
Tools for effective trade union verbal communication

—
Romeo Alavi Kia

european trade union institute

The present script is intended for the further vocational training of members of the European Trade Union Institute. It is subject to copyright law and may not be copied or passed on to third parties. Exceptions require the prior authorization of the Institut für Integratives Stimmtraining®

Brussels, 2015
© Publisher: ETUI aisbl, Brussels
All rights reserved
Print: ETUI Printshop, Brussels



The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication.

Contents

Why this manual.....	5
Introduction.....	7
1. Voice analysis.....	9
2. The 7 components of a commanding voice	13
3. The breathing	15
3.1 Mechanics of breathing.....	16
3.2 The model of breathing types.....	16
3.3 How to identify your breathing type.....	18
3.4 Breathing exercise for in-breathers	18
3.5 Breathing exercise for out-breathers.....	19
4. Preparatory muscle training: yawning – widening of the pharynx	21
5. Discovering your voice.....	22
6. Phonation – application of the voice	23
6.1 Voice application for the out-breather type.....	23
6.2 Voice application for the in-breather type.....	24
7. Preparatory muscle training: relaxation of the mandible.....	25
8. Speaking with a wide or narrow pharynx.....	26
9. Lip-spluttering – riding an imaginary motorbike	27
10. Resonance and directional humming.....	28
11. Nasality in speech	30
12. Muscular training to prepare for articulation	31
12.1 Preparation.....	31
Exercise 1: Grabbing spaghetti with the lips	31
Exercise 2: Tongue-tied opening of the jaws	32
Exercise 3: Stretching the lingual frenulum	32
Exercise 4: Monkey mouth or tongue in cheek	32

Exercise 5: Tongue-tied speech – “Liftel language” – “Liftel language”	32
Exercise 6: Stretching the posterior tongue region	33
Exercise 7: Speaking with a stretched tongue – “Monkey language”	33
12.2 Tongue Twisters	33
12.3 Here you find some more	36
13. Mastering live presentations	38
13.1 Stress management	38
13.2 The feeling of losing ground contact	39
13.3 The feeling of losing room presence	40
13.4 Shortness of breath due to relative immobility of the diaphragm	41
13.5 Globus sensation in the throat, prompting compulsion to swallow	42
13.6 Unpleasant feeling of dryness in the mouth and throat	43
13.7 Increased mucus production, prompting throat-clearing	43
13.8 Thin or weak voice, that has no body connection	44
13.9 Checklist for presentations	45
13.10 Speech errors and pitfalls of public speaking	46

Why this manual

Communication is increasingly important in today's media society. There is a huge amount of available resources; however, nothing can replace human contact and interpersonal communication. The voice is the communication privileged instrument.

The voice is used every day in verbal communication and is essential for expressing ideas, positions, and proposals. It makes them clear and understood by different audiences.

Through the voice (and the whole body), we can explain and convince, clarify and mobilise. We can defend our positions and tackle others. Through the voice, we can reinforce our motives by instilling enough emotional resonance.

Being in control of our voice in stressful situations, such as assemblies, demonstrations or negotiations enhance the work and actions of trade unionists.

In February 2015, the ETUI Education Department organised a training on verbal communication for members of the ETUC Youth Committee. The course was delivered in partnership with the Austrian ÖGB and AK, who gained significant training experience in this field thanks to their cooperation with the Institut für Integratives Stimmtraining. The experience on the qualification of the Austrian trade unionists was taken into account.

The participants highly appreciated the course and found it very useful. Therefore, ETUI has decided to edit this manual and present a set of tools and practical exercises Trade Unionists can apply to improve their communication skills.

Ulisses Garrido, Director of the Education Department, ETUI

Author's note:

When the masculine form is used in the following text, it also includes the feminine form. To facilitate readability, we have refrained from using the gender-neutral form throughout this text.

Introduction

The voice is the essential instrument with regard to communication and interaction in the human sphere. In everyday private and working life, we depend on the functioning of our voice. After all, almost 40 per cent of the impression a speaker makes on his audience is determined by the sound of his voice. It is not so much the content that the audience remembers, but the atmosphere a lecturer creates through his voice. This energy is immediately transmitted to the audience and is the reason for either acceptance or rejection. Of the content, as surveys have shown, only about seven per cent stays in the memory of the public.

My voice is my business card!

Every emotional impulse finds its way into the voice. Joy and enthusiasm will be audible in a voice just as anger, rage, or disappointment will. Whether we want to or not, whether we are aware of it or not, doesn't change the fact that the voice is a mirror of our innermost processes. In a manner of speaking, it is our acoustic business card. It is by our voice that we communicate our sensitivities to the world, and also our attitude towards life, work and ultimately ourselves. It is audible whether a man is "at peace" with himself. Someone whose voice expresses this energy will radiate a natural authority, to which others in his surroundings will respond with a sense of calmness and openness.

It's not what you say but the way that you say it

A profession in a role which involves public speaking routinely provides an opportunity to observe the effects which are created by the sound of the voice. "The sound makes the music" or, "it is not what you say but the way that you say it," as the saying goes. If speakers want to be impressive, lending urgency or emphasis to their statements, this may produce pressure on their voice. The voice then sounds hard or even cutting. This vocal pressure is perceived by the listener and interpreted as personal pressure. In response to this situation, either a counter-pressure will be experienced, or the interlocutor will respond evasively. In both cases it will be difficult, if at all, to reach a consensus.

If you wish to be convincing in a presentation or reach agreements, solutions or solution approaches in a discussion, the essential prerequisites are:

1. Vocal assertiveness
2. Natural respiratory flow
3. Personal balance
4. Openness towards the partner, the partners or the audience

It is essential for any speaker to concern himself with the deeper aspects of his voice. Therefore, the following questions shall be treated in this document:

1. How does breathing work?
2. How does voice function?
3. How do breathing and voice react to influences from the environment?
4. What is the impression I give through my voice?
5. How satisfied am I with my voice?
6. How can I develop my voice?
7. How can I radiate vocal assurance and authenticity?
8. How can I care for and maintain my voice?
9. How can I attain vocal assurance even in stress situations?
10. What can I do when the voice happens to be “off-key”?

This training is exclusively about the work with speakers, both male and female. As an expert for Integratives Stimmtraining®, I am concerned with the voices of singers and speakers as well as the performance optimization of instrumentalists. So, working with the speaking voice is only a small part of the diversity of my work.

The material compiled here offers suggestions for dealing with the speaking voice, and the techniques presented are based on experience from working with speakers from various professional groups. In my long practice as a voice coach for actors, journalists, radio and television presenters, managers, seminar leaders, ministers and pastors, waiters, works council and staff representatives, etc., the tools of Integratives Stimmtraining® have proven successful in many ways. It goes without saying that the results of my research and practical application will further evolve in the future. We never stop learning!

Bad Vöslau, January 2015



1. Voice analysis

Especially at the start of voice training with speakers, it is essential to get an impression of the voice using a voice analysis. For this purpose, the following voice analysis sheet can be of assistance and a valuable tool for suggestions. Let your student fill in the following check-list and you will get an impression of his self-assessment and the initial situation for the upcoming training. It also serves to track the progress of the training of past analyses more easily.

The questionnaire:

Part A I have had the following experiences with my voice when dealing with other people:

Rating scale of 0 (does not apply at all) to 6 (definitely applies)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
People often ask me to repeat what I said							
I have been told a few times or often that my voice is in need of improvement							
I have the feeling that I have to make an effort when I use my voice							
Especially in a noisy environment, I am hard to understand							
When I speak in a noisy environment or have to talk loud, I soon get hoarse							
My voice loses assurance when I have to speak before a group							
My voice loses assurance when addressing people I don't know, especially with representatives of the opposite sex							
I try to change my voice to make it sound different							
I am less sociable because I believe I have a voice problem							
I get out of breath when speaking							
My voice is also a constraint in my profession							

Part B Voice characteristics perceived as positive – I feel my voice is as follows:

Rating scale of 0 (does not apply at all) to 6 (definitely applies)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pleasant, mellifluous and relaxed							
calm, relaxed							
convincing, credible							
sonorous (i.e. not thin)							
loud, strong							
clear and distinct							
normal speech tempo							

My breathing is in a positive sense	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
deep and calm when I am relaxed							
also deep and calm when I am under stress							

My posture is in a positive sense	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
generally straight, upright, relaxed							
tense in stress situations							

Part C Voice characteristics perceived as negative – I feel my voice is as follows::

Rating scale of 0 (does not apply at all) to 6 (definitely applies)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
monotonous							
sounds strained (voice pitch too high)							
insecure, thin							
indistinct, mumbling							
too fast or too slow pace of speech							
too soft							
hoarse, rough, husky							
many "uhm"s and self-conscious throat-clearing							
voice breaks or starts stuttering							

My breathing is in a negative sense	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I chest-breathe in stress situations							
- chest-breathe in normal situations too							

My posture is in a negative sense	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
too flaccid, hunched or tense							
mostly unrelaxed in stress situations							

Part D Other characteristics of my voice

Write down other characteristics of your voice you have noticed in the past. Is there something you like in particular, or do you detect weaknesses you would like to work on?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

For an actual-state analysis of the voice, it can also be helpful to have other people evaluate one's voice. This will make it easier to establish a personal, clear snapshot of the voice's current performance. It is also useful to perform a second voice test after a certain period of training. This enables comparison with a previous analysis and a better progress check.

