

# True Voice



*Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning. Maya Angelou*

When is the last time you heard your own voice? Many clients I coach admit that when they hear recordings of their voices they feel disappointed. They say things like “Is that what I sound like?” “My voice sounds so quiet!” “It sounds more nasal than the way I hear it” “Oh I talk so fast! But it feels like I am going really slow.”

Surprising isn't it? That you use your voice as your primary instrument for communication, for speaking up, presenting, pitching, participating in meetings, and engaging in all manner of conversations – virtual and in person – and yet your voice is

unfamiliar to you. What you're really saying is that it's uninspiring to you.

If this is your experience it could be because when you walk through the door of the office you step into your de-fault zone – that mind-set, body and voice you habitually slip into that is shaped by your organisational culture. These cultures have their own language, work-speak jargon and invisible rules that say, “This is the way we do things around here.” Is it any wonder that messages go “stale, flat and unprofitable” (to quote Hamlet)?

Let's leave the office for a moment and go into your other life, the one you leave outside the door when you come to work:

When you read a fairy tale to a child at bedtime do you rush through it? Do you speak in bullet point format? Do you stay in one tone, one gear, one key throughout? Nooooo! You do all those cool things like put on different voices for the different characters, slow down and create magic and suspense, speak loud and soft. At the end of your reading do you run out of the room as fast as you can? Nooooo! You say 'The End' and you look at the child. You let your story settle on them and then you say 'Goodnight.'

When you call your dog from across a field you whistle and yell out their name right? When you watch a sports event live, supporting your team you do a lot of shouting and cheering right? And what about those moments of hysterical, cathartic laughter with a friend? Singing in the shower or letting it rip while driving and listening to your latest favourite track? Insisting your partner listen as you read a passage from the newspaper out loud with righteous indignation or amazement ('You've got to hear this!') Oh and let us not forget that domestic argument (yes that same one).

Wow! What a wide-ranging, dynamic, expressive, contoured voice you have, right? That is until you walk through the door of your workplace. Then it's the big GAG. It all gets damped down, flattened, and rushed. You're surfing the monotone airwaves rather than tuning your bright dial on your personal radio bandwidth.

Your voice is your gateway to your presence, your authentic signature and your capacity to inspire confidence and commitment in those around you. How do you hear yourself? How do you want to be heard?

It's time to invest in your voice. You don't need a battery of voice training.

You've got everything you need to influence, convince and inspire with your voice. Set clear intentions for what you are talking about and invite in the personal, powerful, playful voice of you in your LIFE.

Once more with feeling!

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