentive.

## **Speak With Emotion**

To illustrate the power of speaking with emotion, record yourself reading a favorite poem or speech. The first time, speak in a monotone, with no feeling. The second time, read with feeling and enthusiasm. The difference between the two recordings makes it sound like you are hearing two entirely different messages. When you speak with feeling, your mind "feels" the weight of each word and automatically instructs your vocal muscles, breath, facial expression, and tongue and mouth muscles to perform according to that feeling. The result is vocal quality consistent with the depth of feeling you are trying to convey. This fundamental precept of vocal variety is rooted less in technique and more in allowing your heart, mind, and body flow in sync, producing powerful and natural vocal variety.

One way to develop this skill in an enjoyable way is to read children's stories out loud to a child. If you don't have a little child to read to, you may find opportunities such as reading at libraries for children's story time. The key is to read out loud while throwing yourself into the emotions of the storyline. Your listeners will love it and so will you...and the bonus is that your skill in vocal variety will improve!

## **Vocal Quality**

Think of your voice as a muscle, which, like any other, needs exercise to improve tone and increase strength. When properly done, vocal exercises increase the quality and tone of your voice. Here are simple and significant ways that you can improve your voice quality.

- Read poems out loud and record them. Listen to the recording, and then reread the poem, attempting to improve the quality of your voice tone. Let the recorder be an unbiased evaluator of your progress.
- Join a choir. Regular singing practice will make your vocal muscles stronger and limber, and will enrich the tone of your voice.
- Breathe naturally. This means using the muscles of your diaphragm, not the muscles of your shoulders. Your stomach should move out when you breathe in, and will move in when you breathe out. This is the process of natural breathing, and helps improve the resonance of your voice.

## **Articulation**

Crisply pronouncing each word you speak adds enormously to the overall effect of your vocal variety and the listening pleasure of your audience. Good articulation also causes your voice to be projected further. How do you improve your enunciation and articulation? Here are a few things you can do very easily:

- When you speak, sound out every part of every word, including the endings.
- Complete every sentence before starting on the next sentence.
- Try this speed reading exercise. Pick a passage of a speech or an article to read. Face a mirror and read the passage out fast while enunciating every word and watching your face. Now increase the speed of reading. Make sure that you sound out every word completely as you

gradually increase your reading rate. You will see that the faster you read, in order to properly sound out the words, your mouth and facial muscles have to work extra hard. The only danger here is that when you see your facial contortions you might burst out laughing! Now go back to your normal speeding rate. You will discover that your words come out crisply and distinctly. Enjoy the sound! Now make it a habit to speak crisply and clearly.

Your voice has a power of its own when it has pleasing quality, natural variety, and crispness of delivery. This voice can be yours. Practice the exercises I've described above. Your voice can become one of your best advertisements.

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