2. The 7 components of a commanding voice

The authority and associated power of persuasion of a voice are based in the natural interaction of all components. No matter which aspect we address first, the impact will always be heard and felt within the overall image of the voice. Our feelings and inner state are primarily conveyed through our voice and body language:

- A vibrant and multi-faceted voice with clear pronunciation demonstrably activates the circulation of the listener; it puts him in an alert and attentive mental condition. Conversely, a monotonous and lifeless voice causes a lethargic and soporific mood in the listener. An indistinct and mumbling voice makes the audience restless and can actually result in aggression.
- A harassed voice, conditioned by shallow, nervous breathing (chest breathing), also blocks the breathing of the audience. This may cause great discomfort among those present.
- A positive attitude also spreads through the voice, the audience feels at ease.
- On the private, interpersonal level and in seduction, a pleasant and erotic voice directly touches the soul and the heart. Such a tone of voice conveys intimacy and trust - the best preconditions for well-being and physical proximity. A powerful voice conveys to others prevalent self-confidence, also a requirement for a successful get-together of the sexes. The fact that the male voice is in fact an essential element of seduction was also found in experiments: young women assessed the degree of attractiveness of men in a field trial of the Max-Planck Institute in Seewiesen near Munich. Result: the men's voices were more important to these women than their appearance.
- In everyday and professional environments, the first impression of a voice often decides about like or dislike and thus about success or failure of a conversation. A good voice conveys authority, clout, credibility and competence. Unpleasant voices are perceived as dubious, incompetent, and not confidence-building.

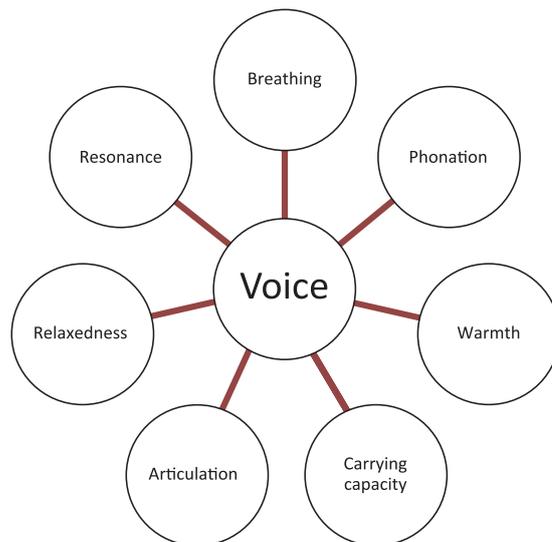
Numerous scientific studies (e.g. by Professor Albert Mehrabian; Speech effectiveness researchers Hartwig Eckert; John Laver; Test GEO magazine) demonstrate the essential effect the voice has.

Our impression on others / How we affect others

The body, i.e. clothing, gestures, facial expressions, body language, accounts for 55% of the effect of one person on another. The word, i.e. what is said, accounts for only 7%, while the voice and the tone of voice account for 38% of the effect. According to these scientific studies, it means that in many situations, our success is already 93% assured merely by the right voice and physical appearance!

Let us now turn to those 38% which are decisive for vocal persuasion and break this potential down into its individual components. How must a voice be conditioned to be considered an effective voice?

First of all, it should sound relaxed, yet strong. With regard to articulation, it should be clear and understandable. Then of course, it should create likeability while at the same time signalling assertiveness. It should, naturally, create attention and convey emotions. Via his voice, the speaker should be well understood in terms of content and not least stick in the memory of his audience.



In conclusion, breathing, resonance, intonation, relaxedness, warmth, articulation and carrying capacity of a voice can be isolated as those individual factors which are decisive for an effective voice and thus for a corresponding impact of the voice.

By now, you may have the feeling that the art of persuasive speaking is rather a God-given talent. So I hope I can reassure you by disagreeing here and affirming that we can all learn and perfect this ability. Because...

Firstly: Clear and understandable speech is first and foremost nothing but the sum of different muscle activities, i.e. the diaphragm, lips, jaws, tongue as well as respiratory and throat muscles. And like any muscle in the body, also these muscles are trainable.

Secondly: Pleasant and attractive speaking results primarily from a relaxation of the speech organs and the body, and not least from a targeted voice and body training. So... What are we waiting for?

3. The breathing

Breathing is the gas exchange in the human organism. We distinguish between **external** breathing (lung respiration) and **internal** breathing (cellular respiration). During external breathing, the alveoli are ventilated in an alternation of **inspiration** (inhalation) and **expiration** (exhalation). The transport of oxygen from the air to the lungs and the evacuation of carbon dioxide, as well as its emission to the environment through exhalation, has a life-sustaining function. Through breathing, we gain energy. In addition, a certain concentration of carbon dioxide in the blood ensures an optimal acid-base balance which, measured in pH-value, may fluctuate only slightly. Too shallow breathing (hypoventilation) will increase the carbon dioxide level in the blood. Excessive breathing (hyperventilation), e.g. as a response to stress, will cause a reduction in the carbon dioxide level in the blood. Thus, healthy breathing behaviour contributes to a biochemical balance. Breathing is also a fine indicator of physical and emotional changes. It reacts to every movement, every touch, every thought, and every feeling. It is an expression of all psychological and mental processes in humans, i.e. a mirror of his overall well-being.

hypoventilation leads to tiredness

hyperventilation leads to muscle cramps

healthy breathing ensures the generation of vitality

respiration reacts to all inner and outer processes

If during basal respiration in a relaxed sitting or lying position, relatively little air (gas) is exchanged, the situation is quite different during power breathing due to movement or sports. A lot more gas is ventilated and the body responds appropriately to the respiratory processes. Experiencing a stitch while jogging or tingling in the lip region as a result of stage fright are references to the requirement to regulate respiratory processes. Because obviously something is wrong!

Also when speaking, the respiratory processes differ from those in a basal respiration phase. Phonation breathing (speaking or singing) can also be considered power breathing. During a lecture, the so-called breathing phrase

expands so that related sentence parts can also be spoken coherently. If the speaker is nervous, this condition also affects the formation of the breathing phrase.

Stress impacts the breathing phrase!

The breathing itself becomes restless, sometimes hectic, the lecturer “gasps” for air and is going to deliver the text rather incoherently, with little attention to punctuation, i.e. without *full stops or commas*, or else falteringly. The decline in his audience’s attention is certain and will likely lead to an increase in pressure at voice level, since he would like to be heard. Unfortunately, however, rather the opposite will be the case.

3.1 Mechanics of breathing

The mechanics of breathing refers to the combined effect of all parts of the musculoskeletal system and those functions involved in inhalation and exhalation. These are primarily activities on a muscular level. **Inhalation** causes an enlargement of the chest cavity. This expansion of the chest cavity occurs through lifting of the ribs, respectively by lowering the crest of the diaphragm. The impetus for the corresponding muscle activities is provided by the nervous system. When the chest cavity is expanded, it creates a negative pressure in the lungs, followed by the suction of air from the outside. During **exhalation**, the breathing muscles relax. The chest and diaphragm crests return to their normal position. This constriction in the chest in turn creates a positive pressure, resulting in a discharge of the breath.

Although the regularity of breathing movements warrants control over biological processes, different concepts with regard to breath control have evolved within the last hundred years, to meet the requirements of extending the breathing phrase of singers, speakers and instrumentalists. This document is not the forum to introduce all methods or even to compare them with one another. In principle, it can be said that any method that works is good and moreover supports the body in its flexible capacity to perform. In other words: if we are forcing the body to function and correspondingly exert pressure on it, its capacity will quickly diminish. Thus the resulting, increased pressure will, in the next phase, lead to a performance slump. Voice problems are no longer a phenomenon of marginal groups, and a healthy breath flow is indispensable for good voice control.

3.2 The model of breathing types

During my thirty years now of practice as vocal coach, I have discovered many different approaches to the regulation of breath. I found to be the work of Erich Wilk (1915-2000) to be the most efficient and therefore best breathing concept for my practical work. Wilk, musician himself, classified respiratory processes by their priority. Sometimes breathing in is the leading phase, sometimes

breathing out. The sources for Erich Wilk's inspiration were ancient yoga scriptures, observations of cyclical processes in nature, studies in pathology, as well as a keen sense of people. According to Wilk, the human body is subject to cyclical processes just as everything else in nature. Since life on this planet is determined to a large part by water, and the human body also consists of 70% of water, people's water balance plays an essential role. There are times when the body holds a lot of water, at other times less. It seems the influence of the moon plays a decisive role in this, which is supported by scientific studies on the subject. Just as the tides, high and low tide, are induced by the moon, the moon appears to have an impact on the hardness of timber. Timber that was cut during a decreasing moon's orbit is harder and therefore better suitable as building timber than the softer wood that is cut during a waxing moon. Surgeons also draw on the fact that surgery which is performed during a full moon often causes higher blood loss than interventions which are carried out at a different time. A number of surgeons do not schedule dates for difficult surgical operations on a full moon day. At a full moon, the body obviously retains more water and the blood loss therefore is greater.

In-breathers actively breathe in

Erich Wilk interpreted this fact somewhat differently. He termed moon and sun as vicarious of the principles of **distension** and **constriction**, and considered the time of birth of a person as the decisive criterion for whether a new-born was a distension or a constriction type. Wilk also declared in his book *Typenlehre* (Typology), published in 1949, that the respiratory processes in neonatal humans develop and shape according to this principle. If at the time of birth of a person primarily expanding forces prevail (i.e. moon > sun), then the development of the breathing functions will follow just these distending forces. As a result, breathing in is the leading principle, unlocking the person's natural power. Of course, this person will also exhale. However, we can say: inhalation is active - exhalation is passive. And whenever this person requires additional energy reserves, his natural impulse will be inhaling.

Out-breathers actively breathe out

Conversely, if at the time of birth of a person predominantly constricting forces prevail (i.e. sun > moon), then the development of the breathing functions will follow these narrowing forces. As a result, breathing out is the leading principle, unlocking the person's natural power. Of course, this person will also inhale. However, we can say: exhalation is active - inhalation is passive. And whenever this person requires additional energy reserves, his natural impulse will be exhaling.

Consequently, we have two types here before us: the **in-breather** and the **out-breather**.

When, through a student of mine, I became familiar with the Wilk typology in 1989, I was extremely sceptical, and was even less than unconvinced of the possibility of applying it to the area of breath and voice. Seven years later I co-

authored and published a book on the subject¹, because by then I had been able to verify that Wilk's principles were not only correct; their implementation to the area of breath and voice worked in a way I had not thought possible. Since then, the Wilk principles have made their way into a method I devised for the development of singing and speaking voices, which has found Europe-wide recognition as "Integratives Stimmtraining".



A personal comment: it is often attempted to justify scepticism and related rejection of systems or doctrines based on the argument that they are "unscientific". After all, what cannot be true must be not true. However, only the success of a method and not its confirmability prove it right. And a model remains a model as long as it has not been examined by scientific methods.

3.3 How to identify your breathing type

There are several possibilities to do this.

1. You try out the different, opposing options and find out what works better
2. You look it up in the table of the book **Sonne, Mond und Stimme** (Sun, Moon and Voice)
3. If you open the Internet address: <http://integratives-stimmtraining.com>, a calculation module will tell you which breathing type you are
4. You let a coach of the Integratives Stimmtraining method tell you which breathing type you are and what you can do

Whichever method you opt for, be assured of the fact that it will change your life. You will have more strength, more energy and more motivation, balance and authenticity, which in itself is enough to make you convincing to other people.

3.4 Breathing exercise for in-breathers

Disposition or starting position: Lie down on your back on a soft surface, as relaxed as possible. Your arms are resting next to your body, palms facing the ground. The legs lie straight on the mat, keeping your feet in parallel as best possible. The head is relaxed, with the back of the head resting flat on the surface, the chin pointing upwards. The back rests as if in a cradle, with eyes open. Have you settled in this position? Then let's turn to the next part of the exercise.

1. Alavi Kia R., Schulze-Schindler R. (1996) Sonne, Mond und Stimme, Aurum Verlag Bielefeld.

The function exercise: Breathe in actively and impulsively through the nose. In doing so, the thorax lifts and widens. Enjoy the feeling of space and wideness for a moment, and then slowly let it sink back into its original position. The air is gradually and passively discharged from your lungs. Repeat this process about ten times and then immediately proceed to perform the holding exercise.

The holding exercise: Breathe in actively and impulsively through the nose. In doing so, the thorax lifts and widens. This time, hold your breath as long as possible (about 20 seconds maximum is sufficient). Important: do not suppress the breath in the throat, but keeping the chest wide is what characterizes the essence of this holding exercise. After holding, release the breath and let the thorax return into the starting position. The holding exercise is carried out only once.

Wait a little moment, breathe normally and observe possible reactions of your body. This exercise can be repeated at your convenience and depending on the time available.

3.5 Breathing exercise for out-breathers

Disposition or starting position: Lie down on your stomach on a relatively hard surface. The arms are lying next to the body, bent with elbows out, the hands are resting approximately at shoulder or head level, palms facing the ground. The head is turned to the right. The heels should be facing each other if possible. The eyes are open. Have you settled in this position? Then let's turn to the next part of the exercise.

The function exercise: Actively – yet gently, breathe out through your nose. Your aim is the calm at the end of the expiratory phase. After a small pause, let new air stream in through the open mouth, passively and without effort (no inhaling sound). It doesn't matter if the breathing phase is not very long initially. It may be extended throughout the repetitions. Repeat this process about ten times and then immediately proceed to perform the holding exercise.

The holding exercise: Start breathing out gently through your nose, then with increased intensity, and persist in this deflated condition as long as possible (about 20 seconds maximum is sufficient). Subsequently, let the breath stream back in passively through the open mouth. This holding exercise is carried out only once.

Wait a little moment, breathe normally and observe possible reactions of your body. This exercise can be repeated at your convenience and time available.

Tip! Practice this breathing exercise according to your breathing type once or twice a day. When you find yourself in exceptional situations, such as before a lecture or a potentially difficult conversation, also take a moment to perform

this breathing exercise. You will soon experience the benefits, reflected in your improved condition and also with respect to the upcoming situation.

Targeted breathing training creates optimal energetic conditions and a healthy basis for voice development, to which there are, in principle, no limits.

If you do not have the opportunity to practice the breathing exercises lying down, it is advisable to practice in a sitting position. Just try it out!

4. Preparatory muscle training: yawning – widening of the pharynx

Prerequisites for a voice with body resonance are relaxed throat muscles, an open pharynx and a lowered larynx (voice box). It is true for many people that when they speak, their pharynx is too tight, the throat muscles are tense and the larynx is too high. Accordingly, the voice sounds tight, flat and tensed. We want to change that now.

We will yawn without covering our mouth, loud and to our heart's content, with wide open mouth. Let's try to get a feeling for the opening of the jaw, the position of the tongue and the width of the entire pharyngeal space. Yawning position. If it works, then that's good. If not, you can:

- imagine a small balloon, that gets bigger and bigger inside your mouth, increasingly filling the space, until you have to yawn;
- slightly pull the tongue back and forth with open jaws, and note any changes in the posterior pharyngeal space.

5. Discovering your voice

To use the voice's full potential, it is important to develop an awareness of your own voice. Only then can changes in the voice happen. Usually, we are unaware of our voice patterns, we simply function... if only after a fashion sometimes. If we were singing, it would be easier to recognize the existing patterns and modify them. Singing is located differently in the brain, and, as a result, "conscious" singing also influences all speaking functions. For example, a sung vocal is up to 10 times longer than a spoken one. However, if we are dealing only with the speaking voice, it seems essential to lay traps or banana skins for the speaking voice in order to cancel out the habitually ingrained patterns and to establish a realignment of the correlations for linguistic clarity and personal-vocal expressiveness.

Personality originates from the Latin word "per-sonare" – sounding through. How our personality is perceived by others has very much to do with the sound of our voice and often whether and how we "get across" to others will be decided in a matter of seconds.

A voice that reaches the most people, moving them to listen, is always a voice which triggers pleasant and positive feelings. It is always a balanced voice, one which connects head and chest voice, light and dark, loud and quiet. A voice that sounds full, being flexible and relaxed. If the voice is constrained and rather flat, squeezed or compressed, then it is no longer "permeable", which means it cannot properly convey the feelings, moods and attitudes of the speaking person.

Variations in the voice are normal. Our voice is subjected to the daily ups and downs in the same way as everything else in our lives. And the development of a voice is definitely independent of our age. Good premises for vocal activities are to have a feeling for the mouth, the throat and the whole body, together with a sense of eutony, i.e. comfortable tension.

6. Phonation – application of the voice

The essential requirement for a healthy voice is that the application of the voice – i.e. the moment when the breath is transformed to the voice – can happen in a healthy way. Integratives Stimmtraining® is a method that combines two completely different principles; not only in terms of leading the breath, but also with regard to the use or implementation of the voice. These differentiations are required due to different physiological conditions in humans as such, and taking into account their diversity in temperament. So we are approaching the same function, namely the application of the voice, from two fundamentally different basic positions.

The leaning or application² of the voice to the breath therefore occurs principally in two different ways. In the first instance, the application of voice relates to the body's exhalation tendency and thus the narrowing tendency of the thorax. In the second instance, the application of voice relates to the inhalation tendency and thus to the expansion tendency of the thorax. Of course, we will all speak or sing during exhalation, but dealing with the air or breath is done in different ways and thus serves as the basis for a healthy use of voice.

6.1 Voice application for the out-breather type

“Imagine coming home at the end of a long and tiring work day, closing the door behind you, dropping into your favourite armchair and letting the day drain away from you with a long, exhaling sigh... with each new sigh you have the feeling of letting go some more, of relaxing and slowly getting back to being yourself again. After a few minutes of repeated sighs and inner releasing, you will notice a change in how you feel. The evening can begin!”³

Based on this principle, try using individual notes, or also at different pitch levels, for a few minutes. Maybe you even feel like gliding up and down with your voice and literally “sounding out” the possibilities of your different voice ranges (registers).

2. “Appoggiare la voce” or “Appoggio” in Italian was incorrectly translated with support, diaphragm support or respiratory support. Incorrectly because “support” implies an effort, requiring muscular activity, which rather entails tension in the diaphragm and negative consequences for the larynx and the voice. We at Integratives Stimmtraining prefer to speak of “apply” or “lean to”.
3. Alavi Kia R. (2009) Sonne, Mond und Stimme, Bielefeld, S. 45.

6.2 Voice application for the in-breather type

“Imagine coming home at the end of a long and tiring work day, and the moment you open your front door, you breathe in the most delicious scents of herbs and spices that are tickling your nose. Your partner, your friend, your spouse, your lover or your kids have cooked for you... Your spontaneous response to this unexpected situation will most likely be a kind of sniffing, you are sucking those wonderful scents into yourself. Then a long, drawn-out... hmmm... will certainly escape from your mouth, expressing your rapture in this way. Time and again, you “aspire” the scents and ... hmmm... The application of voice is that simple for the inhalation type. Bon appetit!”⁴

Here, too, you can experiment with this principle for a few minutes. Individual sounds, a gliding up and down with the voice creates a playful situation which can distract you from technical details and other complex deliberations that continue to play on your mind.

We are now familiar with the breathing-typical differences in the usage of voice and we know what to do in situations of tending towards over-tenseness or tending towards a fall-off in energy in terms of applying the use of voice. In the everyday routine of professional speakers, the use of vowels should be examined with regard to accuracy. Is the tone of voice hard, or do we even start the vowel with a glottal stop? Or is there, on the contrary, a fine film of aspiration over the phrases formed exclusively of vowels?

- On any other evening it is allowed
- Everything is okay actually
- Unperturbed, Elisabeth upped the arms and ate up everything

It is advisable not to practice the phrases too loud and to make sure to maintain “lightness” in applying the voice. That way, a glottal stop can be avoided and it also provides the opportunity to watch out for the aspiration part. If problems occur during the exercise, the glottal stop can in any case be practiced on all vowels:

- a... a... a... a... a...
- e... e... e... e... e...
- i... i... i... i... i...
- o... o... o... o... o...
- u... u... u... u... u...

Of course, this exercise applies equally for open and closed vowels.

4. Alavi Kia R. (2009) Sonne, Mond und Stimme, Bielefeld, S.46.

7. Preparatory muscle training: relaxation of the mandible

Our jaw musculature is one of the strongest muscle groups of the body. This is quite obvious when we consider what we crush with our jaws and teeth every day. Unfortunately, these muscles also tense up very easily, especially due to the fact that our personal will expresses itself in a contraction of the jaw musculature (gnashing of teeth) and as a result often creates far-reaching implications.

When you find yourself clenching your teeth at night and realize in the morning how your teeth are literally locked together, you should start the day with a jaw-loosening exercise.

- Gently open the mouth as far as possible and hold this open position for a few seconds
- Repeat several times
- Sweep with your hands over your face and massage the mandibular joints on both sides.
- Releasing or opening of the jaw should be done in accordance with breathing-typical aspects
 - OB by lowering the mandible
 - IB by tilting the skull backwards
- Look around like a small child, amazed by all the things you see...
“Ah” - the jaw opens up
- Verify the opening of the jaw by trying to insert the index and middle finger between the rows of teeth. Both fingers should fit in between. If not, “practising” will help.
- It is possible that the jaw clicks during this exercise. Then patience and further practice is called for. At some point, the clicking will stop and opening the jaw will be pleasant.
- Next, practise opening the jaw also with closed lips
- Remind yourself during the day to neither press the lips nor teeth together when the mouth is closed.
- In severe cases of jaw muscle tension, continuously performed micro-movements can also help.

8. Speaking with a wide or narrow pharynx

To get a feeling for the width or narrowness of the mouth and pharynx space and the resulting position of the larynx during speech, vocal exercises with an “imaginary” bear voice or a Mickey Mouse voice can be helpful. First the bear:

- AAAAHHHH...
- OOOOOHHH...
- HEY...
- HAAAALOOO...
- HUHUUUU...
- SUUUSIII...
- BUUUUH...
- also your own word creations or half-sentences...

Then the whole thing once again with a Mickey Mouse voice and appropriately tight, narrow throat.

This exercise gives you an awareness of the different tension states in the pharynx region. When we work with the different settings, the appropriate muscles will be activated and made more dynamic. When we subsequently speak the above examples with a normal voice, we will be able to detect changes in the sound of our speaking voice. Perhaps we also feel a toning of the pharynx.

Furthermore we gain an understanding of the fact that emotionally difficult and stressful situations affect our voice for the simple reason that as a reaction to these situations, we often feel “choked” and our voice threatens to fail. The nerve stimulus passes from the solar plexus up to the larynx and pharynx area. The exercise with the different settings of jaw width and constriction can produce a lot of changes, especially in chronically thin or weak voices, and also voices that appear depressed by life.

9. Lip-spluttering – riding an imaginary motorbike

Not only for singers, lip-spluttering provides relief for the larynx. Also for speaking, the flexibility of the lips is of great importance. Let us remember that the attempt to curb emotion often occurs through lip biting or pressing the lips together. And we already know from singing that lip trilling relieves the larynx. So let's imitate the sound of a speeding motorcycle

- BRRRRRMNMNMNM...
- BRRMNMN... BRRMNMN... BRRMNMN... BRRMNMN...

During this sound, the voice may gently rise and then fall again as the sound fades out. The initial sound starts to move the lips and relaxes the throat. The fading-out humming already creates a sensation of the resonance space in the skull.

Even if many of assume that they cannot sing and therefore persist in refusing to sing simply from fear, it may still be advisable to undertake a few little singing experiments. So even small exercises based on a pentatonic scale can contribute to making the voice more vivacious and thus avoid a monotonous-sounding voice. Especially monotonous voices are real attention killers; within a very short time, the audience loses interest in a presenter who recites with a monotonous voice – no matter how interesting the content may be. So before looking for exotic things such as charisma coaching and paying out a lot of money for it, vocal dramaturgy, which consists in part of a variety in the sound of the voice, can already be accomplished with small “singing attempts”. And we know: everyone can sing.

- Lip trilling, going up 5 tones ... stop at the top with a hum
- Lip trilling, going 5 tones down... stop at the bottom with a hum
- Twinkle twinkle little star... or a different children's song with lip trilling

10. Resonance and directional humming

Just like each instrument requires a body or sound box, the voice too needs room to unfold. This sound space is provided by the different resonance chambers of the body as well as through bone conductivity. Ideally, the entire body resonates while singing or speaking, thus offering a sound vessel to the voice as resonance amplifier. The advantages of this resonance amplification are

- filling even larger rooms without vocal effort
- powerful and vigorous charisma through the voice
- greater confidence through vocal presence

The discovery of the inner sound chambers occurs initially through consciously directing the primary sound, i.e. the sound produced in the larynx, into the “sound bowls” for amplification. These bowls are, on the one hand, the hard palate as a sort of fixed element, and on the other hand the floor of the mouth with the tongue as a variable element. The two “bowls” together create an acoustic space, which can take on different forms and shapes.

Exercise:

We start with a humming sound in a comfortable pitch, i.e. neither too low nor too high, then slowly and gradually change the shape inside the mouth. The lips remain closed, even when the opening of the mandible creates a larger or smaller sound space. Hmmm...

Gradually, the lower jaw can be moved sideways, shift it to the left, then to the right. Also possible are slightly circling or chewing movements. In addition, the lips can be pursed, that is, pushed forward, and then resuming their initial position.

All positions and shapes of the jaws and lips produce a specific sound space that expresses its acoustic character through different timbres (overtones). These changes in sound are not always perceptible. It is therefore recommended, in a next round, to cup your hands and hold them over your ears. The sonic result is actually the same, however, owing to the changed perception - 100% bone conduction – it will usually produce a great surprise.

Not only is the sound felt to be strong internally, its acoustic colour changes are clearly perceptible for most people.

In a next exercise, the sound or the vibration of the bones shall now also be felt physically with your hands. To do this, we palpate different regions of the skull with one or both hands. Is the sound palpable everywhere?

Experience has shown that there will be areas where we clearly feel the vibration of the skull bones, whereas other regions will resonate only slightly or not at all; the bone echoes no tangible result. The reasons for this can be various. Mucus or slags, which are stored by the body in the cavities, contribute to the space or the specific region being unable to resonate freely. As a result of the limited vibration capability, the voice and with it the tonal opulence loses acoustic colouring and facets to different degrees. The challenge is to change that with the next exercise.

Let's now try to bring those regions, which so far did not provide much of a tactile feedback, to palpably vibrate. This can be done in different ways:

- Changing the shape of the mouth cavity
- Changing the pitch
- Changing the volume (possible only to a limited extent!)
- Inner perception or “thinking of” (energy follows awareness)

With some practice and a little perseverance, it will be possible for everyone to cause the entire skull to vibrate in a way that is palpable with the hands. In cases of uncertainty about the tonal development, it is always possible to briefly “cover the ears” again. Eventually, though, you will be able to maintain the physical feeling of resonance also with uncovered ears.

In a further exercise that is already somewhat more advanced, the feeling of resonance and also the vibration behaviour of the bones and sound chambers can be extended to the whole body. To do this, we simply extend our attention to the remaining body areas. In this way, the following body regions may one after one be added for resonance enhancement:

- The throat and neck region
- The chest and back
- The spine
- The pelvis
- Arms, legs, hands and feet

It is in fact possible to enable the whole physical body as a sound box, similar to that of an instrument. In the longer term, the impact on the vocal sound will be huge.

11. Nasality in speech

We differentiate two types of nasality, a closed and an open nasal twang. Closed nasality occurs when we have a cold and the nose is completely blocked. There is nothing that helps except getting cured and well again. The reason for the open nasality is that usually too much air escapes through the nose when speaking.

For the next exercise, we close our nose and say out loud:

Tatutata... Tatutata...

If that sounds very nasal, it is time to resolve this situation. The possible reason for nasalization may be that the body tonus is too feeble when we speak, causing us to slip into a rather passive mode of speech.

So we have to go on trying until that “Tatutata” no longer sounds nasal, even with a closed nose. To do this, we will deliberately send the breath through the mouth during speech. In German, there are only a few sounds where the air must flow through the nose: N, M and NG.

As a complementary exercise and awareness training for the direction of expiratory air, you can also breathe out alternately through the mouth and then the nose during yawning. It is also easier to eliminate the nasal twang by clearer articulation and opening the jaw wider.

12. Muscular training to prepare for articulation

Most people hardly open their mouth when speaking

If we take a look at our fellow people we will find that a large part of our contemporaries in the Western civilized world hardly get their teeth apart when speaking. In most cases, the opening of the jaw is insufficiently wide. Also the lips hardly move and the tongue is used in a way that the subsequently emitted sound is often a long way from proper speech intelligibility. The listener sort of rhymes things together on the whole, based on his own vocabulary and the language syntax acquired over the years. If, adding to that, regional phonetic expressions in the form of dialects are used, it often makes mutual understanding difficult, even in one's own country. Fellow countrymen become strangers; we no longer understand the world, not even our neighbours. But let us not deal theoretically with the reasons at this point, and rather tackle it practically and get the situation under control. Important: lips, tongue and jaw should be used independently from each other if possible, because otherwise the unconsciously applied compensation mechanisms will inevitably lead to a limitation of the acoustic or articulatory result. First, we deal with some simple exercises that prepare our articulation functions for a differentiated formulation of sound and language.

12.1 Preparation

Exercise 1: Grabbing spaghetti with the lips

Imagine grabbing the end of a cooked and very long spaghetti with your lips and feed it into your mouth exclusively by the movements of the lips. Your lips reach far forward and then in the direction of your front teeth. Move your lips alternately fast, then slower. After some time, you will notice an increased circulation of the entire orbicularis oris, or ring muscle, of the lips (also called the kissing muscle). The lips feel "more awake". If you want, you can remove the spaghetti from your mouth again after some practice. This requires you to execute the exact opposite movement. You purse your lips forward, similar to "giving a kiss" and then open them. Anyone who has ever observed the kissing fish (gourami) in an aquarium knows about this special lip activity.

Important: Ensure that except for the lip activity, there is no other additional or compensatory facial movement, e.g. with the eyes or forehead.

Practice time approx. 1-2 minutes

Exercise 2: Tongue-tied opening of the jaws

With your mouth closed, bring the tongue blade (front upper part of the tongue) to the alveoli (tooth sockets) behind the upper incisors. This position is also known as the tongue resting position. Now, imagine, or try for real, to fix a grain of rice or oatmeal to that contact point. Then open the jaw, with the grain of rice or the oatmeal staying in place. Gradually try to open the jaw more and more. As in the previous exercise, make sure to keep your eyes and forehead relaxed.

This exercise serves to train the independence between tongue and jaw, an important premise for good articulation.

Practice time approx. 1 minute

Exercise 3: Stretching the lingual frenulum

Completely fit your tongue to the hard palate and let it attach itself (by suction) there. Leave the tongue in this attached position and open your jaw as wide as possible. The tongue should remain sucked in. You will feel a more or less strong drag on your tongue frenulum (connecting the tongue with the base of the mouth). Close the jaw again and repeat opening and closing it several times in a row.

Length of exercise: approx. 30 seconds

Exercise 4: Monkey mouth or tongue in cheek

With your lips closed, the tip of the tongue alternately presses against the insides of the cheeks, and the upper and lower lip. This exercise strengthens the tongue and increases its mobility in different directions.

Length of exercise: approx. 1 minute

Exercise 5: Tongue-tied speech – “Liftel language” – “Liftel language”

Position your tongue with the tongue blade to the alveoli, as described in exercise 2. With your tongue fixed in this position, we will try to speak. Note: even with a fixed tongue, you still have the jaw and lips to produce – as best possible – intelligible speech. Make sure you speak slowly and refrain from gestures and facial expressions. Occasionally, watch yourself in the mirror when doing this exercise. You will be amazed at how little the jaws and lips are active in the early phase of this exercise.

This exercise is very well suited for a dialogue. The seriousness of the matter and the emphasis of the topic are quickly reversed. In a group, it will soon lead to an atmosphere of exuberant merriment.

Practice time: discretionary. Once you have started, you don't want to stop.

But beware: The tip of the tongue must always hold on to the grain of rice.

Variety: Of course, it is also possible to sing with your tongue frozen in this position. It's really a lot of fun to perform a song in this way once. At least the audience is going to enjoy it.

Exercise 6: Stretching the posterior tongue region

Position the tongue with the tongue blade behind the lower row of teeth. Then bring the middle of your tongue visibly far forward like a "rollmops" (rolled pickled herring) and back to the starting position. Repeat it several times. Here too applies: no faces or other compensatory activities.

Length of exercise: approx. 30 seconds

Exercise 7: Speaking with a stretched tongue – "Monkey language"

Place the front part of your tongue in the groove between the front lower teeth and lower lip and stretch the upper surface of your tongue (dorsum linguae) far forward. Then try to speak in this tongue position.

Length of exercise: approx. 1 minute

After these exercises, you will find that the lips, tongue, jaw and whole oral cavity are more alert and vigorous than before. You have now created a good basis for differentiated work with your language.

12.2 Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters and spoonerism offer excellent training opportunities for free and differentiated articulation. I recommend performing these both in Liffel and in monkey language. If, following these exercises, you articulate them in normal speech, you will be amazed at how precise the sentences can be reproduced.

R and W

Rory the warrior and Roger the worrier were reared wrongly in a rural brewery

It is always tougher to pronounce words repeated quickly when there is sometimes an R in the word and sometimes not.

The ruddy widow really wants ripe watermelon and red roses when winter arrives.

The R and the W are probably not doing what you want them to right? So don't give up and try again!

TH

Thirty Plymouth sleuths thwart Luther's thirsty slithering.

In most cases one tries to speak too quickly. Take your time and make sure you pronounce every word correctly and slowly before moving on. You can always speed up later, but get it right first! Don't over exaggerate. Just take your time...

Improving the coordination between the brain and the tongue

Mister Max is a master mask maker. He makes wax masks mostly. He makes the most amazing wax masks in March. Imagine that. Mister Max the master wax mask maker mostly making amazing masks in March.

So did you manage it? If you did I am sure you said it quite slowly and deliberately. Or is your Mr. Max a masker mast maker? Or is Mr. Macks a master matchmaker?

So did you manage it again even at speed? Then you are an natural! Or maybe you have been cheating?

She stood on the parapet inexplicably mimicking him hiccupping and amicably welcoming him home.

Are you in stitches? Is your tongue in knots? Try and try again.

Mixing the Ch and the Sh sound

Choc chip clock shops stock ship stop choks.

Did you make it to the end or stumble on the way? Go back and have another go!

Practicing the vowels

Ellie ordered extra eggs in aioli and avocado

This is an easy way to practice the vowels. But be aware of rolling all of the words into one. If you are articulating correctly you will have given each word a little kick with your vocal folds separating the words from one another.

Switching consonants

Red leather yellow leather

A cricket critic

Irish wristwatch

Swiss wristwatch

Rubber baby buggy bumpers

Here are a few examples of short phrases to repeat. Start slowly and increase the speed and see what happens. The repetition will enable you to feel the sound in your mouth and to see what is actually happening when you articulate the words.

This tiny little sound bites will make you mess up the second you think you have it and stop concentrating.

The difference between B and P

Betty Botter bought a bit of butter

Peter Piper picked a pack of pickled peppers

Betty Botter's butter and Peter Piper's pickled peppers prove

Betty Botter and Peter Piper were perfect pals

12.3 Here you find some more

1. A big bug bit the little beetle but the little beetle bit the big bug back.
2. A box of biscuits, a batch of mixed biscuits. A canner remarkably canny one morning remarked to his granny: "A canner can can anything that he can, but a canner can't can a can, can he?"
3. A good cook could cook as much cookies as a good cook who could cook cookies.
4. A haddock! A haddock! A black-spotted haddock! A black spot on the black back of a black-spotted haddock!
5. Any noise annoys an oyster but a noisy noise annoys an oyster more.
6. A proper cup of coffee from a proper copper coffee pot.
7. A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.
8. Are our oars oak?
9. Around the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran.
10. Easter tongue twister: Baby bunnies bounced bright balls beyond Bunnyland borders
11. Betty Better bought some butter. But she said: This butter's bitter! If I put it in my boughter, it will make my boughter bitter! So she bought some better butter. Better than the bitter butter. To make the bitter butter better.
12. Betty and Bob brought back blue balloons from the big bazaar.
13. Betty better butter Brad's bread.
14. Billy blows big blue bubbles.
15. Black bug's blood.
16. Bobby blue blows big blue bubbles.
17. Brad's big black bath brush broke.
18. Bubble bobble, bubble bobble, bubble bobble! (just see how long you can say this one over and over)
19. Can you can a can as a canner can can a can?
20. Cheryl's chilly cheap chip shop sells Cheryl's cheap chips.
21. Chop shops stock chops.
22. Cooks cook cupcakes quickly.
23. Don't spring on the inner-spring this spring or there will be an offspring next spring.
24. Easter tongue twister: Each Easter Eddie eats eighty Easter eggs.
25. Five fat peas in a pod pressed.
26. Flee from fog to fight flu fast!
27. Freshly fried flying fish, freshly fried flesh.
28. Friendly Frank flips fine flapjacks.
29. Give papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.
30. How many cuckoos could a good cook cook, if a cook could cook cuckoos.

31. If one doctor doctors another doctor, does the doctor who doctors the doctor doctor the doctor the way the doctor he is doctoring doctors? Or does he doctor the doctor the way the doctor who doctors doctors?
32. I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, but if you wish the wish the witch wishes I won't wish the wish you wish to wish.
33. I slit a sheet, a sheet I slit, upon a slitted sheet I sit.
34. Imagine an imaginary menagerie manager managing an imaginary menagerie.
35. I thought a thought. But the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought. If the thought I thought I thought had been the thought I thought, I wouldn't have thought so much.
36. If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?
37. Katai is the maasai girl, If Katai can tie a tie, why cant I tie a tie like Katai tie a tie?
38. Moses supposes his toeses are roses. But Moses supposes erroneously. Because nobody's toeses are roses as Moses supposes his toeses to be.
39. Mr Smith's ship sank when he went to spit.
40. Old oily Ollie oils old oily autos.
41. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers? If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?
42. Easter tongue twister: Peter spent spring spotting sports stars.
43. Plain bun, plum bun, bun without plum.
44. Roberta ran rings around the Roman ruins. (this is very hard!)
45. Sheep shouldn't sleep in a shack. Sheep should sleep in a shed.
46. She brews a proper cup of coffee in a copper coffee pot.
47. Six slippery snails, slid slowly seaward.
48. Six sick hicks nick six slick bricks with picks and sticks.
49. Swan swam over the sea, Swim, swan, swim! Swan swam back again
Well swum, swan!
50. The big fat cat sat on the rat.
51. The blue bluebird blinks.
52. The bootblack bought the black boot back.
53. There was a fisherman named Fisher who fished for some fish in a fissure. Till a fish with a grin, pulled the fisherman in. Now they're fishing the fissure for Fisher.
54. The folk of Chatton say the cheese of Chatton is better than the cheese of Chillingham; but the cheese of Chatton's nee mair like the cheese of Chillingham than chalk's like cheese.
55. Winter winds whistled and whipped about Wilamina's wimple.

13. Mastering live presentations

Working as a professional speaker may occasionally include the preparation and holding a speech, lecture or presentation. Experience has shown that in addition to a thorough substantive preparation, it is equally important to get properly “attuned” to this special situation - especially since many have to deal with a high level of nervousness. As Mark Twain once said:

“The human brain is a great thing. It works from the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.”

Otherwise normal processes in the body are disturbed when in fear or stress situations. This reaction is present in every man and should be considered normal. In order to deal with the side effects of anxiety, it is important to:

1. Accept and not suppress them
2. Observe the specific effects and become fully aware of them
3. Transform the weakening of the system (body and energy) due to stress back into vibrant vitality, strength and presence.

13.1 Stress management

... essentially means having an awareness in extraordinary situations of what stress does with and to the body and its functions, and controlling these reactions through specific exercises in order to attain stability and security. Stress management works if, regardless of the situation, a general feeling of well-being can be produced in the body. This well-being prevails when the physical flexibility and flow of breath are sustained, because they provide the premise for a voice that is connected to the body. Let us first visualize what happens physically in stress situations. In most instances, we can observe:

1. The feeling of losing contact with the ground
2. The feeling of losing presence in the room
3. Shortage of breath due to relative immobility of the diaphragm
4. Globus sensation in the throat, prompting compulsion to swallow
5. Unpleasant feeling of dryness in the mouth and throat
6. Increased mucus production, prompting throat-clearing
7. Thin or weak voice, having no body connection.

These reactions are usually inconvenient or even embarrassing for those affected, since they are an indicator of a state of imbalance and ultimately of weakness. We will deal with each issue individually and see what can be done.

13.2 The feeling of losing ground contact

Stress response

... often shows itself in a certain vibrant “light-footedness”. The speaker’s physical dynamic has an upwards tendency, sometimes downright “bouncy”. In line with the basic tonus, the relative pitch goes up. The breathing phrases are short, with a resulting, subjective feeling of breathlessness; sometimes even a veritable gasping for breath may be audible. The resulting hectic demeanour of the speaker spreads to the audience - it, too, suffers. This will usually be followed by mental blanks, unnecessary filler words and generally halting speech behaviour. Often, the speaker’s gaze is similarly hectic, flickering around the room. In addition, the situation may induce the speaker to talk faster, which in turn overwhelms the listeners, whose attention is likely to digress very quickly. This type of stress response is typically found with out-breathers. Contact with the pelvis energy, the lower space and the “earthing” get lost and are accordingly compensated upwards.

Stress management

The way out of this dilemma can be found in a reversal of the current behaviour. The dynamic and the upwards strive will be counterbalanced through static anchoring, especially by fixation on the left leg as standing leg. The inhalation reflex can be compensated by consciously breathing out and thus releasing the high tension currently prevailing. During the inhalation phase, the person affected should accordingly “think” of regeneration, releasing and anchoring in the lower body regions (pelvis, legs). Slowing down the speech rate usually provides additional relief. Depending on circumstances, it is also useful to “put some more air” on your voice, as it takes the excess pressure out of your voice, which became audible due to the tense situation. Also giving the listeners more time will bring back their attention. Fixing the gaze on one spot or a friendly face usually helps to regain inner stability and the contact with the audience. In short, stress management in this situation means:

fixation on the left leg

consciously exhaling

putting some air on the voice

thinking "downards" when inhaling

reducing the tempo of speech

giving the listeners time

concentrating the gaze

13.3 The feeling of losing room presence

Stress response

... is often reflected in a certain static gravity. The presenter has the feeling of shrinking or becoming inconspicuous. Also a certain fatigue may arise under the circumstances. The voice gets faint, thin and lacklustre. The attempt to vocally reach the audience feels strenuous. To counteract the inner tension level, the speaker exhales. His physical dynamic is directed downwards and sometimes results in a downright clumsy appearance. In line with the basic tonus, the relative pitch goes down. The breathing phrases are short, accompanied by a feeling of breathlessness. The presenter feels unable to meet the expectations of the audience. This will usually be followed by mental blanks, unnecessary filler words and generally halting speech behaviour, maybe even accompanied by intellectual “blackouts”. With this type of lecturer, an introverted “victim-look” can often be observed, that unconsciously solicits the affection and acceptance of the audience. For the audience, this soon feels embarrassing, as it is inevitably thrust into the role of the “offender”. In an attempt to find some relief in this stressful situation, his speech tempo slows down. That in turn quickly bores the audience and causes their attention to turn to other things. This type of stress response is typically found with in-breathers. Contact with the chest energy, the upper thorax space, which expresses presence and vitality, gets lost and is accordingly compensated downwards.

Stress management

The way out of this situation is again to be found in a reversal of the current behaviour. By consciously breathing in and thereby extending the chest, both the physical dynamic of the speaker as well as his room presence are immediately recovered. Raising the relative pitch of speech will give his dynamic momentum, and keeping the chest wide as he speaks will make the voice sonorous, brilliant and more sustained. Maybe a mental orientation on the right leg as the standing leg can contribute to feel more stable. Because usually no specific contact with the audience can be established with the eyes, this is done best via the ears. While the eyes are direction-oriented, the ears have an orientation that relates to space. By orienting yourself primarily via your ears, i.e. listening to the sounds around you, you can momentarily develop a sense for the space around you and in all directions. This makes you the centre inside this room and has a highly attractive effect on the audience. Not you need to reach out to the audience - the audience will contact you! In short, stress management in this situation means:

conscious inhalation produces vitality and presence

raising the pitch of voice produces dynamism

keeping the chest wide is advantageous for the voice

right standing leg produces stability

orientation via the ears produces a sense of space [room]

sense of room [space] feels attractive to the audience

13.4 Shortness of breath due to relative immobility of the diaphragm

When the breathing phrases are getting short, it always has to do with a restricted mobility of the diaphragm. Usually people think they are simply lacking breath and consequently breathe in even more air. But this is wrong! Breathing problems when speaking or singing were never solved by inhaling more. Let us remember that stress starts at the level of the solar plexus as the result of a nerve stimulus which can then affect specific muscle functions in the body. In other words: what feels like a *knot* or *stone in the stomach* is a direct symptomatic expression of our body and the response to stress. More specifically, we feel certain functional limitations of diaphragmatic activity in such a situation, which is then immediately manifest as an impairment of the ability to breathe. We are literally winded!

Stress management

In such a case we must breathe. Not to get more air, but to promote the flexibility of the diaphragm and thereby counteract the stress reflex. But how should we be breathing?

Frantically in and out, to set the diaphragm in motion, or slow and flat, so that the rigidity can be carefully released? The answer is: neither one nor the other! Because here too, the respiratory regulation through a breath-typical approach has proven to be helpful.

In stressful situations, in-breathers should be sure to pay attention to their inhalation and the associated expansion of the chest cavity. No special attention needs to be paid to exhalation, it happens more or less by itself. After a few breaths already, in-breathers will notice that the stress phenomena (of whatever kind) start to reduce. You are getting stabilized by the breath-based energy supply, finding your presence in the room again, and as a result also have a longer breathing phrase. Your voice too will gain vitality and carrying capacity.

Out-breathers on the other hand should endeavour to pay attention to their exhalation and the associated relaxation in a stressful situation. The inhalation requires no special attention, it happens more or less by itself. You will notice after some conscious out-breathing that you are getting both quieter and more stable. Contact with the ground ensures additional security. The shortness of breath will disappear and the voice will be more quiet and profound. You may safely assume that this atmosphere spreads to the audience.

In-breathers consciously inhale - exhalation happens by itself

Out-breathers consciously exhale - inhalation happens by itself

13.5 Globus sensation in the throat, prompting compulsion to swallow

This sensation is a very typical response to stress. As different nerve fibres converge in the solar plexus, this reaction is attributable due to the vagus nerve (a cranial nerve) which also passes through the solar plexus and with its dendrites in turn activates certain larynx regions and muscles. So stress not only halts your breath, it also produces a choking sensation. Usually, it's not possible to swallow this "hunk" down. On the subject of dealing with it in terms of stress management, I would like to recount a little anecdote from my personal experience as vocal coach. In a seminar, a participant told me that she regularly had to serve as lightning rod for her boss. She already felt at how the door flew open when the time had come again and had even thought about handing in her notice, since this situation represented an enormous psychological burden for her and literally caused her stomach pain as well as a constant lump in the throat. I advised her that, when such a situation would arise again, she should focus completely on her breath. When she returned to one of my seminars after about four or five months, she told me that as early as one week after the first seminar, it occurred again. To my question how she had dealt with the situation, she replied: *"I leant back in my chair, looked at him and just breathed out. He then paused, looked at me perplexed, turned around and disappeared."* She further told me that such an incident never happened again and that ever since she liked it much better at the company.

There will always be situations in which you find your body reacting intensely to stress. A globus sensation is definitely an indication of it. So remember that it is the breath which will get you out of the stress-related rigidity of your body. By getting centred and concentrating on your flow of breath, you will mobilize your diaphragm again and the nerves will stop playing havoc. In addition, the stress-induced overacidification of the body gets absorbed by the respiratory flow, since the breath acts in fact as the first buffer system against acidosis. If, however, the respiratory processes are blocked, then the second buffer

system to balance the pH-level in the blood has to take effect, resulting in a degradation of calcium. So again, the rule applies:

In-breathers consciously inhale - exhalation happens by itself

Out-breathers consciously exhale - inhalation happens by itself

13.6 Unpleasant feeling of dryness in the mouth and throat

Using one's voice for either speaking or singing is dehydrating. Therefore, it is important that the voice's environment, i.e. the mouth, pharynx and larynx, are kept moist. There are glands in the larynx which are responsible for the humidification of the vocal folds and the mucous lining of the larynx. Oral and pharyngeal cavities are moistened by saliva glands in the mouth. However, the moisture film is usually not sufficient to maintain the liveness of the voice in a lecture situation, especially not when the speaker is nervous.

It is recommended to drink plenty of water to ensure the appropriate humidification of your voice. If you have problems with dryness in lecture situations, just put a glass of water on your table. Sometimes that alone suffices.

13.7 Increased mucus production, prompting throat-clearing

Increased mucus production and a correspondingly husky voice are the exact opposite of the aforementioned problem. In stressful situations, annoying mucus settles on the voice, to which you would inevitably want to respond with throat-clearing. Giving in to the need to clear one's throat actually stimulates mucus production even further, which can result in frequent throat clearing. In a speech, repeated throat-clearing has a very disturbing effect on the flow of speech. Furthermore, throat-clearing can be considered as auto-aggressive, since it instigates an inflammatory stimulus in the throat, which the body will counter with the renewed production of mucus.

My best recommendation for dealing with such a situation is:

try to resist the urge to clear your throat

if possible, swallow the mucus down

better a brief cough than throat-clearing

drink water, it dilutes the mucus

13.8 Thin or weak voice, that has no body connection

Our whole life is determined by muscular processes. When our muscles have a good tonus, i.e. they are trained regularly, this fitness will positively affect the quality of our lives. If this tonus is lost, for example due to a long illness, the subsequent weakening of our body will negatively affect our quality of life, and we know that the tonus must be restored if we want to feel joy of life again. The same applies to the voice. If we train the muscles that are responsible for voice and articulation, we will find this to be an excellent method for vocal fitness well into old age – provided we use our voice healthily.

Regular singing is certain to be the best training programme to stay vocally fit. People who sing habitually also train their speaking voice, sort of automatically. It is strengthened by the singing and uses the physical resonance space to unfold in its fullness. Singing can be recommended to anyone who would like to, or has to, deal with the development of his voice as a health- and voice-promoting effect. However, for many people, singing seems to be a problem. Often, it raises unpleasant memories of school or the parental home. Repeatedly receiving the feedback that one doesn't have a beautiful voice, to sing off key or to be a "rumbler", will henceforth be in the way of a positive voice development. The person concerned vocally withdraws.

If you are among those people who for above-mentioned or other reasons are not happy with their voice, maybe you should heed the following advice:

- Regularly take time for your voice – often twenty minutes is already enough
- Select a text - a poem or a little story, on which to work for a while
- Retire to a room where you can be by yourself, unobserved
- First, read the text in a medium-low voice
- Recite the text and imagine an audience you want to reach
- Declaim the text, exaggerate and impressively orate its content, and moreover imagine a large audience

- If during the training you should have doubts about the effectiveness of your exercise, continue anyway- and keep to your training time!
- After finishing your training, observe how you feel in the next 30 minutes. Do you feel different?

A voice needs care just like everything else in our lives. You are taking the time for your family, the house, car, job, friends, and much more. So take time also for your voice. It will repay your efforts.

13.9 Checklist for presentations

Before the presentation:

1. Check all materials and test all technical aids (video projector etc.)
2. Investigate special room features (lighting, acoustics, etc.) early
3. Endeavour to position yourself optimally in the room
4. Avoid coffee (milk, sugar) before the presentation – it dehydrates and increases mucus production
5. Drink water in sufficient quantity
6. Afford yourself some rest or a walk before the lecture
7. Perform breathing exercise
8. Perform preliminary articulatory exercises
9. “Warm up” your voice with some text.

During the presentation:

1. Especially at the beginning, watch the speed of your speech
2. Again, at the beginning, pay particular attention to the relative pitch
3. Punctuation breaks serve to regenerate
4. In the event of insecurities, remember your stabilizing leg
5. Take brief moments to breathe
 - in-breathers consciously inhale, thereby extending their spatial presence
 - out-breathers consciously exhale, thereby anchoring themselves
6. Maintain contact with the audience
 - in-breathers share their spatial presence with the audience
 - out-breathers focus their attention
7. Do not speak into empty space - the audience is a person
8. Talk in the direction of friendly faces
9. A short pause gives the audience an opportunity to let the words sink in
10. In case of a dry mouth, keep water ready for moistening
11. When you offer room for questions, beware of the difference between questions and emotional attacks. Stay neutral and stick to facts.
12. Even if you need to come to a close, you can still allow a limited number of questions.
13. Ensure a smooth closing, with thanks to the audience.

After the presentation:

1. When there is applause, stay put and accept it
2. Take your time in leaving (the stage), don't run off
3. Remain in place, maybe people want to contact you.
4. If offered, accept praise and compliments with thanks (don't add to it and certainly don't belittle your performance!
5. If criticism is viced, you can accept that too (no justifications!)
6. Also thank yourself if you have done a good job
7. Forgive yourself about small errors that may have occurred
8. Don't forget anything.

13.10 Speech errors and pitfalls of public speaking

When someone orders a pusselmizza in a restaurant, or a speaker welcomes his audience with “dear fiends”, he will probably trigger general hilarity by such slip of tongue, which can certainly produce mutual sympathy. However, it is fatal if false notes are continually being uttered, for example when a speaker always keeps his voice high at the end of a sentence. It is difficult to almost impossible to take such a speaker seriously.

Below is an overview of some typical pitfalls of public speaking and how you can avoid them:

Rising intonation

A statement or whole sentence sequences are erroneously spoken with a raised intonation at the end. This will make one or more statements seem unconvincing; furthermore, they may not even be understood as a statement. It's like asking yourself a question. Even worse is when some speakers in the course of their speech or presentation keep raising their pitch, until, with an almost hysterical and cracking voice helplessly gasp for breath. No listener can be expected to keep following a speech delivered in this manner.

It is therefore vital that, when you make a statement, to lower your voice at the end of the sentence, almost always. A rising intonation may have its purpose when trying to increase the tension, but please don't forget to lower your intonation again as soon as possible.

Wrong emphases

Many speakers permanently stress the last word in their sentences or have a continuous, monotonous intonation (particularly when reciting poems). It produces a monotony of voice, which makes their listener fall asleep.

The right way is to put emphasis on what is important. As an example, take the short sentence “The door is closed.” Depending on which of the 4 words you are emphasizing, this statement has a different meaning:

- “**The** door is closed” means a reference to a certain door among several doors
- “The **door** is closed” for example would be a remark when the door opener in a multi-storey house doesn’t work, or because the door has been locked with a key
- The statement “The door **is** closed” is a very clear and specific confirmation of the door’s state
- “The door is **closed**” is likely the annoyed exclamation about a closed door, which should actually be open.

This emphasis will be facilitated by specific words, using short sentences as often as possible. It is hard anyway for listeners to follow complicated multi-clause sentences, and the speaker may easily get tangled in or muddled on them.

The infamous “Uhem”

Occasional “uh’s” or “uhem’s” in the middle of a sentence are not so bad, and sometimes even charming. But when it happens in every second or third sentence, it communicates insecurity and low self-esteem.

What can be done about it?

Instead of an ‘uh’, make short speaking breaks! A small pause in a sentence allows reflection and listeners can digest what has been said so far; repetitive ‘uhm’s’ however, keep the audience in a passive listener mode in which it will soon “switch off”.

Also, if you deliberately deliver your statements with a downward intonation, you will automatically use less of these filler words.

Superfluous filler words

In addition to “uh’s” or “uhem’s”, also other words such as “you know?”, “Ok?”, “yes?” or “right?” are commonly used, placed mostly at the end of a sentence together with rising intonation. By making it sound like a question, it comes across as a provocative statement to the listener: “did you finally get that now?”

Word repetitions

In situations in which we are prone to be nervous, the mind often runs ahead of our articulation apparatus. To address this situation and to curb the galloping mind, brake mechanisms are inserted by way of word repetitions, sometimes they are even the two to three last words that are repeatedly jumped at. “And so I believe... I believe that,...” or “we have gathered here today... we have gathered here to...” Make a point of watching out for such word repetitions. They are fairly commonly inserted in the flow of speech.

Speaking too fast

One of the essentials of communication and presentation techniques is: the first 100 seconds are decisive in whether or not we win over our audience. This is of course a huge challenge for the speaker and frequently causes many speakers to start off too fast, with the pace increasing even further within the first 60 seconds. Why? Because about 30 seconds later, the audience is overwhelmed by the pace of speech. So do make sure to begin your presentation at a reasonable tempo.

What possibilities exist to reduce the speaking pace?

Quite simple: Relax and watch your breath! Your voice is related to your body tension and motion. Concentrated and slower movements of the body cause an automatic adjustment of your speech. And once again: keep your statements brief and to the point.

Speaking without punctuation

Speaking without period or comma is a really serious fault which is sure to lead to a loss of attention of the audience. Speech pauses are an important rhetorical device and part of the dramaturgy of your presentation. So use punctuation and pauses as a means to:

- structure your lecture or your speech
- assure yourself whether you have the attention of the audience
- ensure that your audience understands the content of the lecture
- provide for your own feeling of comfort.

Mumbling

Mumbling inevitably arises when the tools of articulation, i.e. the lips - tongue - jaw, are untrained and consequently cannot produce the required vigour and independent functioning. Also, an inner insecurity and aloofness of the speaker often results in this form of vague speech. Mumbling predictably leads to lack of credibility and suspected incompetence, as the speaker appears to

be unsure of his topic or abilities. All exercises presented in this script will contribute to an improvement in cases of mumbling.

Lip-smacking

Lip-smacking typically arises when inhaling and can be regarded as a result of nervousness. Due to the insecurity of the speaker, the mouth is closed in a speaking pause and the tongue immediately gets sucked to the hard palate. At subsequent inhalation through the mouth, as is essential before continuing to speak, the sucked in tongue detaches from the palate with a smacking sound. So, the next sentence is initiated with a smack. Especially when talking via microphone or microport, such breath sounds can attract an enormous attention among the audience.

Solution: Fixing the tip of the tongue to the alveoli (dental dam) at inhalation, respectively opening of the jaw. This immediately detaches the back of the tongue and avoids the smacking sound.

Speaking monotonously

Monotonous speech can often be attributed to low body tension. Speaking is done mainly by the throat with little or no involvement of the body. Moreover, the speaker usually employs relatively few gestures. This way of talking can be an expression of nervousness (rigidity from fear). If this is the case please take your time and breathe. After a few seconds you will feel more of your inner balance.

Room for personal notes: