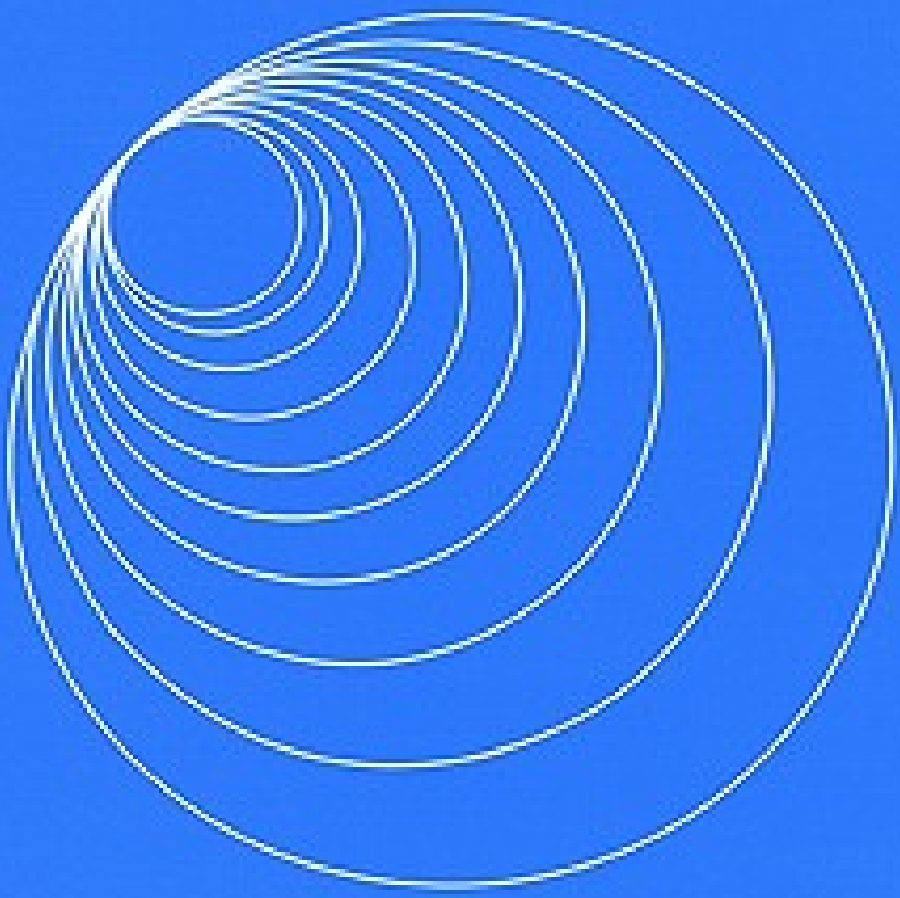
ARTHUR LESSAC

The Use and Training of the Human Voice

A BIO-DYNAMIC APPROACH TO VOCAL LIFE

THIRD EDITION



With a Foreword by Frank Langella

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Foreword

Sometimes all at once . . . there's God." So said Tennessee Williams in one of his plays. Arthur Lessac is not quite God to me, but he's certainly a piece of heaven.

I can remember quite clearly the day I grasped his technique for the first time, or should I say, the day I **felt** it for the first time. I was standing amidst a group of some thirty students. I was twenty-four years old, new to New York, and a member of the **Lincoln Center Training Program**—eight hours a day of Body, Voice and Acting classes to prepare us as members of the first acting troupe for the then-as-yet-unbuilt **Vivian Beaumont Theatre**.

Arthur was leading us in a vocal exercise using the words: *Hello—Away—Until*. He was trying to make us understand where to place these sounds and how to project them. I wasn't getting it. My throat was closed and my eyes were tearing. I would cough, tighten up, and lose my breath. All around me were young actors with similar difficulties.

Like any other training approach, until a certain "body truth" happens, it can seem somewhat strange. You're asking your body to reprogram its computer and at first it rebels. Mine certainly did. I had, up until Arthur Lessac, done okay with my voice, I thought. But I had not as yet really tested it on the great roles, or in extended long runs, or in cavernous old theatres. Nor had I yet come to respect its power.

But this day, as Arthur walked among us loosening cheeks, directing mouths forward, correcting breathing and posture, my body decided to accept his lessons. I felt in my upper palate a tingle as if the words were *born* in my mouth. My breath eased, and out came a sound I had never before made. The feeling was immediate and profound. My body said, "Yes." Arthur heard it and said, "Yes, Frank, yes." "God" spoke, and from that moment on I was free. The way you are free when you finally learn to swing a bat, or play a scale, or when you effortlessly pull up on your skis for the first time. You may fall down from time to time, but you've got it forever.

I got the Arthur Lessac process and for thirty years or more it has sustained me. I have never lost my voice due to strain, overuse, or, more importantly, misuse. I have been able to project it in any auditorium. It has given me infinite vocal freedom. It works, and once acquired it will do the same for you.

Perhaps more importantly, his methodology is real therapy for voice and body. The more you do it, the better you feel. It's a boon to anyone: actor, public speaker, singer, vocally impaired, private citizen. Once learned it never deserts you. It's simple to maintain and only strengthens the voice as you grow older. It's always there, even if all you do is call your dog from across the road.

I am extremely grateful that fate put me into Arthur's hands at so young an age. Like all great teachers, he gives you the tools to allow you to run free. If you suffer through body resistance, vocal distress, and mental strain, and conquer them through the Lessac training, you'll be out in front, in the lead, at full gallop and feeling great.

—Frank Langella
July 8, 1996

Acknowledgments

This newly revised edition of *The Use and Training of the Human Voice* reflects over forty good years of teaching, training, performing, and research, during which time I've been the fortunate beneficiary of the most stimulating encouragement, guidance, healthy criticism and support from my many friends, colleagues, associates and students. I take this opportunity to single out, for very special thanks and appreciation, Walter Lowen, David Simon, David Morgan, Al Brooks, Irene Dailey, Sue Ann Park, Bonnie Raphael, Bob Hobbs, Jack Clay, Cissie Blumberg, Mary Corrigan, Lisbeth Roman, Richard and Saundra Cuyler, Dorothy Mennen, Richard Warner, John Reich, Bob Lear, Don Wilson, Tom Leabhart, Norma Berkeley, and, most of all, Michael Lessac.

Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to others who have also devotedly helped and contributed to the task of preparing, for this revision, four generations of manuscripts over the past three years. They include Debbie Kinghorn, Kathy Dunn, Nancy Krebs, Mary Thomas, Kathleen Campbell, Marth Munro, Tom Casciero, Sheila Sabrey-Saperstein, Ann Marie Jodoin, Georgia Martin, Andy Griggs, Ruth McKenney, Beth McGee, Jennifer Schuler, Sandra Shotwell, Barry Kur, Kate Burke, Colleen Kelly, Patricia Romanov, Kittie Verdolini, Carol Prendergrast, Leonard Meenach, Diane Gaary, Yanci Bukavec, and Fred Nelson.

There have also been professional colleagues who have reviewed later drafts of the manuscript, whose names I don't have the privilege of knowing, but whose input and critiques have been invaluable to me. There must be others whose names I may have inadvertently omitted here, and I want to thank all of them most heartily as well.

And finally, a most enthusiastic thank you to my Mayfield team of editors, led by Janet Beatty, sponsoring editor, and Melissa Kreischer, production editor, who worked valiantly to bring this project to a successful conclusion; and a special bow to Bettina Borer, art editor, and to my talented and dedicated manuscript editor, Andrea McCarrick.

Introduction

The subject of this book is vocal life. Although it is a resource for anyone who wants a beautiful voice and who requires clear, articulate speech, I address this revised edition primarily to teachers and students of acting at colleges, universities, and private studios and to professional actors working in theatre, film, and television. Regardless of what level you have reached in your teaching or acting careers, you will, I hope, find the process laid out here immediately accessible, applicable, and empowering. It will describe goals you can relate to and ways to reach them. Through your own searching, discovering, and *doing*, you will fully understand the feeling of complete mastery of voice and speech and its relatedness to the quality of performance. This book is about finding your own voice, rediscovering your own originality, reexploring your artistic skills and talents, and reinforcing and expanding your communicating personality. Terms that may be unfamiliar are defined in the text, footnotes, and glossary.

Hopefully, you will find that Lessac training is not a rigid step-by-step progression. The new order of this book reflects a circular sequence that has worked extremely well and with maximum flexibility in studios and in workshops. Feel free to adapt and experiment along the way. Wander through the chapters at will, but with curiosity and awareness. You will find the book's principles, experiments, and explorations part of an innate, vital whole, and, as such, you may enter the training at any point as a viable starting place. Because of its natural circuitry, Lessac training employs a dynamic rhythm and balance to lead you progressively through the training circle with all the other parts always connected, always in motion.

Whatever else you gain from this book, I hope you will find yourself exploring the idea that nothing stands alone, isolated, or encapsulated—not your voice, your speech, your body, or any of the modalities through which you perceive, feel, emote, or physicalize expression. Everything, whether simple or radical, is a unique part of something else, for nothing

functions well enough until it functions in balanced relationship with everything else. As you use this book, I hope you will sense that we are building a "whole" out of smaller "wholes"—a "gestalt" out of smaller "gestalts."

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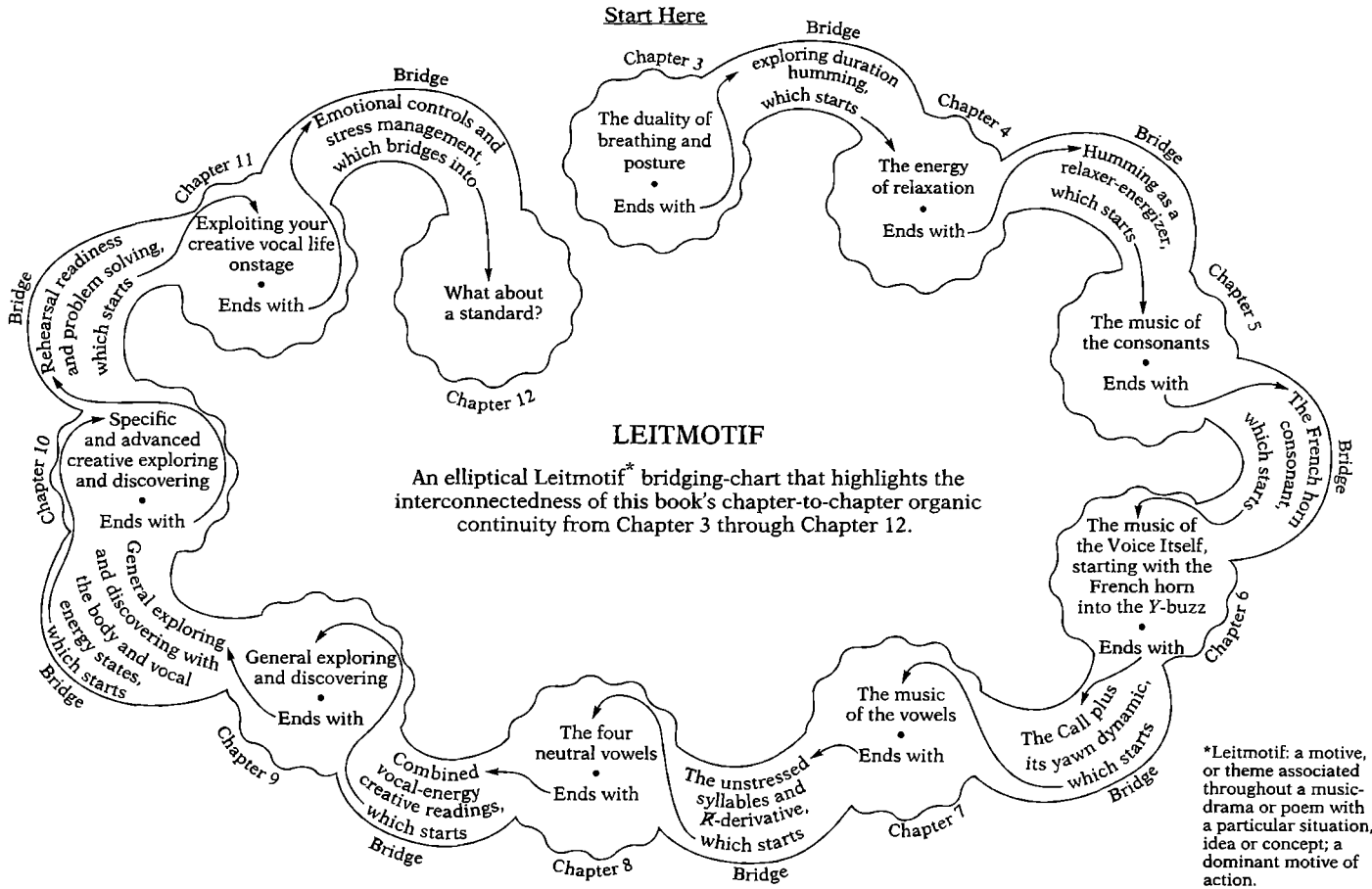
To Michael and Fredi
and
To the Memory of Birdie

THE USE AND TRAINING OF THE HUMAN VOICE



*Leitmotif: a motive, or theme associated throughout a music-drama or poem with a particular situation, idea or concept; a dominant motive of action.

PART ONE

Seeding the Soil and Building the Foundation

Before anyone sets out to train and develop the human voice and body, he or she should first develop an awareness of the body's bioneural physical principles and its energy precepts.[1] The human organism is born with a virgin soil, fascinatingly rich and fresh, ready to receive seeding from the outside world so that it may later successfully and creatively reap what was sown. Your resolve should be to determine what you wish to accomplish, how to go about accomplishing it, and how to equip your body to optimally fulfill what will be demanded of it. It is conceivable that anyone can, within limits, speak, sing and act professionally without knowing much about fundamentals, but the artist must have the *knowing* and the *feeling* of how the body's systems work and how its creative instrumentalities function. The artist must acquire this inner intelligence and experience with gutfelt and heartfelt awareness; he or she can have the technical knowledge of these fundamentals but can understand them organically and vitally only by physically *experiencing the feeling* while at the very same time behaviorally *feeling the experience.*

[1]Refer to Parts 1 and 2 of *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body* by Arthur Lessac (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance, 1981).

CHAPTER 1

Theatre as a Laboratory[1]

Someone once wrote: "Like all true art, theatre should enhance the desire, and strengthen the capacity—to live!" We seem to be living in a culture where theatre and society occupy separate quarters. While it is true that theatre offers all of us an opportunity for entertainment, recreation, and, occasionally, reflection, it also has a much more significant and powerful role to play in contemporary society: that of educator, trainer, guide, and facilitator toward the development of personal culture, personal style, and personal growth.

Actor training, when truly integrated, (1) involves the optimal exploration of human skills and talents, be they physical, emotional, artistic, intellectual, intuitive; and (2) provides a creative problem-solving resource for such related areas as an energy-systems approach to body ecology, crosscultural education, physical training, body-voice-speech therapy, and research in identifying body synergies, among other areas. Theatre, and actor training in particular, is the only art form that makes optimal use of the total human instrument. It requires the mastery of movement, sensitivity, **vocal life,** nonverbal communication, and character development. It calls for the refinement of **perception** and **awareness,** as well as the projection of emotion and personality. Clearly, serious actor training can even lead to the elevation of human behavior.

The craft of acting also demands an integration and instinctive coordination of voice, movement, awareness, emotion, and perception *with* the spoken language; as such, it deals with human potential itself. It requires a training that respects and listens to the *body-whole*—the entire human organism. I refer to such training as **kinesensic** training—an **intrinsic** sensing process where energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression. (I coined the term

[1]After completing Parts 1 and 2, you may want to revisit Chapter 1 with the added insight that experience allows. I personally would recommend such a second reading.

"kinesensic" to better describe the neurophysical sensing process: *kine,* for movement and motion; *esens* for basic meaning, nature, cognition; *sens,* for spirit, inner energy, involvement; *sic,* for familiar occurrences).

The kinesensic feeling process becomes a built-in therapeutic control factor in voice building. Bioneural bone-conducted sensing becomes the reference point—the measuring rod that tells whether or not the voice is being used optimally. Within the framework of kinesensic feeling (or experiencing), we discover that when we sing and speak bone-conducted hearing takes over from air-conducted listening. Furthermore, we discover that there are two *naturals* in our functioning: the seemingly comfortable "natural" that stems from habit-patterned conditionings and the "natural" that occurs when the body-response is not subject to habit-patterned functioning.

As part of this beginning chapter, I want to briefly present four concepts that are integral to "vocal life" actor training:

1. Body esthetics (as differentiated from body anesthetics)
2. Inner harmonic sensing
3. Organic instructions to the body
4. The "familiar event" principle

Note: Many of these concepts, at first, may be difficult to grasp, but be patient. As you read through the book and participate in the experiments, you will accrue a better understanding of these concepts and their application in voice training.

Body Esthetics

Through the course of civilization, we have so intellectualized the search for **aesthetics** (a philosophy dealing with the nature and appreciation of beauty) that we have virtually lost touch with "esthesis"—literally, the study of the nature of sensation. Our kinesensic understanding of vocal life allows us to retrieve the original, archaic meaning of the term and construct from it a new "aesthetic." In our framework, anything that promotes sensitivity and induces awareness of sensation is an **esthetic** (a body esthetic), and anything that deadens sensitivity and lessens awareness or perception of sensation is an anesthetic (a body anesthetic). Heaviness, floppiness, tightness, strain, flabbiness, being full of care[2] are,

[2]Refers to "careful" (which, here, is not synonymous with "alert") and implies a possible back-door opening for elements of fear and insecurity to squeeze through. Within the same logic, "carefreeness" here means "free of care."

within our frame of reference, body anesthetics. Conversely, balance, lightness, carefreeness, gracefulness, feeling inner rhythm and vibration, and body flexibility are just some of our body esthetics that lead to optimal functioning.

Inner Harmonic Sensing

Lessac training postulates that our human sensing system functions not only through the five outer fundamental senses (hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell) but also through an **inner harmonic sensing** system. As with musical instrumental and vocal pitches, each of our outer fundamental senses can also produce "harmonic offspring"; and once the outside signal is registered internally, it transmutes and becomes synergized into sensory harmonics and overtones, creating new dynamics, new essences, and new intelligence, thus producing its own indigenous resonances, vibrations, reflections, images, and movements through our innate kinesensic feeling process.

With this in mind, we teach ourselves to follow through and reach beyond the five fundamental senses in order to register and program our inner harmonic feeling process. External hearing is of no value when trying to understand how our voice wants to function and how it feels internally just as outer-directed vision is of little use when trying to feel how the spine wants to function. Extrinsic cues and signals cannot help us perceive the intrinsic relationship between breathing, posture, and vocal life in operating optimally. Similarly, in musical pitches, the fundamental frequency by itself is most unsatisfactory and unpleasant sounding; it needs its multiple harmonic overtones to create the fullest and richest effects. In self-use, inner harmonic sensing provides us with extended and expanded vistas for heightened sensitivity, perception, awareness, response, subtext,[3] **synergistic**[4] activity, and research.

Organic Instruction

The concept of **organic instruction** initially requires a conscious capacity to perceive the body in movement as an internal, physicalized experi-

[3]*Subtext:* within our frame of reference, implies subconscious (and unconscious) or unexpressed feeling, almost always triggered by inner harmonic sensing.
[4]*Synergistic:* in Lessac training, refers to a high *intermixing, interrelating,* and *interacting* of the body's energy states and systems. Unlike the "catalytic agent," the synergistic agent becomes a vital integral part of the organic "whole."

ence. This is a significant first step in the self-teaching process. It leads to identifying sensations, acquiring perception, responding to awareness, and, finally, through the inner harmonic senses, training oneself to use these feelings and their images as organic instructions to the body and as holistic unifiers to reduce complexity. (See the following section, "The Familiar Event.")

To illustrate, a nonorganic instruction to the body might be to throw your voice to the farthest row of the theatre. Nevertheless, that image and instruction demands of the body something it should not be asked to do. The voice cannot be thrown out of the body. The voice can only resonate and vibrate *within* the body. The proper sensory instruction in this case would be to search for the "bone-conducted" feel of your voice as an inside-the-body experience and not treat it as if it were a baseball being thrown through the air! (See Chapter 2, Experiment 2.) A command to the body to fulfill a specific goal or to make a special effort ("Push yourself to the limit," "Speak or sing much louder," "Run as hard as you can") may seem perfectly reasonable, but, in fact, it places the body and the voice in unreasonable competition, thus inhibiting and blocking the free use of the body's natural rhythms, balance, and energy qualities. Such commands are externally imposed nonorganic instructions that only wear down the body and the voice.

The Familiar Event

Lessac training begins by searching for and finding any number of **familiar events.** These may be activities you have always performed with ease because of some special talent, skill, or gift, and they are always performed naturally and always "feel really good"; or they may involve particular acts that, from constant doing, function pleasurably, gracefully, efficiently, and effectively for you; or they may stem from **instinctive,** intuitive behavior that is still as natural and **spontaneous** as when you were a small child and therefore never subjected to habit-patterned, nonthinking, conditioned functioning. A few easy examples might be smelling a rose's perfume, sighing with contentment, breathing in an easy squatting position with your feet flat on the ground, and the feeling of your facial posture while whistling. You may not know why these familiar events feel so good, you just know they do.

Each of us can find many such familiar events, and they always feel like fresh and unique experiences. Initially, you may need to think and search a bit, perhaps with some guidance from your coach, trainer, or

teacher. You could, for example, take the familiar event of smelling your favorite flower, learn the feel of that unique experience, and then carry the same action over to the natural breathing process. By doing this, you will have *self-used* the familiar event as an organic instruction to teach yourself how to improve or correct your breathing and your posture—two body functions most of us do poorly.

Generally speaking, familiar-event programming proceeds as follows:

1. Single out one natural activity and do it, experiencing the act spontaneously as a positive experience totally opposite from imitation or routine. Because this "model activity" is instinctively experienced, giving pleasure and comfort, it can be qualified as a **salutary**[5] and positive familiar event, which is always experienced as fresh spontaneous behavior.
2. As you experience the familiar event instinctively and naturally, with total ease, you will learn to identify its physical feel and respond with awareness to this feel as kinesensic memory.
3. Having isolated these sensations and perceptions as registered physical sense memories, while experiencing the comfort of the familiar event as a fresh and unique body function, you will, with coaching and guidance, be able to transfer the same sensations and perceptions (including the *image* of that feel) to a given and relatively unfamiliar or "poorly" functioning body activity. It will still feel good but now *strangely* comfortable rather than *familiarly* so—such as using the feel of skiing positions as proper carryover to spinal and body postures.
4. You are ready to use your awareness and alertness as "image experience"—that is, to make the image active and learn how to use it as an organic instruction to the body.

Thus, a kinesensic image resulting primarily from association with the initial familiar event will become part of body physical memory and then constitute itself as internal, **organic** motivation for new and future unique events. By appreciating the relationship between image and action as essentially one involving self-use, or self-to-self communication with the body, we teach ourselves to properly channel our perceived information into the body and thereby allow the body to behave in a nonconflicting, noncompetitive way.

The preceding four steps will help you understand the experience of the feeling process in any physical act as it directly relates to sensation,

[5]*Salutary:* healthy, wholesome, "feeling good," therapeutic.

perception, awareness, and response. These steps will become the foundation for voice and body training as part of a broader, more **holistic**[6] approach toward acting in general.

As you learn through kinesensics how to speak, image, move, and act holistically, by physically feeling your way through the training process, you will also begin to perceive yourself differently. Your reactions to yourself will be felt rather than self-fancied or, still worse, imposed upon you by others. You will kinesensically begin to feel the carryover from perceptive, imaginative performance onstage to a sense of vital life, balance, and self-assurance offstage; the reverse is equally true. You will be able to use your energy more efficiently, handle stress better, feel less fatigued, and discover reservoirs of strength (physical and emotional) you never knew you had. You will come to realize that spontaneity and control are not opposites, but different chords you can play with the same instrument—your own body, a genuine "Stradivarius" that spawns and generates a number of other, smaller "Strads." You do not need to improve upon your Stradivarius. Rather, you want to teach yourself how to keep it in tune, feel its harmony, consonance, melodies, and chords. Once you do, you will begin to appreciate the continuity between your training for exciting, aware performance and every possible situation in which you will need to communicate with the full range of your individuality offstage.

We are all performers! We all audition, whether for acting jobs or for living and working creatively in daily life. As performers, we need to learn how to feel the energy qualities that go into perceiving, experiencing, and communicating. In the final analysis, *good acting is nothing more than interesting, imaginative, involved behavior:* it is the *experiencing* of communication and, at the same time, the effective and involved *expression* of that experience. It is the voice, the inflections and intonations, the words, eyes, gestures, and emotions working together, expressively, in symphonic concert and harmony. So let me invite you into a comprehensive and most accessible theatre lab, where voice and body training[7] are really communication and language training; where development and exercise, feeling and perception become "body wisdom"; and where you learn to deal uniquely with the exploration of originality, not as the discovery of another novelty but as the *re*-discovery of origin itself . . . within yourself.

[6]In Lessac training, "holistic" implies working with "gestalts." A **gestalt** is a "whole configurated entity" that has its own essence and meaningful purpose, as differentiated from "dependent parts," which by themselves have no life of their own. As we progressively add and organically bring together more and more wholes, we engage in a process of holistic development and functioning.
[7]Refer to *Body Wisdom*.

CHAPTER 2

Don't Envy a Good Voice . . . You Have One!

In one of his poems, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote: "How wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul." The human voice is more than an extension of the pure mechanics of voice and speech. To become vital vocal life, voice and speech must become intrinsically enmeshed with the physical and emotional energies that shape our individuality. Far from being an isolated function, vocal life represents a composite of synergistic energies involved in vocal and verbal communication. Vocal life is the use of the developed voice to express and communicate every nuance of feeling and purpose. Ultimately, it is the expression of our individual personal culture.

To the aware actor, vocal life is more than the extension of inner energies; it is a creative and controlling influence upon the dynamics of these energies. As a creative tool, exploring vital vocal life allows us to experiment with and plumb these energies—not merely to express emotions but also to perceive new dynamics, new subtexts, new visualizations, and new images. It is a powerful resource that can provide an enormous range of possibilities and choices for unanticipated interpretation and feeling.

We begin our work from the physical end of voice and speech. If we think about the human body as a superb instrument, we can proceed from the premise that careful observation of how the body *wants* to function—how it would function in the absence of adverse conditioning—is a good guide to the production of fine tone and excellent sounds. When the body produces excellent tones, the voice is not throaty, nasal, or forced; it is produced and resonated effortlessly. It has **stentorian,** resonant qualities and projection, full pitch range, and rich, warm, colorful timbre.

By "voice," (or vocal fold phonation) we mean experiencing the bone-conducted tonal vibrations of the sound waves that resonate and become amplified in other parts of the body. Generally speaking, "voice" is related primarily to the vowels of our language. When these vowels are sustained, we say we hear singing or chanting; when the vowels are shorter and the

consonants occupy a greater proportion of time and significance, we say we hear speech. In its narrowest sense, "speech" refers primarily to consonant articulatory skills that provide us with crisper and clearer intelligibility. In its broader sense, "speech" usually includes what was just discussed and all other aspects of vocal expression, such as intonation, inflection, accent, emphasis, nuance, modulation—everything used to convey intellectual content as well as emotional impact. Singing, in the broader sense, should be the same thing except that the vowel sounds are sustained longer than in speech.

Although articulatory *consonant* skill may be considered the "spine" of speech communication, voice is the very lifeblood of the communicating personality. The call to bridge distance or rise above noise, the expression of enthusiasm, the lyric description, the solemn entreaty, the cry of pain, the adamant emphasis, the forceful but healthy anger, the poetic musical expressiveness—all vocal energies are, in effect, matters of voice.

Clearly, all the vocal arts and all the speech skills form a single discipline. To compartmentalize this discipline into polarized fields would be as counterproductive as training the left and right hands of a pianist separately. The discipline resists compartmentalization because vocal life does not, indeed cannot, exist apart from physical and emotional life.

Saying Goodbye to Imitation

As children observe, listen, and learn from their parents, grown-ups, and peers, they begin what, for most, is a lifelong path of imitating bad examples and poor speech, which become the norm. That is an alarming realization when you stop to consider that we use speech and voice to defend ourselves, challenge the positions and beliefs of others, justify our motives and actions, motivate the actions of others, and reveal or share our thoughts and feelings. Our voice and speech are our first lines of defense and our chief weapons of offense. To accept low standards of their use is to compromise and undercut our ability to communicate.

Admittedly, imitation is a difficult behavior to surrender. It has all the appearances of comfort and none of the benefits. Without strong motivation for additional growth and development, the angry voice will remain angry, the timid or the insincere voice will endure, and the pompous voice, to which so many imitative actors are prey, will persist. We need to recognize (1) that the so-called natural of conditioned speech and voice habit patterns may very well be *un*natural self-use and (2) that through familiar event programming we can discover the body's true natural (see Chapter

1). With such assistance and training, we can learn to be angry or pompous or intense without bringing hurt or pain to the voice.

At first, you may find yourself resisting the feeling of an altered tonal quality or a modified facial posture during training. But then ask yourself: Does this rather strange, altered tonal quality or modified facial posture feel good? sound good? look good? If it does, then approach this "strangeness" as a discovery that needs to be explored. Resist the impulse to resist! Go with it! A sound that seems initially peculiar or unrelated to you may strike you as being surprisingly expressive and very acceptable on a recorded playback. A facial posture that feels odd may pleasantly surprise you when you catch a casual glimpse in the mirror. Once you have realized that any initial discomfort is a subjective reaction to the seemingly unfamiliar and that the objective results are empowering and effective and feel good, the strangeness will fade and a sense of gain and growth will set in.

Some approaches to voice and speech training depend too much on imitation, rote, descriptive imagery, or the style of a magnetic personality. Such methods offer temporary benefits, yet they often fail to provide the desirable, long-lasting, conscious control of a healthy, strong voice in a healthy, strong body.

How Vocal Sound Is Created

Let us now attend to the physical aspects of voice and speech. At the upper part of the trachea, or windpipe, there are two little muscular membranes stretched horizontally across the windpipe from front to back, called the "vocal folds." (You may want to refer to Appendix C, which contains detailed anatomical illustrations relating to this discussion.) From an anatomical point of view, these vocal folds were originally intended to serve as a gateway for the breath stream during inhalation and exhalation.[1] They spread apart to permit the passage of air and close during swallowing to prevent the passage of foreign matter, such as food and liquid, into the trachea instead of the esophagus (or food pipe). The space between the vocal folds is called the "glottis."

As humans evolved, long before recorded history, they began to rely less on the sense of smell as their visual sense sharpened and vocal sounds developed. Comparative anatomists have noted[2] that early man, given the

[1]The vocal folds are also believed to serve a function during heavy lifting, childbirth, and defecation.
[2]*The Comparative Anatomy of the Larynx* by V. E. Negus (London: Heinemann, 1928).

structure of the body, had a choice of developing any of (at least) three different ways of fashioning the vocal sound to create speech.[3]

The vocal folds eventually took over the function of phonation. But even today, when the larynx is removed because of throat malignancy, some patients are able to develop a fairly strong speaking voice by substituting the upper esophagus as a sound source. There have even been reports claiming that some laryngectomized patients develop a significant degree of singing ability as well—without mechanical or electronic devices.[4]

But sound created by the vocal folds is primarily what we deal with in voice and speech. The process begins as a mental one—we decide to speak. The brain then sends a message, or nerve impulse, to the vocal folds to come together, something like when we swallow. The breath, coming from the lungs through the bronchial tubes and trachea toward the larynx, build up a tiny amount of pressure behind the closed folds. When the pressure is strong enough, the breath puffs through, setting the folds into vibration at a fantastically rapid speed. The vibrating folds, in valvelike manner, transform the breath puff into systematic sound waves. If the vocal folds are closing well, virtually all the breath puff is transformed into sound waves, or voice. (If the vocal folds do not close well, as with pathological conditions and, in some cases, poor technique, some of the breath puff stays as unorganized, superfluous breath.) The vibrating vocal folds then create the sound waves that constitute the human voice, and this action is what we term "phonation of the vocal folds." At this stage, the sound waves, down around the vocal folds in the larynx, produce almost inaudible tones that are ready to travel, grow, and mature into resonant, amplified vocal life. But for all practical purposes, it could be said that *breath ends where sound begins.* Furthermore, because the breath puff required is so truly infinitesimal, we might also say that as our levels of sensitivity and perception expand, we can actually learn to feel the very *presence of the absence of breath.*

The breath stream and the vocal sound stream have quite different characteristics. Breath emerges from the body as unorganized or chaotic molecules traveling at approximately 12 feet per second; its characteristic action is to disperse or sweep away. Vocal sound is an organized molecular wave action (much like waves in the sea) and represents a kinetic energy traveling at the rate of approximately 1,200 feet per second, or one hundred times as fast as the breath stream. When this current comes into con-

[3]Air stored in the esophagus (belching), air stored under tongue or cheeks, and so on. See Negus, *Comparative Anatomy.*

[4]Some of my own early clinical experience (circa 1945) bears this out.

tact with any hard, rigid substance, it sets that substance into vibration, causing additional sound waves, while the already weakened breath-puff stream often dissipates and sets up few or no vibrations.

Resonance and Wave Reflections

Strictly speaking, "resonance" is defined differently within various disciplines, such as physics, performing arts, and psychology. For our purposes, we define resonance as secondary vibrations produced in any hard substance by sound waves from another vibrating body. Two types of resonance are defined as follows:

1. *Direct, or enforced, resonance* occurs when a vibrating body is placed in direct physical contact with another substance—a tuning fork on a piano, a piece of metal, or the outer surfaces of your teeth.
2. *Indirect, or sympathetic, resonance* occurs when the sound waves from a vibrating body set up vibrations in a substance some distance away. For example, if you depress the E and G keys on a piano without hitting the strings and hold the strings open while striking a short sharp C, the C vibrations will stop as soon as you release that key, but sound will emanate from the open E and G strings. Why? Because the sound waves sent out from the C string have set the open E and G strings into sympathetic vibration.

Both types of resonance occur in the human vocal process. The primary resonating structures are the teeth, hard palate, nasal bone, cheekbones, sinuses, forehead, and cranium. If such bone-conduction functions efficiently and effectively, the resonance dynamics can continue to other structures such as the spinal vertebrae and rib cage.

Sympathetic resonance occurs as the vocal sound waves, traveling through air space from the vocal folds, make contact with the hard palate and then with the nasal bone. In contrast, direct resonance is passed from the nasal bone to the bones of the forehead and cranium.

Wave reflections are produced by sound vibrations traveling in all directions within a cavity, whether or not the cavity contains other resonating material. The result is a special timbre, or sound quality, that varies according to the size and shape of the cavity. "Timbre," in this framework, refers to tone, color, and body, as well as to tonal warmth and richness, rather than the ringing brilliance and penetrating power of bone-conducted resonance.

EXPERIMENT 1: HAND CUPPING

• Cup your hands to your face while speaking or singing. Note how your voice takes on a deeper, fuller, darker quality. What you've done is to add a megaphone-like extension to the vocal tract. Because the palms are covered with flesh and porous skin, which absorb sound, no new resonating material is added. Still, your voice does take on a deeper and fuller quality, precisely because your hands have changed the size and shape of your oral resonating cavity.

Anatomy of Voice Production

Lessac training has a unique definition for the term "voice box" (or human sound box): it is the cavity or enclosure where the tone is strengthened, amplified, and enriched by resonance and wave reflection. Most musical instruments have a sound box of definite shape and size; the human sound box, however, incorporates both the definite shape and the flexible cavities.

Traditionally, the larynx has been called the human sound box. But once the vocal folds have begun to vibrate, nothing else of much importance takes place in the larynx. Lessac training considers the true voice box to actually comprise two areas: a major adjustable area right above the larynx and in the oral cavity and a major nonadjustable area in the pharynx, the nose, the forehead, and adjacent structures.

When we speak, we exert tonal control and tonal direction in both the flexible and the rigid cavities. *Proper formation of the oral cavity, where to a large extent timbre is created, produces a full-bodied, mature, authoritative, warm, expressive tone.*[5] *Coordinating this action with proper use of the nonadjustable bone-conducting resonating areas adds brilliant, ringing, penetrating, stentorian qualities*. Vocal bone resonance without proper form of the oral cavity becomes tinny, shrill, and strident. Conversely, the best-formed cavity lacking specific bone-conducted resonance cannot make the voice more than a dull and lifeless instrument. Deny either one and the other loses its luster.

Even the rib cage, in the chest cavity (also often mistaken as a principal sound box), will resonate more efficiently and effectively when the vo-

[5]Recall the hand-cupping experiment where wave reflection changes the vocal timbre despite no added resonating surface. Our flexible oral cavity sound box consists of both resonating (teeth and hard palate) and nonresonating (cheeks, tongue, soft palate, uvula) surfaces where both wave-reflection timbre and bone-conducted resonance feed each other.

cal fold vibrations, the oral and nasal cavities, and the forehead are properly used. Instead of moving incorrectly through the throat into the chest, the sound waves travel and transmit through the three major resonating structures—the hard palate, nasal bone, and forehead plus the cranium—and continue on through the spinal vertebrae and the ribs directly into the chest cavity.

Neither the breath nor the diaphragm (or the abdomen) control the action of sound waves (as they reflect through the oral cavity, setting the resonating areas in vibration) any more than the bow or hammers control the sound waves within the cavity of a violin or piano. The diaphragm and the abdominal, intercostal, and back muscles, along with the breathing process, play a vital role in posture, body structure, firmness, alertness, athleticism, physical labor, and the maintenance of a good general condition for all of the body's functions. In voice production, it is the abdominals and intercostals that help send the breath through the trachea and into the larynx in order to initiate vocal-fold vibration; but at this point, the role of the breath has just about accomplished its major task.

CONTROLLABLE AND NONCONTROLLABLE FACTORS

We can consciously train only that which is controllable with awareness. The entire process of originating the embryonic vocal sounds in the larynx is performed without voluntary control or awareness. We do not sense the breath that begins the vibration of the vocal folds, and we certainly do not consciously feel the vocal folds vibrating. The unfelt, unmeasured puff of air is supplied before we register the sensation of sound.

Lessac training values feeling above listening; it exerts control of the breath stream secondarily through the primary control of the sound stream; and, by the way, the primary built-in control over vocal life also exerts a secondary control over the emotions during vocal self-use (more on this last point in Chapters 6, 9, and 10). Let us examine a graphic illustration comparing two Stradivarius instruments—the violin Strad and the human vocal Strad (Figure 2-1):

1. The violinist does not and cannot exert conscious primary control over the sound waves reflecting and transmitting within the violin sound box; however, the human being can and does feel and respond to the focus, conduction, and resonance of the vocal sound system in the flexible sound box and "mask resonators" (the hard palate, cheekbones, nasal bone, and forehead, reaching into the cranium).

2. The hand, bow, and string manipulation are fully and consciously controlled by the violinist; however, the breath-puff and vocal-fold vibration are not consciously and primarily felt or controlled by the performer.

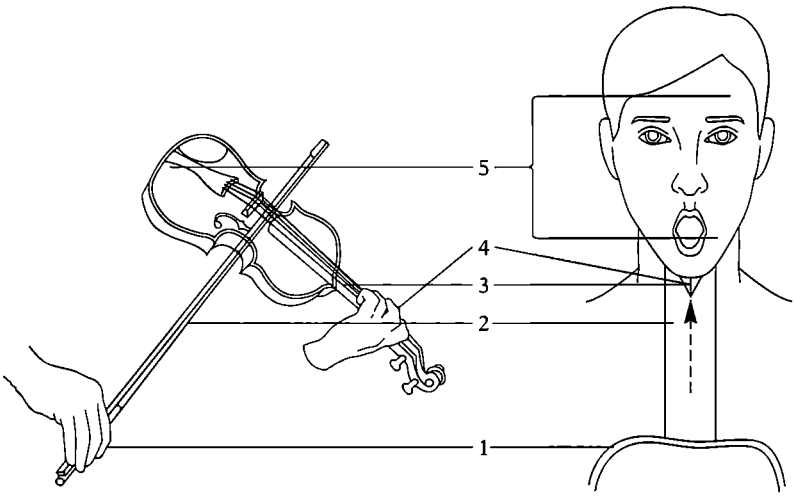


Figure 2-1 A Comparison of Violin and Voice Actions

1. Initial pressure: violin—right hand, direct control; voice—diaphragm, indirect control.
2. Vibrating agent: violin—bow, direct control; voice—breath stream, no direct control.
3. Vibrators: violin—strings, direct control; voice—vocal folds, no direct control.
4. Pitch: violin—left hand, direct control; voice—vocal-fold action and cochlea, indirect control.
5. Resonance: violin—wooden sound box, no direct control; voice—mouth cavity, hard palate, teeth, face, and head bony structure, direct control.

Air and Bone Conduction. Because sound is a molecular action, it requires a substance to carry, or conduct, it. Air is one such conductor. Tiny air molecules, stimulated by an initial vibration, become condensed, then extended (or rarefied), and then condensed again. Thus defined, sound waves (condensed and rarefied air molecules) travel until the molecules reach the eardrum and set it into vibration. This begins the auditory process in the ear. The movement of sound waves through the air to the ear is called "air conduction."

Sound can also be conducted through other media, such as wood, metal, water, bone, and glass. In the human body, bone conduction takes

place principally in the teeth, the hard palate, the nasal bone, the cheekbones, the sinuses, the forehead, and the cranium and secondarily in the spinal vertebrae and the rib cage.

EXPERIMENT 2: AIR AND BONE CONDUCTION

A simple experiment can demonstrate the difference between air and bone conduction.

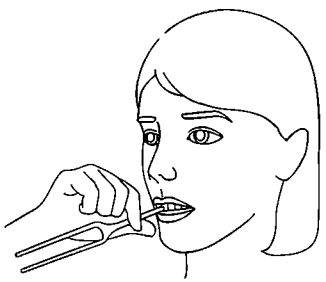


Figure 2-2 Tuning Fork Experiment: Bone Conduction

- Pluck a tuning fork, and hold the vibrating end near your ear. The sound you *hear* is transmitted by air conduction.
- Now pluck the fork again, but this time rest the base against the outside surface of your upper teeth. The sound you *feel* coursing through your teeth, nose, and head is transmitted by bone conduction (Figure 2-2).

A variation on the experiment demonstrates that the outer ear plays no part in bone conduction.

- Place the tuning fork on someone else's teeth. You hear practically nothing, regardless of how close you are, while your partner feels and hears a sustained, brilliant, ringing sound. This indicates that your partner's middle and inner ear structures are stimulated but that she or he is not hearing this sound through the *outer* ear, because you hear nothing through yours. When you place the tuning fork near your ear, you hear what you listen to through the air. But when you place it on your teeth, you hear what you feel through the bone. Both the **kinesthetic**[6] and the auditory cortices of the brain are stimulated by the bone-conducted sound waves—and the sound registers in both without the aid of the outer ear.

OVERRIDING THE OUTER EAR

Hearing, therefore, can arise from vibrations initiated within the body as well as vibrations transmitted by air conduction through the outer ear. To provide another example, a student of mine with a particular accent problem once proclaimed in one of his exercises, "I want to go 'beck' home." I

[6]It is important to note here that *kinesthetics,* which refers primarily to the physical sensation (muscle sense) of motion, is one part of the entire concept of *kinesensics*—a term I coined that encompasses the concepts of *kinematics, kinetics, kinesics, kinesthetics,* and *esthetics.*

told him to say "back" not "beck," and he replied, "I didn't say 'beck,' I said 'beck.'" His ear (and mind) was, at that time, unable to offer effective guidance to his vocalization because it simply could not discriminate between bone-conducted and air-conducted sounds, even after hearing it on tape. It wasn't until he experienced the action kinesthetically that the proper results and response were satisfactorily achieved.

I apply the concept of "overriding the outer ear" so that you may discover that instinctive, built-in control valve for your vocal experiencing system. It simply posits the primacy of innate control through hearing what you feel neurophysically inside the body's environment, rather than waiting to listen to your voice via air conduction. Do not overlook the fact that when you listen to your own voice, your brain interprets it far differently than when you *hear what you feel* during your vocal production. We still hear the inner vibrations, even when both ears are stopped up and outside sounds are inaudible, just as long as the middle and inner ear and one of the auditory nerve branches remain intact.

EXPERIMENT 3: SOMETHING WE'VE ALL DONE

- Block your ears off completely when you speak, and you will hear the inner vibrations even more dynamically and with different timbre than when you listen with unblocked ears. Note, too, that your speaking voice sounds different to another listener than it does to you—hearing a recording of your own voice for the first time highlights this phenomenon.

When we listen to others, our ears are the prime active participants that transmit the sound received through air conduction with total objectivity. Because we kinesensically train ourselves to hear our own voices by means of bone conduction, the outer ear becomes a nonobjective and insufficient agent in judging our own vocal sound.

The ear proves an ineffective instrument for changing deeply inbred vocal and verbal patterns. In other words, when a person has been conditioned to improper speech, the ear (and the mind) reinforces the errors. It adapts itself so well that it can no longer distinguish between the speaker's mistake, discernible through bone conduction, and someone else's correct sound, audible only by air conduction. When, through proper training, one acquires the ability to feel the sound kinesensically, only then does the mind register the new sound and only then does the ear finally become attuned to the correct sound.

I want to reemphasize that to say this is not to deny the natural role of the ear or the value of ear training, which indeed develops sharper and better hearing for external air-conducted sounds. When you listen to your

voice on a recording, your ear is entirely reliable in contributing to an objective judgment. But when you listen to your voice as you produce it, your ear becomes undependable and, in fact, a deceptive guide.

Some Guidelines for Vocal Training

When you work with your vocal experiments:

- *Do not think the sound first!* Such mental control is fickle at best and may very well compound existing vocal problems.
- *Avoid listening in order to judge your vocal sounds!* The new sounds that the ear automatically rejects as strange or awkward are precisely those that may represent training progress.
- *Turn off the outer ear and turn on the inner "feel"!* The perception of these new sensations will lead you to *do* more, and by doing you will diffuse the old and find the new.

With this basic understanding of what constitutes vocal life and how vocal sounds are physically conducted within the body, you are ready to apply this knowledge to two areas that are fundamental to voice training: breathing and posture.

CHAPTER 3

The Duality of Breathing and Posture

The function of breathing determines the structure of posture at the very same time that the function of posture determines the structure of breathing!

Voice and speech reflect our personalities. But they can also exemplify or betray the physical condition of our bodies! Staying in peak condition is vital to vocal life. Illness, pain, fatigue, and stress all take their toll on the quality, amplitude, rhythm, and pitch of the voice.

Nothing contributes more to optimal body condition—and vocal health—than proper breathing and posture. Breathing and posture constitute an essential interdependent duality. If you stand properly, you will breathe well. If you breathe correctly, salutary posture will follow. Breathing **NRG**[1] affects body balance and alignment, distribution of body weight, and the relaxation and appearance of the body. When you stand and breathe properly, you free yourself of unnecessary muscular tensions, aches, and strains. No physical act, speaking and singing included, can be carried out efficiently and pleasurably unless it is supported by healthful breathing and by posture that is responsive to the body's needs. This is as true offstage as it is onstage, but it becomes especially important during performance when speaking occurs simultaneously with a wide range of physical acts and emotional projects that change from moment to moment.

During sleep, we do not inhale very deeply, but in a sleeping posture we normally breathe instinctively and consistently well. During waking hours, however, two significant factors negatively affect our respiratory systems:

1. The universally poor and harmful postures we use to stand, walk, sit, run, and so on
2. Extremely shallow inhaling, often to the point of not breathing at all

[1]eNeRGy—just say the consonants. I use this as a trademark and to identify the dynamics of the body NRG states and qualities presented here.

Aside from moments of fear, guilt, anxiety, and apprehension, which affect our breathing rhythms, most of our breathing is "passive." Unconsciously, we tend to suspend breathing while listening, concentrating, reading, conversing, and so on.

Breathing becomes active and instinctive, however, when:

the body assumes a posture that naturally forms a single convex dorsal (or back) curve, such as when sitting, squatting, leaning, wafting, dancing, golfing, conducting, skiing, sculpting, crouching, and so on;

the body is balancing or performing a "spherical" action, such as rolling, rocking, or tumbling;

inhaling occurs through the natural and spontaneous self-absorbing actions of pleasure smelling,[2] pleasure sighing, yawning, and laughing.

The Mechanics of Breathing

To understand how posture and breathing complement each other, you must understand the breathing process. The primary purpose of breathing is to provide the body with oxygen and to carry away its waste products, especially carbon dioxide, through the passage of air in and out of the lungs. The second purpose is to feed breath puffs to the vibrating vocal folds to produce vocal sound. Before we discuss these two purposes, however, let's try a simple experiment to experience "active" and "instinctive" breathing.

EXPERIMENT 1: PLEASURE SMELLING

- Imagine that just in front of you is a beautiful, pleasant-smelling flower. The aroma attracts you, and you squat down to get a better whiff. Cup the flower in both hands, and smell its lovely fragrance. It smells so good that you want to inhale more deeply each time you smell it. Feel your whole torso fill with the fragrance of that flower.
- Stand up, and find another fragrant flower just in front of you. Cup your hands around it, hold it near your face, and smell its fragrance (Figure 3-1). Feel the same expansive filling of your torso as when you inhaled the fragrance of the first flower while squatting down. Smell the flower several times, each time enjoying the fragrance more.

[2]The pleasure and joyful action of smelling a flower's perfume or the pleasurable appreciation of a contented sigh uses the body and affects the muscles differently than when smelling an ugly, foul odor or sighing out of grief, sadness, or anxiety.

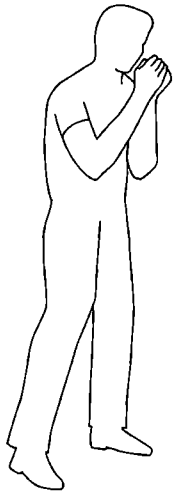


Figure 3-1 Flower / Pleasure-Smelling Posture

Note that there is little noticeable body action—no push-pull-lift action of your belly, chest (thoracic cavity), sides, or shoulders. Instead, you feel the gentle but firm inflation and expansion of your intercostals (the side muscles between the ribs), back, and chest. You should have the feeling of a combined, complete breath experience—whether the expansion travels only to the lower-back energy center through an ample, small breath in a squatting position; whether it continues to travel to the mid-back through a satisfying half-breath in a bowing position; or whether it continues to travel to the latissimus muscles (below the shoulder blades) through a full-measured complete breath in an upright position. All three actions would manifest your exhilarated pleasure and appreciation of the flower's fragrance; all of them would represent natural, optimal, healthy breathing behavior; and all of them would function as an ideal familiar event for proper posture and the breathing process.

Inhalation begins when the brain signals the diaphragm (a muscular, membranous partition separating the chest and abdominal cavities) to contract—an action that lowers and flattens the muscle. With this action, the thoracic cavity increases in size, causing the density of the air in the lungs to be reduced. Because the air pressure within the lungs is now less than the air pressure on the outside, new air rushes into the lungs through the trachea and the bronchial tubes to restore the balance (Figure 3-2*a* and *b*).

During exhalation, the process is reversed. The diaphragm relaxes and returns to its original position. With this, the chest cavity is reduced and the lungs are compressed. The increasing density in the lungs moves breath out through the bronchial tubes, trachea, larynx, throat, and, finally, the mouth or nose, again to equalize with the atmospheric pressure (Figure 3-2*c*).

In full inhalation, and in breathing to produce sound, the dimensions of the thoracic cavity increase in all directions, most notably in the back. This adds extension to the rib cage position, thus providing added leverage, which helps to control the breath stream. There is little or no movement in the upper chest—just an energy feel—and there is no raising of the shoulders. The thoracic movement happens in the moveable ribs.

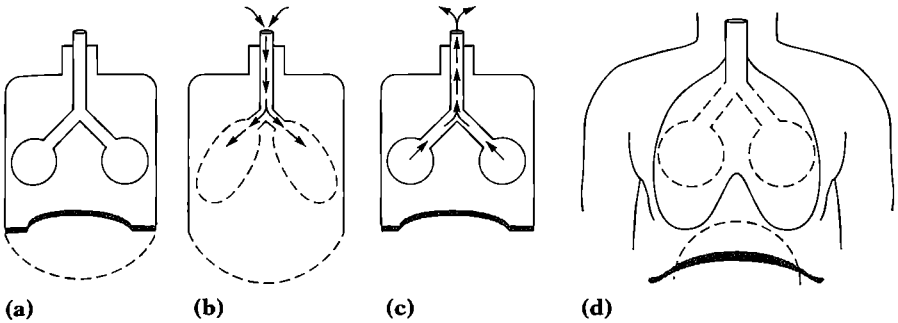


Figure 3-2 An Experimental Demonstration of the Breathing Mechanism

(a) The bottle cavity represents the chest cavity; the rubber stretched across the bottom, the diaphragm; the balloons, the lungs; and the glass tubes leading into the balloons, the trachea and bronchial tubes. *(b)* As the rubber is pulled down, the bottle cavity increases, the balloons expand, and air rushes into them through the tubes. *(c)* When the rubber returns to position, the bottle cavity decreases and the air is sent out of the balloons. *(d)* The human trachea, lungs, and diaphragm.

EXPERIMENT 2: PLEASURE HUMMING

- Close your eyes, and begin to quietly hum an *N* sound, with your lips and teeth gently parted. Turn the hum off while continuing a soft, silent breath flow through the nose. Maintain this tongue position, and **practice** gentle, smooth in-and-out breathing while your face expresses benign, smiling contentment.
- Repeat the process with the *NG* hum. Turn the hum off, and, again, feel the gentle sigh of escaping air through the nose while maintaining a smiling, contented facial expression.

For the *N* sound, the front of the tongue gently touches the upper gum ridge and the front palate; for the *NG* sound, the back of the tongue gently touches the soft palate. This gentle contact of the tongue to the palate, with the teeth gently parted, is the most comfortable and comforting way to breathe through the nose.

Quiet, smooth, and gentle breathing is the body's most hygienic and energy-gathering way to breathe, whether through the mouth or nose. Such almost imperceptible and slow-motion inhale-exhale breathing brings on the feeling of rising resilient liveliness on the inhalation and level floating on the slight pause before returning to settling down like a feather on the exhalation. It is the very essence of the relaxing and pleasurable "sigh breathing."

Breathing must feel good and be fulfilling and vitalizing. The quiet,

easy, rhythmic breath of "satisfactory appreciation" is the best and most esthetic way to fuel, feed, and accommodate breathing energy so that inspiration (inhaling) truly "inspires" and exhalation truly relaxes.

Breathing through the nose, especially outdoors (particularly in windy, smoggy, dusty weather), brings cleaner, warmer air to the lungs than breathing through the mouth. Nevertheless, the fact is that talking and maintaining smooth utterance require us to breathe through the mouth. Clearly, during normal speech, stopping to breathe through the nose would only distract the tongue and lips and even the mind from their proper business of comfortable everyday speech (involving both consonants and vowels).

Also, communication becomes ineffectual when phrasing, inflection, intonation, and rhythm are thwarted or disturbed by open-gap breath[3] interruptions. Moreover, the spontaneous tempo and involvement of conversation often prevents quiet, controlled breathing through the nose. This explains why, particularly on stage, the noise and character of forced nose breathing is not esthetic and negatively affects the actor's performance. So, although mouth breathing outdoors or in poorly ventilated environments is not the most hygienic, wholesome, or esthetic practice, it is the necessary choice during the stream of involved talking. Vocal life does, however, appreciate all the help it can get. During pauses, breaks, or listening moments, you may and can return reflexively to nose breathing. Otherwise, mouth breathing can become labored, make the mouth dry or cause panting, or forcibly (psychophysically) impose an unintended change in the emotional climate.

Somewhere between the fundamental acts of inhaling and exhaling lie the harmonics of crying and laughing, fear and joy, anticipation and astonishment, gentle blowing and whispering, sobbing and sighing, disappointment and ecstasy! Mastery of correct breathing is, therefore, an essential tool that the actor uses to shape and subtly shade the interpretation of emotional moments. Interpretive breath cues or signals and all other voiceless means of expressing, communicating, or responding may be considered **behavior-affective,** or "emotivated," breathing.

Behavior-Affective Breathing

Actors often use emotivated breathing while performing on stage, whether as an interpretive pause or as a gasp of astonishment. However,

[3]*Open-gap breathing:* intrusive, often noisy, jerky nose-inhaling that disengages and disturbs smooth utterance and communicating expressiveness.

the actor often does not fully understand emotivated breathing as an extension of the familiar event to new and freshly unique situations. The following explorations are meant to remove the self-consciousness we feel in dealing with such natural body emotions as laughing, sobbing, shivering, sighing, crying, trembling, and quivering. All of these body emotions have a wholesome effect if we learn how to use them, with proper emotivated breathing, through the **modality** of the familiar event. Have fun with these explorations; treat them as actor games and as possible future familiar events.

EXPLORATION I: BEHAVIOR-AFFECTIVE BREATHING THROUGH THE SENSE OF SMELL

To experiment and demonstrate what we've been discussing, register the quality of breath produced by your instinctive reactions to the following situation:

- You are at home late at night and, suddenly, smell leaking gas. How will your breathing rhythm respond to the emergency? Will it become a quick, darting smelling action? Or might it become a heaving, pounding fear-induced breathing?

Now compare the varying qualities of breathing (related through the sense of smell) as you freely associate with the following, very different images:

- It is a balmy summer day. Smell the fresh-cut grass and the perfume of flowers in the breeze. Feel and perceive the body's intrinsic sensations. Can this smelling action serve as a "good-feeling" familiar event for perfectly natural breathing behavior? Do you feel a rising buoyancy as you inhale?
- You're doing the weekend shopping, and as you go from store to store, you take in the aroma of rich, freshly ground coffee . . . then the rancid frying oil of a fast-food restaurant . . . next the smell of recently baked bread at a French bakery . . . followed by the distinctive smell of a fish market. Do you sense a change in your breathing rhythms and breath quality? Do you hold your breath or, perhaps, breathe through your mouth to avoid an unpleasant smell?
- Now visualize and smell the scent of gentle rain . . . the first fall of snow . . . the morning dew . . . mist and fog. Do you find yourself taking smooth short breaths? easy half-breaths? What are your facial expressions? What part of your innermost being seems to respond instinctively?
- You're in a crowded elevator with no air conditioning and you have to respond to other people's odors. Are you perhaps breathing and trying *not* to breathe at the same time? How shallow is your inhaling?
- You're driving on a highway in the summer with the windows open, and you suddenly pass from fresh open fields to several miles of swampy industrial waste and garbage. Are there changes in your breathing rhythm? amplitude? intensity?

Learn to become aware of and appreciate the different behavior rhythms and facial expressions, the contrasted reactions, and the varying qualities of breath that accompany emotivated response through the *creative* use of the sense of smell.

EXPLORATION II: BEHAVIOR-AFFECTIVE BREATHING THROUGH THE SIGH

A spontaneous sigh can be a most beneficial, fulfilling breathing experience. Emotionally, it can also express contentment, deep disappointment, terrible grief, or exquisite pleasure. Discover these differences by practicing a variety of sighs, each with its own expressive purpose, its own nuance and shading. Respond especially to the smooth breath rhythm of the easy, relaxed sigh.

- Feel the sigh as you breathe in; feel it as you breathe out. Make no mouth sounds except easy, gentle breathing primarily through the mouth. Is it gentle? smooth? easy? pleasing? Is it instinctively natural?
- Combine pleasure smelling (of a spring flower) on the inhalation with a silent pleasure sigh on the exhalation—all of it through relaxed, silent, smooth mouth breathing.
- Feel the sigh of sadness, disappointment, discouragement, doubt. Experience the sigh of deep contentment, hope, affection, pleasure giving, dreaminess.

The pleasure sigh induces perfectly smooth, natural body breathing and becomes a familiar event for organic instruction in breathing training; the sad or troubled chest-heaving sigh is definitely not such a candidate.

EXPLORATION III: BEHAVIOR-AFFECTIVE BREATHING THROUGH SHIVERING

Experience the different breathing responses to various emotions that play into and express themselves through shivering. Situational contexts for emotivated shivering may include the following:

- You are out in the freezing cold, fairly bundled up, but it is too cold to stay out very long. You begin to shiver. In this, and the next three situations, check out any accompanying breathy or vocal effects. How would you describe those expressive sounds?
- You are again out in the freezing cold but this time underdressed. You start almost immediately to "shiver breathe." Explore this type of breathing with both your nose and mouth. Do you find yourself using staccato, or pulsating, breaths?
- You have just come out of the water after a bracing, refreshing swim. The air is a bit breezy and just cool enough to induce mild shivering.
- You are leaving a very fine, comfortable, dry-hot, wood-scented sauna,

and you plunge into the cool clear waters of a mountain lake. Feel the tingling shiver go through your completely relaxed body.

- Practice shivering and breathing through your lips, letting your teeth chatter. Next, change the shivering to trembling. Is it a different feeling? Describe the difference to yourself by comparing them physically and by feeling them emotively.
- Now shiver and breathe while your lips, teeth, and tongue make the consonant sounds *F, H, S,* or *SH.* Make the same consonant sounds to initiate and gradually arouse a crying jag; a laughing jag; body pain. Now try to *hold back* laughter or crying. If you cry or laugh by trying *not* to cry or laugh, what quality of quiver, tremble, or tremor do you discover and experience?

Too many times onstage we catch ourselves holding our breath as we experience emotion—or in order to *produce* emotion. It should be clear by now that although pleasure smelling and pleasure sighing are natural familiar events for learning the proper and naturally organic breathing process, all the other creative behavior-affective breathing actions—smelling, sighing, shivering—are also familiar events through breathing that *connect* us to the truthful expression of many different emotions and characterizations. Such breathing awareness relaxes us and also energizes us, keeping our inner sensing mechanisms alert, fluid, and ready to go in any direction.

The Posture of Breathing

The chest should never be unnaturally puffed out during inhalation; in fact, it should be at a comfortable, nearly full expansion at all times (Figure 3-3). "Chest expansion" means the natural inflation of the chest, not a change in its position or girth; neither does it mean lifting the front of the chest while contracting the back. The chest cavity, like any other cavity, has a front, back, bottom, and sides, and, like a balloon, all these parts must expand radially and radiantly[4] during inhalation.

The explorations and experiments in this chapter should guide and help you organically experience **optimal** rather than maximal[5] expansion, extension, and use of the entire chest cavity without exertion or puffing. This is true for the back, chest, sides, abdomen, shoulders, neck, and head—all of which significantly support the heart, lungs, throat, and diaphragm as well. As Figure 3-4 illustrates, organically improved body

[4]See "Radiancy NRG" in *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body* by Arthur Lessac (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance, 1981).
[5]*Optimal:* the best, most favorable, most salutary condition, degree, or amount; "optimal" (and "optimum") always implies "quality" and is never fixed or finite. *Maximal:* the greatest possible quantity, degree, or amount for a particular situation; "maximum" is fixed or finite.

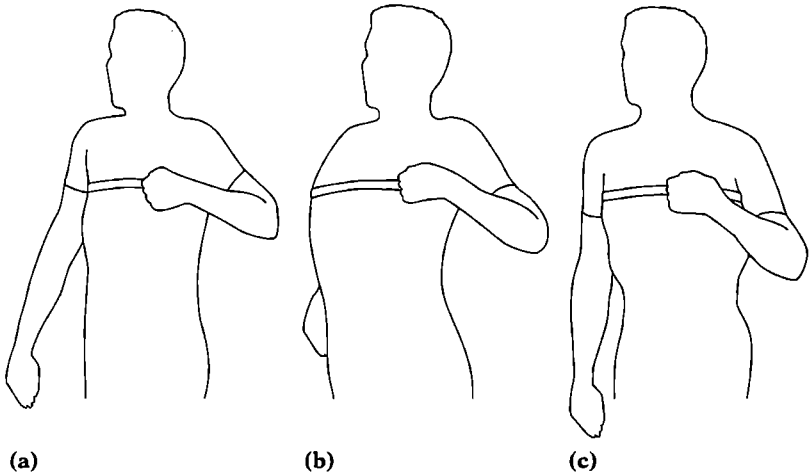


Figure 3-3 The Effects of Breathing and Posture on Body Measurements

(a) Normal chest measurement with improper posture—33¼". *(b)* With improper chest expansion, the measurement is 36". *(c)* With proper breathing and posture, the normal and expanded measurements are almost the same—39" to 40". These measurements were all taken on the author.

measurements are achieved by proper breathing and posture; they are natural attributes that may have remained unrevealed due to improper breathing and posture. Unlocked knees, an elongated spine, a reduced waistline, a naturally expanded thorax, a full broad back, and an extended shoulder line (free of shoulder-blade protrusion or hollow chest) allow the body to look as it was meant to look—pliantly upright and strong, yet relaxed and graceful, with the back exhibiting a fully extended, soft, slender elliptical curve, rather than a straight, rigid, or multiple-curved spine line. With more room inside the chest cavity at all times, such vital organs as the heart, lungs, trachea, and larynx will be less crowded, and the whole body will feel lighter and more comfortable.

Unfortunately, many of us, young and old alike, have taken or been given as models the stiff look of the soldier at parade attention; the puffy, heavily hunched look of the improperly trained wrestler or weight lifter; or the sculpturesque, thrust-bellied stance of the old-fashioned opera singer (Figure 3-5). Perhaps few people today would imitate these examples completely or consciously, but even partial imitation is harmful and to be avoided.

With good posture, you will never stand with your knee joints locked or with tense thigh muscles pushed to the rear, forcing the pelvis back-

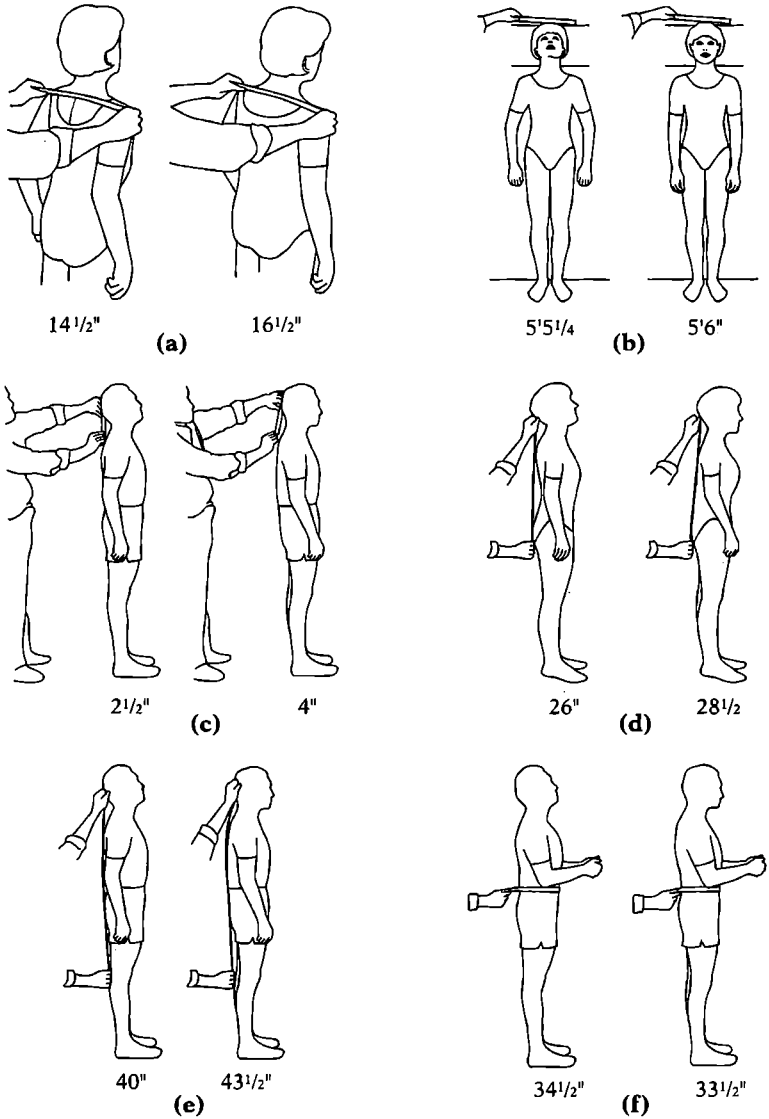


Figure 3-4 Other Body Measurements Affected by Breathing and Posture

(a) Shoulders: poor posture 14½", proper posture 16½". *(b)* Full upright posture: poor posture 5' 5¼", proper posture 5' 6". *(c)* Cervical spine (neck): poor posture 2½", proper posture 4". *(d)* Spine to coccyx: poor posture 26", proper posture 28½". *(e)* Spine to knee hollows: poor posture 40", proper posture 43½". *(f)* Waist: poor posture 34½", proper posture 33½".

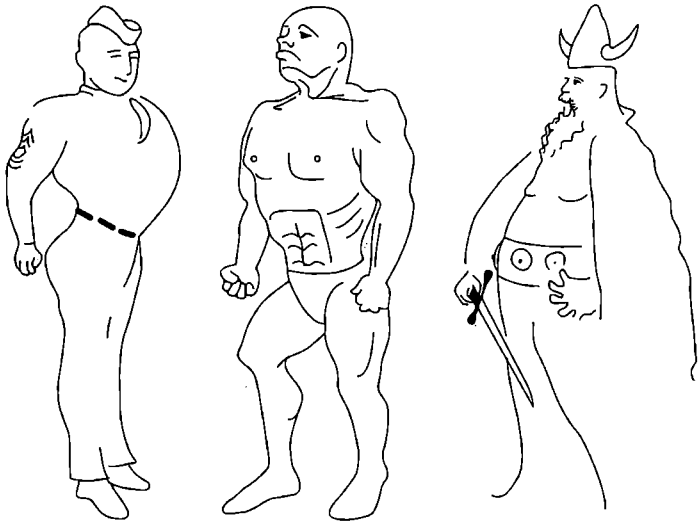


Figure 3-5 Three Incorrect Versions of So-Called Correct Posture

ward and thus shortening and stiffening the lower spine. Proper posture will prevent you from (1) sucking in or pushing out the abdominal wall, (2) lifting and puffing out the chest, (3) contracting the upper back and narrowing the shoulder blades with ungainly protrusion, and (4) having the back muscles of the neck so constricted that your head is forced backward, with your chin pointing forward and up.

With good posture and breathing, you will look taller if you are short and less gangly if you are tall, and you will certainly feel stronger and more flexible. Fortunately, proper breathing and posture are relatively easy to achieve. Demonstrate this to yourself by finding your own innumerable familiar events. You can be your own teacher. Creative practice[6] over several weeks will build the desirable functioning into instinctive, continuing experience. You will discover that the body breathes well naturally while comfortably bending over, squatting, kneeling, crouching, jumping, skiing, sitting forward, or lying in a supine position. In these positions, the muscles fall naturally into the relationships that counteract faulty conditioning. Observe what happens when you spontaneously inhale and exhale in any of these activities or postures, and register the sen-

[6]Most of our practice is rote. "Creative practice," however, is living, or vital, practice (for a detailed definition of the term *practice,* see the Glossary). In this same vein, I avoid the use of the word *exercise* and prefer, instead, the terms *experiment* and *explore.*

sations. Observe particularly the physical crescent-like feeling of the stomach, the sides, and the lower back expanding; then, apply these sense-memory familiar events as organic instructions to the body to reproduce and reexperience them while standing upright.

The following checklist and Figure 3-6 enumerate and delineate the optimal body positions in attaining good, vital upright posture:

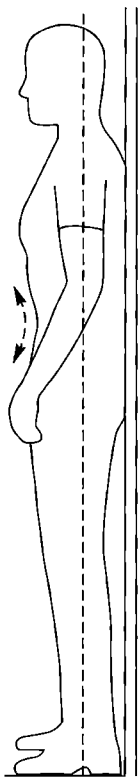


Figure 3-6 Proper Upright Posture

- The head is *not* up against the wall and thus does not rigidly shorten the cervical spine; note too that the heels practically touch the wall.
- The crown of the head is the highest part of the body.
- The head is in an easy-swiveling position.
- The chin is level—never raised, pulled down, or protruded forward.
- The back of the neck and head extend antigravitationally upward.
- The front of the neck is always loose—never stretched or tight.
- The shoulders slope somewhat forward.
- The entire back is expanded, with optimal space between the shoulder blades and with an overall thoracic expansion.
- The spine makes easy contact with the wall from the pelvis to the upper back.
- The pelvis gently curves forward, and the abdominal wall gently curves inward and upward as part of the parenthesis-like curve in the back.
- The hands fall a bit in front of the thighs.
- The thighs face forward and are loose.
- The knees are always unlocked and loose.
- The calf muscles are loose.
- The heels practically touch the wall, with the body resting lightly on both the heels and soles.

- The pelvis rolls gently forward into the thighs and appears to connect with the groin and abdomen in its "inward and upward" NRG flow. Thus, the pelvic motion helps form a crescent-like concavity in the abdominal area from the pubic bone to about two inches above the navel. This crescent, which is concave in front and convex in the lower spine area, helps to secure and maintain the parenthesis-like elliptical curve posture (the *C*-curve).

As your body responds to accommodate the unfamiliar, yet good-feeling expanding action of natural breathing, it will begin to assume the position shown in Figure 3-6. Then the initial feeling of strangeness will diminish and evaporate precisely because it does "feel so good." The checklist that accompanies the illustration, outlines the characteristics of the posture that accompany proper breathing. Any departure from the checklist items will, no doubt, lead to improper posture and improper breathing while in an upright position.

Like bending and squatting, many common activities tend to break the unnatural posture patterns that inhibit natural breathing. A batter poising to swing, a tennis player executing a backhand swing, a boxer looking for an opening, a musician playing the violin, a conductor leading an orchestra, a golfer bending over to tee off, a swimmer assuming the diving position, a porter mopping, a gardener hoeing—all of these people, in all probability, breathe naturally and properly until their given activity ceases and they stand upright again, when their breathing and posture may very well fall once more under the control of habit-patterned behavior. In some of these activities, the participant breathes naturally even in a semiupright position as part of the movement. By using the sense memory of the semiupright feeling as a familiar-event training model, you can retain the comfortable expansion and extension of your shoulders, back, and pelvis while adjusting your head, neck, knees, and legs as you return to a complete upright posture.

To perform their sports, competitive gymnasts, swimmers, and divers must combine the optimal chest expansion of natural breathing with optimal body extension. Because of their training, they often carry over good breathing and posture into everyday life. But good posture and breathing can be had by anyone—by simply learning to recognize and reproduce at will the sense memory of natural breathing.

Breath and Sound

Before moving on to the experiments, let me emphasize that although natural breathing is a necessary support for good voice and speech dynamics,

the breath stream should be understood as a distinctly different and separate current from the vocal sound stream. Remember that vocal sound is amplified and strengthened by resonance and wave reflection. Being windlike, breath tends to obscure or disperse the sound waves, creating a breathy, forced tonal quality. If the breath stream were really the same as the sound stream and traveled at the rate of sound, it would, as Dr. Douglas Stanley points out, "have to blow more than ten times as hard as the worst hurricane."[7] For beautiful singing tones or beautifully projected speaking tones, conscious or impelled exhalation must be kept to an irreducible minimum.

Today, as in the past, the technique of concentrating on the diaphragm for vocal tone control is often advocated. The claim seems to be that with the imposition of conscious breath pushing, you will be sure to sing and speak better. Supporters of this position have observed an association, but the cause and effect have been turned around; although the abdominal muscles are indeed involved, if you *feel* yourself singing and speaking well, you will be breathing optimally, easily, and with top efficiency. The best tones will be felt when a *minimum* of breath is used—an amount so minimal as to deny conscious use of it. Strenuous pumping or pushing of the diaphragm or the abdominal muscles can have little to do with strength, brilliance, amplitude, projection, or tonal quality. Not only does straining cause a noneconomical waste of "breath fuel," it also prevents the balanced and controlled use of reserve and residual breath for special vocal artistic and dramatic effects.

The diaphragm and other respiratory muscles, as well as the whole body, must be maintained always at peak condition, but the dispersant stream of breath must never be permitted to interfere with the stream of sound. *Remember that breath control does not regulate voice production; rather, voice production regulates breath control.* Put another way, voice is not vocalized breath. The only direct role of the breath stream in the speaking or singing voice is to help initiate the vibration of the vocal folds; the role of the breath puff ends as soon as sound begins. Even voiceless consonants (and whispering) are *optimally* experienced and articulated with the most minimum breath use.

Natural Breathing Experiments

The following experiments will help you feel the natural, instinctive breathing function and physically sense it as food, energy, and power for

[7]Douglas Stanley, *Your Voice: Applied Science of Vocal Art,* revised edition (New York: Pitman 1950), 3.

the body. While doing the experiments, breathe freely and easily; do not *consciously* try to breathe correctly or do anything unusual or difficult. You will find instinctive inhalation and exhalation in these postures comfortable and natural, even if they seem strange and different from what you usually feel in an upright position. Take careful note of the various action sensations that accompany these experiments. Remember these sensations. Associate them with a natural activity you enjoy as a familiar event, and experience them each time as though you were realistically engaged in this activity.

EXPERIMENT 3: FLOATING, SWAYING, AND WAFTING

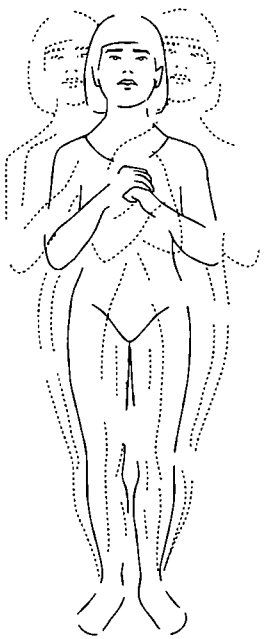


Figure 3-7 Floating, Swaying, and Wafting

- In an upright position, with your eyes closed, find yourself gently floating, wafting, or swaying from side to side; don't bend your body, just tilt it gracefully in slow motion (Figure 3-7). Now waft slightly forward and backward, and then float circularly, in a conical fashion. Can you sense yourself meditating while miraculously "spinning" through inner space? The more slowly you waft and float on the outside, the vaster your inner space will feel and the speedier you will spin through it.
- While floating, wafting, and swaying in an upright position (from side to side, forward and backward, or circularly), always test for quiet, smooth breathing; breathe gently and quietly through your nose while the front of your tongue softly blankets the velvety lining of the hard palate and your lips and teeth rest gently apart. Feel free to inhale and exhale softly and almost imperceptibly through your mouth. Inhaling and exhaling should feel like a slow-motion, self-satisfying sigh—a soft sigh reflecting a feeling of appreciation, contentment, serene meditation. Try floating and swaying with your eyes open as well as closed, and feel free to alternate your inhaling and exhaling through your nose and mouth as part of your exploring.
- When you breathe in, feel yourself fueling and feeding and vitalizing your body. As you sense the distribution of breath energy throughout your body, trace its movement to different parts and limbs; feel the breath NRG flowing in the veins, arteries, nerves, muscles, and bone cells into and through the pores and outer surfaces. As you track the breath NRG perceived through

the bioneural feeling process, you will sense a feel of inner rhythm, inner equilibrium, inner potential, inner visualizing. The slower and farther you waft and wave in any direction, the slower, longer, quieter, and gentler will be the "inspired breath"—an inhalation that literally *inspires* the body, both viscerally and esthetically. As you coordinate your body wafting with soft, rhythmic inhaling and gentle, quiet exhaling, you will begin to experience a more sophisticated awareness of the rhythm and balance feel of breath NRG.

EXPERIMENT 4: SUPINE POSITION

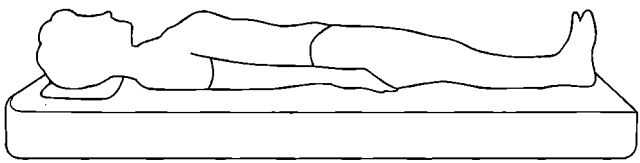


Figure 3-8 Supine Position

- Lie on your back on a firm mattress, a pad, or a blanket.
- Visualize yourself in a very large bathtub filled to the top with water and feel yourself weightless, floating, with every muscle loose and soft; your whole body should feel as if all gravity were eliminated. (Corroborate these feelings the next time you take your luxury bath.)
- Gently "yawn-stretch" your body: make it as long as possible from the bottom of your heels to the crown of your head, with the back of your neck fully extended and your head weightlessly touching the supporting surface with absolutely no feeling of tension in your throat. When beginning the experiment, if you wish, place a rubber pad or a book (approximately an inch thick) under your head (Figure 3.8).
- In this supine position, keep your knees loose enough so that your knees and calves remain elevated from the supporting surface without actively raising them. Doing so will allow the pelvis to slide forward just enough to relax the small of the back against the supporting surface and allow you to feel the full support of the abdominal and lower lumbar-sacral "crescent centers." Fully expand the rest of your back so that the shoulders, rounded gently and comfortably, do not touch the supporting surface. (When the

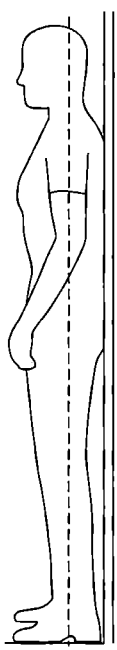


Figure 3-9 Upright Position

spine is properly elongated in the upright position, the shoulders should slope naturally down and somewhat forward.)

- Observe how your body feels in the supine position (see Figure 3-8). Is it comfortably relaxed and breathing naturally? Have you achieved an optimal posture in this supine position? Is it a position of body alignment you would also like to achieve while standing (Figure 3-9)?
- Now turn your attention to the natural breathing process in the supine position. When you breathe in, your abdominal muscles (just below your rib cage) swell out gently; when you breathe out, your abdominal muscles go in. This in-and-out motion accompanies every breath rhythmically and quietly. The intercostal muscles near your waistline also gently expand. Memorize the action-sensation of the movements you feel in these areas. Do the same in the prone position (on your stomach), and feel the gentle, vital expansion of your sides and the small of your back. Feel them as familiar events.
- Do the same experiment in a squat position.
- Then stand up and apply these familiar events to reproduce these sensations as you breathe quietly (see Figure 3.9).

Do not be discouraged if at first in the upright position you find that your abdominal wall moves inward during inhalation and outward during exhalation—the exact opposite of the actions you observed while lying down. Simply lie down again and observe once more the easy, natural breathing configuration; memorize and register the feeling of the action

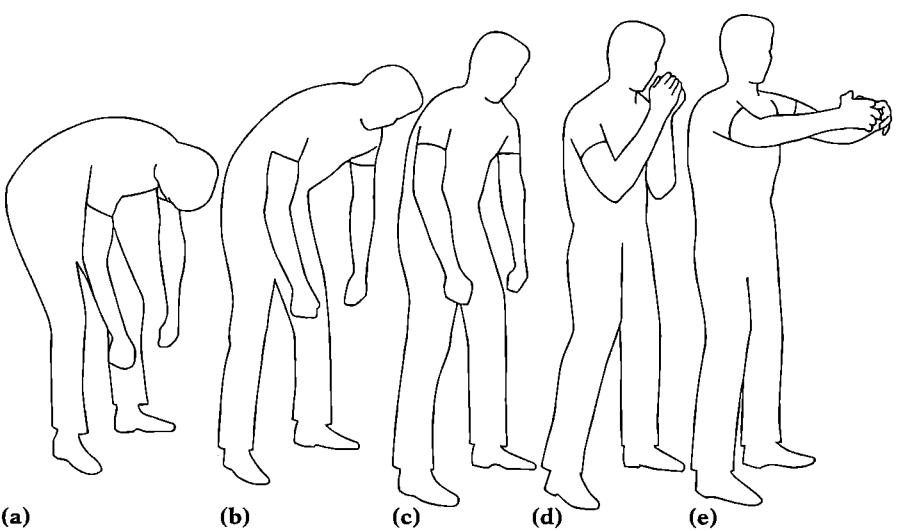


Figure 3-10 Bend-over Series

that produced it as a familiar event; then stand again and *re*produce the action with the assistance of the familiar event. Do this three or four times; then proceed to the next experiment.

EXPERIMENT 5: BEND-OVER SERIES

FULL BEND-OVER

- Bend over from the hips so that the top of your head falls below your waistline. Your body should form a deep *C*-curve, with your arms and hands hanging loosely and comfortably about six to eight inches from the ground and your knees slightly bent (Figure 3-10*a*).
- Inhale easily and naturally without the slightest lifting of the body above the waist.
- Memorize the action-sensation so that you will be able to repeat it when standing upright: your side muscles will expand all around to the small of the back and, at the same time, your abdominal wall will expand, as if you were pushing against the circumference of a belt. Think of the expansion of the entire waistline as filling up the bottom of the breath bucket.
- Exhale, and re-experience the experiment several times.

HALF BEND-OVER

- From the full bend-over position, form a more extended *C*-curve by raising your body until your forehead, still hanging loosely and easily, is about five inches above waist level (Figure 3-10*b*).
- Inhale easily and naturally.
- Memorize the action-sensation of further upward expansion, now moving up into the lower back area just above the sides, so that it, too, can be carried over to the upright position. Exhale easily and smoothly.
- Rehearse this part of the experiment several times. Register and program your familiar events.

QUARTER BEND-OVER

- From the half bend-over position, float your body upward into a golfer's putting position, or until your chin is about ten to twelve inches above your waist (Figure 3-10*c*).
- Inhale easily and naturally.
- Memorize the action-sensation of expansion now moving through the upper back under the armpits (or at about the bra line) and forward into the chest. Think of the expansion of the entire upper back and chest as filling the breath bucket toward the top.
- Exhale and repeat this experiment several times.

If you do not immediately feel this expansion progressing laterally and upward, tie a string around your chest just under the armpits across the pectoral muscles. Feel the gentle pressure against the string during inhalation while taking note of the crescent-like formation of the abdominal area.

ALMOST UPRIGHT POSITION

- Unbend your knees, but leave them flexible enough to jiggle back and forth an inch or two. Keep the pelvis curving into your thighs to create a slightly convex curve in the entire lower back area; the abdomen will become gently firm and crescent-like. Now float your upper body up antigravitationally, as if it were suspended from a string. Keep your shoulders expanded and extended forward over your thighs, and bow your head and neck lightly while the rest of your body comes to an upright position.
- Cup your hands, and raise them to about two inches from your nose, with your upper arms touching the pectoral muscles. As if holding a flower, bow your head a bit to inhale the fragrance (Figure 3-10*d*).
- Inhale the imagined fragrance realistically.
- Memorize the action-sensation of the expansion starting from the abdominal wall; moving through the side muscles around to the small of the back (the bottom of the breath bucket); then up the lower and mid-back into the muscles under the armpits; and around into the chest, which completes the sensation of filling the rest of the breath bucket.

Note that the chest really expands from back to front. Because it is not lifted or puffed out unnaturally, there should be no strain or discomfort in the neck, shoulders, or back. Observe that your position is almost upright.

FULL UPRIGHT POSITION

- Extend the back of your neck upward, from the flower-smelling position, until the back of the crown of your head is the highest part of the body, your chin is level, and the front of your neck is soft. Visualize and feel a fully extended (very slender) parenthesis-like curve starting from the base of your head right down to the hollows of your knees.[8] Hold your hands easily in a rounded, weightless circle in front and inhale easily and naturally (Figure 3-10*e*). Exhale, and repeat this experiment using a pleasure sigh.
- Repeat the complete expansion of natural breathing as it felt from the beginning to the end of the bend-over series and you should be breathing correctly in the proper upright posture, especially if you use the familiar event of inhaling the flower's perfume.

[8]Visualize that your spine, at the coccyx, bifurcates, or branches, through the hamstring muscles to the inner hollows of the knees.

SUMMARY

In all of these experiments, the action-sensations emphasize back expansion rather than chest heaving or lifting. The back thus expanded feels strong and powerful. It moves the arms a bit forward and gives the entire body a feeling of better overall balance. This action follows the law of forward direction: breathe with your back and everything molds gently forward; breathe with your chest and everything moves undesirably backward.

EXPERIMENT 6: DIVING, OR BROAD-JUMP, POSITION

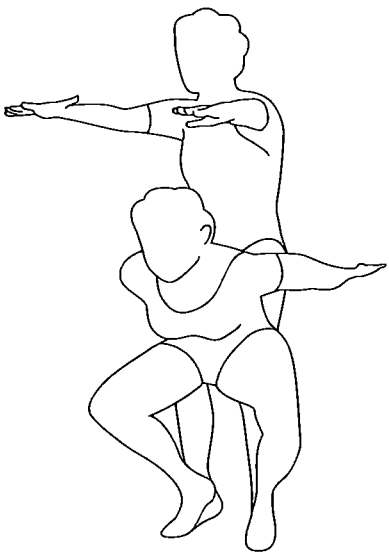


Figure 3-11 Diving, or Broad-Jump, Position

- Stand upright with your arms stretched forward at shoulder height; your entire body, especially your knees, should feel loose and free.
- While inhaling, swing your arms speedily and energetically down and back; at the same time, bend your knees into a jumping, diving, or squatting position. Keep your buttocks rolled inward toward your thighs and your face up, and stay alertly on your toes (Figure 3-11).
- Hold this position, and your breath, long enough to memorize the strong action-sensation you will get from the firm, dynamic crescent in your abdominal and side muscles (the bottom of the breath bucket) as you swing into the squatting position while inhaling. Do this experiment several times.

EXPERIMENT 7: CROUCHING POSITION

- While on your toes, squat down, and place your left forearm just above your left knee and the knuckles of your loosely clenched right fist on the floor between your spread knees to maintain balance (Figure 3-12*a*).
- Inhale easily and naturally.
- Memorize the action-sensation of expansion spreading in the back.
- Exhale quietly, and repeat this experiment two or three times; then reverse the positions of your right and left arms and repeat. Place both hands in loosely clenched fists on the floor between your knees, and repeat this experiment (Figure 3-12*b*).

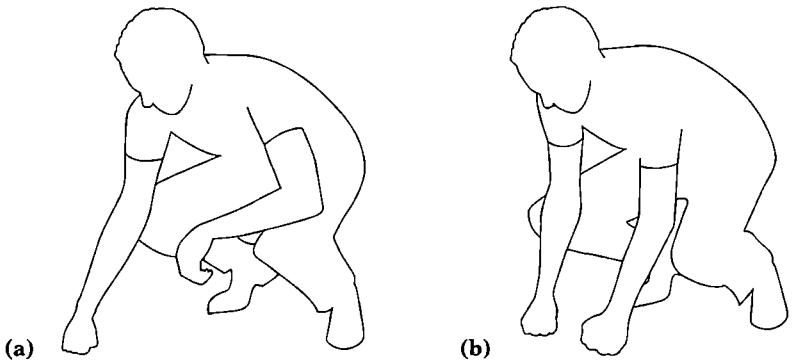


Figure 3-12 Crouching Position

• Stand upright and reproduce the action-sensation of back expansion as you inhale. You may need to let your shoulders relax and extend buoyantly into shoulder-high rounded arms to accommodate this expansion.

EXPERIMENT 8: PUSH-UP POSITION

• Raise your knees about six inches off the ground and balance on your hands and toes; keep your knees somewhat bent and flexible and the pelvis rounding out the lower end of the spinal *C*-curve as shown in Figure 3-13.

• Inhale easily and naturally.

• Memorize (1) the action-sensation of expansion in the entire back area and all the way down into the lowest spine and pelvic region and (2) the comfortable, firm crescent-like feel of the abdominal muscles after inhalation.

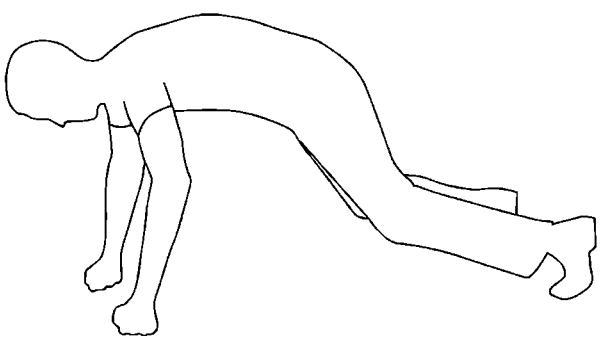


Figure 3-13 Push-up Position

- Exhale easily and repeat two or three times.
- Hold your breath during the last inhalation, return gently to a squatting position, and stand up slowly and gradually, retaining the crescent NRG centers and the elevated body posture.
- Exhale and then inhale while standing. Visualize and memorize your breathing-posture relationship as part of your future familiar events.

EXPERIMENT 9: SQUATTING POSITION

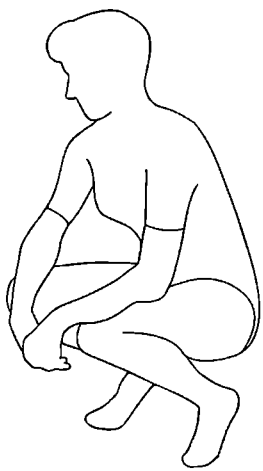


Figure 3-14 Squatting Position

- Squat comfortably on your toes (or the soles of your feet) and keep your pelvis low, rounded, and comfortably forward to avoid a rigidly straight back. Rest your elbows easily just above your knees, and place your hands loosely between your knees (Figure 3-14). Inhale easily and naturally, hold your breath for two or three seconds, and exhale gently and noiselessly.
- Memorize the action-sensation of the complete breathing cycle, beginning with the expansion of the abdominal muscles and continuing into the sides, back, and chest, and ending with the comfortably firm feeling in the abdominal muscles. Repeat this experiment two or three times.
- After holding your breath easily, exhale completely and take a few small, restful breaths; then inhale fully and about halfway through the inhalation, float yourself up to a standing position as though the breath itself raised you up weightlessly and gracefully (see Chapter 4, Figure 4-5).
- Exhale, and then inhale while standing and check for the same breathing action as in the squatting position; at the same time, try to re-experience the weightless, antigravitational float-up from the squatting position.

This experiment emphasizes the significant function of the abdominal muscles (particularly the crescent area) as a built-in control valve for body posture and breathing—a kind of body governor.

EXPERIMENT 10: SITTING POSITION

- Sit forward with the very edge of the posterior portion of the pelvis (or sacrum) resting on the front edge of a chair; rest your elbows just above your knees, and cup (or hang) your hands loosely between your knees; and comfort-

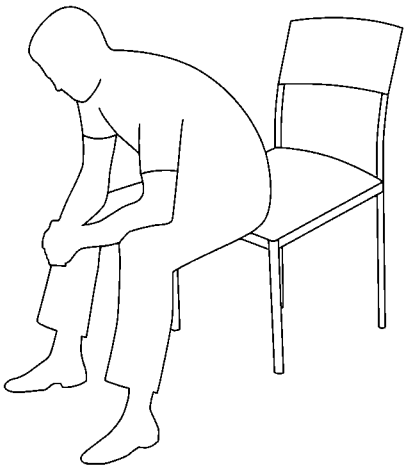


Figure 3-15 Sitting Position

ably place your feet flat on the ground (Figure 3-15). Inhale easily and naturally, hold your breath for two or three seconds, and exhale gently and noiselessly.

- Memorize the action-sensation of the complete breathing cycle, ending with the firm feeling in the abdominal muscles, (similar to that of the squatting-position experiment). Exhale and repeat two or three times.
- Hold your breath easily during the last inhalation and float up to a standing position, trying to retain the same sensation as in the sitting position.
- Exhale and then inhale while standing, and check for the same breathing action as in the sitting position.

EXPERIMENT 11: LEANING POSITION

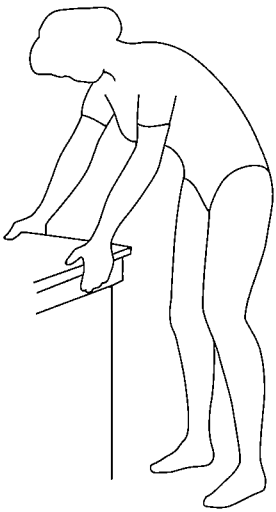


Figure 3-16 Leaning Position

- Stand with your feet about fifteen inches away from a table or desk, and lean forward, placing your hands on the edge as if you were examining a letter or a drawing (Figure 3-16). Inhale and exhale easily and naturally.
- Memorize once more the action-sensation of the back expansion and the firming of the abdominal crescent muscles at the end of the breathing cycle.
- Step back, and stand in an almost upright position (as in the flower-smelling position). Let your hands hang comfortably in front of your thighs, and re-experience the action-sensation at the end of the breathing cycle. Check your posture, and exhale and inhale gently and rhythmically.
- While standing upright, re-experience the same action-sensation as in the preceding positions.

EXPERIMENT 12: COMBINED LEANING POSITION

- Crouch on your toes while resting your hands and arms on the seat of a chair (Figure 3-17*a*). Inhale and exhale easily and naturally, and memorize

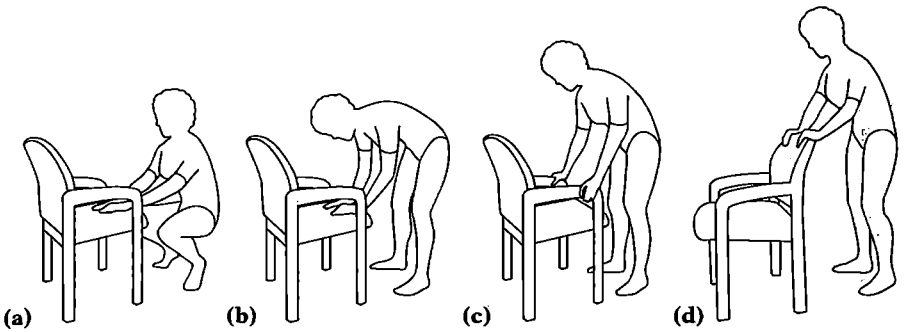


Figure 3-17 Combined Leaning Position

once more the action-sensation of the entire breathing cycle. Repeat this action several times.

- Stand up and bend over the chair, with your hands resting on its seat (Figure 3-17*b*). Repeat the breathing instructions outlined in the first step.
- Lean forward with your hands resting on the arms of the chair (Figure 3-17*c*). Repeat the breathing instructions outlined in the first step.
- Lean forward with your hands resting on the back of the chair (Figure 3-17*d*). Repeat the breathing instructions outlined in the first step.

EXPERIMENT 13: EXHALATION CONTROL

This experiment will develop the skill of using minimum breath in the production of either voiced or unvoiced sound. Although this experiment is concerned with breath control, focus on your posture as you complete the routine.

- Inhale easily and naturally while *visualizing* the feel and sound of the letter *S*.
- Feel the sustained sound of the *S* with your tongue up toward the gum ridge and your side teeth almost occluded.[9]
- Concentrate on making the *S* very high pitched but, at the same time, very soft; avoid any jerkiness, a change in quality, or a heavy, pressured hiss, like air escaping from a tire.
- Alternate softening the *S* when it gets thin and sharp and then sharpening it to a subtly higher pitch when it gets extremely soft and gentle.
- Check with the back of your hand to make sure there is minimal or no noticeable escape of breath. At the same time, note how your abdominal muscles remain comfortably firm, as they gently and gradually contract inward

[9]This position of the side teeth helps to achieve good tongue-muscle quality and orientation, which will be retained when the side teeth do not have time to fully come together in connected speech.

and upward, almost imperceptibly, like a sponge being squeezed very slowly until all the water is gone.

• To check your posture as you perform the experiment, ask yourself the following: Do I feel the slight *C*-curve? Are my knees loose? Is the back of my neck floating upward? Can I swivel my head easily from left to right on a perfect level? Is the crown of my head the highest part of my body?

Do ten consecutive repetitions of this experiment three times daily. In the beginning, you should be able to sustain the *S* sound comfortably for about fifteen seconds; if you maintain the sound as long as you can each time, without force or pressure, you should be able to add from three to five seconds each week, without difficulty, and achieve a duration of forty to fifty seconds over a ten-week period. When the *S* is fully explored, do the same with *SH, F,* and the unvoiced *TH*.

EXPERIMENT 14: SUSTAINED HUMMING SOUNDS

• While the previous experiment dealt with breath duration using only breath, this experiment explores a similar experience using vocalized tone, specifically the voiced consonants *Z, V, M, N,* and *NG* and the voiced *TH*. The emphasis should be on minimum breath; clear, clean, gentle humming sounds; pure, unforced tones; no pushing, huffing, or puffing; no extra noises or secondary sounds—just an inner harmony and equilibrium between vocal tones, body posture, and instinctive breathing. You should be able to sustain the hums for about twelve seconds. As in the exhalation-control experiment, feel free to time and progressively add three seconds weekly until you can sustain the hums for forty to fifty seconds.

BRIDGE

The organic "oneness" of breathing and posture presented in this chapter should be regarded as a vitally new vocal-life principle. Like Siamese twins, breathing and posture cannot be considered disparate parts but rather the fusing of an organic whole. We have seen and experienced in this chapter's experiments how the breathing system and posture dynamics depend on each other, how they accommodate each other, and how they synergize and empower each other. In the next chapter, we will explore how the duality of breathing and posture are applied in the creative art of relaxation.

The kindred relationship of this organic duality also sets the stage for the future interinvolvement of other **body NRG** states, body dynamics, body systems, and body languages. Think of breathing and posture as two sides of the same coin; using only one side is simply impossible. The legal

tender is the whole coin, whether applied to body and voice endurance, capacity, range, variety, strength, quality, or esthetics. Such holistic, inner-ensemble functioning should appeal to everyone, but for the performing artist, it has a special significance. This vital interaction provides a basis for the "energy of relaxation," which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

The Energy of Relaxation: The Creative Art of Resting

In *An Actor Prepares,* Konstantin Stanislavsky wrote:

> It seems that if you lay an infant or a cat on some sand to rest or to sleep, and then carefully lift him up, you will find the imprint of his whole body on the soft surface. But if you make the very same experiment with a person of our nervous generation, all you will find on the sand are the marks of his shoulder blades and rump—whereas the rest of his body, thanks to chronic muscular tension, will never touch the sand at all.

The secret of the infant and the cat (and the consummate actor) is a special brand of relaxation—a relaxation that is live, active, positive, buoyant. Great actors have always known that relaxation, or "creative rest,"[1] onstage is a talent in itself: a technique for modulating the rhythm of their performance, a strategy for sustaining their stamina, a vital protection for their instrument, and an effective way in making their acting look easy.

This chapter builds on the foundation of kinesensic breathing and posture to explore the concept of energy and relaxation and to learn about "relaxers" that are in fact "energizers." You will play (like a cat or a baby) with "active rest" and "restful action" and practice "resting down" and "resting up" simultaneously. You will learn how to feel the stillness of movement and the movement of stillness so that you never have to rely on muscular tension to support your voice. Relaxation is a dynamic process.

The Dynamics of Relaxation

The most common misunderstanding about relaxation is that it involves the absence of action or motion. Not true. Unless disease has set in, there

[1]Refer to Chapter 4 of *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body* by Arthur Lessac (Claremont, CA: Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance, 1981).

is no such thing as an inactive muscle or an inactive nerve. True relaxation is the most efficient application of all the body's muscles to the task at hand—be it action or rest.

Conventional wisdom has it that rest is a condition where the voluntary muscles operate with zero action. But even then, some muscles contract or shorten (which is action) while others are released or lengthened (which is rest). Each group helps the other. Just as correct breathing aids good posture and good posture leads to correct breathing, so muscle contraction aids release and muscle release permits contraction; there is never a loss of muscle tonus. In this state of harmony, the whole body functions in proper balance. Action and rest become inseparable, and we experience **genuine** relaxation both in action and in rest.

The discussion on breathing and posture in Chapter 3 dealt primarily with the voluntary muscles. But relaxation involves the entire muscular system: when we relax the voluntary muscles, we clearly exert a direct effect upon the semivoluntary and involuntary systems of the body. In other words, when we relax the skeletal muscles over which we have control, our visceral organs and our internal muscles tend to relax as well. I believe it is physically impossible to be thoroughly relaxed in any one part of the body while tense in any other part—and I don't believe that by consciously concentrating tight tension in any one part of the body one can achieve genuine dynamic relaxation by merely letting go of that imposed tension.

The beneficial effect of physical relaxation on the nervous system is well known.[2] Relaxation is in itself a quiet, gentle NRG quality that can be consciously induced, controlled, and felt the same as any other body NRG. The interesting point to be kept in mind is that "relaxation" and "muscle-working" must learn to support and unify each other, cooperate with each other, and synergize each other. In this frame of reference, relaxation is a constant fueler and feeder of body action rather than simply a means to "untense" a tight muscle.

Restful Energy and Energetic Rest

In this chapter, you will explore how to accomplish a voluntary physical act and achieve a state of "restful energy." You will learn how to perform the physical task so that (1) the total action required is distributed among the largest possible number of muscles, (2) excessive **stress** or tension is

[2]I posit that physical tension relief always brings on mental tension relief but that the reverse is not necessarily true.

completely absent, (3) muscular balance is achieved, and (4) every action includes a rest ingredient and every relaxation includes (or incorporates) an experience that stimulates. Your whole body will perform the task, not just one specific muscle group.

Conversely, you will explore how to relax easily into a sense of physical flotation as you approach the state of "energetic rest." You will learn how to teach your muscles to feel so free and weightless (but never limp or heavy) that you lose your sense of contact with the ground, bed, chair, or any other supporting surface. Every muscle will be in a state of release: the sensation of repose and the readiness to spring alertly into action will melt into one feeling—into one complementary dynamic. Whether onstage or offstage, this dynamic will provide you with the ability to refuel without ever losing focus.

To achieve these two states, you must learn to be **habitually aware** of your body's functioning. With continued exploring, you will progressively learn to identify body actions that may once have seemed too subtle to be perceptible. The sensation of combined dynamic action and active relaxation, or the feel of the equilibrium of rest and energy, will become conscious information. As you gain mastery over your body and freedom in its use,[3] you will also gain control over the subtler and previously semivoluntary actions and find new sensitivities and other intelligences that add physical shadings and nuances to your vocal production and overall performance.

Control and Consciousness

With sufficient exploring, you can achieve relaxed energy and energetic rest by choice, effortlessly, and at will. "Choice" and "will" are the key words here. The ability to balance rest and energy is particularly advantageous during periods of stress. At such times, the body tends to experience greater tension and muscle contraction. But by practicing active rest as a dynamic process, you will be able to reverse this tendency and significantly increase your physical and neural endurance in times of severe pressure.

Take stage fright, for example. Stage fright and stage nervousness are too often the accompanying "kinsmen" of stage vitality and stage excitement. They are manifestations of disorganized and random configurations of energy—energy that is not channeled into the total stage effort

[3]Refer to *Body Wisdom*.

but is allowed to disrupt behavior, memory, coordination, and attention. This pressure-energy, when tied into a knot in the chest or wrapped tight into muscle tension, can wreak havoc for the actor.

The physical sensations of fear that we describe as "stage fright" are not the private property of the ill-trained or inexperienced actor. They are physiological reactions to the body's release of chemical substances into the blood stream that are influenced by many different inner and outer environmental situations. These metabolic changes increase the magnitude of emotional reactions; they do not create the reactions. The result can be either destructive or useful energy.

Whether the physiological reactions are channeled constructively or destructively depends on the actor's perception of these sensations in relation to the situation in which they occur—on whether he or she perceives them as feelings of fear, excitement, anger, joy, or diffuse nervousness. Thus, adrenaline can stimulate strong and exciting performance when its effects are perceived in conjunction with strong motivation and confidence, but it can also disrupt performance when accompanied by fear and uncertainty. Whatever the situation, the chemical processes are always present and the actor can either learn to use their manifestations constructively or be controlled by them.

Even the seasoned professional will often experience these physiological reactions as nervousness. But nervousness is a form of energy, and energy has many faces. It can perform only the task assigned to it. Onstage, nervous energy can be transformed into stage fright: knocking knees, a voice that squirrels into its higher pitches (no matter how you fight to control it), indecisive movement, or no voice or movement at all. This will happen if your only connection to nervousness is with fear and you have lost all contact with yourself. But nervous energy in stage fright can also be transformed into an exciting quality that vitalizes and lights up your performance—an excitement and a joy that you share with your audience. It is really a matter of perception—a perception of converting something that disturbs you into something that reinforces you, that makes you feel so good.

Your vocal life, when fully developed and integrated with emotional and physical life, will become an important key to effectively transform stage fright into stage excitement. When you learn to experience the physical sensations of voice and speech with awareness and relaxed energy, and when these sensations become an integral part of your neuropsychophysical sensing devices that monitor other areas of emotional control and expression, you will acquire dynamic responses strong enough to overcome irrelevant responses that could undermine your performance.

Natural Means of Relaxation: Relaxer-Energizers

Our bodies contain a great storehouse of natural **relaxer-energizers** to which the body instinctively resorts, usually on an involuntary or semivoluntary basis. Our challenge is to convert this intuitive storehouse into a reservoir of voluntary events accompanied by conscious awareness. A relaxer-energizer is any body activity that frees muscles, relieves tension, maintains body awareness, supports personal pleasure, and sustains body curiosity and vitality. A relaxer-energizer connotes two qualities:

1. The act must embody both relaxer and vitalizer agents.
2. In performing the act, the existence and functioning of both relaxer and vitalizer agents are *consciously* perceived and grow into familiar events.

Only natural, instinctive body functioning can serve as relaxer-energizers. The breathing and posture exercises in Chapter 3 could very easily serve as relaxer-energizer experiments or explorations, but there are other basic relaxing actions we come by naturally, such as muscle yawning (stretching), facial-vocal yawning, muscle shaking, muscle floating, laughing, smiling, humming, singing, dancing, and swallowing. These are some of the natural relaxer-energizers that, as adults, we do not consciously indulge in often enough to relieve tension. Observe how spontaneously and how often the cat and baby stretch, shake, and yawn. These are natural and therapeutic ways of controlling and directing the state of feeling good, and they do not have to be learned—they are there for the asking. Let's begin by exploring five natural modalities of relaxation.

FACIAL-VOCAL YAWNING

The vocal-yawn reflex has two characteristic forms. In the first and more involuntary form, the facial muscles stretch upward and sideways, the soft palate and uvula automatically lift high up, and there is a deep, involuntary intake of breath (with, at times, respiration stopping for a split second), which is often followed by several short breaths (Figure 4-1*a*). If this yawn is voiced, as it should be, the soft-palate focus produces a clear, vital, high-pitched nasopharyngeal sound (of importance in training the upper-third covered register of the male singing voice and the very top tones of the high soprano register; see Chapter 6, pages 156–159, for a detailed discussion on "registers").

The second form of the facial-vocal yawn is more controllable and may be induced by forming a full forward facial posture, augmented perhaps

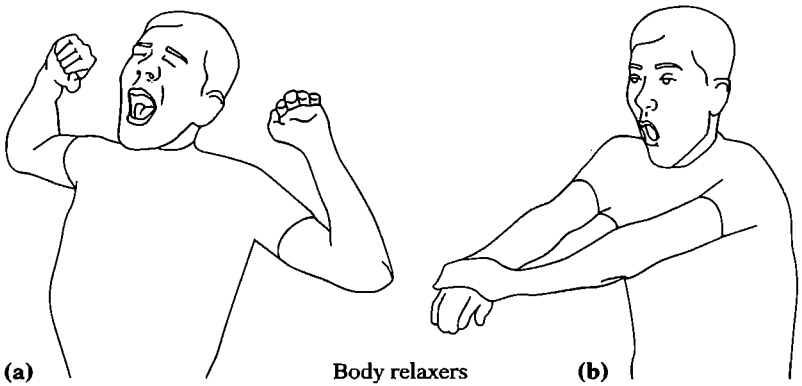


Figure 4-1 Facial-Vocal Yawning as a Relaxer-Energizer

a. Backward yawn, focused on the soft palate. *b.* Forward yawn, focused on the hard palate.

by a facial expression of wide-eyed surprise (Figure 4-1*b*). When this yawn is voiced, the sound comfortably produced is usually an *AW* or *OH* vowel sound, cleanly concentrated and focused in the body resonating areas. This yawn is of major importance in training the full range of the female voice and the lower two-thirds of the male singing voice (that is, provided it is unforced, flexible, genuinely spontaneous, natural, nondistorted, and feels vigorously good). Freely experiencing these facial yawns may bring a tear or two to your eyes but should never stress or strain your jaw or facial muscles.

Facial yawning vitalizes the muscles of the face, thus helping to eliminate muscle-cell waste matter. It produces free, healthy vocal sounds, and it releases tension.

MUSCLE YAWNING (BENEVOLENT STRETCHING)

"Muscle yawning" is very different from "muscle stretching." Muscle (catlike) yawning is a **right-brain** action that is flexible, empowering, and qualitative. Conventional muscle stretching is a **left-brain** action that is tense, limited, and quantitative. Catlike muscle yawning relaxes and energizes. Muscle yawning vitalizes the muscles by eliminating muscle-cell waste matter; it serves both as part of gestalt functioning and as part of synergy. Whether voluntary or involuntary, this action (or writhing, as a pain reliever) is never passive, for there is potency in its seeming ennui—the vitality of intense dynamic relaxation. Don't stifle it, encourage it!

When we yawn our muscles, extending and expanding the arms, legs, back, and so on, we feel as if we could move the world. There is more strength, or holding power, behind a healthy, vitalizing muscle yawn than in any similar forceful action. The fact is, *yawn is stronger than brawn!*

EXPERIMENT 1: EXERTION OF FORCE

- Perform some action that requires exertion, such as (1) lifting or pushing a heavy, moveable object, (2) prying a tightly screwed lid from a jar, or (3) squeezing or resisting an opponent in a hand wrestle (either a hand-to-hand wrestle on the top of a table or the old-fashioned hand wrestle in which the objective is to cause your opponent to lose his or her balance while standing).
- At first, think of the action as an exertion of force in the usual, "muscle-tight" way.
- Then do it again, experiencing a powerful muscle-yawn NRG and using, as supporting energy, whatever spontaneous reflexive vocal sound your body chooses to make.
- Check out which is easier, which is lighter, which is more spontaneous, which is more enjoyable, which is more effective!
- Now explore the muscle-yawn using a catlike action—like the early morning wake-up muscle-yawn that seems to say, "Oh, it feels so-o-o goo-oo-ood to get up in the morning." Actually repeat this phrase as you perform the muscle-yawn.

MUSCLE FLOATING

Muscle-yawning energy, when turned off (while the body is still in action), resolves itself into a follow-through action of weightless "floating energy." It is a fascinating experience of total relaxation filled with gentle stimulation—an experience of muscles in action without the slightest awareness of muscle effort or muscle use.

EXPERIMENT 2: ARM FLOAT

- Stand about four inches from a flat wall with only your right wrist joint contacting it. Energetically "yawn" your wrist into the wall, feeling the yawn flow into your arm and shoulder for about three seconds. Then move away from the wall into an open space and allow your arm to float up as if by magic. Don't judge it, challenge it, or undermine it; just let it happen as you "go with the flow" of it.
- Explore with your left wrist-joint.
- Explore using both arms, either standing in a doorframe or standing in

a circle with two (or more) buddies so that all of you can experiment simultaneously (remember your contact is only at the wrist joints).[4] When you feel the yawn NRG float into your arms and shoulders, step into open space and let your arms and hands float weightlessly upward, remembering to keep your hands reaching gently outward rather than hanging (floppily) downward.

EXPERIMENT 3: BODY FLOAT

• Explore a modern-dance-like body expressiveness using a catlike muscle-yawn; then, while the body expression continues, turn off the yawn energy and discover your body continuing in a state of delightful, weightless buoyancy and stimulated relaxation. This weightless buoyancy and stimulated relaxation, when seasoned with a tiny bit of muscle-yawn NRG, will provide you with an indigenous intelligence and awareness of the traditional Tai Chi—a Chinese dance, exercise, relaxation, and combat technique.

MUSCLE SHAKING

Shaking or vibrating the muscles is a wonderfully therapeutic way to relax them and simultaneously loosen and free the joints. Start with your wrists, then your elbows and shoulders and neck muscles; then begin with your toes and proceed up through the calves, thighs, pelvis, and hips (Figure 4-2*a* through *c*). Improvise different rhythms; you will find yourself tap dancing and experiencing other interesting dance movements. Lightly

Figure 4-2 Muscle Shaking as a Relaxer-Energizer

[4]Refer to Chapter 4 of *Body Wisdom.*

skipping or dancing down four or five flights of stairs is another great way to shake up the muscles and feel relaxed and exhilarated (*resting up and down*)[5] at the same time. (Experiment first on four or five steps before prancing down flights of stairs!) As suggested in Figure 4-2*d*, you might visualize yourself "shake-dancing" with a "dance" rope.

SWALLOWING

A more subtle relaxing action is swallowing. For natural, relaxed swallowing, remember to comfortably gather saliva in the mouth so you have something to swallow; then, the action not only relaxes but lubricates as well. If your throat and mouth are unusually dry, suck on a lozenge to help the swallowing action.

The five preceding relaxer-energizers do not have to be learned; we all do them, though not often enough. A morning muscle-yawn expansion and extension, a freely released facial-vocal yawn, a shake, a swallow, a belly laugh, a spontaneous shimmy or disco dancing, and a comfortable filling of the breath bucket from the bottom up all feel good because they induce an NRG of looseness where previously there was tension. They all represent *natural* relaxation in action.

Tension-Relieving Experiments

The following experiments are based on research, study, and experience; interviews with dancers and physiotherapists; and the observation of animals, babies, and adults in various stances and movement. Along with the breathing experiments in Chapter 3, they are designed to eliminate tension and rid the body of unnecessary muscular contraction. They will help produce the relaxation that Stanislavsky noted in infants and cats, and they form a marvelous adjunct to his acting exercises. Explore them with uninhibited curiosity and imagination and anticipated pleasure. Consult your physician before doing the more strenuous exercises regularly.

EXPERIMENT 4: MUSCLE SPREADING

• Lie flat on your back on a firm surface. Feel free to place a one-inch book or rubber pad under your head. Visualize your body's muscle groups as con-

[5]*Resting up:* floating antigravitationally. *Resting down:* simultaneously lighting oneself (like a feather or balloon) to the ground. Refer to *Body Wisdom* for further discussion.

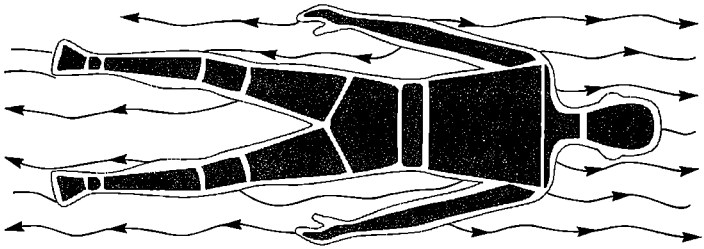


Figure 4-3 Muscle Spreading: Active Rest

sisting of myriad cells, and think of the cells as separate and distinct units—as little atoms in space. Imagine yourself spreading these muscle cells farther and farther apart. Wherever you feel tension or body weight, feel yourself spreading or emptying or melting that area into weightlessness.

- As you feel the weight oozing out, start loosening and extending the various parts of your body: the back of your neck gets longer, thus extending and lightening the crown of your head; your back gets broader; your shoulders, hands, and heels get lighter; the small of your back spreads flatter; every joint is now looser and freer (Figure 4-3). Your overall posture is naturally perfect: you are longer, broader, lighter. You have never felt so delightfully relaxed before.
- Imagine the surrounding air to be a body of water or a gentle bank of fog or mist. Weightlessly float up—through this water, fog, or mist—first one hand, then the other; one arm, then the other; one leg, then the other; your head and then neck; and, finally, your back. The imagined resistance will turn into a beautiful sensation of restful active energy. When you lift your arms, move them all the way beyond your head and back again, while stopping several times to waft and rest your arm or leg weightlessly on or in the water or fog or mist.

Because the object of this experiment is to free the body of obstinate muscle tensions, you must search out the groups of muscles in the body that are heavy and contracted and instruct your body buoyancy to dissolve them—and your body radiancy to illuminate them in order to rid yourself of muscle weight and mass. As your body becomes lighter, seems emptier, and feels more rested—with all the poisons oozing out—the sensation of contact between it and the surface on which it rests will also dissolve and seem to disappear. You will seem to be in a veritable state of levitation. This freedom and feeling of live relaxation can be achieved when your efforts to reduce tension are accompanied by naturally correct breathing energy. The advantage of this tension-release experiment is that breathing tends to function most naturally in a supine (lying on the back) or a prone (lying on the stomach) position, even for the very poorly conditioned or incorrectly trained individual.

EXPERIMENT 5: BLOCK BUILDING

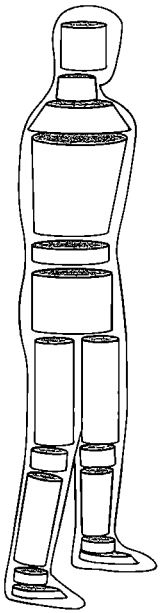


Figure 4-4 Block Building: Restful Action Combined with Active Rest

• Stand upright with vibrant posture, and simulate smelling an imaginary flower cupped in your hands about four inches from your face (see Figures 3-1 and 3-6).

• Inhale and exhale quietly through your nose, with your tongue in the *N* position. Repeat once or twice. Then vary the experiment: after inhaling on the *N*, exhale silently and delicately through the parted lips without holding your tongue in the *N* position.

• Float your hands down to your thighs, float your neck and the crown of your head upward, antigravitationally, and think of all the major segments of your body as blocks (Figure 4-4).

• Build an upright and well-balanced column of blocks from the ground up: Place the foot blocks gently and weightlessly on the ground; imagine the ground rising to receive your foot blocks. Lightly place the ankle blocks on the foot blocks. Place the calf blocks on ankle blocks, and gently receive the knee blocks on the calf blocks. Lightly place the thigh blocks on the knee blocks. Keep going with the pelvic, hip, and back blocks until you place the neck block on the shoulder block and the head block on the neck block. As you proceed through the experiment, each block should rest easily and comfortably and be ready and anxious to receive the block above.

• Walk floatingly around the room, feeling extremely loose and extended and in comfortable equilibrium. Balance all of the blocks upward, as if you were a weightless, moving Greek column full of antigravitational energy. Don't do this walking carefully or carelessly; do it *carefreely!*

During this process, feel yourself growing taller as the column grows. Feel yourself walking on a cushion of air, with an inner energy maintaining the sensation of balanced equilibrium. As you move, you will begin to develop an unusually keen sense of rolling ease, lightness, alertness, and grace. You are resting up and resting down simultaneously.

EXPERIMENT 6: FLOATING UP AND DOWN

• Start by inhaling. Then, as you gently exhale, slowly float your whole body downward, until you are resting in a squatting position, with your toes or

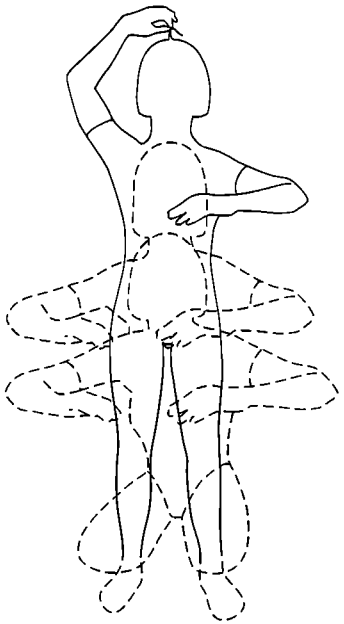


Figure 4-5 Upward and Downward Floating: Restful Action Combined with Active Rest

the soles of your feet touching the ground and your arms curved easily in front (Figure 4-5).

- Gently rock, waft, and wave while breathing in and out once or twice; your breath energy is now your primary driving power.
- With your lips gently parted, breathe through your mouth to start filling up the bottom of the breath bucket. About halfway into your inhaling, as your back begins to fill up with breath energy (and your arms, with raised elbows, round themselves out in front), *breathe yourself upward* floatingly, gradually, rhythmically; at the very same time, concentrate deeply on resting downward lightly and weightlessly.

If you feel your thigh and calf muscles contracting, visualize yourself eliminating the feeling of effort by sensing yourself being drawn up gently by one hair at the crown of your head. Feel yourself floating up without bending or leaning. Feel yourself floating up antigravitationally and floating down like a feather or balloon.

EXPERIMENT 7: RADIATING HEARTBEAT

- Lie flat on your back on a firm surface.
- Rest your body into complete weightlessness as in Experiment 4.
- Concentrate on feeling the pulsation of your heart until you are conscious of that heartbeat as the only energy center in your body.
- Feel the pulsation of that heartbeat radiating smoothly and quietly to

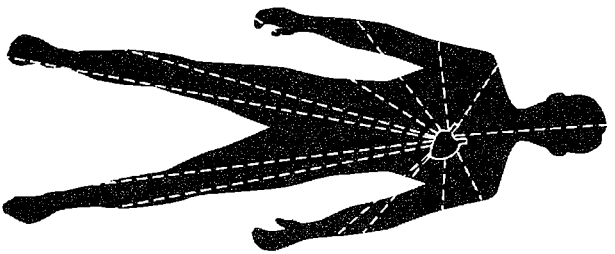


Figure 4-6 Radiating Heartbeat: Active Rest

every part of your body—your stomach, your head and neck, your arms right into your fingertips, your legs right into your toes, and out through your pores—and creating an "energy aura" throughout surrounding your body (Figure 4-6).

- Allow the pulsating heartbeat energy to move and lift your fingers, your hand, and then your entire right arm weightlessly and in slow motion; let your arm move effortlessly and restfully as it is fed by the stream of energy provided by your heartbeat and supported by your smooth, quiet breathing. Your inhalation feeds and fuels the expressive movements, and your exhalation accommodates the weightless floating.
- Now do the same with your left arm. Next, experiment with each leg, both arms together, both legs together, and, finally, your head and back. Waft and wave each body part gently and gracefully throughout its motion.[6]

Do not be disturbed if, initially, you do not succeed at feeling the heartbeat. Your concentration may not yet be keen enough; tensions and tight muscles may still stand in the way, and you may need to work longer on the other relaxation activities. This experiment takes much concentrated, skillful exploring and heightened awareness, but even partial success is extremely rewarding. To the extent that you do succeed, you will experience the very essence of the delicate balance between energetic rest and restful energy.

I have been using much imagery (specific and general) that, for me, emanates from the "vitals" of this work. But although one might say, "My house is your house," one could not claim, "My image is your image." The spirit of this work is to foment fresh visualization—to give birth to new images. Your genuine experiencing of inner harmonic sensing should and will generate your own personal internal imaging.

BRIDGE

In addition to the examples outlined in this chapter, some further relaxer-energizers would include smiling, laughing, pleasure sighing (as opposed to "suffer sighing"), and humming, which we will play with here as a bridge into vocal-toning training.

We hum to feel good, to dissolve our tensions, and to awaken our inner spirit. We hum to warm up our voice. We hum to create inner imaging. We hum to soothe and enjoy ourselves! Humming is certainly a familiar event for all of us; it's too bad we do so little of it. Let's do some now.

EXPERIMENT 8: VARIED HUMMING

- Hum in your own familiar manner using a variety of pitches or melodies.

[6]For other relaxed-energy experiments, see *Body Wisdom*.

- Explore as many different kinds of humming sensations as your imagination will allow: with your lips touching, with your lips parted, with your tongue in different positions. Hum with a very light vowel sound suggested by the consonant *W*. Or perhaps hum with an *EE* sound, as in *dream*. Come up with your own variations.
- With your eyes closed, hum for your own pleasure and peace of mind while imagining yourself wandering through wilderness, exploring your own inner space, with its many colors, shapes, designs, motion.
- Feel yourself almost meditating through your humming.

We hum to relax. We hum to contemplate. We hum to recall. We hum to think. And, now, we hum our way into vocal life—to be specific, we hum ourselves into the music of the consonants, which is the subject of our next chapter.

PART TWO

Organically Cultivating the Body's Vocal NRG States

The human body is a musical apparatus capable of great precision and versatility: it can register, remember, implement, and play itself creatively. But humans, so used to masterly manipulating and controlling other instruments, seldom apply the same expertise to play their own inner *vocal life* instruments. They get along with a note or two but leave many melodies unheard and many rhythms untried.

Any human voice can range from light, high, and bright to deep, rich, and dark. It can express sorrow, anger, melancholy, and joy in both speech and song and can adapt itself so well to each emotion that it seems the ideal instrument for each expression. Like any instrument, the body Stradivarius must be played with skill and artistry if most of the possibilities are to be realized.

Once you acquire such vocal NRG skills, you will find it easier to *play well* rather than *play poorly*. In the four chapters of Part 2, you will learn to work with the body Stradivarius skillfully and naturally and to play it creatively, artistically, and instinctively onstage and offstage. You will learn to play it for pleasure as well as for communicating—the pleasure itself will improve the communication.

CHAPTER 5

The Dynamics of Consonant NRG: The Music of the Consonants

Euphony through Body Esthetics Starting with the "Child within You"

The setting is a schoolroom filled with 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds. They are gathered around a woman, holding a violin case and wearing a T-shirt with a large *N* on it.

Child: What does your T-shirt say?

Ms. N: That's my name: Ms. N.

Child: Do you play in a band?

Ms. N: I play in the Children's Symphony Orchestra. I'm the first-chair violinist, and this (*She opens the case and draws out a beautiful Stradivarius.*) is my violin.

Children: It's pretty. What's it made out of?

Ms. N: It's made out of fine wood, which I keep carefully polished.

Child: (*Pointing to the bow.*) What's that?

Ms. N: That's called a bow. And if I draw this bow across the strings of the violin, I begin to make sound, you see? (*She plays a little melody.*)

Children: (*Crowding around.*) Where does the sound come from? From those holes?

Ms. N: I'll show you. Very lightly, put one finger on the wooden part of the violin. (*The children do so.*) Now, tell me what you feel. (*She plays a long, low note.*)

Children: It's buzzing! It tickles!

Ms. N: That's where the sound is coming from—from those *vibrations* that you feel in the wood. Just keep touching the wood, and I'll play you a song. (*She plays a beautiful melody that travels from the lowest to the highest notes of the violin. When she finishes, the children are looking in wonder at her.*) It's a lovely feeling, isn't it, all those vibrations? (*The children nod.*)

Child: I wish I could play a violin.

Ms. N: You can!

Child: But I don't have a violin.

Ms. N: You have your own violin, inside you.

Child: Where?

Ms. N: Remember that melody I just played? (*The children nod.*) Let me play that for you on my own personal violin. (*Ms. N hums the same piece on an* N, *traveling easily from her lowest to her highest notes, filling the room with beautiful melody.*) Now you try it. (*The children begin humming.*) Now, play your violin! Create your own melodies! (*They do so, easily.*) Now, put your hand lightly on your nose and forehead, and play your violin again. Feel those vibrations?

Child: I feel buzzing, just like on the violin.

Ms. N: That's where your sound is coming from. And as long as you feel those vibrations there, you will always play your violin beautifully and easily. Now, whose name has an *n* in it? Is there a Jane here, or an Edmund, or a Nancy?

Child: My name is Nan.

Ms. N: Let's all say Nan's name, slowly tasting every sound of it. N-n-n-n-a-a-n-n-n-n. What did you discover?

Children: The violin! Two times in the same word!

Ms. N: Right! Say Nan's name again, but now play melodies on the violins in her name. (*The children do so.*) What if, now, you made a little hoop with your lips and put it between the two violins? What would you get?

Children: Nnnnnnoooooooonnnnn—you get *noon!*

Ms. N: Good! And now, as if you were the first violinist in the Children's Symphony Orchestra, play the melody of the word noon. (*There is a wonderful sound of twenty-five violins*

being played, all with unique melodies, on the simple word noon.) How many other words have violins in them?

Children: Bone . . . can . . . nine . . . and . . . band . . . violin!

Ms. N: So, you see, you can play your violin in any word that has an *n* in it. Now, on the blackboard, you can see a lot of little magnets, including violins, small hoops, and bigger hoops. Who thinks they can spell the word noon?

Child: I can! (*A child picks out a "violin" and hums it while placing it on the blackboard. She proceeds to pick out a tiny "hoop" and hum the "violin" plus the "hoop." Finally, she picks out another "violin" and spells the entire word by humming a "violin-hoop-violin."*) Nnnnnoooooonnnnn.

Ms. N: Right! And who can spell Nan?

Nan: I can! (*Nan goes to board.*) Violin, big hoop, violin. Nnnaaannn.

Ms. N: Excellent! Well, I have to go back to rehearsal, but I understand that tomorrow you will be visited by another member of the orchestra—Mr. M, our first-chair viola player! Just remember, you have your own musical instruments right inside of you, and you can play each one whenever you want—in a word, by itself, or just to hear its music alone. Good-bye!

Children: Good-bye, Ms. Nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn!

Fanciful? Whimsical conceit? I don't think so. What a wonderful way this would be to teach young children spelling—a way in which they could easily connect to the concept—because they *experience* it already—through feeling vocal sound! Moreover, to connect sound with the music of speech would keep the *natural* music in children's voices alive and allow them greater joy in vocal expression throughout all of their formative years and into adulthood. If such an instructional approach were common, those of us who train voices would have less to *undo* before getting to the actual *doing!*

But you, too, can experience the music of the consonants without having to return to your childhood. Just find that child still within you with his or her own genuine, fresh vulnerability and freedom!

In the last chapter, you discovered many natural functions that both relax and energize the body. One of these relaxer-energizers was humming, an inherent, enjoyable sensation that is **euphonic** to your ear and

adds music and equilibrium to your inner harmonic sensing. It is this pleasurable intrinsic stimulation that leads us into the music of the consonants.

EXPERIMENT 1: MUSICAL HUMMING

• Because we usually think of humming as bringing the lips together and adding sound, we'll begin that way. But first, moisten your lips a little and let them rest together lightly, without pressure, and leave a little space between your side teeth. Now hum. Do you feel that little tingle or buzz where your lips meet? Chances are, you also feel vibration in your teeth and nasal bone. If you play with the hum, you will find that you can slide it up and down a scale and sing tunes, too. As you explore the hum, continue to maintain a comfortable but optimal space between your side teeth.

• Now let your lips part, and bring your tongue up to the roof of your mouth; then loosen your tongue so that only the rim stays in light, soft contact with the gum ridge all around your upper teeth. Hum. You should feel a tickle or vibration in your tongue where it meets the gum ridge. You can gently and consistently sustain this hum as long as you have breath, creating all kinds of interesting melodies, up and down your entire range, while flexibly expanding the space between your side teeth.

• Follow the first two steps simultaneously: gently rest your lips together, with the tip of your tongue lightly contacting the gum ridge, and hum. Do you feel an increased richness in the vibration? Do you feel a warmer resonance energy in the front of your face? Keep the optimal space between your side teeth, and feel the tingling buzz in your lips.

• Now explore what happens when you hum while releasing the tip of your tongue from the gum ridge and raising the back of your tongue to lightly contact the soft palate. Now, you won't feel a tingle so much as a resonant vibration throughout the upper part of your face and even into your skull. Do this with your lips parted, and vary the size of your mouth opening as you experiment with a higher or lower pitch.

• Play with all four ways of humming, and "taste" the different feeling of vibration with each change you make.

If you haven't guessed already, you have just hummed on an *M*, an *N*, an *M* and *N* together, and an *NG*. But your repertoire is not limited to those nasal consonants; try humming on *V, Z, L, ZH,* and even *R, W,* and, particularly, *Y* (which combines itself with a taste of the vowel *EE* as in *dream*). In each instance, the humming has a beneficial and therapeutic effect: the vibration is soothing and, at the same time, energizing—the two qualities necessary for active rest and restful action! Humming, then, is not confined to an *M* but can be experienced on any number of sustainable, voiced consonant sounds. A taste of the hum can always be experienced whenever one of these consonants appears in a word, *especially when it is final or before another consonant* (except for *W* and *Y*).

As we already discovered in Chapter 3, shaking is another natural body function that relaxes and vitalizes. Shaking has many forms: trembling, twittering, bouncing, jiggling, rattling, giggling, quivering, jolting, fluttering, or tapping, to name just a few. It is this last one, tapping, that leads us into the percussive, rhythmic element of consonant music.

EXPERIMENT 2: MOUTH TAPPING

- Bring your lips together, and leave some space between your side teeth, as if you were about to hum on the *M*. But instead of starting to hum, let your lips spring or pop open with a voiceless sound. You should feel the spring-away action as a light tap, like the delicate tap of a drumstick springing away from a drumhead. Repeat this several times.
- Now do the same thing, except this time part your lips and place your tongue in the *N* position. But rather than sounding the *N*, let your tongue spring away lightly. Take note of the drumbeat sound, and repeat several times.
- With your tongue in the *NG* position, try the same process.

Of course, you have just sounded out a *P*, a *T*, and a *K*. And, if you add voice, you would produce a *B*, a *D*, and a *G*. The feeling of the tap can be experienced whenever a "drumbeat" consonant appears in a word, *especially when it is the final sound or precedes another consonant.*

Consonants are the anatomical "spine" of words in vocal life. They are the interpreters that convey the meaning of speech—they make the spoken word intelligible. But they are also the instruments that provide musical accompaniment to speech; they produce rhythmic patterns, melodies, and sustained tonal colors. They provide contrasts and variations. To the single, sustained note of the vowels they add percussion and sound effects. They can also bring healthful, enlivening energy to our speech when they are *felt, tasted,* and *enjoyed* as a sensory, or *kinesensic,* experience.

Consonants are distinct from vowels. Whereas all the vowels are voiced and produced alike as pure, unobstructed, frictionless sounds, the consonants may be voiced or unvoiced, sustained or unsustained, and are each produced differently, using the techniques of obstruction, impedance, interruption, and friction.

Consonants form the skeletal structure of words and are responsible for intelligibility. In such word pairs as *seeds/seats* and *laws/loss,* it is the consonant sound that distinguishes one word from the other. Although there is room for error in the formation of vowel sounds, there is none in the formation of consonant sounds. If a consonant is properly felt, the word will remain intact and the meaning clear, regardless of any distortion of the vowel, but if a consonant is changed or lost, the whole word may

be changed or lost. Without a properly executed *T*, the word *wrote* may very well be heard as *rode, rogue, roan, roam, rope, robe, role, rove, rose, roast,* or *roach*—if it is heard as a word at all.

It is important, here, to add an esthetic concept. Vowels have always held the esthetic role in verbal communication, with consonants being the workaday part of speech. But consonants bring more than intelligibility to speech; they provide a multiplicity of musical values and instrumental qualities, built-in tempo controls, and a wide variety of contrasts. Each consonant has its own characteristic sound, timbre, and quality: some are lingering **legato** sounds, like the humming sounds of our first experiment; some are crisp **staccato** sounds, like the tapping sounds of our second experiment. Playing and experimenting with these sounds (alone and in words) is not only pleasurable but introduces us to the variety and beauty of speech. In this new esthetic concept, the consonants and vowels alternate their relative positions in singing and speech: in singing, the vowels make the principal artistic contribution; the consonants, a utilitarian one. But in general speech, the consonants carry a multiplicity of melody, syncopation, and rhythm while the vowels function as a solo instrument, providing emphasis, inflection, and intonation.

Playing the Consonants

In this chapter's explorations, when you are asked to "play" a consonant, think of that particular consonant as a musical instrument with unique, expressive, and beautiful qualities. *Play* each consonant as a fine musician would play a particular instrument. In this chapter, each consonant is classified as an orchestral instrument—melodic, percussive, or sound effect. Some consonants are strings, brass, or woodwinds because their timbres and their legato tones add melody and varied tonal colors to speech; some are drums or cymbals because their sharp, percussive beats add their own unique rhythms and tempos; and others are whistles and wind machines because of the sound-effect qualities they add to speech.

In this chapter, you will learn the action of each simulated musical instrument and the sensation of that action—this is the actual *playing* of the instrument, and it is always something that can be physically felt. This instrumental approach is guided by the same principles that guide the musician: when he plays his instrument, he does not force, pound, scrape, squeeze, push, or tighten. To do so would result in mere noise and, worse, possible damage to the instrument. The musician also does not need to think about where to put his fingers for each note or how to move the bow once he has learned the "feel." Once you learn how to produce the feel of

the orchestral consonants, you can focus your attention on playing them lightly, softly, smoothly—musically. The drum tap of the *T* or *K* is a superior tap if it is lightweight and quiet. The *S* sound effect is more superior the softer, higher, sharper, and lighter it is. The *V* cello is most satisfying when the rich vibration is made without the slightest escape of breath. Play your consonants the way a musician plays his or her instrument—lightly, with no pressure in your lips, tongue, or jaw, and without forcing your breath or making extraneous sounds or noises—and you will play your instrument well, whether for speech or song, for personal or professional work, or for stage or microphone work.

The instrumental approach is most important where a *consonant precedes another consonant or is the final sound before a pause or semipause.* For example, the *k* in *take*, the *v* in *live*, and the *n* and final *d* in *demand* are all easily lost or corrupted. The consonant before a sounded vowel, however, requires less attention because the vowel that follows maintains the vocal line and keeps the sound of the whole syllable moving forward. Of course, when you learn to play and feel a consonant musically, it will function better before a vowel as well; nevertheless, you really have to go out of your way to drop or mispronounce the *t* in *take,* the *l* in *live,* or the initial *d* in *demand!*

When consonants are lost, faulty, or corrupted, speech becomes deficient; it is precisely where sloppy speech begins that the technique of playing the consonants is most effective. You will learn to experience a new energy, to feel a new speech sense almost like taste. When you fully exploit the execution of a word for consonant NRG, you will add meaning, emphasis, and emotional content to your speech.

The Consonant Orchestra

Figure 5-1 illustrates the entire range of musical consonants classified in this chapter—a full complement of strings, drums, woodwinds, and cymbals and a fair representation of sound effects and brass. Not included in the consonant orchestra, nor in the consonant chart (Table 5-1), are the consonant sounds *Q, X, C,* and *WH.* The *Q* is always sounded as either *K* as in *technique* or *KW* as in *quiet;* the *X,* as *KS* as in *extra, GZ* as in *exact,* or *Z* as in *Xerox;* and the *C* as *S* as in *fancy, K* as in *credo, CH* as in *cello,* or *SH* as in *ancient.* When properly pronounced, *WH* is an *HW*—the first an unvoiced consonant and the second a voiced consonant; it is not, as some phoneticians claim, the unvoiced counterpart of the *W.* That consonant is no more affected by the *H* sound before it in "when" than by the *K* sound before it in "queen." The consonant orchestra does, however, include the

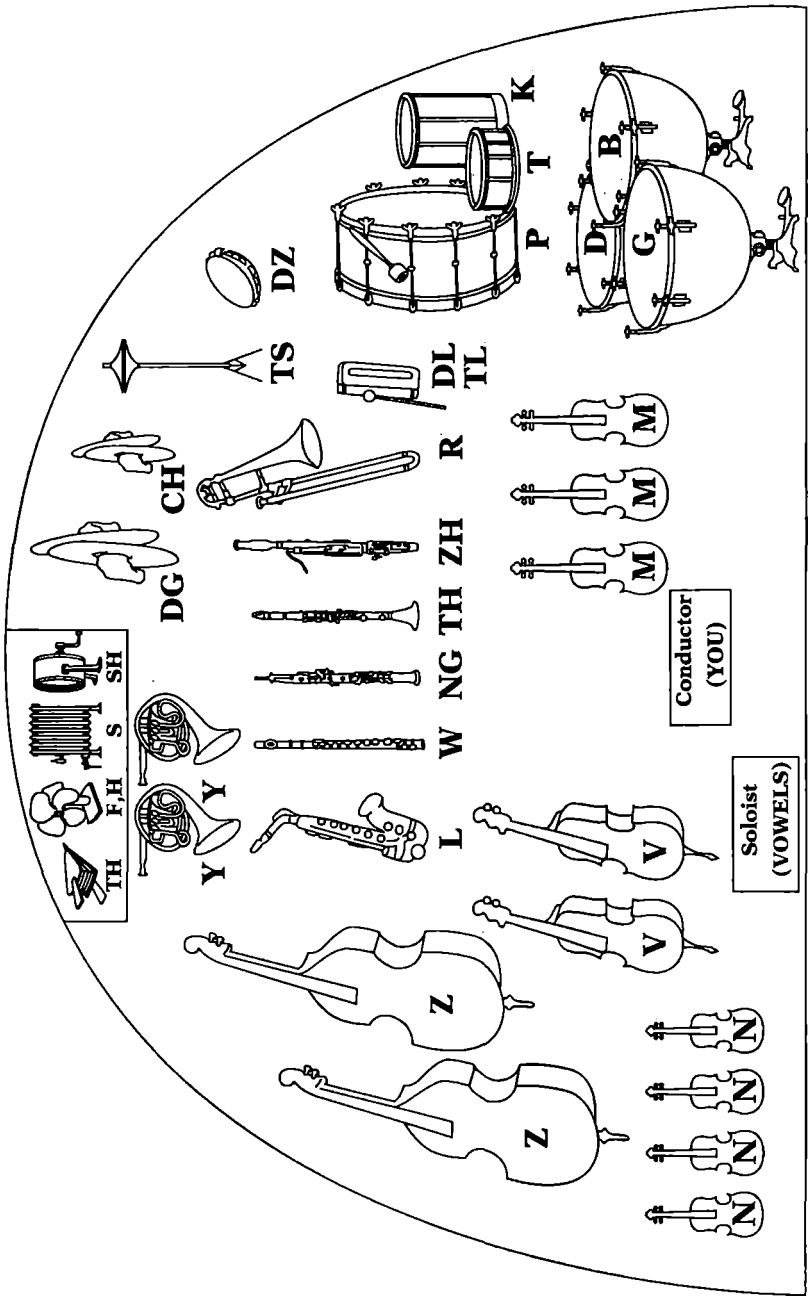


Figure 5-1 The Consonant Orchestra

TS, as in *its* or *artists,* and the *DZ,* as in *buds* or *bonds,* because they are separate instruments and separate consonants and appear as such in the alphabets of numerous foreign languages.

You will note in the consonant chart (see Table 5-1) that nine consonants have counterparts, or "cognates"—that is, they are paired. There is no articulatory or mechanical difference in the way the two members of a pair are produced; if you can execute one properly, you can execute the other equally well. The only difference is that one uses voice, the other, breath. The unvoiced consonants, because they are made without phonation of the vocal folds, are the only speech sounds that are produced entirely within the oral cavity and appear to make their way out through the lips. They are made with the glottis open and can only be whispered. But even these whispered sounds are made without breathiness: the *S, F, SH,* and unvoiced *TH* are executed best when practically *no* breath stream can be felt coming through the lips; even the *P, T,* and *K* can and should be

TABLE 5-1 CONSONANT CHART

Voiced *These consonants are phonated with vocal-fold vibration and cannot be whispered.*			*Unvoiced* *These consonants are produced without vocal-fold vibration and cannot be voiced.*		
		COGNATES			
as in	*babe*	*B*	*P*	as in	*pope*
as in	*dead*	*D*	*T*	as in	*tight*
as in	*agog*	*G*	*K*	as in	*cook*
as in	*noon*	*N*			
as in	*mime*	*M*			
as in	*verve*	*V*	*F*	as in	*fife*
as in	*zones*	*Z*	*S*	as in	*safe*
as in	*breathe*	*TH*	*TH*	as in	*breath*
as in	*pleasure*	*ZH*	*SH*	as in	*wish*
as in	*sing*	*NG*			
as in	*lilt*	*L*			
as in	*window*	*W*			
as in	*beyond*	*Y*			
as in	*rewrite*	*R*			
			H	as in	*high*
as in	*judge*	*DG*	*CH*	as in	*church*
as in	*intends*	*DZ*	*TS*	as in	*physicists*

made without conscious use of breath, although this admittedly requires consummate skill and virtuoso control.

Voice the whispered consonants and they will turn into their voiced counterparts (or, as in the case of *H*, disappear since it has no counterpart); *whisper* voiced consonants and they will turn into their unvoiced counterparts or, as in the case of the noncognates, revert to escaping breath.

EXPERIMENT 3: FAMILIARIZING YOURSELF WITH THE CONSONANT INSTRUMENTS

- Look for recordings that highlight specific orchestral instruments and listen to as many individual instruments as possible.
- Play some of the instruments, if you can, and associate their sounds with their consonant counterparts.
- Hum or tap each consonant, trying to capture the quality, expressiveness, or rhythm of the instrument in your exploration of the consonant.

HOW TO EXPLORE THE CONSONANT INSTRUMENTS

In the following section, you will explore each consonant fully and individually. Here are some guidelines for exploring consonant NRG and consonant music.

- Play the melody consonant instruments for the sheer pleasure of feeling and resonating your vibrant tones.
- Play the instruments while shifting to different intervals, lowering or raising your pitch, and varying their sustention. Feel and explore self-to-self improvising while keeping in touch with your inner mood, fantasy, conceits, images, prayer chants, and so on.
- Play the consonant instruments for intimate communication with someone else in the form of crooning, love song, a lullaby, a friendly give-and-take, a musical banter, and so on.
- It is virtually impossible to lose, ignore, or neglect initial consonants when followed by a vowel or another consonant (for example, *d*oes, *p*ut, *fl*y, *b*ring, *t*win). We, therefore, would not mark these consonants as "playable" unless they represented individual creative exploration or imaging choices. However, it should be emphasized that where we do tend to underplay our consonant instruments is when they occur in a final position, a medial position, or when they precede another consonant. It is precisely in these positions that we often lose, ignore, or neglect proper consonant formation.

• As you did in Experiment 1, *hum* on the voiced *sustainable consonants*[1] within each word. You will explore the melodic possibilities of these consonants relating to specific words. Because some of these consonants are often devoiced, you should initially hum them for about two seconds in the word. It would look something like this: *townnnn; innnnsannnne; I cannnn today ennnvisionnn nonnnne.* However, because writing out each of these consonants in this way would take up too much space, look for the double underline under the consonant being explored: for example, *town, insane, I can today envision none.* (The first *n* in *none* is not underlined because it precedes a vowel and is, therefore, not a prime candidate for instrumental exploration. And, of course, the final *e* in *none* is silent; thus, the second *n* is the final sound in this word and can be played.)

• *Tap percussive consonants* lightly and cleanly in a spring-away fashion. To know which ones to play, watch for the single underline: for example, *stab, trap, handmade, Oh tip-top lollipop.* Move with dispatch from consonant to consonant. (Note again that consonants preceding a phonetic vowel are not underlined.)

• Sustainable consonants that are not voiced, like the *F* and the *S*, should be explored like the voiced consonants. Here, you will not explore for melody but try to discover the quality and character the sound offers to the word.

• Remember, you should play consonants that occur at the end of a word or before another "playable" consonant, even when separated by a silent *e* as in the word *pinned*. Understand, too, that double consonants are treated as single ones.[2]

• After exploring a consonant, move quickly to the next one, playing the vowels lightly in between. This will keep your focus on the music of the consonants and not on the music of the vowels!

• *Connect* words into phrases. Articulate sentences with a *firm* but smooth flow. Select your own phrase-making as long as you avoid word-by-word disconnectedness and choppiness. Test it (and taste it) with the following example:

And even winter's moon . . . is down.

• Where you see the horizontal curve (⌣), you should link two connected words. For example:

those emblems[3] take care good tones

[1]In our frame of reference, "sustaining the consonant instrument" means playing it longer, feeling it genuinely, and embodying it with inner imaging. ([2,3] next page.)

In the first example, because the *s* provides the final consonant sound and it precedes a vowel (the *e* in *emblem*), it is marked as a linking opportunity. In the other two examples, the final consonant sound precedes another identical or similarly formed consonant sound and thus presents a linking opportunity (this type of linking will be discussed later in the chapter under "Linking: Consonant NRG in Connected Speech"). Many linking choices are marked throughout the consonant-instrument sentences and poems; *however, you should feel free at any time to replace these markings with either expressive breath pauses or with other special creative interpretation.* Likewise, ellipses (. . .) and commas are occasionally used to *suggest* interpretive pausing, but do be sure to use your own creativity and individuality as you explore all the consonant instruments by making linking or pausing choices as you see fit.[4]

- Please be alert to the fact that (1) the following word lists are marked for the *playable instruments currently covered;* (2) the individual sentences in the ongoing sections are marked *only for the specific instrument being worked on;* (3) the poems in each consonant section are marked for the *current and previously discussed consonant instruments* and should be expressed behaviorally or imaginatively, with each word flowing easily and comfortably into the next word or pause; and (4) the poems should not be approached as tongue-twisters but rather should be explored as musical, tonal, expressive, or poetic vocal-life opportunities.
- If you are working alone, explore how each sound affects you, how it makes you feel inside. These feelings and their expressions will vary every time you explore the opportunities. Enjoy that freedom! The improvisational possibilities are limitless.
- If you are working with a partner, use the sound as an *action* to affect him or her in some way: communicate the meaning of the word or poem, or express a mood through the text and particularly through the specific sound being explored. Experimenting or exploring with a partner is also excellent practice to help you connect with other characters and the audience when you act.
- Play! Enjoy! Of course, this is work, but treat it as spirited, creative behavior—not as "work on demand."

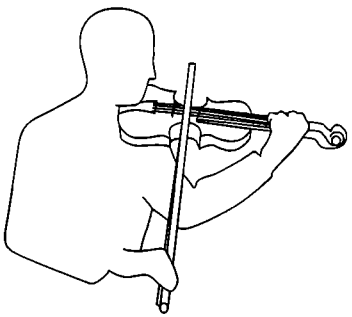
[2]Double consonants are treated as just one unless the dictionary indicates otherwise—for example, *accent* (pronounced *"aksent"*).

[3]The reverse slash (\) indicates a nonsounded vowel or consonant. The regular slash (/) indicates that the marked consonant is not a playable consonant instrument but is linked directly into the initial consonant of the next word.

[4]As you progress through this chapter and subsequent chapters, be aware that not all playables or linkings are marked in the sentences, poems, and other explorative selections. This is deliberate so that you may: (1) practice filling in your own markings; (2) feel free to link (I have a dream) or choose a pause to take advantage of the playable

To those of you who think or have been told by others that you can't sing, do not be intimidated by the musical concept of the consonants. A musical tone simply implies good quality, and moving a tone to different pitches is, in fact, melody and singing.

THE *N* VIOLIN (cognate: none)



N

To feel the NRG of the *N* violin, slightly part your lips and leave a small space between your teeth. Gently bring the upper surface of your tongue to the roof of your mouth at the hard palate, and then loosen your tongue, leaving only the rim in contact with the gum ridge all around the upper teeth. Now sing on the *N,* allowing the sound to flow and transmit through the bony resonating areas through the hard palate, mask, and forehead. You will feel gentle vibrations along the rim of the tongue.

Play this consonant instrument pleasurably and tunefully, without pressing your tongue or forcing breath through your nose. The violin will not sing if the violinist presses hard on the bow.

Play the violin—Hum it—in the following words:

town	none	govern	open	women	lantern
undone	insane	unseen	return	monsoon	mountain
condone	incline	unclean	Indian	unison	envision

Experiment and explore, in a meaningful manner, the playable opportunities in the following sentences:

The thundering monsoon rains inundated the entire mountain range.

None but the lonely man . . . can find infinite solace in his mind.

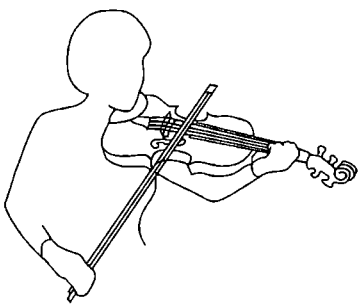
Now explore this poem. Remember to connect the words to each other and to communicate the meaning or the mood you discover through your sensory experience of the tonal vibrations:

---

opportunity (I have . . . a dream); and (3) train yourself to be an expert "sight reader." Using your own pauses either for interpretive breaths or spontaneous, creative expressiveness is a form of personal poetic license.

I can today envision none
but one
whose taint has sent my sun . . .
into a plunging,
lone
descent . . .
And even winter's moon . . . is down.

THE *M* VIOLA (cognate: none)



M

To feel the NRG of the *M* viola, allow your lips to meet very gently and hum vibrantly. Leave a slight space between your upper and lower teeth, and let your tongue relax on the floor of your mouth. You will feel a gentle vibration or a keen tingle in the fleshy part of your lips.

Play this consonant instrument without pressing your lips together or tightening any of the muscles around your mouth. Your lips, whatever form they take, should always be so relaxed that they feel almost cushiony.

Play the viola (and the violin when it occurs) in the following words:

dim	maim	sum	fume	alarm	supreme
symptom	anthem	minim	atom	them	amphitheatre
embalm	become	tame	complain	humdrum	momentum

Experiment and explore behaviorally the following sentences. Use both the violin and viola consonant instruments even though only the viola is indicated.

The impediment was so drummed and hummed into him that he became entirely tamed and embarrassingly imbecilic!

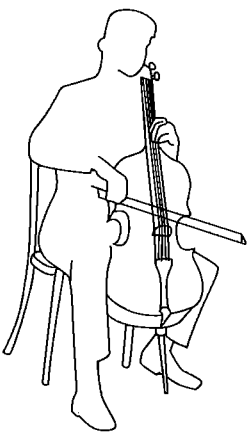
The amphitheatre trembled and hummed and resonated in alarm simply because the anthem was not the hymn supreme.

Now explore both instruments in this poem:

Mem'ries are compliments supreme . . .
and yet,

Embalmed and dimmed,
they trample . . .
Maim the moment's
tamed simplicity
and become . . .
a humdrum hymn,
an anthem
wheezed in a ruined apse,
To a damned . . .
contemning past.

THE *V* CELLO (cognate: *F* sound effect)



V

To feel the NRG of the *V* cello, let your upper teeth gently touch the inside of your lower lip (just where the lip turns moist) and sing a buzzing melody. The upper lip is not involved at all. You will feel a gentle, dark, buzzing vibration or a sharp tingle on the lower lip.

Play this consonant instrument without blowing or forcing your breath. Any feeling of breath will move the resonant cello toward the sound effect *F*. Experiment with the *V* cello by placing your upper front teeth a bit lower inside your lower lip to feel a fuller, richer cello buzz as well as a keener tickle sensation.

Play the cello (and the viola and the violin, when they occur) in the following words:

verve	improve	connive	tentative	everyone	positive
love	contrive	behave	conceive	sensitive	gravestone
lively	caveman	lovelorn	driveway	approve	dive-bomb

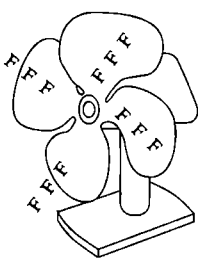
Play the cello, viola, and violin consonants in the following sentences with meaning and feeling:

Can we strive to give . . . unresolved love, not tentatively, but positively? The curved stone driveway obscured the ancient, dissolved gravestone, as well as the lovely, cavelike grove where almost every evening they lived and loved their inner dreams.

Now play them in this poem:

A lively lovelight lives but to connive . . .
Gets hives
from wives.
The lovelorn drive love to the grave, to thrive
on chives . . .
not wives.

THE *F* SOUND EFFECT (cognate: *V* cello)



In the *F* sound effect, the dark, rich vibrations of the *V* cello are stilled to the whisper of a fan. To feel the NRG of the *F* sound effect, play the *V* cello; then turn off the voice and continue in a smooth-flowing whisper. The unvoiced, whispered *V* is a perfect *F*.

Play this sound effect without blowing, forcing your breath, or tightening your lips. Check with the back of your hand very close to your lips to make certain that practically no breath stream escapes. It is a very delicate balance. You should feel a gentle, smooth, virtually airless sensation that sounds something like the gentle rustle of a quiet electric fan.

Play the *F* sound effect as a sustained voiceless sensation where it occurs at the end of a word or before another consonant. Continue to play the *N* violin, the *M* viola, and the *V* cello when they occur in these positions as well.

laugh	triumph	enough	cough	muffler	graphmaker
nymph	halfway	after	laughter	confuse[5]	cliffdweller

Play the *F* sound effect plus the other consonant instruments in the following sentences:

[5]Phonetically, there is a *Y* consonant following the *f* in "confuse."

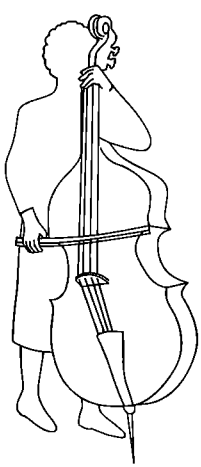
After we huffed and puffed through the tough climb, the top of the cliff seemed like a veritable fairyland where elves and sylphs half-winked and half-flirted as they wafted and waved about us.

The fluffy silver butterfly flew off triumphantly after escaping the nymph who laughed, and floated softly down the cliff.

Play the four consonant instruments in the following poem:

The graphmaker laughed a laugh
of triumph . . .
for halfway cross his cleft in two,
a woodnymph coughed,
and soft
laughter
tarried after.

THE Z BASS FIDDLE (cognate: *S* sound effect)



Z

To feel the NRG of the *Z* bass fiddle, place your tongue toward the gum ridge with your side teeth almost occluded. The sound will come through a tiny aperture between your tongue and teeth, either centered at the tongue tip or slightly to either side. If this opening is centered, then both sides of the tongue rim should gently touch the upper gum ridge; if to the side, the forward portion of the opposite side of the tongue, including the tip, should be in gentle contact with the gum-ridge hard palate. Hum on the *Z* until it vibrates in the very small tongue aperture behind your upper teeth. You will feel a smooth but strong resonant vibration in your teeth and the front of your tongue without any hissing or breathy undertones.

Play this consonant by letting it sing lightly, gently, easily, and vibrantly with the deep resonance of a bass fiddle. Any breath at all will

move the *Z* bass fiddle toward an *S* sound effect. Remember to keep your upper and lower side teeth gently occluded for the full, rich bass fiddle *Z*.

Play the *Z* bass fiddle and any other previously discussed consonant instruments in the following words:

daze	breeze	prize	Joe's	blazes	cheers
is	was	has	his	hers	ours
yours	theirs	these	those	whose	emphasize
abused	wisdom	amaze	transpose	because	sympathize

Now explore the humming of double strings:

violin plus bass:	returns	zones	interns
viola plus bass:	consumes	systems	condemns
cello plus bass:	unnerves	conserves	disproves

Play the bass fiddle and all the other string consonants in these sentences:

Bees plus fleas, in twos and threes, gazed at the heavens . . . as they buzzed their ways through the leaves . . . and trees.

Johnny's haze-like daze was caused by crazed fears, which amazed the hospital's interns.

Now play the *Z* bass fiddle and all the other string consonants in the following poem. Remember to connect the words to each other.

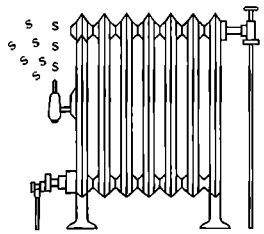
These interzones
whose . . . sizzling days
have seized the tears
from worlds ablaze . . .
are scenes with Ceres,
lone and crazed,
or fears of seers
who dream . . . amazed.

When does the *S* sound effect become a *Z* bass fiddle? Although it's impossible to classify all the instances, here are two rules of thumb:

1. When a final *S* follows a voiced consonant (*wins, sales*)
2. When a final *S* is added to a word that ends with a vowel sound to form the possessive or the plural (*pianos, Joe's*)

When in doubt, look up the pronunciation in a dictionary.

THE *S* SOUND EFFECT (cognate: *Z* bass fiddle)



The *S* sound effect is a light, soft, high-pitched sensation, like the gentle escape of steam from a radiator. It induces an incisive quality in words when it precedes other consonants.

To feel the NRG of the *S* sound effect, play the *Z* bass fiddle; then turn off the voice, and continue in a quiet whisper. The unvoiced, gently whispered *Z* is a perfect *S*.

Play this sound effect softly, sharply, steadily, and smoothly. If you concentrate on keeping your upper and lower side teeth almost occluded and your tongue tip at the gum ridge, you will always produce a satisfactory *S*, whether the sound comes through a central tongue aperture or a slightly lateral one. You will feel a steady, keen sensation, too soft to be a whistle but sharp (high-pitched) enough to feel a gentle, rising energy. Practically no breath or air comes through your lips when the *S* is properly executed.[6] (Re-explore Experiment 13—"Exhalation Control"—in Chapter 3.)

Note: Even though many do follow the "path of least resistance" by using the tongue-to-lower-teeth position, this habit leads to lisps, superfluous breath, and jaw protrusion and tension. The only time I would recommend a tongue-to-lower-teeth position (other than for character trait development) is when therapeutic assistance and/or compensatory techniques are indicated.

Play the sustained *S* sound effect in the following words while continuing to play the other consonant instruments:

force	basis	entrance	kiss	monstrous	incestuous
moisture	robustious	question	dance	blaspheme	emphasis

Play the *S* sound effect (as well as the other instruments covered) in the following sentences:

The usually blissful, peaceful, picturesque atmosphere, this time seemed blusterous, musty, and almost mysterious, bringing serious questions to our lips.

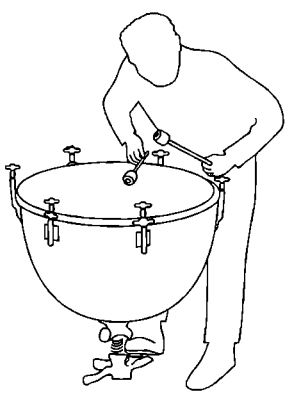
[6]The *S* sound evokes many complaints when it is obtrusively loud, "slushy," inaudible, "whistled," or lisped. If produced as described above, the *S* will develop into a clear, sharp, yet delicate sound and provide a lovely tonal contrast to the melodic strings and woodwinds and the staccato drumbeats; it will also be perfect for personal, stage, or microphone speaking or singing.

At last, the expressfulness_of his kiss danced and pranced on her sensitive lips.

Now play the *S* sound effect, plus all other previously mentioned consonant instruments, in the following poem:

Whistling cross the blistering past,
She wrestled[7]
with a kiss.
At last
She danced with questions_on her lips;
Moisture
glistened softly,
passed too close . . .
and psst!
A moment on her fingertips.

THE *B* TYMPANI DRUMBEAT (cognate: *P* bass drum)



B

The voiced tap of the *B* tympani, or kettledrum, is played with a light spring-away action of the lips. To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, close your lips gently together to achieve a feeling of cushiony softness; then let them spring lightly apart with a momentary vocal resonance that stops with the end of the spring. The result will be a delicate but clearly voiced *B* drumbeat.

Play this drumbeat as your lips spring apart. Do not, however, press your lips together and explode the sound through built-up breath pressure; such an action will produce a forced, breathy noise and a tightness in your jaw and lip muscles. Instead, you should feel a gentle, voiced pulsation on your lips like a delicate, crisp tap—an energy, not an effort.

Play this drumbeat along with the preceding consonant instruments in the following words:

[7]The *S* sustention is optional before the liquid *L* consonant. Also, the *t* is silent in *glistened* and *wrestled*.

stab	bribe	hubbub	suburb	microbe	job
imbibe	grab	absence	probably	disrobe	subject
absorb	abdomen	ablaze	cobweb	cobbler	hobnob

Play this drumbeat (plus the other consonant instruments) in the following sentences:

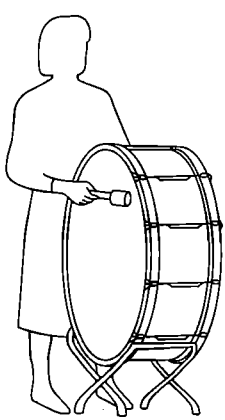
Bubbling like a babe, and very much disturbed, Bob grabbed at my outstretched hand and sobbed.

The obdurate but rehabilitated mobster obviously bribed the hobnobbing hobo out of the rub-a-dub drumbeating job.

Now play the *B* tympani drumbeat in the following poem. Remember to connect the words to each other, and continue to play all the consonant instruments you have discovered so far.

The hubbub in the suburb
was just a microbe . . . in a cobweb,
compared
to the hubbub of the hobnobs
bobbing on the job,
imbibing and cavorting,
and probably subscribing to sin.

THE *P* BASS DRUM DRUMBEAT (cognate: *B* tympani)



P

The whispered tap of the *P* bass drum is played with a light spring-away action of the lips. To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, close your lips gently (as for the *B* tympani) and then let them spring lightly apart. In a whisper, the *B* tympani beat becomes a perfect, delicately popped unvoiced drumbeat.

Play this drumbeat as your lips spring apart, and deliberately execute not a *P*, but what you feel to be a *B* tympani beat in a whisper, without the slightest puff of air. The properly executed *P* bass drum will never be explosive on microphone, nor

will it shoot an offensive spray of saliva at a nearby listener. You will feel a gentle pulsation on your lips like a delicate, crisp tap—an energy, not an effort.

Play the *P* bass drum and the previously mentioned consonant instruments in the following words:

trap	stop	clamp	escape	asleep	periscope
capsize	lapse	optimum	captain	tip-top	shipshape
stump	flip-flop	stopgap	gape	lollipop	strap

Explore these sentences for the *P* percussion NRG:

> The little pup, in optimal tip-top shape, escaped from the trap when it jumped quickly into the deep dark passageway.

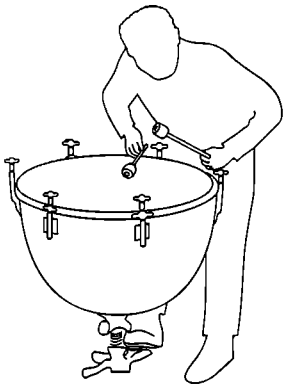
> Asleep at the periscope, the usually shipshape captain couldn't stop the capsizing of his priceless ship.

Play the *P* bass drum in the following poem. Remember to connect the words to each other, and continue to play all the other consonants you have discovered. Remember also that this instrumentation explores percussive and syncopated speech skills; experiment with expressiveness, pauses, and a sense of body humor. Infuse the lines with real or imagined meaning.

O pop top poppy plop,
Captain of my ship
Capsize, flopsize,
Lapsing into sleep.
Up down periscope,
Stop-strap the trap;
my tilly-top lillypop
pop-lipped pollyplop
will pipple our escape.

THE *D* TYMPANI DRUMBEAT (cognate: *T* snare drum)

The voiced *D* tympani beat is played with a light spring-away action of the tongue. To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, place your tongue on the upper gum ridge as you did to play the *N* violin; then, as the brief



D

vocal resonance comes through, let the tongue spring away to play the *D* drumbeat.

Play this drumbeat as your tongue springs away from its soft cushiony contact with the upper gum ridge (avoid pressing your tongue hard against the palate). You will feel a gentle pulsation in your tongue.

Feel the bouncing action of the *D* drumbeat when it occurs at the end of a word or before another consonant, and continue to play the other consonant instruments that appear in playable positions in the following words:

woodman	advertised	handmade	adverse	sandpiper
amplitude	unsound	unplanned	livelihood	conceived
verbalized	identified	alarmed	stockade	blended

Play the *D* tympani in the following sentences:

Afraid, cold, and fatigued, we paddled in the dark, while the strong current pulled me and Fred closer to the dangerous rapids.

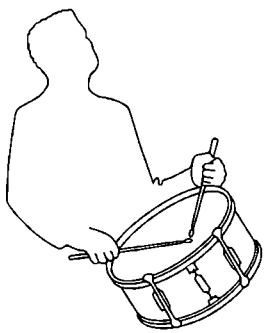
The woodman admitted that he needed more handmade windwipers for the stockade, in Concord.

Now play the *D* drumbeat and other consonant instruments in this poem:

The madcap woodman
advertised,
identified
his livelihood:
He mended handmade wood windwipers . . .
and inadvertently lost his head.
He said:
Because of the life I've led,
a cad like me is sure to wed.
It is said I am mod
and a little bit odd,

cause_I add_to my quad,
and it makes me so glad
To think of myself, as a mod man
quite mad.

THE *T* SNARE DRUM DRUMBEAT (cognate: *D* tympani)



T

The light *T* tap of the snare drum is played with the same spring-away action of the tongue as the beat of the *D* tympani. To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, place your tongue in the position for the *D* tympani and voicelessly spring away your tongue. With no vocal resonance, you will have formed the light, percussive tap of the *T* snare drum.

Play this drumbeat with a light spring-away action of the tongue (not with pressure against the palate) and with a light and airless whisper. You will feel a gentle pulsation in your tongue.

A final *D* after an unvoiced consonant and silent *E* is also unvoiced; that is, it becomes a *T*, as in *strapped*. Play the *T* drumbeat (whispered *D*) in the following words. Continue to play the other consonant instruments as well.

street	**net**	**omnipotent**	**habit**	**rebate**	**quartet**
abutment	**depart**	**incandescent**	**inundate**	**concrete**	**glanced**
Antwerp	**hatpin**	**incitement**	**Baptist**	**admit**	**dropped**

Play the *T* snare drum and other consonant instruments in these sentences:

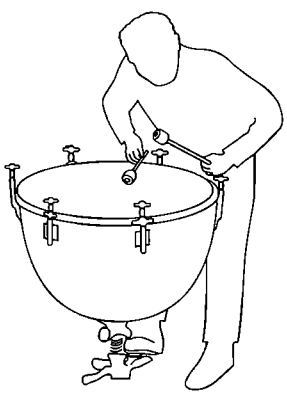
Her temperate restraint would not affect her tactful treatment of the expectant candidate, who talked_in quiet, reluctant_tones regarding his violent past.

The miffed customer blurted out, "This burnt roast has no taste—take it back posthaste."

Play the *T* snare drum in this poem. Remember to connect the words to each other and to play all the other instruments!

O omnipresent, omnipotent young terrorist,
titillating to excitement and parting crowds:
I dreamed a quartet of battered matadors,
brandishing beltbuckles yet wearing no habit,
had chased you down the streets of Antwerp—
and net-barbed
and wet-garbed
dropped you into a tin of wet concrete,
which was sweet . . .
if not neat.

THE *G* TYMPANI DRUMBEAT (cognate: *K* tom-tom)



G

The deeper tympani drumbeat of the hard *G* is played delicately with the soft palate and the back of the tongue. This action is subtler and a little more difficult than the other percussive consonants for the many teeth gritters and jaw clampers.

To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, gently touch the back of your tongue to the soft palate. Rest the tip of your tongue at your lower front teeth. With your mouth half-open, let your tongue spring away from the soft palate as you voice the beat of the *G* tympani.

Play the springing action of this drumbeat in the back of the oral cavity, without tightening, pressing, or pushing. You will feel a delicate, yet crisp tap and a gentle, voiced pulsation at the back of your tongue and at the soft palate.

Play the *G* tympani drumbeat and other consonant instruments in the following words:

dig	beg	fog	fatigue	league	catalog
suggest	ignorant	intrigue	pigment	Dogberry	recognized
straggler	vaguely	augment	quagmire	zigzag	synagogue

Play the *G* tympani in the following sentences along with the other playables; turn this exercise into an actor's experiment:

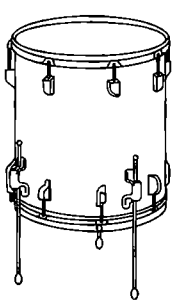
Zig-zagging through the igneous cragged precipice, we suggested that the stragglers dig through the fog till they recognize the way.

The indignant witness was totally ignorant of the quagmired intrigue and struggled gallantly to be even vaguely cognizant of the pregnant circumstances.

Play the *G* drumbeat in this poem. Remember to connect the words to each other. Keep imaging.

Vaguely, I recognized the ignorant straggler who dug his way
zig zag
through fog and quagmire,
I suggested to him . . .
Augment your bag
and do not lag,
nor straggle
nor dig,
nor zig
nor zag
through fog and mire of quag
and minds that sag.

THE *K* TOM-TOM DRUMBEAT (cognate: *G* tympani)



K

A bit deeper than the other unvoiced percussion instruments but still crisp, the tom-tom click of the *K*, like its cognate drumbeat *G*, comes from the soft palate. To feel the NRG of this percussive consonant, place your tongue in the *G* position. The unvoiced whisper of the *G* drumbeat as the tongue springs away from the soft palate will produce the soft clicking beat of the *K*.

Play this drumbeat on the spring-away action without any tightening, pressing, pushing, or forcing your breath. You will feel a delicate, yet crisp tap and a gentle implosive action created by the back of the tongue and the soft palate.

Play the *K* tom-tom and the previously mentioned consonant instruments in the following words:

make	plaque	panic	shellac	success	unmask
crack	Cockney	checkmate	accessory	monarch	dejected
ache	unique	eccentric	crackpot	milkwood	Antarctic

Play the *K* drumbeat, plus any other playable consonant instruments, in these sentences; do it creatively:

Strengthened[8] from his previous weakness, he accepted the task to review his erratic behavior and quickly asked to see the fractious, intractable, and indictable picture.

Jack Techlectik was a unique, bleak, eccentric character whose particular technique was to feign being weak-minded, weak-kneed, and dejected.

Play the *K* tom-tom in this poem; remember to play the other consonants you have discovered as well:

The panicked Cockney
checkmated
the dejected monarch,
who ached at this success . . .
thought himself attacked
(knew himself shellacked)
and wondered most eccentric'ly:
If he could take
and break . . .
this crackpot Cockney
with exile[9] in Antarctica.

DOUBLE DRUMBEATS

A characteristic of the percussion section of the consonant orchestra is the frequent doubling of drumbeats—the *PT,* the *KT,* the *BD,* and the *GD*—and a characteristic of slipshod speech is the frequent dropping of one or

[8]In *strengthened,* the *g* is pronounced *K* and the preceding *N* becomes an *NG.*
[9]*Exile:* pronounced "egzile."

both of the beats. Double drumbeats need not be difficult. Just feel the double tap-tap. But it is not enough just to imagine hearing both sounds, you must also sense each sound as a separate event; the two can be executed with surprising drumbeat agility.

No matter how light or how gentle, if you feel the taps, your listener will hear them. Practice feeling the double drumbeats for the following consonant pairs, and continue to play the other consonant instruments:

PT double drumbeat:

apt wept accept looped hoped stopped
chipped stamped escaped concept clasped adapt

KT double drumbeat:

act effect inflict obstruct subject enactment
sacked picked wrecked stacked tracked docked
joked raked booked peeked flaked streaked

BD double drumbeat:

stabbed robbed robed bribed rubbed sobbed

GD double drumbeat:

flogged rigged hugged lagged tugged wagged

Now explore these double-drumbeat sentences:

Since his hoped-for concept was being balked, blocked, and stopped, he elected to act promptly and accept productive employment elsewhere.

She wept, gasped for breath, and clasped the looped chain to her heart.

The shocked actor was docked part of his pay because he joked, and wrecked, the show's effect upon the audience.

The little boy sobbed, rubbed his nose, and begged for help, while all the time his little dog wagged his tail furiously and begged . . . to be hugged.

The drugged animal was accidentally stabbed in the abdomen while being dragged through the rugged, snagged timberland.

Play all the double drumbeats and other consonant instruments in the following poem; remember to connect the words to each other:

His home was wrecked,
Sacked, raked, and blacked
again.
He'll accept, and he'll adapt.
But he wept then . . .
Flogged, stabbed, stamped, and wracked
He hoped, and hugged a dream,
sobbed and wept,
character cleft,
bereft,
and left.

THE *TH* CLARINET (cognate: *TH* sound effect)

TH

The warm, vibrant sound of the voiced *TH* simulates the clarinet, a woodwind instrument with a quality similar to the *V* cello. Although this sound is frequently overlooked or neglected by many people, when executed correctly, the *TH* clarinet is very easy to play.

To feel the NRG of the *TH* clarinet, slip the rim of your tongue between your upper and lower teeth (perhaps even more than necessary at first), with the sides of your tongue filling the spaces between your side teeth. Then sing, and feel the buzz or motor-purring vibration throughout the front rim of your tongue.

Play this consonant instrument gently, without biting down on your tongue or forcing your breath. Do not practice the softer form with your tongue against or behind the upper teeth. When you are familiar with the strong form, the softening process will take place naturally and inevitably when the tempo or the informality of the speech situation calls for it. The *TH* clarinet feels like a tingling vibration on the rim of the tongue at and outside the teeth.

Play the *TH* clarinet—and any other playable consonants—on various pitches in the following words:

breathe	unsheathe	soothe	bathe	loathe	writhe
smoothes	seethed	breathed	breathes	clothes	loathsome
withdraw[10]	withstand	therewith	truths	tithe	wreathed

Explore these sentences creatively:

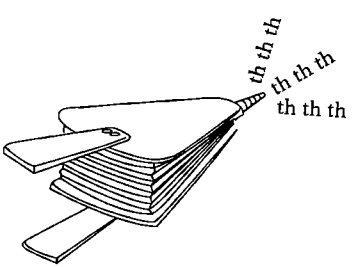
I cannot breathe smoothly; I need to bathe, and soothe my wounds; I have writhed enough.

As he tried to smoothe some painful truths, she seethed, lathered, and bathed him . . . in loathsome looks.

Now play the *TH* clarinet in this poem. Continue to connect words to each other, and play all the consonants you have discovered so far.

"Foresoothe me, do!"
the loathsome, snaggletoothed werewolf proclaimed,
as he seethed beneath the unsheathed knife—
tithes extracted[11] from his hide.
"I cannot breathe smoothly for I have toothed four writhing worms
. . . and have need to soothe my wounds."

THE *TH* SOUND EFFECT (cognate: *TH* clarinet)



TH

The thin, bellows-like friction stream of the *TH* sound effect is a dry and gentle whispered counterpart of the warm vibrations of its cognate, the *TH* clarinet. To feel the NRG of the *TH* sound effect, play the consonant as a clarinet, and then turn off the voice and continue in a whisper.

Play this sound effect lightly and softly without forcing your breath, which would turn the thin whisper into an undesirably heavy, throttled hiss. You should feel a steady but almost airless sensation of the escaping breath stream.

Play the *TH* sound effect as a light, thin whisper in the following words. Be particularly careful to play the consonants that occur immediately before the *TH*.

[10]Dictionary pronunciations include both a voiced and unvoiced *TH* for the words *withdraw, withstand, therewith,* and *truths.*
[11]*Extracted:* pronounced "ekstracted."

wreath	earth	birthday	myth	teeth	booth
breathless	months	truth	tenths	ruthless	siksths (sixths)
forthwith	fifths	wealth	faithful	breadth[12]	width

Play the *TH* sound effect while exploring the following sentences:

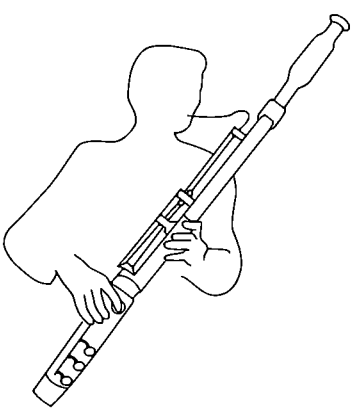
You have been ruthless, unfaithful, and uncouth, so spare me your breathless, mythful truths.

The width, length, and breadth of the earth would take thwarted months and months to traverse.

Now play the *TH* sound effect and other playable consonants in this poem:

The breathless months move slowly over earth
as the fourth threnody[13] brings to truth
the myths of time:
Thwarted thoughts
and lost desires . . .
on the last long breath, of that siksth (sixth) year.

THE *ZH* BASSOON (cognate: *SH* sound effect)



ZH

The deep rumbling of the *ZH* simulates the bassoon and adds voice to the hush of the *SH* (refer to the next section). Although this consonant has no alphabetic identification, it is a sound we use frequently. To feel the NRG of the *ZH* bassoon, whisper the *SH* and add vocal resonance while keeping your teeth gently occluded.

Play this consonant instrument vibrantly but without forcing breath into the sound. When the tonal vibration begins, all suggestion of the *SH* sound effect must vanish. You will feel the *SH* sound effect completely replaced by the deep rumbling vibrations of the *ZH* resonating against your teeth and at the tip of your tongue.

[12]*Breadth* and *width*: the *d* in both words becomes a *t* in preparation for the unvoiced *TH;* refer to the "Prepare and Link" section of Experiment 8 later in this chapter.
[13]*Threnody:* dirge, elegy, requiem, death march.

Play the tonal vibrations of the *ZH* bassoon in the following words, with no hint of the "shushing" of the *SH* sound effect.

garage	beige	collage	garaged	corsage	mirage
entourage	badinage	menage	rouge	Taj Mahal	massaged

Play the *ZH* bassoon creatively in these sentences:

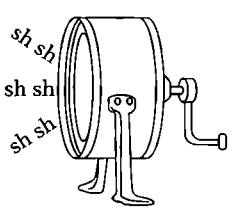
The color photo on the garage door was no mirage; it showed a beautiful young woman with natural rouge color in her cheeks, dressed in a light beige wedding gown, and holding a gorgeous corsage to match the beige.

The beige Taj Mahal garage housed a veritable entourage—a montage of antique rouge cars.

Play the *ZH* bassoon and other previously mentioned consonant instruments in this poem. Remember to connect words to each other easily.

I massaged my eyes
as the motley menage
(my entourage)
as_in_a mirage . . .
a dreamlike collage . . .
disappeared
in_a Taj Mahal.
I garaged my camel and went for a drink.

THE *SH* SOUND EFFECT (cognate: *ZH* bassoon)



SH

The distant windlike sound of the *SH* is the universal call for silence. To feel the NRG of the *SH* sound effect, bring your side teeth gently together in a natural bite and "shush" quietly. Your tongue will take its natural position during this action without any effort on your part.

Play this sound effect softly, sharply, and smoothly. You will feel a high-pitched sound-effect sensation, almost like a gentle whistle, but there should be no rush of air. Check with the back of your hand to be sure that, aside from a barely discernable feeling of warmth, you feel no "air stream" at all.

Play the *SH* sound effect and any other playable consonants in the following words:

hush	dish	mesh	push	harsh	flashlight
wishful	Oshkosh	clash	harshly	fishnet	bashfully
bashed	brushed	hash	mishmash	dishwasher	cash register

Play the *SH* sound effect in the following sentences, along with the other consonant instruments:

> **Sh-Sh-Sh, hush child, there's no shame in being bashful or ticklish, so perish the thought; for "bashful" often grows into owlish wisdom, and "ticklish" (which needs not be skittish) can easily turn to whimsical roguishness and lush laughter.**

> **In Oshkosh, a hush rushed through the marsh, and fish vanished in the harsh, enmeshed underbrush.**

Now play the *SH* sound effect in this poem. Remember to connect the words to each other and to explore your other consonants. Explore your inner imaging, your expressiveness, and your free-feeling pauses.

Hush!
You push too harshly.
Never rush me . . .
Ahhh! wishful thinking,
for even as you brush your hair
so feverishly . . .
each stroke, a clash—
And yet,
you push too harshly . . .
Hush!

THE *L* SAXOPHONE (cognate: none)

The *L* saxophone is a gentle, fluid instrument. Although it asserts itself somewhat more when it precedes a vowel than when it precedes a consonant, it is a beautiful, melodious sound that adds clarity and richness to consonant speech. To feel the NRG of the *L* saxophone, place the tip of your tongue on the upper front gum ridge and let the vocal resonance come through without applying any pressure.

L

Play this consonant instrument with a light touch—with as little of your tongue touching the gum ridge as possible. If you have difficulty with this position, place the whole rim of your tongue on the upper gum ridge (as for the *N* violin), and then loosen all of your tongue except for the tip at the front gum ridge. You will feel a gentle, vowel-like resonance, only slightly impeded by the tongue position.

Lightly play the *L* saxophone and any other playable consonants in the following words:

doll	fall	prevail	protocol	kneel	conceal
film	elm	help	revolve	willed	delve
gold	fooled	dolphins	sylphlike	asphalt	milkwood

Explore the *L* saxophone in the following sentences. Remember to connect the words to each other.

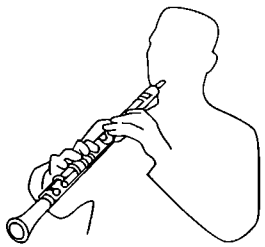
> To prevail_in the film world, one must: (1) delve deeply into the realm of professional know-how, (2) nail down some respectable protocol, and, on the whole, (3) not freely reveal_all personal dreams.

> A moldy film fully colored the golden elms and milkwood trees, helping to conceal the squirrels' lair.

Now play your *L* saxophone in the following poem. Play the other consonants you have discovered, too!

> The sylphlike dolphin spring
> willed_its way
> through the filmy wold . . .
> A milky thing, this thing of_old—
> veiled whimsy and fooled gold,
> concealed_in slow, cold, mournful,
> lilted_times to come.

THE *NG* OBOE (cognate: none)



NG

The twangy, nasal tone of the *NG* simulates the oboe, an instrument sometimes said to have an oriental tonal quality. The *NG* is a single, sustained, vibrated nasal sound in which neither the *N* violin nor the *G* tympani drum-beat plays any part.

To feel the NRG of the *NG* oboe, sing with the back of your tongue in contact with the soft palate and the tip gently touching the inside of your lower front teeth and gum ridge. Play this consonant instrument without effort or tension for a sustained nasal vibration. You will feel a twangy, nasal resonance.

The *NG* oboe is more complex than some of the other consonant instruments. It must not, to begin with, be confused with the *N* violin followed by a *G* pronounced as a *DG* Chinese cymbal (see the following section) as in *hinge.* The substitution of the *N* for the *NG* in participle endings is a common error (such as *doin'* and *feelin'*), and there is often confusion about the correct use of the *G* or *K* drumbeat following the *NG* (as in *stronger* and *tincture*). Let's look at the various uses of the *NG* oboe and how it is affected by its relative position to other consonant instruments.

Play the final *NG* oboe alone, with absolutely no suggestion of the drumbeat action as the tongue leaves the soft palate. Here, the *NG* is double-underlined to denote a nonpercussive consonant sound.

hang **belong** **strong** **young** **sing** **tongue**
seeing **hitting** **being** **batting** **reading** **loving**

In words ending in *nk,* the *n* by itself represents an *NG* oboe followed by a *K* drumbeat. Here, the *n* is marked with the symbol ⊸ to signify that it stands for the *NG* oboe, not the *N* violin.

in k **flan k** **mon k** **drun k** **hon k** **brin k**

The medial *NG* is the oboe alone (not followed by a *G* tympani beat) whenever the portion of the word containing the medial *NG* oboe *is a word in itself* that carries a meaning in common with the word as a whole.

singing **ping-pong** **dungheap** **springtime** **things** **hanged**

Exceptions: In the comparative and superlative forms of the following words, the *NG* oboe (marked ⊸) is followed by a *G* tap (marked with a single underline).

stron ger stron gest youn ger youn gest lon ger lon gest

Play the medial *NG* as an oboe plus a *G* or *K* tap when the portion of the word containing the medial *NG* has no meaning of its own (*maling*-ering) or is a word but with no common meaning to the completed word (*hung*-er). In this category, many words spelled with an *n* carry the oboe resonance followed by a *K* or by the *C, CH, Q,* or *G*—variants of *K*. Note the markings. The *K* or *G* following the *NG* oboe is marked to remind you of its presence or that it should be played when preceding another consonant.

an ger	**En gland**	**stren gth**[14]	**malin gering**	**tin cture**	**tan gle**
bon go	**fin ger**	**shrin king**	**relin quish**	**In ca**	**an chorage**
un cle	**can kerous**	**succin ct**	**delin quent**	**un ctuous**	**defun ct**

Exceptions: In some nouns, especially proper nouns, the oboe is not followed by a tap. (The *h* in the following nouns is silent; if the *h* were sounded, the medial oboes would be underlined).

Birmingham Washington Buckingham Nottingham gingham

Play the oboe in the following words, and decide whether it is followed by a drumbeat. (The first two lines are marked to get you started.) Continue to play the other consonant instruments.

tan gling	**lin ger**	**En glish**	**lan guage**	**stran gle**	**len gth**
kingly	**sin gles**	**min gle**	**wrongful**	**hun ger**	**hanger**
gangs	**singer**	**languish**	**Long Island**	**bringing**	**warmonger**
jungle	**singsong**	**stringier**	**springing**	**clangor**	**elongate**
singular	**sanguine**	**wringing**	**triangular**	**lengthy**	**Congo**

Note that although *singer* and *singsong* carry no *G* drumbeat, *singular* and *singles* do; this is because the syllable "sing" in these cases has *no* meaning in common with the whole word.

Play the *NG* oboe in the following sentences:[15]

He looked around and murmured, "If a word is an act, then *lan guage* and *tongues* are actions. And which actions," he asked himself, "belong to *wrongful hun ger,* or *an gry warmon gers,* or *un ctuous, san ctimonious, cantan kerous wrongdoers?*"

[14]In as much as the *TH* in the word *strength* is unvoiced, the preceding *G* must also be unvoiced and therefore felt as the unvoiced *K*.

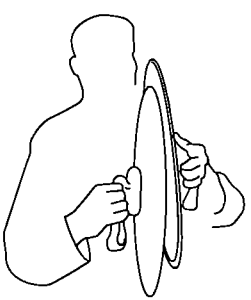
[15]Catching and experiencing the unmarked playables in the *sentence selections* will provide excellent training in sight-reading expertise.

The En glish lan guage fascinatingly combines stren gth and singing along with an intriguing_assortment of tingling orchestral music within its sin gular tongue.

Now play the *NG* oboe in the following poem. Play the other consonant instruments as well, and remember to connect word to word. Watch for the special marking indicating that the *NG* oboe is followed by a drumbeat, and *feel* the drumbeat firmly.[16]

Stran gle that hun ger for kingly things
that lin ger . . .
San guine.
A tan gled_stren gth with wrongful an ger,
hanging,[17]
shrin king young, and
Un ctuous.
Make lan guished_tongues once loving
again sing
again ring.

THE *DG* (*DZH*) CHINESE CYMBAL (cognate: *CH* crash cymbal)



DZH

The muted clang of a Chinese cymbal is simulated by the soft, sliding resonance of the *DG*—a combination of the *D* tympani drumbeat and the *ZH* bassoon into a single consonant sound. To feel the NRG of the *DG* Chinese cymbal, place your tongue on the upper gum ridge (as for the *D* drumbeat); then let the tip slip downward to let the *ZH* resonance come through (before the spring-away action that occurs at the end of the *D* drumbeat).

Play this consonant instrument smoothly; do not let the whisper of the *SH* dull the *ZH* resonance at the end or let the sound dissipate into a

[16]Normally in markings, we do not mark initial consonants in syllables (for example, stran-gle). However, an exception is made here in order to remind you to firmly feel the drumbeat which follows the *NG* in these special instances.
[17]In *hanging,* the medial *NG* is not played because it precedes a vowel.

slushy sustentation of the *ZH*. The voiced *DG* Chinese cymbal must be played with a light, quick, energetic staccato treatment. You will feel a phonated, sliding, percussive sensation flowing from the hard palate into the gum ridge.

Play the *DG* Chinese cymbal in these words, and feel the staccato resonance.

edge	rage	George	image	abridgment
largely	besiege	judgment	engagement	acknowledgment
engaged	pledged	bulged	averaged	encouraged

Play the *DG* Chinese cymbal in these sentences:

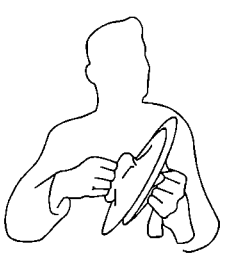
George urged the judge to acknowledge his pledge to discourage the young man's dangerous engagement.

The siege engaged a large segment of legionnaires who edged closer to the ledge near the bridge to better gauge and judge the enemy's advance.

Play the *DG* Chinese cymbal again in this poem, along with all the other playable consonants covered thus far:

His rage edged slowly
and images engaged his mind . . .
A besieged judgment
Pledged a moment, wedged a way,
and made a ledge to stand on,
To nudge, all pain away.

THE *CH* CRASH CYMBAL (cognate: *DG* Chinese cymbal)



CH

In the crisp clash of the *CH* crash cymbal, the voiced *D* and *ZH* of the *DG* Chinese cymbal become the whispered *T* drumbeat and *SH* sound effect blended into a single sound. To feel the NRG of the *CH* crash cymbal, place your tongue firmly on the upper gum ridge for the *T* drumbeat and crash through gently but sharply with the voiceless *SH* sound effect.

Play this consonant instrument crisply, with no sustention of the *SH*. The proper execution depends on a staccato action rather than breath and ends lightly, quickly, and energetically. You will feel a sharp, crisp, percussive sensation between the tip of your tongue and the gum ridge.

Play the *CH* crash cymbal in the following words, and feel its crisp staccato. Remember that this instrument offers a percussive sound, not a sustained or breathy one. Above all, remember that *the musical instrumental experience is your self-instructing familiar event!*

etch	march	church	catch	bewitch
witchcraft	watchman	patchwork	matchmaker	churchman
matched	fetched	itched	switched	watched

Play the *CH* crash cymbal in the sentences that follow:

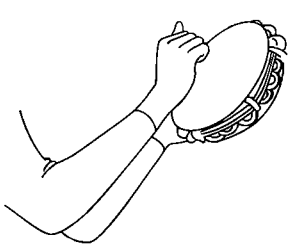
Mitch watched his teacher as she touchingly reached out and cheerfully coached each little child in the church‿outreach project.

The church chaplain approached his charming visitors and greeted them with bewitchingly rich, chest-voice tones.

Now play the crash cymbal and other playable consonants in this poem. Remember to connect the words to each other.

A matchmaker itched, to catch‿a bewitching lady
for the watchman‿of the church . . .
But witchcraft entered, and watched,
the patchwork‿of fate,
and left‿the man‿at‿the church . . .
in the lurch.

THE *DZ* TAMBOURINE (cognate: *TS* high-hat cymbal)



DZ

The delicate percussive action of the *DZ* is like a single light tap on the tambourine. To feel its percussive NRG, press your tongue against the upper gum ridge for the *D* drumbeat and then glide the tip of your tongue down a bit as the vibrant *Z* comes through (just before the tongue's spring-away action).

Play the *DZ* in a light staccato fashion, ending quickly and energetically without sustaining the *Z*. You will feel an instantaneous tiny buzz between your tongue and the gum ridge.

Play the *DZ* tambourine in the following words, and feel the staccato buzz. Where the *N* violin precedes the *DZ* tambourine, be doubly careful not to turn it into an *N* violin followed by a *Z* bass fiddle, as in *Ben's* instead of *bends* and *fines* instead of *finds*.

bids	**deeds**	**towards**	**roads**	**aids**
ends	**finds**	**husbands**	**commands**	**swords**
fields	**holds**	**builds**	**scalds**	**demands**

Now play it in the following sentences:

All the fields, all the woods, all the forbidden roads and bends, winding towards the sacred lands of the religious group, were diligently searched.

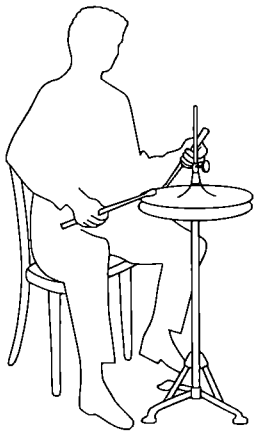
Good deeds, dear friends, and loving hands, are safeguards in a child's development—a development that grows as it builds, and builds, as it grows.

Carry the feeling of the *DZ* tambourine (and other playable consonants) over to this poem, and remember to connect the words into phrases.

The sword's command
ends husbands' rights
. . . and wrongs!
Leaves all demands
In foreign hands
and sounds the marching song
That bends former friends
towards bitter ends,
Among the sands—of time.

THE *TS* HIGH-HAT CYMBAL (cognate: *DZ* tambourine)

The crisp whisper of the *TS* ends a number of words, like the after-beat or high-hat cymbal used in popular orchestras. To feel the percussive NRG of the *TS* high-hat cymbal, press your tongue against the upper gum ridge for the *T* drumbeat; then spring away crisply with a sharp, soft *S* sound effect.



TS

Play the *TS* crisply, lightly, and energetically, with only the slightest staccato incisiveness on the *S*. You will feel the beginning of a percussive hiss, or crisp, cricket-like sound, between the tip of your tongue and your teeth.

Play the *TS* high-hat cymbal in the following words, feeling its staccato incisiveness. The consonant NRG is a bit complicated when the high-hat cymbal comes after another consonant at the end of a word; be sure to feel the proper action-sensation of the *K* and *P* drumbeats, the *S* and *F* sound effects, and the *N* violin whenever they precede the final *TS*.

bets	hates	limits	debates	casts	artists
contrasts	effects	gifts	thefts	lifts	sifts
adopts	adapts	attempts	exempts	acts	scientists
instincts	precincts	districts	patients	entrants	physicists

Now continue with the following sentences:

The strange play demanded the artist's capacity to portray horrible acts, terrorist's tactics, plus a tyrant's madness to consistently convey the playwright's message.

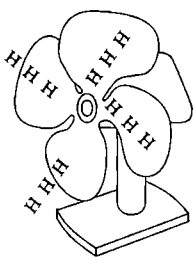
She hates the contrasts . . . and the arguments between scientists and artists, since both have distinctive gifts . . . and instincts to contribute.

Play the *TS* high-hat cymbal in the following poem:

Don't leave your last effects
as gifts . . .
They are thefts
from one whose limits were hates
and constant debates . . .
whose cosmic scientist's instincts
tracking through the pasts
of ancient Picts and Kelts,
drew welts;

Yet, still alive, casts . . . sighs aside . . .
attempts . . .
forgets events
once sung on a hollow drum . . .
Time drifts—
Rifts
in a passion to come!

THE *H* SOUND EFFECT (Cognate: none)



Like the barest whisper of wind, the *H* sound effect hints at the vowel to come. By itself, it sounds like the gentle sigh of an exhale. It is sounded as a consonant only when it precedes a vowel or the vowel-like consonants *W* or *Y*. Phonetically, it does not exist when it occurs at the end of a word or is followed by any other consonant.

To feel the NRG of the *H* sound effect, sigh almost inaudibly in a whisper while forming the sound that follows with your lips. Play the *H* gently, without force, pressure, or excess breath. You will feel nothing more than a slight release before the vowel, as in *hero, hippy, high, hollow.*

Play the *H* sound effect in the following words, feeling the brief release gently and airlessly. Visualize the spellings as *hw* and *hy:*

when	hue	which	overwhelm	whistle	why
hewn	what	whipped	whisper	heuristic	humor
whet	while	whisk	whack	whelped	human

Play the *H* sound effect in the following sentences. The *h*'s are marked where they precede the voiced consonants *W* and *Y*, as in *when* (pronounced "hwen") and *human* (pronounced "hyuman"). The *h* is not marked, however, when it precedes a voiced vowel, as in *heavy* and *who.*

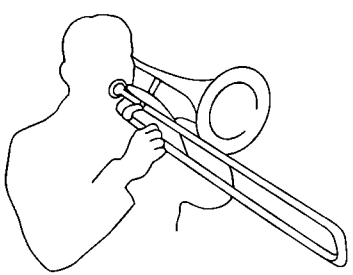
Heavy overwhelming human considerations whisked and whipped through his mind, and he hesitatingly whispered the sensitive information, while pretending to whistle humorously.

In breathless whispers, our hopeless, helpless, wheezing criminal had to answer all our hero's questions regarding why, when, where, who, which, what.

Play the *H* sound effect in this poem. Play your other consonants as well, and continue to connect words to each other.

(Hwen) When rough-hewn you
half-whistled into life,
You gentled the hues (hyewz),
and whispered the clues,
and whetted eyes
in a whimsical disguise,
Half-hints . . . so rife . . .
half-hide your hew.

THE *R* TROMBONE (cognate: none)



R

The strongly vibrating *R* trombone creates a substantial, legitimate consonant sound when it precedes a vowel, but it creates a danger as well: because of the nature of its articulation and placement, it tends to pull syllables and entire words backward into the throat whenever it appears as a final consonant or before another consonant. The only protection is good structural and tonal energy in the preceding vowel.

To feel the NRG of the *R* trombone, hug the inside of your upper back teeth or gums with the posterior under-edges of the tongue. Curl the tip of your tongue upward and slightly backward. Play the *R* trombone as fully as you like as long as you use sufficient facial energy to dilute the potential tension and enough tonal energy to draw the throaty sound forward so that you feel it vibrating on the hard palate. The strongly articulated American *R* is essentially a confined vibration in the throat area that should be deemphasized whenever the sound is not absolutely necessary[18] (as in *burn, born, barn, beard, bared, toured*) or when the *R* is the final sound (as in *mother, fair, manner*).

[18]See Chapter 8, pp. 188–189.

Feel the *R* trombone in the following words and sentences cleanly and completely before a vowel, in a single word or at the beginning of another word, or where a final *R* links with an initial vowel; the vowel will absorb the strong vibration as the lips maintain a forward direction. The *R* trombone is marked in the sentences only.

terrorist	reread	hierarchy	terrestrial	hurry	warrior
February[19]	rarefy	library	aristocrat	barrier	interior

In February various characteristically bureaucratic representatives discussed the very irritable matter of extraterritorialism.

Run round and round the roses, race through the streets and narrows, and roust the red-ribboned warriors—my dear Rahisa.

Now play the *R* trombone in the following poem. Remember to connect words to each other and to play the other consonant instruments:

Rondos written round my mind,
Roses rousted_out of bed;
Torrid_torrents in a hurry
roar pronouncements never_read:
I am sorry to remember . . .
draw a cross through memories,
and render dead
the words_unsaid,
in . . . rondos
ringing
round
my head.

When the *R* trombone appears before a pause or before another consonant, concentrate on applying *optimal facial posture* to the preceding vowel. In other words, in the precise positions where other consonant instruments can be fully played, the *R* trombone should be somewhat underplayed to avoid dragging the whole word into harsh throatiness.

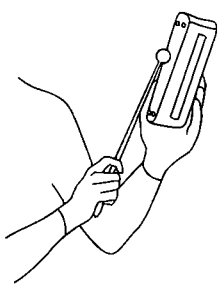
[19]In the word *February,* the first *r* precedes the *W* consonant ("Febru_ary"; see the *W*-flute section later in this chapter).

bored	form	endured	pure	dour	father
barred	farm	endeared	pier	dear	canard
bird	firm	endorsed	pare	dare	zephyr
beard	deferred	entered	pore	door	nature

Now try that same feeling in this poem:

Rolling more than naturally,
I love your form; a zephyr wind . . .
endured of time,
a poor martyr to frivolity;
endorsed, endeared . . . or possibly,
a firm door barred,
a dear bird flown . . .
a moment—all my own.

THE *D°L* AND *T°L* WOODBLOCKS (cognates)



TL
DL

In executing the woodblock clicks *D°L* and *T°L,* the tongue adjusts adeptly to accommodate these sound combinations (which are made at the same contact point) without losing the percussive NRG of the *D* and *T* drumbeat. To feel the NRG of the woodblock click, press your tongue into the drumbeat position on the upper gum ridge; then let the sides of your tongue bounce away with a click while the tongue tip remains in position for the sustained *L* that follows. Voiced, this action produces *D°L;* unvoiced, *T°L.* The circular degree mark (°) identifies the woodblock click.

Play the percussive action with emphasis while getting to the *L* saxophone as quickly as possible; the woodblock click will substitute for the drumbeat automatically. To disengage the tongue between the drumbeat and the *L* saxophone in words like *bottle* or *idle* is not necessarily incorrect if the emphasis remains on reaching the *L* and the vowel between is kept infinitesimally short.[20] Properly executed woodblock clicks elimi-

[20]Words like *idle* and *idol* or *metal* and *mettle* are syllabified and pronounced the same way; they are all two-syllable words. The British tend to avoid the woodblock click by disengaging the tongue tip just enough to allow for a subtle vowel sound. Such disen-

nate undesirable pronunciations for such words as *little* ("lil," "li'l," "lid-duhl," "littuhl," "liddoo") and may discourage the growing tendency of turning two-syllable words like *paddling* and *bottling* into three-syllable words.

Play the *D°L* woodblock, and feel the quickness of the *D* click before the sustained *L* saxophone at the end of the following words:

meddle	medal	paddle	idle	idol	hurdle
needle	cradle	bridle	waddle	coddle	puddle

In the following word list, where the *D°L* woodblock click is followed by another syllable (*worldly*), you will feel crisper, cleaner, and more complete clicks than in words where the woodblock click itself forms the end of the word (*needle*). Practice feeling the *D* click even when the *L* is not sustained because a vowel sound follows; the examples that follow should be pronounced as two-syllable words "pa-ddling," "la-dling," "cu-ddling."

paddling	ladling	cuddling	straddling	puddling	idling
friendless	maudlin	handling	swindling	windlass	kindling
boldly	mildly	worldly	coldly	wildly	baldly
blindly	friendly	kindly	blandly	fondly	toddler

Now feel the unvoiced click of the *T°L* woodblock in the same way.

little	cattle	bottle	Beatles	settle	fatal
evidently	saintly	succinctly	elegantly	exactly	arrogantly
perfectly	correctly	distinctly	ardently	lately	insistently
teetotaler	settling	settler	listless	rattling	gauntlet
outlet	frontlet	dauntless	restless	fistless	gentlest

Feel the *D°L* and *T°L* woodblock clicks in the following two-word linkings:

get °lost	set °low	hot °licks	short °letter
good °luck	cold °look	bad °lot	Bud °Light

Far too many individuals in communication, politics, and even the arts are currently pronouncing two-syllable words like *cuddling* and *settling* as three-syllable words; remember to visualize their syllabification as

---

gagement registers as awkward in American speech, which almost always opts instead for the woodblock click. The use of the woodblock click helps maintain crisp articulatory dexterity and prevents the careless tendency of turning two-syllable words (*swindling* and *rattling*) into three-syllable words ("swin-da-ling" and "rat-a-ling"). I should also posit that, along with the other consonant instruments, the appropriate use of woodblock clicks brings a unique contribution to the rhythmic content of the English

"cu-ddling" and "se-ttling." The blendlike percussive *D̊L* and *T̊L* woodblocks are the only consonants that are played while *preceding* a vowel.

Explore the woodblock clicks in the following sentences (if you wish, add your own ° marks):

> At the meeting, Mr. Spratling proposed a dauntless campaign for the survival of the "two-syllable structure" in words like *settling* and *settler, swindling* and *swindler, gentlest* and *gentler,* and *toddling* and *toddler* before extinction sets in and *maudlin* becomes "mau-de-lin."

> Ardently cradling the little child, Myrtle ran the gauntlet of friendless, restless, battling settlers.

Play the woodblock clicks in the following two poems, as well as all the other playable consonants covered thus far:

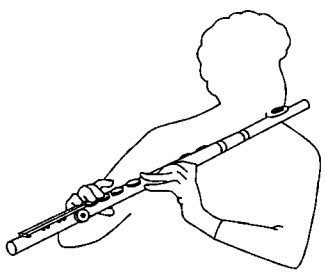
You are the idol of my cradle . . .
mildly maudlin,
yes, but all the same,
wildly idle
in its handling;
so fondly worldly . . .
a hurdle for your name.

The gentlest little thing
you give me
is a saintly outlet.
You will run the gauntlet,
settling
. . . not exactly fatal
. . . not lovely all the same.

An interesting related variant of the woodblock-click principle applies to *tn* and *dn* combinations in which the action transfers the sensation to the nose. Examples include *sudden, didn't, prudent* and *rotten, cotton,* and *button.* I prefer, however, to hold the line (permitting a subtle neutral vowel between *t-n* and *d-n*) with words like *curtain, certain, pardoned, pattern, modern, patent,* and *cordoned,* where the positive challenge for the performer ought to be to develop such finely tuned *drumbeats* that the subtly elevated articulatory skill never draws special attention to itself re-

We should all strive to train and develop the skills, talents, and discipline needed to save, maintain, and use a number of vocal life's colors, dynamics, and qualities rather than watch them become extinct. A case in point: we might be uncomfortable putting the *Y* sound into words like *blue* and *suit;* but at the same time, we might be stimulated and reinforced by using the *y* consonant in *that suits* ("syoots") *me fine* or *your suitor* ("syooter") *is unsuitable* (unsyootable). If we continue to win some, while losing a few, we won't find ourselves going backwards—and our personal culture will continue progressing forward.

THE *W* FLUTE (cognate: none)



W

The *W* flute has a lovely hint of an $\overline{OO}$, as in the word *moon.* It exists only in the brief space that connects the $\overline{OO}$ sound with any other vowel. It cannot be sustained without reverting to an $\overline{OO}$. Almost a vowel, the *W* flute is considered a consonant because the lip opening is so reduced that it impedes and confines the vowel sound for an instant. As a phonetic consonant sound, it is never the final sound and it is never followed by another consonant.

To feel the NRG of the *W* flute, purse your lips to produce the smallest possible aperture. You will almost feel a tingle where the dry part of your lip becomes moist. Precede the following vowel with a tiny resonance.

Play the flute lightly and quickly. Remember that the *W* exists only between the $\overline{OO}$ and the next vowel:

$\overline{OO}$ $\overline{A}$ (*way*)

Feel the forward facial posture and then reduce the lip opening still further, to create the slightest impedance of the $\overline{OO}$ as it moves to the following vowel sound.

Practice feeling the smallest possible lip opening before the vowel (which is the only position in which *W* appears as a consonant) in the following words. Continue to play the other consonant instruments.

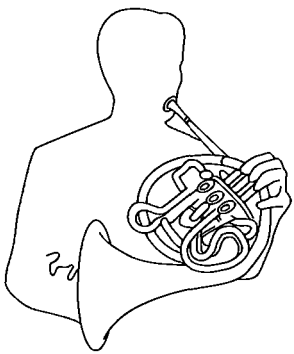
wind **away** **wormwood** **wander** **wigwam** **Wellington**

Practice connecting the following words that end in the sounds $\overline{OO}$, $\overline{O}$, and *OW* into the subsequent initial vowels with the *W* between as the link. You may visualize the link between the two words as the *W*-connective—or, the birth of a consonant.

to excel you are no intrusion now engage

The sentence and poem selections for the *W* flute will be combined with those for the *Y* French horn.

THE *Y* FRENCH HORN (cognate: none)



Y

The *Y* French horn is nothing more than the sustained "buzzy" sound of the *y* as in *young, yonder,* or *yes.* Like the *W* flute, it exists only in the connecting space between the vowel *EE* and whatever vowel follows. It should be buzzy enough to give you the vibrant feel or image of a French horn resonating in the mask of your face.

In the process of articulating the *Y* French horn, the tongue crowds forward to impede and confine the vowel sound just enough to create consonant action. As a consonant sound, the *Y* French horn is never the final sound and it is never followed phonetically by another consonant.

Feel the *Y* consonant action by moving swiftly into the following vowel after the slightest buzzy tonal action (as in *re$_y$union*). Play the *Y* French horn crisply and vibrantly and without forcing the resonance. Remembering that the *Y* exists only between the buzzy *Y* and the next vowel:

EE$_y$OO (*you*)

You will feel the buzzy *Y* quickly cut off as it slides into the following vowel—and another consonant is born.

Play the French horn in the following words:

you yonder beyond pi$_y$ano yardarm pe$_y$ony b$_y$eautiful

When the *EE* vowel, or one of the three diphthongs with the *EE* (*AY, OY,* and *IY*) ends a word that is followed by an initial vowel, as in the following examples, the final *EE* creates a *Y*-connective as it links smoothly without pause into the following word. This smooth link eliminates any tendency toward glottal (throaty) attacks on the second word's initial vowel—a healthy preventive to throat strain.

he$_{\bar{y}}$insists	away$_{\bar{y}}$off	my$_{\bar{y}}$album	destroy$_{\bar{y}}$everything
see$_{\bar{y}}$it	obey$_{\bar{y}}$all rules	goodbye$_{\bar{y}}$all	coy$_{\bar{y}}$utterance
annoy$_{\bar{y}}$only	they$_{\bar{y}}$attacked	to die$_{\bar{y}}$in peace	every$_{\bar{y}}$alternative

Play the *Y* French horn and the *W* flute in the following sentences:

Andrew$_{\bar{w}}$insisted that be$_{\bar{y}}$ing oblivi$_{\bar{y}}$ous to the$_{\bar{y}}$inclusion of a *W* in *to$_{\bar{w}}$insist* or a *Y* in *we$_{\bar{y}}$intend* is as inacc$_{\bar{y}}$urate as ass$_{\bar{y}}$uming the$_{\bar{y}}$exclusion of the *Y* or *W* in pi$_{\bar{y}}$ano, b$_{\bar{y}}$eautiful, un$_{\bar{y}}$usu$_{\bar{w}}$al, f$_{\bar{y}}$ew$_{\bar{w}}$er, and eq$_{\bar{w}}$ual.

The worm sq$_{\bar{w}}$uirmed and immedi$_{\bar{y}}$ately wandered away to wait for one more day with superi$_{\bar{y}}$or weather.

Now play the *Y* French horn and the *W* flute in this poem. Remember to connect words to each other.

Yonder lies the wormwood tree,
beyond the yellow wishing well,
away from winter's majesty
and the winding willow's sanctity.

A winsome thing, this thing beyond,
a yearning thing of past reprieve
Yet someday think of yesterday
and turn away from wormwood wand.

EXPERIMENT 4: IMPROVISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

• Now that you have learned to play and experience all the instruments of the consonant orchestra in words and phrases, test your ability to communicate without verbal content or actual words, using only the music and sound effects of your orchestral instruments. Choose a partner and by applying these "least common communicating denominators," improvise communication between the two of you. Use and experience any and all of the instruments with the involved intention to love, yearn, plead, demand, conspire, dominate, threaten, whine, and wheedle. Be incisive, warm, friendly, selfish, conniving. The wide range of melodic, percussive, and sound effect qualities in the consonants will give you ample material to work with. Employ inflections and intonations (as you would in everyday speech) as you improvise. Don't hesitate to use the vowel-like qualities of the *W* flute and the *Y* French horn to widen the range of expressive possibilities.

Linking: Consonant NRG in Connected Speech

EXPERIMENT 5: FEELING CONNECTED SPEECH

- Say the word *practice.* Remember to play the *K* tom-tom before the *T* snare drum.
- Now say *black‿tie,* playing the *K* and *T* exactly as you did in "practice."

If you feel the double drumbeats in "black tie" the same as you felt them in *practice* (or *tick-tock*), you are beginning to link!

Connected speech is essential for speaking in phrases and sentences. In fact, it is something you do almost all the time, without thinking about it. In your daily speech, you may notice that words and phrases are connected together as if you were speaking a long stream of sound, which just happens to be shaped by consonant energy.

Be aware that what often happens in daily speech is the dropping of back-to-back consonants and final consonants. Such a tendency is undesirable and leads to untidy and unintelligible speech. But now that you can feel each consonant as a separate instrument, you can avoid this trap and, in the process, sharpen your speech with the rhythms, nuances, and dynamics of the consonants. In fact, if you preserve the integrity of the consonants, you can speak as quickly as you like and always be understood. The only time speaking quickly is a problem is when intelligibility is lost; in fact, rapid speech, done well, can be an exciting exercise for the actor and is often called for onstage or in television or radio.

EXPERIMENT 6: VARIED SYLLABIFICATION

- From the point of view of remedial-reading techniques and other speech-therapy practices—and from the point of view of clear articulation and esthetic speech qualities—I find it desirable to change the scheme of syllabification so that every syllable, wherever possible, starts with a working or sounded consonant (as in Spanish). Thus, words like *remarkable, characteristics, unusual,* and *Antarctic* would be syllabified as *re-mar-ka-ble, cha-rac-te-ris-tics, un-(y)u-su-(w)al,* and *An-tarc-tic.* It works well in Spanish and—despite our allegiance to grammatical syntax—it works well in American English too.
- Practice the preceding hyphenated words with smooth utterance and legato connecting, and be aware of how each syllable is initiated by the energy and quality of a consonant. Try to divide the following words into syllables starting with consonants, and experience their articulation: *indigenous, meditate, reminder,* and *etymological.*

EXPERIMENT 7: SHIFTING CONSONANTS

• As you explore the individual consonants, you may find that certain final consonants seem difficult to manage. When this happens, program yourself to shift that final consonant to the starting position of the next word. Practice first on these words:

An-tarc-tic cha-rac-te-ris-tics sy-ner-gis-tic

• Pretend each syllable is a word. When you get a good *rhythmic feel,* accelerate your delivery until you reach an optimal speed without any consonant loss whatsoever.

• Now program the following sentence in the same manner:

For Steve there remained but one alternative.

Reprogrammed, the sentence should read:

For‿Ste‿vethe‿remain‿dbu‿t(w)u‿nalternative.

• Practice the reprogrammed sentence with smooth utterance, easy flowing rhythm, and legato connecting. Say it slowly at first, then pick up speed until it sounds perfectly natural.

Does the reprogrammed sentence look strange? Of course! But in reality, each word in this sentence does not have a pause between it and the next one, as is suggested by written language. Each word is connected to the other. In fact, the only time the stream of sound is broken in speech is when we pause to think, breathe, change our thought, or to add punctuation, emphasis, or special interpretation; otherwise our objective, generally, is that of smooth utterance. The specific goals of this experiment are to (1) enhance clarity and precision without any sense of *carefulness* or affectation, (2) achieve an easier and more natural sound progression, and (3) minimize wear and tear on the throat and vocal folds even when speaking in large open spaces without amplification.

As illustrated in Experiment 8, *a final consonant should always be carried over, or linked, to the initial letter of the next word* (except when pausing for the previously listed reasons). The exact technique depends on the letters involved, but linking can be broken down into three categories: "direct link," "play and link," and "prepare and link." Let's examine these one at a time.

EXPERIMENT 8: LINKING

DIRECT LINKING

• Any final consonant can be linked directly to any vowel at the beginning of the next word. For example, *far above* can be thought of as *farabove.* But

since we cannot rewrite our entire scripts in this fashion, it is easier to remind ourselves by marking them (*far_above*). Following are some practice phrases. The first few are marked for you; mark the rest for yourself. Remember to mark and play other consonants just as you normally would.

1. grab_it
2. stop_up
3. bad_actor
4. breathe_in
5. that's_enough
6. birth_of_a nation
7. arrange everything
8. catch on
9. get out
10. leads_on
11. run off
12. home owner
13. give away
14. enough of it
15. because of it
16. missed out on it
17. drag along
18. back away
19. massage it
20. wash up
21. sail away
22. over all
23. strong executive
24. this is it

• With the taste of direct linking still fresh, re-experience the consonant poems earlier in the chapter. What changes in rhythms, emphasis, and phrasing do you feel?

All of these linking guidelines are indispensable for singing, especially for the complex story lyrics of Sondheim, Kander and Ebb, and Gilbert and Sullivan. Direct linking provides us with a tool to easily execute voiced consonants we often leave out like *Z, D, DZ, TH, ZH,* and *V.*

PLAY AND LINK

• Back-to-back consonants that are formed at totally different contact points in the mouth can be played fully. For example, in the phrase *black tie,* the *K* tom-tom beat is formed by the back of the tongue springing away from the soft palate and the *T* snare-drum beat is formed by the tip of the tongue springing away from the gum ridge—two totally different contact points—so the *K* can be fully played before the *T* is tapped. The same principle applies in *love knot,* where the *V* cello and the *N* violin are made in two different places in the mouth. You might write these phrases like "bla cktie" and "lo vknot," but this would not be realistic. Instead, simply mark the consonants with a double underline for sustainable consonants and a single underline for percussive consonants, and add a linking curve to connect the words to each other.

black_tie love_knot

• Explore marking, playing, and linking with the following phrases:

1. sob_sister
2. keep_this
3. stand_back
4. take_time
5. smooth_surface
6. wisdom_tooth
7. stack pack
8. big deal
9. can't be

10. what for
11. big money
12. barrage balloon
13. don't you
14. match cover
15. gone forever
16. that's mine
17. told him
18. leave soon
19. staff party
20. has been
21. loose talk
22. wash clean
23. hill country
24. night report
25. predict weather
26. judge carefully
27. room temperature
28. back with
29. hot wind
30. judge severely
31. those ships
32. this sheep
33. last row
34. canned goods
35. watch gently
36. it's good
37. exciting game
38. that's bad business
39. word list
40. dropkick in football
41. red car
42. mysterious witch
43. dark neighborhood
44. ask not why
45. understand patience

PREPARE AND LINK

Some consonants are formed at the same or nearly the same contact point in the mouth. This is obviously true with *identical consonants* and *cognates*. For example, in the phrase *hip pocket,* the two *p*'s are identical; in the phrase *hip bone,* the *p* and *b* are cognates. In both instances, the contact point is the same, and you could not fully play both consonants without breaking the flow of the phrase with a tiny, artificial pause. Instead, you "prepare and implode" the first consonant—that is, your lips or tongue actively take the position for the first identical consonant or cognate—but only fully execute the second one. The preparation keeps the first consonant from being merely dropped.

Two percussive sounds—the *DG* (*DZH*) Chinese cymbal and the *CH* (*TSH*) crash cymbal—are treated identically and as cognates of *D* and *T* because their initial tongue placements are the same. For example, the phrase *sad joke* ("sad dzhoke") contains back-to-back *d*'s (identical pair), and the phrase *bad chips* ("bad tships") contains the cognates *D* and *T.* Here again, you would prepare and implode the first consonant and play the second.

Finally, semirelated *consonants* are those made at nearly the same contact point in the mouth:

1. *D* or *T* followed by *SH, TH, S, Z, N* (for example, *bid this, but none, malt shake*)
2. *B* or *P* followed by *M* (for example, *bribe money, trap mice*)

The interesting thing about the semirelated consonants is that they are only related when they occur in the above order. If you reverse them (*SH* followed by *D—push down,* for example) the relationship disappears, and they are simply play-and-link opportunities.

All examples of prepare and link are marked like this:

bid̸‿this hip̸‿pocket hip̸‿bone

The slash through the final consonant reminds you to prepare and implode it. The linking curve reminds you to link and feel the following consonant. (Refer to the box "Consonant-Marking Guide" for a complete list of consonant markings and their meanings.) The following examples include all three kinds of prepare-and-link opportunities. The first few are marked; do the rest yourself.

Identical	*Cognate*	*Semirelated*
1. stab back	1. bribe paid	1. stab me
2. help pack	2. keep back	2. help me
3. good deal	3. bad time	3. good news
4. don't talk	4. sit down	4. that seems good
5. big guns	5. dog collar	5. good smoke
6. stick close	6. dark gray	6. red zone
7. even now	7. five friends	7. cute zebra
8. some men	8. seems so	8. patent nonsense
9. have vitality	9. bequeath theatres	9. mist shrouded
10. life force	10. quoth thus	10. dead ship
11. fence sags	11. not George	11. broad theme
12. cloth thrown out	12. did change	12. asked them
13. bad judge	13. this zone	13. did that
14. not Charlie	14. hated tsetse fly	14. won't throw it

TABLE 5-2 MISCELLANEOUS WORDS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF DIFFICULTY

Explore all of the musical consonants in the following words, and play them with awareness and skill. If helpful, you may want to mark some of these words.

first	firsts	patience	tennis	serendipity
second	seconds	patients	tens	etymological
third	thirds	petitions	tends	ejectamenta
fourth	fourths	entrance	tense	synergistic
fifth	fifths	entrants	tents	extraterritorialism
sixth	sixths	thieves	tenths	rather
seventh	sevenths	Thebes	whirls	recalcitrance
eighth	eighths	fines	worlds	recapitulative

Continued . . .

TABLE 5-2 MISCELLANEOUS WORDS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF DIFFICULTY (Continued)

ninth	ninths	finds	whirly	recapitulance
tenth	tenths	Ben's	worldly	reconnoitered
eleventh	elevenths	bends	wouldst	reconnaissance
twelfth	twelfths	bashes	couldst	January
thirteenth	thirteenths	batches	shouldst	February
fourteenth	fourteenths	tracks	wouldn't	sanguineousness
fifteenth	fifteenths	tracts	couldn't	satiate
sixteenth	sixteenths	acts	shouldn't	characteristic
seventeenth	seventeenths	axe	didn't	palimpsest
eighteenth	eighteenths	asks	hadn't	Wednesday
nineteenth	nineteenths	Rubicon	liaison	amanuensis
twentieth	twentieths	rubicund	sapient	amateurism

CONSONANT-MARKING GUIDE

Single underline (tapped)*	percussion, tap the sound
Double underline (delves)	sustain the sound
linking curve (but_in_a)	directly link a final consonant to an initial vowel
linking curve plus slash (cannot_dominate)	related consonants; prepare and implode the first consonant but execute the second
connecting curve plus *w* (you_insist)	*W*-connective
connective curve plus *y* (the_earth)	*Y*-connective
reverse slash (pneumonia, calm, dazed)	nonsounded consonant or vowel

These are suggestions only. Use whichever of these markings you need to learn to connect words and phrases in a smooth legato fashion. Turn to Table 5-2 for further marking and articulatory practice.

*Remember that in the English language (unlike other languages), double letters with precisely the same sound or melody are pronounced as one single sound. For example, the double *t* in *letter* is pronounced the same as the single *t* in *later*. (In *accept* or *success*, however, the two *c*'s are pronounced *KS* and only the initial *c* would be played: *accent* and *success*.)

Exploring Consonant NRG

• The first few lines of the following extract have been marked for consonant play and linking opportunities. Explore it by letting consonant energy lead the way: move quickly to the consonant opportunities, linger on them if they are sustainable, tap them lightly if they are percussive, and connect words and phrases using the linking techniques you have learned. If you play your consonants fully, you will discover that you cannot give a tired, worn-out reading of this well-known piece. You may discover new rhythms, dynamics, and nuances you never suspected were there. As you explore, your mind will call up images that give altered meaning and life to the words. Allow this to happen; let the images grow and reinforce each other.

• If you are working with a partner, try to affect him or her with these images through the sounds in the words; if you are working alone, imagine you are speaking to someone or a group of people. Speak with poetic expressiveness! When it's prose, speak and feel it like poetry; when it's poetry, speak and feel it like prose!

> **But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion, to that cause, for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve, that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.**
>
> —From Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

The following paragraph has a multitude of consonant combinations and linking opportunities. Work on it the following way:

• Mark the text for consonant energy and linking.

• Read through it slowly, and discover the images that come to you as you explore the consonants for mood, rhythm, and melody.

- Speed up your reading, play all the consonants, and use the images you have discovered to give your unique interpretation to this piece.
- Choose a character, and perform the piece as that person, using all the consonant energy opportunities you have discovered to enhance that character's goal in giving this speech. Using consonant energy most particularly, relate to your imagined listener—enlist, rattle, shake, incite, inspire, motivate. Possible characters might include a reporter, a politician, a neighbor, a preacher, or a political activist.

> **The old resident of the neighborhood bitterly condemned the characteristic tirades and unchristian behavior displayed by government, business, and police representatives. He asked why the city permits a situation that tends to reach the lower depths for tens of thousands of the city's inhabitants; why it adopts improvements for privileged groups, yet the long-promised urban renewal program, five-sixths curtailed and no longer ambitious, is still being blocked or ignored by bureaucratic policy and cowardly subterfuge. Why, he asked, hadn't that materialized? He succinctly dismissed the "goodwill" myths so sanctimoniously projected by local social scientists. We looked around the dilapidated, yet once picturesque neighborhood, destroyed by bullets, bottles of Molotov cocktails, bricks, and fire—it is no mirage. The effects of the holocaust throughout the city's precincts are overwhelming; the destruction includes the length and breadth of the shopping districts. I want to try to understand this tragedy. Who controls the not-so-mysterious witchcraft that overnight turns into hospital patients those who yesterday stood for patience and reason? The indignant urban population is as tense as a tightened fiddle string—nine-tenths of them would rather live in pup tents than in the rat-infested holes that pass for apartments in the city.**

BRIDGE

By now it should be clear to you that consonants—far from being utilitarian, far from being the kind of thing that requires tedious drill work—are gloriously versatile and unique qualities of vocal sound that add richness and precision to speech and are enjoyable to create with and pleasurable

to experience. When any action is enjoyable and pleasurable, no matter how often you repeat it, it cannot possibly be tedious! Consonants are, then, *relaxer-energizers* for the voice when used with all their musicality.

FEATURING THE *Y* FRENCH HORN

- With a partner, begin an interchange using only the *Y* French horn as your method of communication. Rather than imitating specific words, express yourself with the vibrancy of the French horn. Entice your partner; lure, cajole, gently upbraid each other; dismiss, love, invite each other; but, in this experiment, *do not* hate or violate each other.
- Explore what happens when you extend the French horn sound longer and longer. Don't be afraid to make it bigger. Schmaltz it up, have fun with it! Then try it intimately, searchingly, lovingly, crooningly.
- Vary sustention: try a short, pulsing *Y* French horn several times in a row, and then alternate with longer, richer tones.

Undoubtedly you will find that when sustained, the *Y* French horn becomes a beautiful *Y*-tone, which carries directly into our work in tonal energy. This tone balances lightly between the two worlds of consonant energy and our next chapter, "The Dynamics of Tonal Energy"—providing us with a fascinating bridge into "The Music of the Voice Itself."

CHAPTER 6

The Dynamics of Tonal NRG: The Music of the Voice Itself

Tonal NRG and the Y-Buzz and +Y-Buzz

We ended the last chapter with an exploration of the consonant *Y* French horn. This instrument now becomes a link and a key to developing the music of the voice—tonal NRG.

EXPERIMENT 1: HEARING WHAT YOU FEEL

Let's do the tuning-fork experiment once again,[1] only this time program that sense memory into your brain. When you place the base of the tuning fork to your upper front teeth, *know* that the sensation you feel coursing through your teeth, nasal bone, and head is altogether an internal event. You are *hearing what you feel* rather than attempting to feel what you hear.

EXPERIMENT 2: FEELING THE *Y*-BUZZ

The tuning-fork experience should now be your familiar event for the French horn.

• Do the French horn, and as you sustain the warm, rich, vibrating tone, think of the consonant *Y* in the words *yonder, you,* and *yes* (*Y≈≈≈≈yonder, Y≈≈≈≈you, Y≈≈≈≈yes*). Sense the French horn tone as both consonant and vowel (*EE*). From now on, the French horn may be identified as the "*Y*-buzz"—and also serve as a familiar event for your tonal NRG. Feel the *Y*-buzz naturally and easily in a speaking or chanting voice and on comfortably lower pitches. You should feel a buzz or vibration on the forward gum-ridge section of the hard palate and in the nasal bone, traveling toward the bridge of the nose and the connecting forehead. By exploring the *Y*-buzz, you are helping to establish

[1]See Experiment 2 in Chapter 2 (p. 17).

the vibratory foundation for bone-conducted tone in your singing and speaking voice.

• If you don't feel the buzz immediately, express or chant the word *easy;* do it easily and freely, lingering over both the first and second syllables: *ea≈≈ ≈≈sy≈≈≈≈y.* Now go back to *you, yonder,* and *yes,* and sustain the *Y*-buzz (French horn); blend and feel it like the *ea* in *easy,* and at the same time, blend and feel it like the French horn consonant *Y.* In both instances you will be playing the same French horn, or *Y*-buzz.

• Enjoy experiencing the *Y*-buzz on the following phrases, especially where you see the dot. (Sustain each dot in a chantlike manner.)

Well, ẏes it's rẻally ẻasẏ.
Thẻ ẻvening brẻeze fẻels frẻe and ẻasẏ.

wẻepẏ fẻelings	**squẻezẏ pẻices**
dẻepest drẻams	**pẻaceful slẻeping**

Either way you work the experiment, by now you should be producing a unity of two sounds: the *Y* French horn and the *EE* sound as in *easy.*[2] In so doing, you have quite easily *placed* the tone where it vibrates best: at the front of the hard palate. You have proved, just like you did with the tuning fork experiment, that tonal vibrations can be felt as well as heard.

Although we don't have conscious control of all the actions of sound waves, we can, through simple awareness, become more sensitive to the physical sensation of vocal vibrations and, through sensory recall, recreate good tone. The outstanding proof of this is that deaf students can be taught to feel the sensations of tonal energy and to control these sensations and, therefore, to control the vocal sound waves without hearing. Tone-deaf students can also be taught to sing perfect chromatic scales by feeling the tones and ignoring the lack of ear support; they possess a sensory "third ear" of their own to register their newly found tonal experiencing. If these students, who *must* bypass the auditory mechanism, can learn to control their voiced tones solely by feeling them, then obviously the technique can be adopted by those with normal hearing, who will gain more sensitive power of concentration in the process.

Be constantly aware that the sensations of tonal energy are an internal event—you must feel them, from beginning to end, *within* the body. The resonated vocal sounds that you first experience internally through bone conduction (not the breath) reach the outside world through air conduc-

[2]It may help to visualize the *EE* as the "yin" (or, perhaps, "feminine") dynamic and the *Y* as the "yang" (or "masculine") dynamic. These two opposites, when unified, produce a *third* force—that is, the *Y*-buzz, which is a unity of the two opposites.

tion. The vibrating bony sections of the hard palate, teeth, mask, and head set up direct and sympathetic vibrations that amplify vocal sounds. You must avoid attempting to reach an audience, whether of one or thousands, by "throwing" your voice. To do so creates tension in the body—particularly the jaw—that eventually results in vocal strain. When your voice functions solely as an inner vibrating current, never pushed and never impeded, you will experience it as a bone-conducted vibratory feeling that uses energy without abusing it—a feeling that stimulates, energizes, and relaxes, a feeling that transmits its bone-conducted vibrations to the farthest rows and corners of the theatre or concert hall.

THE RESONATING AREA

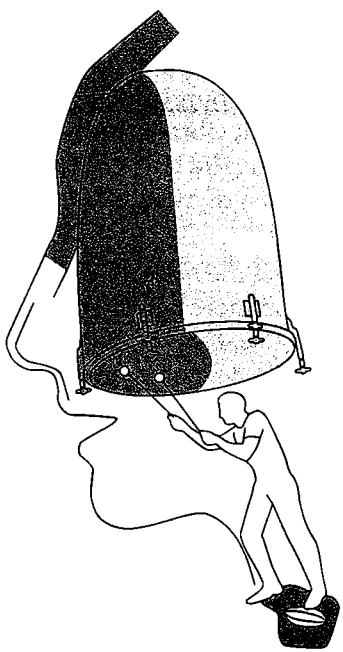


Figure 6-1 The Bony Resonating Area of the Head

In voice production, the bony resonating area functions like the kettle drum, which vibrates in every part whenever any part is tapped.

Within our framework, tonal energy begins when the vocal sound waves contact the bony structures of the mask and set them vibrating. Every action in voice production that takes place earlier—the vibration of the vocal folds and passage of sound waves by air conduction through the throat and mouth—is involuntary and is performed without conscious sensation. The three major resonating areas for the Y-buzz are (1) the hard palate at the upper gum ridge, including the teeth, (2) the nasal bone, including the cheekbones, and (3) the forehead, reaching into the cranium. These three areas, however, must be considered a single solid mass of resonating materials, like a brass gong or kettle (Figure 6-1); the entire mass vibrates whenever sound waves strike the hard palate and continue to course through the rest of the bony structure. The beginner may be aware of the energy at the hard palate, but the more experienced speaker or singer will already be accustomed to this feeling and may feel the more dominant vibrations in the nasal bone and forehead (without losing the hard palate). Nevertheless, it is the instant distribution

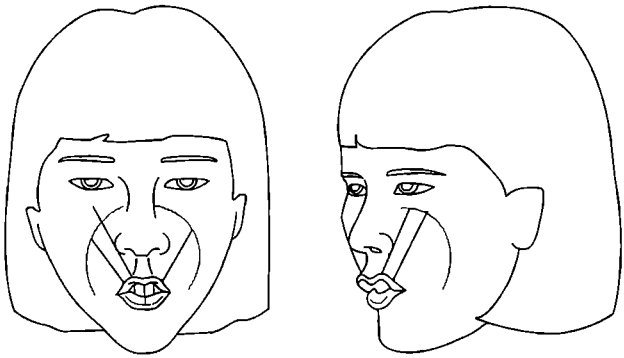


Figure 6-2 The Forward Facial Posture for the *Y*-Buzz and +*Y*-Buzz

of the tonal vibrations throughout the entire bony area that both the beginner and the professional must be aware of in order to *self-use* the tonal vibrations most effectively.

EXPERIMENT 3: EXECUTING THE *Y*-BUZZ WITH A FORWARD FACIAL POSTURE

- Say "Shhhh," as if you were saying to a small child, "Shhhh, someone is sleeping." Put your index finger to your lips as a gesture of emphasis. Feel the forward facial posture of your cheek and lip muscles as you perform this sound. (Figure 6-2 illustrates the facial posture for the *Y*-buzz and the +*Y*-buzz, discussed later in this chapter.)
- Starting with the "Shhhh," sound the *Y*-buzz (*Y* French horn plus the vowel *EE*) firmly while performing the same facial action as for the "Shhhh," only this time leave a slight space between your side teeth.
- Experiment on various pitches, but remain in the lower third[3] of your vocal range. One way to find your own very comfortable *Y*-buzz is to calmly, spontaneously, conversationally express a thoughtful *Well Y≈≈≈≈≈yes,* inflecting the *Y* in *yes* a bit; then repeat the inflected *Y* at the same pitch, sustaining and intoning the *Y≈≈≈≈≈y(es)* to feel the comfortable *Y*-buzz. This is the first basic experiment that explores both your speaking voice and your singing voice.

[3]*Lower third:* approximately the lowest seven to ten half-pitches of your vocal range. The *Y*-buzz is explored and developed only in the lower-third range because the genuine *Y*-buzz/*EE* vowel does not produce an authentic concentrated "mother tone" on the higher pitches. (Generally speaking, the increase in the number of *Y*-buzz pitches occurs by adding lower pitches.)

- The small space between your side teeth should be kept flexible enough to be comfortable—a tiny bit more space for a higher pitch and a tiny bit less space for some lower pitches. Try to feel this adjustment as a *variable* space cushion.
- Feel the position of your tongue: the tip gently but firmly hugs the inside cutting edge of the lower teeth, and the posterior sides gently hug the upper back teeth. Be sure to concentrate on the *y* in *yes* and the *ea* in *easy* at the very same time.

As you experiment, you will find that with a forward facial posture you can sustain the *Y* with far better vocal placement and interesting tonal color. By contrast, executing the *Y*-buzz while smiling and showing your teeth usually produces a somewhat flat, nasal, or pinched tone.

Such tendency toward nasality is the primary reason Lessac training replaces the conventional *mee, mee, mee* with *yee, yee, yee.* The *M, N,* and *NG* are totally nasal. While there is nothing wrong with nasals as consonants (we have already seen that they add color and musicality to our speech), they are not ideal models for tone and vowel production. The entire voice should not be patterned after an intrinsically nasal sound that makes the vowels somewhat strident and unpleasant. Nasal resonance, yes! Nasality or denasality, no![4]

Instead, we are using a nonnasal model—the sustained *Y* French horn—which, when produced properly, results in a vibratory sensation (a warm, rich buzz) on the front of the hard palate, including the gum ridge, and in the nasal bone. You cannot sustain a clear consonant *Y* without feeling these *buzzy* vibrations, which is why we call this the "*Y*-buzz."

DEVELOPING THE *Y*-BUZZ

Now that you can feel some vibration, or buzz, in the gum-ridge area of the hard palate and in the nasal bone, let's cultivate the feeling until you can sense it coursing throughout all the bone areas, including the forehead.

Here are some reminders as you work on developing the *Y*-buzz:

- Explore the *Y*-buzz only in the lower third of your vocal range, and experience it as a bone-conducted sensation—not as a sound rumbling in your throat or propelled through your lips. Begin exploring the *Y*-buzz on a comfortable speaking pitch of your normal vocal range. Choose your own pitch, not someone else's.

[4]*Nasal resonance:* when the bone-conducted vowel or nonnasal consonant resonates without a change of quality when the nostrils are pressed firmly together. *Nasality:* when there is a change of quality upon pressing the nostrils together. *Denasality:* drawing of sounds to the back of the throat, away from the bones of the mouth, nose, and forehead.

• There should be no pressure, squeezing, or pushing with the back of your tongue and no abrasiveness, breathiness or consonant-like noises—just a clear, clean, free-flowing tonal current of the *Y*-buzz sensation. The *Y*-buzz should feel extremely light in weight and volume and, at the same time, nicely dark and vibrant in color and energetic in motion.[5]

• You should not really be aware of using breath to produce the *Y*-buzz. Rather, think of it as sound taking the place of breath, or concentrate on how the more you feel the sound vibes, the less breath you use. Feel the sensation as you subtly sharpen the buzz without actually moving to a higher pitch (some leading practitioners use the image of narrowing the iris of a camera or threading a needle with a smaller eye).

• Maintain a keen *Y*-buzz sound fed by a clean $\overline{EE}$ and fueled by a truly comfortable French horn consonant and supported by a forward facial posture (see Experiment 3). Feel the rich resonance moving upward through the upper gum ridge, hard palate, nasal bone, and forehead (if the $\overline{EE}$ vowel begins to distort, sound foreign, or feel squeezed, adjust your forward facial posture just enough to find the optimal balance between the rich vibrancy of the *Y*-buzz and a true $\overline{EE}$ feel).

• Posture counts! Keep the crown of your head high and the back of your neck long (don't lead with your chin). The front of your neck should be visible, but feel loose, free, and relaxed. You should be able to swivel your head easily from side to side while tasting and sustaining the *Y*-buzz.

• Check periodically for nasality by pressing your nostrils together with your thumb and forefinger. If the *Y*-buzz is radiating properly through the gum ridge of the hard palate and the nasal bone, the sound will not change, but if it is even a bit nasal, the tone will change noticeably. (Don't use this test with words or sentences containing *N, M,* or *NG;* these consonants are purely nasal and can't be sounded with closed nostrils.)

• Be *carefree,* not careful or careless. Being too careful will lead to a feeling of confinement, encourage apprehension, and destroy spontaneity. Carelessness or neglect, on the other hand, will diminish the purpose and understanding of this exercise. So work and *sense* intentionally and intelligently, but easily, uninhibitedly, and always with newly conceived imagery.

• As you sustain the *Y*-buzz, continue to explore, improve, and refine the tonal and vibratory quality. Your training will be more rewarding if you try to improve, mold, or correct the tonal NRG while you are in the very act of exploring and experiencing it, rather than repeatedly stopping and starting (that is, you are living the event rather than technically struc-

[5]*Light in weight and volume:* free from force and undue loudness. *Dark in color:* full of rich warmth and quality. *Energetic in motion:* transmitting a steady "anti-gravity" flow of mask resonance through the bones and pores rather than through any facial orifice (opening).

turing it). Just imagine how counterproductive it would be for an actor to impatiently and stressfully snap out of character during a rehearsal because of some minor slipup rather than *use* the slipup as a self-correction while staying in character. Kinesensic training teaches us that if you feel you're about to fall (vocally or bodily), make it a part of the song or dance, thus preserving the gracefulness, rhythm, and balance.

The *Y*-buzz sensation is a protective device against strain and throatiness; the forward posture of the facial muscles automatically relaxes the jaw. When produced without force, the *Y*-buzz also helps cure bad vocal habits like nasality, denasality, and breathiness. Moreover, it is successfully used as therapy for vocal-fold nodes, cleft palate, stuttering, hysterical aphonia, chronic hoarseness and chronic vocal fatigue, and for teaching the clinically deaf and the tone deaf. It is also an excellent warm-up and cool-down tool for strenuous vocal demands.

The vibrations of the *Y*-buzz are so relaxing and refreshing that you will begin to anticipate, search for, and welcome them whenever you speak. The true test of your mastery of tonal energy will be your capacity to maintain contact with this tonal guide in moments of stress, anger, strain, overexuberance, passion, or extreme intensity. To the extent that you are able to maintain tonal control in your speech, you will be able to maintain your own equilibrium and reduce disturbing behavior. In this way, the control of the tonal focus in your speech and voice will help you to a better control of yourself—of your emotional experiencing. It is a disciplined and therapeutic control, and it is an extremely discriminating and exhilarating one as well.

Through kinesensic training, tonal NRG will mature into an internal built-in fail-safe control valve—when you feel it you cannot lose it! Although your emotions can function unimpededly without the voice, your "vocal experiencing system" is *always* in a one-to-one relationship with the "emotional experiencing system." If you lose "control of self" the first thing that will go is your healthy voice; ergo, you simply cannot become hysterical or lose control of self if you stay "organically tuned in" to your built-in tonal NRG control valve.

EXPLORATION I: ADJUSTING THE PITCH ON THE *Y*-BUZZ

- Practice the *Y*-buzz on the words *weepy, heed, peace, squeeze, deep,* and *evening,* using a progressively lower pitch for each word over a range of approximately three to six half-pitches or whatever you feel are minimal interval changes. Be sure you stay within the upper gum-ridge area.
- Practice sliding the *Y*-buzz like a siren sound, first down and up, then up

As the pitch is lowered in both steps, an overall small reduction occurs: the buzz creeps somewhat closer to the upper teeth and seems to resonate an infinitesimally smaller focus pocket[6] at the gum ridge; the elliptical lip opening relaxes a bit and reduces slightly; and the side teeth come a bit closer together. Maintaining a rich, fresh buzz requires a progressively gentler treatment as the tonal action vibrates more delicately in the smaller area. As the pitch is raised, the process is reversed: the buzz expands to a slightly larger focus pocket on the gum ridge and hard palate, and the lip opening and space cushion between the side teeth enlarge slightly. Neither half-step change, however, should very perceptibly alter the outward appearance of your facial posture. If they relate to the tiniest half-step interval changes, up or down, then they are truly infinitesimal and might be visualized as being almost—but not quite—the same *feel experience.* You might even think of quarter-pitch interval changes rather than half-pitch intervals.

EXPERIMENT 4: VIBRATING THE *Y*-BUZZ

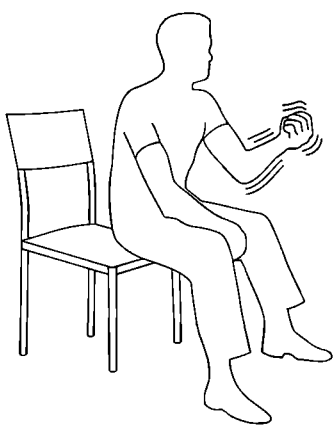


Figure 6-3 Vibrating the *Y*-Buzz

- Practice the *Y*-buzz while gently shaking one hand (Figure 6-3).
- Observe how this action gently vibrates the entire body and seems to bounce or pulsate the *Y*-buzz into the bones of the face; remember this feeling as a sense memory and as a familiar event to be used for organic instruction.
- Continue the *Y*-buzz and reproduce this sense memory without shaking your hand.

Shaking your muscles is a relaxing technique that can help you achieve a liberated, moving tonal current and permit you to concentrate on the form and direction of the *Y*-buzz. Begin with one hand in something like a gesture used in expressive speech; then use both hands as if you were shaking maracas. The shaking should be energetic but gentle. Your muscles should move freely enough to permit your entire body to vibrate in a pleasurable and stimulating muscle-loosening exercise that relaxes and vitalizes the vocal pulsations at the same time.

EXPLORATION II: *Y*-BUZZ WORD LIST

- Practice the following words with emphasis on the *Y*-buzz sensation. In multisyllable words, the dot indicates the *Y*-buzz.

[6]*Focus pocket:* an adjustable (in size and shape) area on the hard palate and gum ridge that receives the concentrated tonal NRG or sound waves.

• Improvise simple phrases or short sentences using one or more of these words; maintain the proper facial form throughout. Note that nonaccented *Y*-buzz syllables are also dotted. Be sure to focus on voice development and tonal NRG now—not on normal diction.

thieves	demeaned	decree	complete	reasonably
wheel	creeds	deemphasize	Ethan	tea leaves
seize	pristine	sheaf	kingly[7]	deeply
keyed	conceived	wreath	sync	seemingly
obscene	meager	lethal	precincts	pleased
breathe	Hebrew	weep	tincture	merrily
congeal	seizure	priest	sing	easy
squeezed	plebeian	ether	linger	pique

In normal conversation, the *Y*-buzz falls into two categories according to sustention or emphasis:

1. Longer, where the *Y*-buzz vowel is either the final stressed sound or is followed by a voiced consonant, as in *feed, teethe, leave, peas*
2. Shorter, where the *Y*-buzz vowel is followed by an unvoiced consonant or an *NG* sound or is a final unstressed *Y*, as in *feat, teeth, leaf, piece, bring, only*

EXPLORATION III: *Y*-BUZZ SENTENCES

• Explore the following sentences out loud, and sustain every dotted vowel for two or three seconds. Sing the *Y*-buzzes—or chant or inflect them—while concentrating on voice training and tonal NRG. The first three sentences are marked; you do the rest.

• When you are satisfied with the consistency and richness of the *Y*-buzz resonance, shorten the sustention until you can speak the sentences at a conventional communicating pace while continuing to feel the buzz.

1. **Please don't leave me; I need you.**
2. **We need steam heat immediately.**
3. **She screamed when her knee started to bleed.**
4. **Leave me alone; I don't need this grief.**
5. **Steve's friend was a real creep.**
6. **What we really needed was some immediate and deep easy peacefulness.**
7. **Deep green seas bring me feelings of serene relief.**

[7]For those of you who are uncomfortable using a *Y*-buzz in words like *king, sync, tincture, sing,* and *linger,* disregard the *Y*-buzz and move on to the sustainable *NG* oboe.

8. **We mean to keep these leading people free for this evening's meetings.**
9. **The evening breeze seems to seep between the leaves of these trees and flees easily beneath the ceiling of stars.**

DEVELOPING THE PLUS *Y*-BUZZ (+*Y*-BUZZ)

The words *easy* and *lazy* have two things in common:

1. They both have a *Y*-buzz feel in the second syllable.
2. Although the vowels in the first syllable of both words are different, they have a *Y*-buzz feel. The first syllable in *easy* is a pure *Y*-buzz tone; but the first syllable in *lazy* has an initial tiny impulse before slipping into the *Y*-buzz.

Only the "+*Y*-buzz" starts with that tiny ping, or gentle tonal impulse, to initiate the +*Y*-buzz mask resonance. Let's check this out by exploring the purely tonal aspects of the +*Y*-buzz.

EXPERIMENT 5: FEELING THE +*Y*-BUZZ

- Execute a comfortable *Y*-buzz, starting in the lower pitches.
- After feeling the quality and caliber of it, shift into the very next higher pitch.
- After sustaining the *Y*-buzz for several seconds, add a pulsating rhythm with the consonant *Y*: *Yeee-Yeee-Yeee-Yeee.* Accelerate the pulsating rhythm progressively until you're shaking and vibrating it into a sustaining, free-flowing **vibrato.**[8]
- Continue pulsating the *Y* but now, while saying or feeling the *Yeee-Yeee-Yeee,* think or image *Yey.* Feel the tiny ping of the *Yey* for a split second at the nasal bone and bridging into the forehead like a very slight quaver—*Y≈≈≈≈Yey≈≈≈≈Yey≈≈≈≈Yey*—without breaking the *Y*-buzz flow even for an instant.
- Do the *Y*-buzz in short pulses. Repeat with the +*Y*-buzz.

You have undoubtedly discovered that you are producing the vowel sound *EY,* as in *obey* or *fade,* a diphthong combination of *Ĕ* plus *Ē*. Ordinarily, this diphthong should be accented on its first sound; however, to ensure the proper tonal quality, placement, and movement, our concentration will be on the second sound, which in our frame of reference is not the short *i* vowel as in *this* but the tonal *Y*-buzz vowel. The first sound, although very brief, is felt as a

[8]*Vibrato:* a pulsating, vibrating singing tone that has a positive, freeing effect on the voice.

tonal impulse in the nasal bone and forehead and is accompanied by a forward lip protrusion and the smallest opening between the side teeth. It is nothing more than an infinitesimal tonal impulse feeding into the *Y*-buzz; this first sound will be designated by a plus sign (+) before the *Y*, and the diphthong will be called the "plus *Y*-buzz," or "+*Y*-buzz."

As with the *Y*-buzz, be carefree in practicing the +*Y*-buzz. Correct and adjust it on the sustention, which, as previously mentioned, is always on the second sound of the diphthong. Maintain optimal facial and body posture, and keep checking for nasality. Be fully aware that when sustaining the +*Y*-buzz, you are really playing and feeling a *Y*-buzz French horn.

EXPLORATION IV: + *Y*-BUZZ WORD LIST

As with the *Y*-buzz word list, do not practice the following words for precise diction, but hold each +*Y*-buzz tonal resonance for at least three seconds. Remember that it is the *Y* in the +*Y*-buzz that is sustained.

plȧy	strȧyed	stȧge	nȧming	sȧfely
dȧnger	embrȧce	phȧse	sȧlable	inmȧte
portrȧy	trȧded	escapȧde	ungȧinly	creȧted
fȧmous	mȧimed	proclȧim	dedicȧte	berȧte
gȧzing	rȧnge	remȧining	nȧtion	sȧtiȧte
ȧid	wȧil	occȧsion	debȧtable	shȧpely
vȧguely	frȧmed	belȧbored	elȧted	occupȧtion
crȧve	cȧble	fȧilure	cȧper	strȧngth[9]
strȧin	derȧiled	vȧguely	grȧceful	lȧngthen

Although the *Y*-buzz itself is not dotted in these word lists, feel free to sense them and explore them.

EXPLORATION V: + *Y*-BUZZ SENTENCES

- Read the following sentences out loud, and sustain every dotted vowel for two or three seconds; include as well the undotted *Y*-buzz vowels.
- When you are satisfied with the consistency and richness of the +*Y*-buzz resonance, shorten the sustention until you can speak the sentences at a normal conversational pace while continuing to feel the buzz.

1. **Thȧy cȧme very lȧte; thȧy also stȧyed very lȧte.**
2. **His sensȧtions of rȧge were betrȧyed by his fȧce.**

[9]Pronounced as "strayngkth"; for those who are uncomfortable using the +*Y*-buzz in the words *strength* and *length*, move right on to the *NG* oboe—not the *N* violin.

3. It may rain today; in Spain it rained yesterday, and it rained, and rained, and rained.
4. He was raving as if he were crazy; I was amazed.
5. She lay awake, deep in grief, her aching heart betrayed and afraid.
6. He complained all day about the pain in his inflamed brain.
7. He felt betrayed, ashamed, and painfully crazed with rage.

EXPLORATION VI: *Y*-BUZZ AND +*Y*-BUZZ SENTENCES AND POEM

• While reading the following sentences out loud, take time to taste a sustained, completely concentrated *Y*-buzz or +*Y*-buzz at each opportunity in a kind of slow-motion communication. Mark the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz opportunities if you feel the need.

• Speak each sentence two or three more times with different meanings, but still feel the concentrated *Y*-buzzes and +*Y*-buzzes whether long or short. Be sure to sense the final *y* syllables as *Y*-buzzes.

1. Every baby needs to play each day.
2. We hated to see Jean leave the game.
3. She really craved fame but met with defeat despite her weeks of training.
4. The heavy chains caused great pain to the aged, weakened slave.
5. The heaving seas raised great green waves in the bay.
6. Mr. Beeldray complained obsequiously in the face of defeat.
7. The grave situation decreased the leader's faith in arbitration.
8. Tracy maintained a brave demeanor even though in severe retreat.

• Now recite the alphabet poem. Sing, intone, and *ring out* the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz opportunities as marked.

a, b, c, d, . . . e, f, g,
h, i, j, k, . . . l, m, n, o, p,
q, r, s, t, . . . u and v,
w and x, y, z.

Y-BUZZ AND +*Y*-BUZZ CARRYOVER OPPORTUNITIES

The following explorations are designed to encourage the carryover of concentrated *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz sensation to words, phrases, and sentences; everyday speech calls for ongoing tonal action with a generally non-

concentrated focus—a dilute current pervading the palate, nasal bone, and forehead that resonates pleasantly, if diffusely, in the mask and oral cavity.

EXPLORATION VII: THE *Y*-BUZZ TONAL CURRENT

• Begin with a rich, vibrant, gently ringing *Y*-buzz and run it into the first word of the following phrases. Carry over as much tonal color and focus as possible throughout the rest of each phrase and return to the *Y*-buzz tonal energy on the last word. Make it believable; interpret and characterize each phrase with involvement and imagination.

1. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈Keep* cool, *Mimi*
2. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈We'll* go *see*
3. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈He* called *me*
4. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈We're* odd *people*
5. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈These* toys *break*
6. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈He'll* calm *thee*
7. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈Read* aloud, *please*
8. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈She* asked *me*
9. *Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈Green* eyes, I *see*

The sensation is like moving from a hot sun to semi-shade and back again, or, better still, like gliding swiftly in a strong current and then drifting smoothly and restfully into the outer edges of that current; but you must remain *within* the general current. Finding yourself totally outside the free-flowing *Y*-buzz tonal current should then function as a positive awareness of omission and signal you to glide back into the current's flow. If the dilute resonance feels a bit nasal at first, check for nasality by pressing your nostrils together. If there is no tonal change, what you feel is nasal resonance, not nasality.

• Begin again with a rich, vibrant *Y*-buzz warm-up, and, staying with the *Y*-buzz tonal current, communicate the following lines with the intention to convince and to persuade.

*Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈*This is the way to feel the focus . . .

*Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈*Feel the focus and keep it this way . . .

*Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈*If we feel the focus and really keep it this way . . .

*Y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈y≈≈≈≈*We will always be able to feel an easy control over our speech and voice!

• Now with a single *Y*-buzz preparation, impart the lines in a two- or three-sentence structure. Be actively aware of staying within the *Y*-buzz tonal current.

EXPLORATION VIII: READINGS

• Explore the following selections with a maximum feeling of involvement, but do not let your involvement disturb, destroy, or pollute the *Y*-buzz sensation. On the contrary, concentrate on making the *Y*-buzz current a stimulating channel to discover and express involvement and to add new vitality to your interpretation of each reading. As an actor, make it mean more by releasing more buzz, rather than by *acting from the throat.*

• Remember to feel as much of the *Y*-buzz and your forward facial posture as you can without distorting the recognizable pronunciation of the text. The *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz opportunities are marked in the first selection; feel free to mark the other selections.

Displacing the seeds of reason,
The traitor screams with peals of hate;
But for the patriot, there is relief of pain
In freedom's sweet embrace.

Pitiless waves,
Scraping 'cross the heaving seas,
Unsheathe the razor peaks
Of scaly reefs,
That wait beneath
To reap the sails
Of fools who dare
To venture deep.

Weeping moonbeam tears,
The sea breathes deep
As waves waste away the years
Of waking sleep..

The irate bees
Seemed just like fleas
As they made their escape
In two's and three's..

These men are sheep who nightly sleep in graves,
But ne'er may stay, nor even dream;
They daily wake . . . each day three-quarters slain . . .
Too dazed to be, they only seem.

A gentle *Y*-buzz focus can enhance voice-over work and other microphone tasks by bringing forwardness, control, and balance to the voice and by allowing for more subtle shadings. Of course, microphone work is where crisp, clear nonforced consonants, free of breathiness, pay off particularly well.

By now, you should be aware that in the conversational speech mode most vowels are noticeably longer in words ended or dominated by voiced consonants than in words ended or dominated by unvoiced consonants. For example the *Y*-buzz in *greed* and the +*Y*-buzz in *grade* are felt longer than in *greet* and *great;* likewise the vowels in *toast, agnostic,* and *acoustics* are shorter and crisper than in *dozed, diagnosed,* and *accused.* When the body anticipates the unvoiced consonant, the vowel is shortened; conversely the extended vibratory phonation of the voiced consonant causes a tonal sustention. For native English speakers these differences in vowel length are usually part of unconscious, natural speech. For nonnative English speakers, however, this characteristic needs to be noted and recognized as a very special function of good consonant NRG dynamics. Nevertheless, in acting, you must know that these subtle, built-in dynamic differences are not unbreakable rules to fit so-called proper speech or good diction; you must feel free to alter the length of any vowel or word as needed for emphasis or for the emotional demands of the moment.

Tonal NRG and the Call

So far we have discussed tonal NRG that supports the lower third of the vocal range; that is, the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz. Further extension of tonal NRG is an important step in building and developing the voice before moving on to the nature and study of structural NRG and the music of the vowels. Let's keep in mind that the intended result of exploring the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz sensations is to identify a vital, pleasant, rich, comfortable vocal quality in your speaking voice and speech personality as well as preparing for the "Call."

EXPERIMENT 6: FEELING THE "CALL"

To continue with our tonal NRG experiments for both the singing voice and the speaking voice, return to the *Y*-buzz.

- Sustain it. Pulsate it. Vibrate it. Sing it!
- Perform the *Y*-buzz on different pitches. Make certain you consistently experience it:
  - forward on the hard palate
  - moving into the top of the nasal bone and toward the forehead
  - constantly transmitting through the bony structures without consciously sensing or directing the *Y*-buzz out through the mouth or nose

– while visualizing the *Y* French horn/*Y*-buzz as a yin-yang image combining the "masculine" (yang) *Y* energy with the "feminine" (yin) *EE* sensation, both vibrating in concert

• Progress up through the *Y*-buzz pitches, and shift into the sixth, seventh, or eighth pitch on the +*Y*-buzz; become aware that the "plus" itself delicately and progressively takes on a more dominant role in support of the overall concentrated tone. You will feel the need to allow more and more space between your side teeth until it is the *first* part of the *EY* diphthong that ripens and makes its presence felt. You will sense a more stentorian (or powerful) sound as you begin to experience what we will now refer to as the "Call." Graphically, it would look like this:

Yee≈Yee≈Yee≈Yee≈Yee≈Yey≈Yey≈Ye≈≈ey≈Ye≈≈≈ey≈Ye≈≈≈≈ey!

So let us now delve into the nature and study of the Call as a major part of understanding the dynamics of tonal NRG, whether in the speaking or singing mode. The Call goes beyond the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz in tonal NRG and is designed to expand and develop range, pitch, volume, production, and quality of practically the entire speaking voice, most of the female singing voice, and approximately two-thirds of the male singing voice.

While the *Y*-buzz is explored with a reduced facial form and shape and with minimal space between the teeth, the Call technique requires a fuller forward facial posture, a more definite yawn feel, and, therefore, a wider space between the teeth. The Call is precisely that—a calling out—but it is a rounded, *robust* Call, a *ringing* Call, a *rich* Call, a *singing* Call; a *freely liberated* Call; it is a Call that always reveals involved, connected behavior.

In practicing the Call sensations, the vowel sounds must be treated with considerable latitude—an approximation is all that is necessary. You may feel various shades and gradations of the vowel sound *OO* or *Ō* or *AW* or *AH* during a "h'LLO" Call depending upon your pitch, and you may identify it as the *OO* or *Ō* or *AW* or *AH* vowel, but it will certainly differ phonetically or phonemically from its sound in normal speech.

The Call is always governed by a characteristic vibratory, ringing sensation—a fully concentrated tonal feeling—that expands the technical and emotional ranges of the voice; the subtler qualities of vowel articulation are secondary. In their mutually complementary ways, both the *Y*-buzz and the Call exercises are designed to explore the resonant qualities of your voice and put these qualities at the service of your singing voice, your speaking voice, your acting, and your everyday functioning.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CALL

In Hebrew, the word *Kall* literally means "the voice." From biblical times to the present, callers throughout the world, both secular and religious,

have produced beautiful and exciting vocal tones, sometimes consciously, sometimes quite unaware.

It is said that in the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, an official known as the caller, often the priest, would make early-morning announcements in tones so hauntingly beautiful that women would pause in their morning chores to listen and, so it is reported, sometimes faint from sheer ecstasy. In later days, street vendors "called" their strawberries, watermelons, cockles 'nd mussels, and hot-cross buns in melodies that have inspired composers, serious and popular alike. The soldiers' call for "Wa-a-a-ater boy" that Kipling turned to poetry, the "All abo-o-oard" of the train conductor, the golfer's "Fo-o-ore," the traffic cop's "Pu-ull o-o-over," the engineer's "O-oka-a-ay, let'er go-o-o-o-o," the stage manager's "Pla-a-aces e-e-verybody-y-y," the lumberjack's "Ti-i-imbe-e-e-er," and your neighbor's hearty "Helloo-o the-ere" are all examples of Calls used today and every day. Out of necessity, the peddler and the newsboy often develop perfect Call techniques in order to call attention to themselves and their wares over the sounds of the city without harming their throats or ruining their voices.

Explore a few Calls with an actor's curiosity, enthusiasm, and improvising. Stand up, cup one or both hands to your face, and joyfully sing out a Call on *H'llo*≈≈≈≈ or *Yoh*≈≈≈≈ or *Okay*≈≈≈≈. Enjoy your hearty Call improvisations.

Conscious or not, in ritual or in everyday use, the genuine Call is never a strident scream, a hoarse yell, or a loud shout. The Call is an exhilarating, resilient, resonant bone-tone. It is esthetic and flexible enough to form the basis of the opera singer's recitative[10] (as well as approximately sixty percent of his or her singing) and efficient enough to provide the actor's verbal accent and interpretive vocal emphasis. The Call is the bridge in tonal production between the conversational speaking voice and the singing voice; the Call is also the heightened vocal quality necessary for highly emotional speech.

The Call (as well as the *Y*-buzz), experienced supportively by a subtle, skillful vibrato[11] is the basis for the singer's most artistic techniques in all but the upper-register male-covered tones. Practically the entire range of the female voice can be developed by the Call, but only the lower two-thirds of the male voice benefits specifically from this technique. The top third of the male voice, short of the two falsetto modes, is classified by

[10]*Recitative:* speaking on pitch; a style of vocal music that falls somewhere between singing and speaking.

[11]Here, *vibrato* connotes a gently oscillating or pulsating influence for adding warmth and beauty to vocal tones or for expressing changes in emotional intensity—for better experiencing creative tonal NRG. It is most effective when singing sustained tones.

most teachers as the "covered" or "closed" tones; these covered tones are reinforced by what is referred to as the "soft-palate yawn" (see page 50 for a detailed discussion), while the concentrated Call takes place in what can be referred to as the "open," or hard-palate, range and is assisted by the "hard-palate yawn." We will introduce and work with these yawns in our forthcoming experiments.

THE CONTROL OF THE CALL

To understand either the *Y*-buzz or the Call thoroughly, you must remember that tonal NRG is the control of a vibratory current of sound in a state of constant movement, radiation, and transmission propagating in the hard palate and teeth, nasal bone, cheekbones, sinuses, forehead and cranium. Like a beam of light or a stream of water, the vocal sound current may be concentrated or diffused. The concentrated tone—the full Call, *Y*-buzz, and +*Y*-buzz—occurs mainly in formal delivery or when addressing a large audience; the moderate *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz are used in normal everyday communication; and the diffused or dilute tonal resonance occurs in informal conversation with friends and family. These various tonal levels, however, are no more than variations on a single principle: Every vowel is a voiced tone incorporating the elements of pitch, tonal body, and quality, and every tone is felt as a vibration in the solid bony structures of mouth, face, and cranium. The feeling should be experienced as an organic, intrinsic, private sensation—private, that is, in the same way that a blush or a swallow or a stomach rumble is a private sensation. The only difference is that tonal NRG is a continuing interinvolved awareness, intelligently utilized, and its basis is physical vibration and resonance rather than intellectual will or wishful thinking.

In animated speech, the speaker with a well-focused voice often falls quite naturally into the use of the Call, particularly for the purpose of emphasis, stress, or accent; in that sense, the Call is a part of natural speech. But generally speaking, in normally inflected, intimate or informal speech, the tonal focus of the voice is not felt as a compact, dark, concentrated vibration, but as a somewhat lighter, more diluted, diffused resonance. The important points are that both the fully concentrated Call focus and the partly concentrated or diffused tonal resonance of everyday conversation (1) originate from the same Stradivarius instrument, (2) are activated by the same process, (3) move in the same direction, and (4) transmit from the same bony resonators. With good tonal NRG you can move easily and naturally from one pitch level and intensity to another and make use of any of the gradations in between. The concentrated Call focus guarantees healthy, flexible, fine-sounding diffused tones.

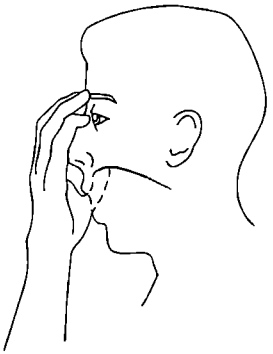


Figure 6-4 The Vocal Nozzle

If you place your thumb on the hard palate and your four fingers around the bridge of your nose, touching your forehead, you hold in the palm of your hand what might be called the "vocal nozzle," with your thumb representing the "base" or "entry point" of the vocal nozzle (Figure 6-4). This entry point is your gum ridge and hard palate, where you first feel the bone-conducted resonance that vibrates through the rest of the vocal nozzle (nasal bone, cheekbones, sinuses, forehead, and cranium). Visualize this entry point as a pliable sound pocket, or flexible focus pocket, that transmits its vibrations to resonate the bones of the face, head, spine, and ribs. The vocal nozzle intensifies, controls, and transmits the sound stream, just as the nozzle of a water hose controls the water and narrows it into a concentrated stream of high kinetic energy or disperses it into a diluted fine spray (Figure 6-5). Without a nozzle, water from the hose splashes to the ground with no focus and no usable kinetic energy. Without use of the vocal nozzle, or bony structure, vocal tone splashes around, spreads, and therefore weakens or becomes a surge of uncontrollable and unpleasant tension and pressure. Vocal sound waves misdirected or forced to the pharynx, throat, or lips are comparable to water escaping through holes in the hose line, weakening the current at the nozzle.

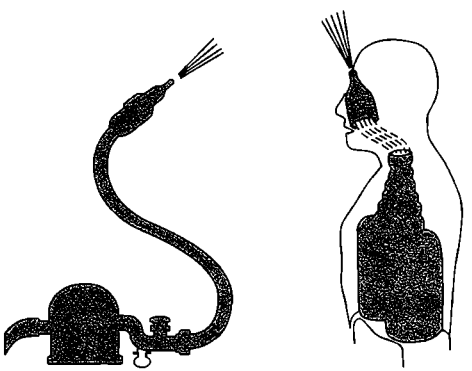


Figure 6-5 A Comparison of the Vocal Nozzle to a Water Hose Nozzle

DEVELOPING THE CALL AND THE MAGIC OF THE YAWN

EXPERIMENT 7: WORKING WITH THE SHORT AND SUSTAINED CALL

- Take a position at one end of the largest room available to you. Cup one hand around your mouth and pretend to Call to someone some distance away; use the word *Hello* but abridge it to *h'LLO*. The *LLO* is really the part of the word that carries the tonal energy. Don't sustain the Call at first, but make it spontaneously short; it should feel exhilarating, free, and effortless.
- Repeat the Call, but this time sustain it with a genuine hard-palate yawnlike feeling—an integral ingredient of the Call tone. The yawn produces a pleasant, flexible, energy-giving sensation in the mouth cavity and cheek muscles and helps direct and urge the Call tone toward the bony structures of the palate, nose, cheekbones, forehead, and cranium.
- Experiment freely with both the short and sustained Call over and over, making it cleaner, keener, and gentler each time. Sing it without any heaviness or throatiness. The tone should course easily and comfortably through the bony nozzle into the forehead as a singing and completely nonthroaty sensation. Avoid the slightest suggestion of force or breathiness. Check periodically for escaping breath by holding the back of your hand close to your lips.

Notice how the Call improves and is reinforced as you incorporate the yawn. The yawn has many virtues:

1. It is therapeutic. It reminds the body to renew and freshen up the breath supply.
2. It instinctively provides us with the most benevolent facial muscle flexibility and resilience.
3. It creates the sensation of a higher ceiling for the hard (bony) palate and simultaneously raises the soft palate, thus expanding the pharyngeal[12] space and creating the optimal space, size, and form for the vocal sound box.
4. It liberates, enriches, and lends color, body, and warmth to the Call, and simultaneously provides a sense of power, strength, and elasticity.

Just as almost all active body muscle functioning must incorporate the relaxer ingredient of *muscle yawning,* so must every singing or speaking Call tone be synergized by the relaxing and energizing *forward facial-vocal*

[12]*Pharyngeal:* related to the throat area.

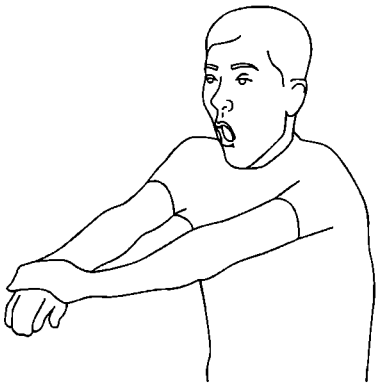


Figure 6-6 Facial (Body) Muscle-Yawn Posture

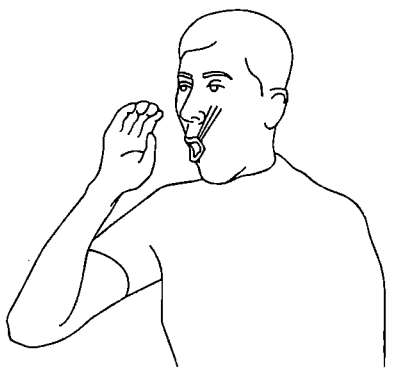


Figure 6-7 Vocal (Call) Posture

yawn. Refer to Figures 6-6 and 6-7, and note how the Call facial posture is identical with the muscle-yawn facial posture, particularly the cheek muscles' bilateral extension into the rounded lip muscle. Every Call needs to be integrated with the yawn sound, the yawn form, the yawn vitality—the very aura of the yawn experience. Tonal NRG in overall speech or singing should always experience the influence of the yawn NRG component; and conversational or confidential speech (as well as light-lyrical singing) must at least be pervaded with the touch and taste of it. Let's keep in mind that all body and voice yawning is one of the human organism's most reflexive and instinctive therapies—one of the body's natural relaxer-energizers that provides stimulating, restful, and salutary exercise.

When and if your yawn experimenting induces discomfort, pain, or rigidity, do check yourself for possible artificial, mechanical, or superimposed substitutes in place of instinctive, organic yawning. You will need to find your familiar event to recapture natural and spontaneous yawn be-

havior. Attempting to perceive such behavior through the intellect, verbal description, or simple memory will not work; it must be perceived through the senses—kinesensically. Good acting demands this.

EXPERIMENT 8: "OH, IT FEELS SO GOOD"

Experiment spontaneously with the hard-palate body yawn (see Figure 6-6). Add the vocals, and note how it expands and animates the entire body. Feel the forwardly extended *C*-curve body posture including the laterally expanded back, and allow a comfortable, sustained, concentrated bone-conducted tone to emerge buoyantly, resiliently. The effect is very much like an enthusiastic and exuberant calling out of "Oh, it feels so-o-o-o goo-oo-d," or "Go-o-o-o-od mo-o-o-o-o-orning" with a surprisingly rich resonance felt in the bony areas of the palate, nose, and forehead. This yawn-supported, concentrated tone is the body's natural hale-and-hearty creative Call, which could never be fully achieved without the dynamic Yawn ingredient.

THE PITCH OF THE CALL

If the Call is to feel right, the particular focus pocket on the hard palate must be realistically filled. As with the *Y*-buzz, the size of the focus pocket will change as the pitch changes. For lower pitches, the vibratory sensations will concentrate progressively toward the gum ridge (which is always part of the focus pocket); for higher pitches, the vibratory sensations will expand toward the sides and rear of the *hard* palate. But whether large or small, the focus pocket must be comfortably filled, not underloaded or overloaded, with vocal effort. The human voice must never be forcefully pushed into the mask of the face; nor should it be directed through the mouth. And, except for special character effects, the voice should never be permitted to seek refuge in the back of the throat. The vocal sound stream should, instead, flow freely as it resonates throughout the bony mask structure—not *invading* the mask but *pervading* it.

If the pitch of the Call is lowered or raised a mere half- or quarter-step interval, the perception of the change, as in the *Y*-buzz, will be subtle and the reduction or increase of the focus pocket extremely slight. When you lower or raise the pitch by a larger interval, however, you will find that the tonal sensation adjusts more substantially. At the same time, although the facial posture remains comfortably forward with optimal space between the teeth, the reduction or increase of the focus pocket will influence a comparable cause-and-effect lip-size and vowel change. As the pitch is lowered, the focus pocket on the hard palate will reduce in size toward the gum ridge and the vowels will move gradually from *AH* to *OO;* conversely,

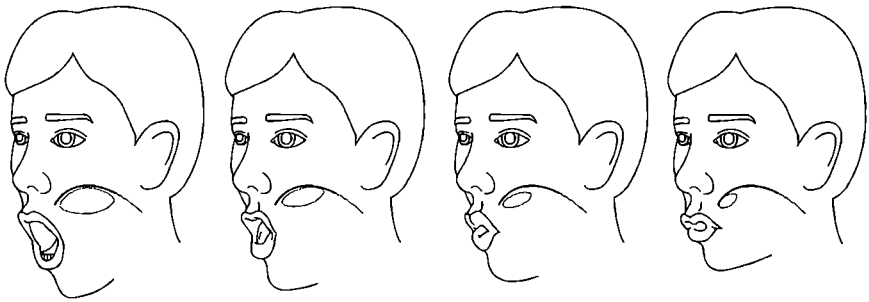


Figure 6-8 The Changing Focus Pocket

Viewed either left-to-right or right-to-left, the focus pocket and lip opening change in sync as the pitch is raised or lowered.

as the pitch is raised, the focus pocket on the hard palate will expand laterally and posteriorly (without losing contact with the gum ridge) and the vowel will move concurrently from *OO* to *AH* (Figure 6-8).

Through all these changes, the Call itself retains the same tonal consistency and character. It remains essentially unchanged in tonal texture, quality, concentrated focus, stentorian brilliance, and relaxed energy. The sensation of a genuine Call experience *is felt in a state of vibrating equilibrium, constantly spinning through the hard palate, nasal bone, and forehead.* With varying pitch, the only change is in the size of the focus pocket and the lip opening. As with our other action-sensations, even the deaf and tone-deaf can feel and control these changes.

As you explore the Call, actively associate yourself with the sensation. Avoid standing aside as a casual (or even interested) observer—this would be tantamount to listening to yourself from the outside. Do not assume that "it" doesn't work—as if you were the innocent victim of "its" misplaced force. The instrument is not on the outside, organically isolated—*you* are the instrument. The "it" is you! You must feel, be aware, and learn to perceive new sensations and program these sensations into your muscles, your nerves, your bloodstream, and your computer brain. The properly experienced Call energy never requires thrusting the chin forward and up; rather, the crown of the head should be held high, and the front of the neck and chin should be loose and flexible. Especially remember to sense your yawn energy pervading every Call or singing tone.

EXPERIMENT 9: THE SHORT SPONTANEOUS CALL

- Do several short *h'LLO* Calls. Do them spontaneously, as if you were ac-

yawn produces a more comfortable feel in your concentrated Call tone as well as your forward facial posture.

- Do the same short, staccato calls on *braVO* and *oLEY* (*olé*). Perform these words with the fullest enthusiasm and excitement, as if you were an actor onstage or a passionate member of the audience.
- Now take the Calls up and down the scale on as many different pitches as you *comfortably* can. Note that in lower pitches, the Call instinctively accommodates a somewhat smaller rounded lip opening; in the higher pitches, the Call is inclined toward a somewhat larger rounded lip opening.
- Explore the feel of sliding or gliding the Calls just the tiniest bit both up and down from the starting (or previous) pitch.

Observe the effect of changing pitches on the focus pocket on the hard palate. Note also how at the lower pitches you move gently toward the gum ridge and at the higher pitches you expand the focus pocket from the gum ridge. *Caution:* Don't lose the gum-ridge area as the focus pocket expands; the gum ridge is always part of the hard-palate focus, as is the full forward facial posture. Note also that the *EY* in *oLEY* enjoys the same lip, focus-pocket, space between the side teeth, and facial posture as the *VO* in *braVO;* only the tongue does the easy moving back and forth.

EXPERIMENT 10: CALL SUSTENTION

Performing the Call as a series of tonal impulses or beats is excellent preparation for the sustained Call on a single pitch. The experiment, written out, would be:

h'LLO

h'LLO - O

h'LLO - O - O

h'LLO - O - O - O

h'LLO - O - O - O - O

h'LLO - O - O - O - O - O, and so on

- Begin with a short Call.
- Now do a second Call, linking another *O* on the same general pitch level but produced with an additional tonal impetus in a gentle but firm pulsation.
- Continue exploring the Call, each time adding another *O* until you have linked as many as a dozen. Do not close the lip opening before each new impulse; vocalize a series of *O*'s, not *WO*'s. Without actually raising the pitch, speed up the impulses until they form a pulsating sustained vibrato. You should feel the sustained vibrato becoming cleaner, subtler, and resonating vibrantly in the bone-conducting area. Essentially, this will also constitute a fine, clear singing tone.
- In place of the *h'LLO* call, repeat the entire experiment with a Call on *oLEY, unEARTH,* and *unTIL.*

EXPERIMENT 11: MUSCLE VIBRATING

- Explore the sustained *h'LLO* and *unEARTH* Calls while shaking your hands briskly but gently and loosely up and down (see Figure 6-3). Try it first with one hand poised in a speaking gesture, then with both hands as though shaking maracas in a rapid but gentle rhythm.
- Observe how the loosening of the body, including the neck and face, encourages the Call to pulsate into the bony resonating area. Remember this vibrato as a sense memory, and program it into your brain.
- Continue the Call, and after a bit of gentle hand shaking, continue the vibrato effect without shaking your hands.
- If the vibrato seems to get lost, feed it periodically by a gentle shake of one hand.

Muscle shaking or vibrating is a natural and radiant way of inducing relaxation and offsetting muscle stress, a tendency to be over-careful, or a regressing facial posture. When the body experiences the vibrating sensations, it lends itself to images of improvisation. Do the gentle muscle vibrating on as many different pitches in your Call focus range as possible until you can sustain them comfortably and retain the subtle vibrato without the support of conscious muscle shaking.

EXPERIMENT 12: THE YODEL CALL

- Do a sustained *h'LLO* Call.
- While sustaining the *O* and maintaining the same pitch, shade into a suggestion of *EY* (*h'LLO-EY-O-EY-O-EY-O-EY-O-EY*) as though slowly preparing to perform a yodel. Do the experiment with agile tongue motion rather than lip motion, and gradually speed up the process until it approximates a true yodel effect. *Caution:* Avoid introducing the consonant *W* (*O-WEY-O-WEY-O-WEY-O*), which would incorrectly induce lip movement (on the outside) instead of proper tongue movement (on the inside). Remember the yawn support. Do the yodel Call on a number of different pitches.

Observe that when the pitch stays the same, the facial posture, the focus pocket, and the lip opening also stay the same. Only the tongue will accommodate the vowel change by moving back and forth rapidly from the *O* to the *EY*. As this experiment is done more rapidly, the Call will approximate a yodel effect.

EXPERIMENT 13: VOWEL CHANGES

- Start with a sustained *h'LLO* Call, and fuel it with ongoing yawn energy and a vivified forward facial posture.
- Now repeat the *h'LLO* Call, and on the same breath and pitch add the *aWAY, unTIL,* and *unEARTH* Calls. Experience the hard-palate yawn in your Calls. On *unEARTH,* sustain the Call on the vowel preceding the *R,* not on the

R itself (*unEA-EA-EA-EA-RTH*). Note that in order to maintain genuine Call quality when changing pitch, you are prepared to coordinate modified vowel alterations caused by the subtle size changes of the focus pocket and rounded lip opening. Singers do this as a matter of course, and since Calling is truly singing, we are improving the singing voice while training and developing the speaking voice.

- Repeat the same Call experience on *it'sGOOD, ta'CARE* ("take care"), *aGAIN,* and *b'WARE.*[13]

Treat the first syllable in *aWAY, unTIL, unEARTH, it'sGOOD, ta'CARE, aGAIN, b'WARE* the same as you did the *h'LLO:* almost throw away the first syllable and concentrate the Call NRG on the second syllable. Remember that the Call does not protect specific vowel sounds, and do keep the same flexible forward facial posture and lip opening for each different vowel, because you're working on the same pitch for the same Call effect. Do not let quality, texture, timbre, or tonal focus change. Accommodate the different vowels in your mind, but let the tonal NRG take the lead and maintain its own integrity. Where necessary, some slight tongue adjustment may take place, but essentially *no* change takes place in the facial structural form or lip-shape opening unless the pitch changes.

EXPERIMENT 14: SIREN DRILL OR SLIDING CALL

To perform this experiment, begin with shorter glissandos[14] over a small part of your range; as you gain confidence and skill, increase the length of the glissando until you cover your entire Call range as if you were imitating a siren. During the siren experiment keep the Call in constant contact with the hard palate—something like a train keeping contact with the rails. Keep feeling the Call, and keep feeding the yawn!

- Do a sustained *h'LLO* Call.
- Slide the Call down in pitch, and feel the tonal NRG on the hard palate subtly and gradually reducing the tonal focus pocket toward the gum ridge area; at the same time, feel a gradual reduction in the lip opening and the resulting delicate change in vowel sound. Be aware that it is the very nature of the genuine Call to get progressively gentler (quieter) as the pitch lowers without losing the tone's "ring"—and you must allow that to happen.
- After the down-glide, slide the Call up in pitch; feel the tonal NRG, lip opening, and vowel change in reverse. Visualize the Call's tonal NRG being inspired up and out through the hard palate and bones of the mask, as though you were actually "breathing" your tonal vibrations upward through the vocal nozzle while putting a temporary hold on breath flow.

[13]The apostrophe here indicates a deemphasized *e* (in *beware*) in preparation for the Call.

[14]*Glissando:* a musical term meaning "slide" or "glide."

- Slide the Call in a series of short down- and up-glides.
- Now siren, or slide, the Call on *aWAY, unTIL, unEARTH, it'sGOOD, aGAIN, ta'CARE.*

As you slide the Call up or down, never for an instant let the concentrated vibrations leave the hard-palate pocket; doing so would spread the concentrated Call into a dilute tone. At no time should you give attention to the vowel or permit it to determine the course of the siren glide; nevertheless, remain flexible enough to allow the vowel sound to change instinctively, naturally, and imperceptibly. While experimenting and exploring the sliding Call on *h'LLO, aWAY, unEARTH,* and *unTIL* and gliding as far down as is comfortable for you, visualize the *h'LLO* ending in *ŌŌ;* the *aWAY,* a rich *Y*-buzz; the *unEARTH,* in a German *ö;* and the *unTIL,* in a French *ü.* (If you are not familiar with German or French, put on an imagined German or French costume and "feel" yourself gliding down into a *Y*-buzz with a foreign accent.) In the very lowest tones, then, the space between the teeth and the forward facial posture as a whole will be reduced to accommodate the very small focus pocket to the point where even *unTIL* and *unEARTH* come into "touching" and "tasting" contact with the *Y*-buzz resonance and vibration (Figure 6-9).

Keep in mind that throughout this experiment it is not important that the words retain normal pronunciation for several reasons:

1. We are concerned with and put full priority on tone-control inspiration (breathing *up* the tonal vibrations through the bones in the facial mask), which naturally and physically controls and monitors optimal breath support.

2. We are preoccupied here with voice building and tone quality.

3. Vowels, even in the speech mode, when used dynamically in extreme or different pitches, are constantly subject to modification.

4. The consonants are primarily responsible for intelligibility; when consonants are felt, even in Calling, word recognition is always present.

EXPERIMENT 15: THE CALL ON CONSONANT *R*

The intention of this experiment is to consolidate the Call sensation in the nasal bone and forehead and to feel the reinforcement of the Call technique while being challenged by the *R:* To initiate the sustained Call, you should feel the posterior sides of your tongue contact your back side teeth for the *R* position; then, while still Calling, your tongue should disengage and permit the sound waves to flow freely through the hard palate, mask, and forehead, unencumbered by *R* intervention.

- Do a sustained *h'LLO* Call on a medium pitch.
- While sustaining the *O,* move your tongue to the *R* position: the sides should touch the inside corners of the upper back teeth and the tip should curl

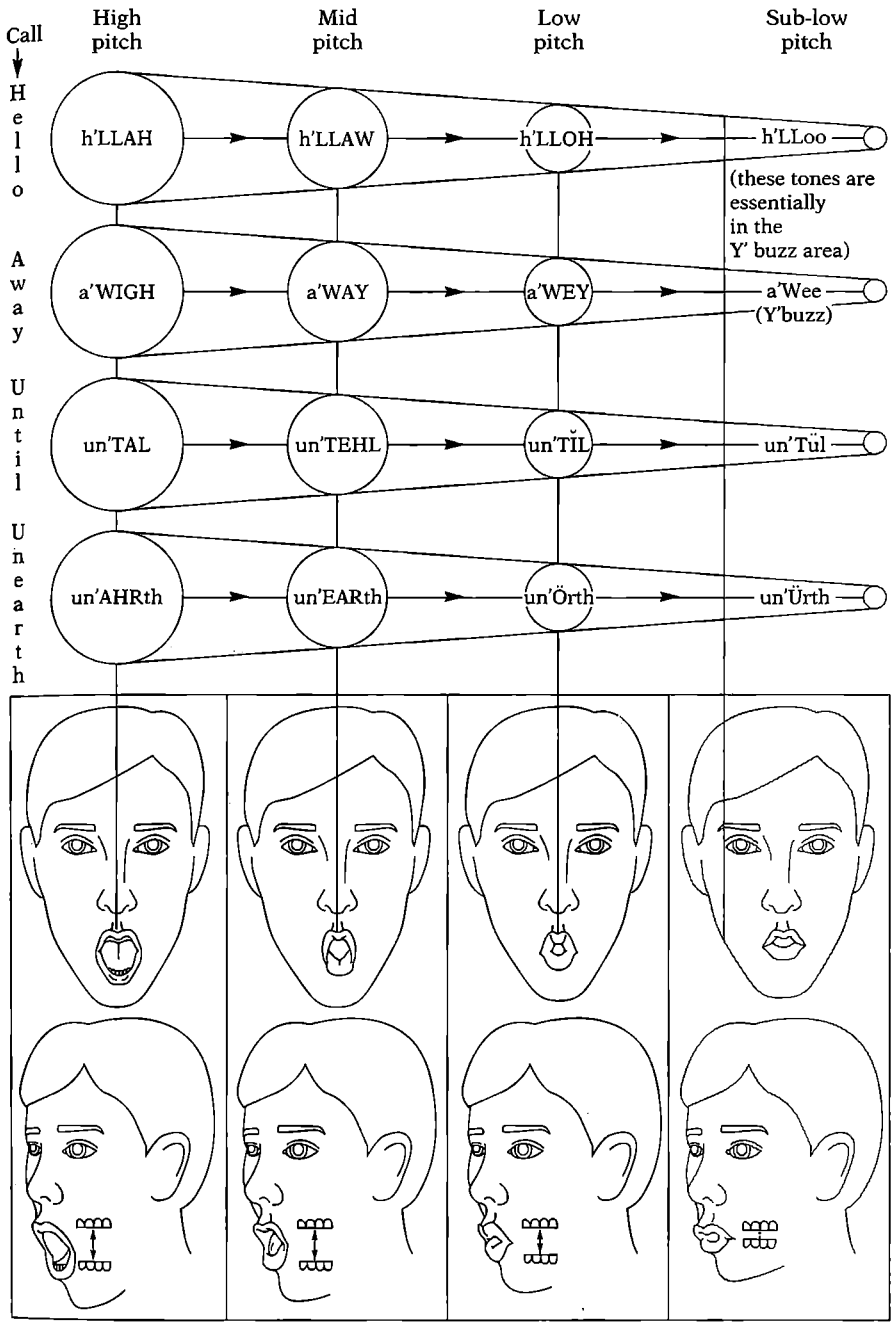


Figure 6-9 The Sliding Call

These diagrams and sketches illustrate the biophysical corelationship of the pitch range (from a high pitch down to a sub-low pitch—the *Y*-buzz range) with the size and shape of the lip opening, the space cushion between the side teeth, and the subtle vowel change during the Call.

up without weakening or diluting the Call sensation. Concentrate on directing a clear, strong *R*-colored Call vibration into the upper nasal bone *and even more strongly into the forehead* without throat participation. Let the hard-palate yawn support the experiment.

• Alternate between *R* and *O*, visualizing the word *raw* or *roar*, and concentrate on retaining the intensified Call sensation: *h'LLO-O-O-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-R-O-O-O. Caution:* Avoid reducing facial form, shape, or size until the very end of the Call sustention, and be sure to maintain the yawn.

• Repeat the preceding steps on the sustained Call *aWAY*. Incorporate the *R* while visualizing the word *rare: aWAY-AY-AY-R-R-R-R-AY-AY-AY-R-R-R-R-AY-AY-AY-R-R-R-R-AY-AY-AY. Caution:* Avoid reducing facial form, shape, or size until the very end of the Call sustention. Visualize and feel the yawn!

• Repeat the preceding steps on the sustained Call *b'LOW*. Incorporate the *R* while visualizing the word *row: be-LOW-O-O-O-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-O-O-O-R-R-R-O-O-O. Caution:* Avoid reducing facial form, shape, or size until the very end of the Call sustention. *Remember the hard palate yawn!*

Because the consonant *R* is essentially a backward, throaty sound, this experiment can serve also to direct the *R* resonance toward the bony nozzle, particularly the forehead area (more about the *R* in the next chapter).

EXPLORATION IX: CALL PHRASES

Visualize yourself in a field, in the desert, on the ocean, or on a city street calling to someone some distance away.

• On a comfortable medium-high pitch, do a sustained Call on each word of the following phrases. Mix the yawn feel into your Call. Feel free to end the last Call word in each phrase with a slightly downward inflection, but avoid losing the concentrated Call quality in the process.

• Repeat these phrases on several pitches, including the low ones.

1. **Those old boats don't float!**
2. **You may go.**
3. **Okay, let 'im go!**
4. **All boats in!**
5. **They came home!**
6. **Ahoy there!**
7. **They may take trains late today!**
8. **Fill this kit with bills!**
9. **Let Nell's friends rest well!**
10. **Where were you?**
11. **This is good!**

12. Take 'm away!
13. The good-looking cook took a good look.
14. The dirty old grey boats will float again Thursday!

Because the very lowest pitched Calls, quiet by their very nature, will help lay the foundation for a rich, intensive focus in everyday speech, they must not be neglected; the low to medium pitches in particular will help bring out the desired effects in emphasized and accented words and phrases.

EXPLORATION X: IMPROVISATION IN COMMUNICATION THROUGH TONAL NRG

The object of this exploration is to communicate with another person through pure sound; in this case, the concentrated vibrations of tonal NRG apply to all the vowels.

- Select a partner, and sit facing him or her.
- Conduct an animated discussion or debate, using no verbal content or actual words; your action is to communicate through all the concentrated resonant variations of the *Y*-buzz, +*Y*-buzz, and Call focus. Berate your partner, praise her, shrink from him; exult with your partner; coax, tease, entice, shun, dismiss, inspire, defend, harangue, influence, warn, and so on.

In tonal NRG, you can use all possible combinations of pure sound, from the lowest purring of the *Y*-buzz to the ringing brilliance of the full high Call. Use inflections with these tones exactly as you would with words. Use all the vowels, the whole range of your voice, and every level of intensity. Improvise without losing the tonal concentrate.[15]

EXPLORATION XI: THE ELECTIVE DISTINGUISHING CALL

After you have developed a reasonably high degree of Call skill, work on this exploration using the sentence, "You just don't know what we've been through." Remember to avoid loudness; potency and brilliance, yes, but loudness, no. Be aware then, that low calls (not loud) can be employed in serious or vital conversation.

- Practice this phrase while repeating the steps in Exploration 9, starting on a comfortably high pitch and moving down to low Calls.
- Now select the words you care to emphasize and practice the phrase with a full Call only on these words. Be sure to communicate meaningfully on the Call emphasis. The rest of the sentence should be communicated in natural, normal expressiveness.

[15]In our frame of reference, *concentrate* always means experiencing genuine *Y*-buzz, +*Y*-buzz, and Call tonal focus.

• Now practice the phrase with full Call on one word at a time, beginning with the first word (*You*), then the second (*just*), then the third (*don't*), and so on. The rest of the sentence, each time, is communicated with the usual effective expressiveness. Each time the sentence takes on a different meaning and interpretation.

• Now speak the sentence with strong Call emphasis on every word, and note the buildup of interpretive intensity and the high degree of personal involvement.

• Now express the sentence as you wish, using your own interpretation and emphasis.

EXPERIMENT 16: DILUTING THE CALL CONCENTRATION

This experiment will familiarize you with good tonal NRG that does not constitute a Call but rather the dilute or diffused focus used in eighty to ninety percent of conversational speech and fifty to sixty percent of speech from the stage.

• Begin with a *h'LLO* Call on a comfortable low-medium pitch. On the same breath and while holding on to the richest, most vibrant resonance in the vocal nozzle, very gradually open your lips until you reach the *AH* vowel; then, on the same pitch and breath, gradually reduce the lip opening until you return to your original Call tone.

• Alternate between the low-medium Call and the *AH* vowel on the same pitch. Do it smoothly, gradually, energetically.

• Repeat the preceding steps, starting with an *unTIL* Call that dilutes to the vowel *Ă* (as in *sad*) and then returns to a strong *unTIL* Call supported by a vital yawning facial posture.

• Repeat the preceding steps, starting with an *unFURL* Call that dilutes to the *AH* vowel and then returns to the *unFURL* Call.

Note that you move from concentrated focus to dilute energy, back to concentrated focus, then again to dilute energy without once losing the focus or feel of the resonated current on the hard palate. Remember that the concentrated Call focus and the diffused tones are opposite ends of the spectrum of tonal NRG, and they differ primarily in degree of density or concentration. During this experiment, you should be continuously aware of the complete tonal spread from the fully concentrated tone to the fully diluted tone and back again to the concentrated Call mode.

EXPLORATION XII: THE ALPHABET POEM

• Recite the alphabet poem in your most creatively expressive style, with all the romantic lyricism a Don Juan, Cyrano de Bergerac, or troubadour would put into reading poetry. Play all the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz effects in the al-

phabet and carry them over into the Call refrain (or "chorus line") that follows each line. This refrain should be recited or sung as inventively and as imaginatively as possible. Use all the Call variations for different effects, and play it as you feel it; the following poem format is only a suggestion.

A, B . . . C, D . . .
EY-O, EY-O, EY-O-O, EY-O
E . . . F . . . G . . .
EY-O-O, EY-O, EY-O, EY-O
H, I . . . J, K
EY-O, EY-O, EY-O, EY-O
L, M, N, O-O-O-O, P
EY-O-O-O . . . EY-O-O-O
EY-O, EY-O, EY-O, EY-O
Q . . . R . . . S . . . T
O-EY, O-EY, O-EY, EY-O
U and V
EY-O-O-O-O . . . EY-O-O-O-O
EY-O, EY-O
double U and X, Y . . . Z
EY-O-O-O, EY-Y, EY-YO-O . . . O-EY-Y-Y-O!

The *Q, U, W,* and particularly the *O* lend themselves to perfect Call communicating. Feel free to change the chorus lines as you wish; you may want to interpret the verse lines as intensified or poetic communication while singing out in varied fashion, emotion, or style on the chorus lines.

EXPLORATION XIII: "ROLE" CALLS

• Play each of the following roles with a clear, comfortable, sustained resonant Call. Find your own pitch and your own motivation, and strive to experience a full true Call on every word and syllable, if at all possible.

Train conductor: **All aboard—Tacoma . . . Emporia . . . Tuscahoma . . . Roanoke . . . Daytonsburgh . . . Baltimore . . . Philadelphia . . . Williamsburg . . . Buffalo . . . Dover . . . New Brunswick . . . and all points north—A-a-a-all abo-o-o-o-o-o-a-rd!**

Street vendor: **Apple . . . Potato . . . Jumbo Potatoes . . . Watermelon . . . (*Pronounced "Epaw . . . Pohtehtoh . . . Wawtahmelohn . . .*")**

Ship's captain: Ahoy there Marco Polo. Can we help you?

Construction worker: Okay, Joe . . . let 'er go-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! Okay, Bill . . . take 'em away-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay!

Ship's lookout: Ship ahoy! Four points off starboard bow!

Drill sergeant: Company halt! About face! Present arms! Parade rest!

Messenger at arms: (*Over the PA system*) Now hear this! . . . Marlow, Radioman third class . . . Report to the brig—on the double!

Fight announcer: Ladies and gentlemen . . . presenting the feature bout of the evening . . . in this corner, weighing in at two hundred and four pounds, from Puerto Rico, Antonio Morello!

Newspaper hawker: Extra, extra (*Pronounced "Wuxtra, wuxtra"*) Read all about it—War Declared! Get your paper—wad'ya read? Extra, extra!

Mother: (*Calling to her children*) Tracy, Erica, Laura, dinner's ready—last one home does the dishes.

Outraged person: Don't you ever dare do that to me again!

Foreman: Okay, down there, let's go! Get your big fat butts movin' and load that timber — keep 'em rollin'!

Fan: Hold that line! . . . Hold that line! . . . We want a touchdown! We want a touchdown!

Stage manager: Places everybody! . . . Let's go . . . Places!

• After you have developed and achieved Call quality on these lines, do them again and extend the experience with improvised words of your own choosing so that you can feel your own spontaneous use of the Call timbre.

Maintain the tonal concentration on words like *we* and *you* in the ship's-captain Call. As you explore, shift from the full high-pitched Call to a medium pitch, to a low pitch, to a *Y*-buzz, and finally back to the high-pitched Call. By this time the yawn feel should be an instinctive familiar event and function as an organic instruction for the Call experience.

EXPLORATION XIV: READING SELECTIONS

• Read the following passages with imagination and freedom. On the words of your choice, use the most concentrated Call focus that is compatible with an intelligent and meaningful handling of the text.

No, my friends, that will never be the verdict of our people. This nation will always be able to legislate for its own people on every question without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation on earth.

If we be conquered, let men conquer us, and not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers have in their own land beaten, bobbed, and thumped. Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, bold yeomen! Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head! Spur your proud horses forward, and ride in blood.

——From William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

If you say just one more word, so help me, I'll destroy you! . . . You get it through your head, we don't want you around here—we don't want you *or* your lousy favors—we want you to take off and stay the hell away!

Don't be careful, and don't be careless. With what you know now, you can afford to be *carefree.* Use the Calls to reflect a meaning that comes from inside you, not from the sound of the word.

EXPLORATION XV: THE CALL BECOMES SINGING

- Call "water boy" as a short command.
- Call "water boy" as a command, but sustain it longer, as if with earnest concern.
- Call "water boy" as a command, and sustain it longer, as if with comfortable and pleasant anticipation and therefore with greater melody.
- Call "water boy" with the melody of a traditional folksong; improvise with it spontaneously.

Singing is sustained speaking. Anytime you voice a well-executed Call and sustain it on various pitches, you are singing—you are making beautiful, artistic tones. Of course, a professional singer needs more advanced training for the singing voice as well as study in related subjects, but with a well-controlled Call and Y-buzz technique you can achieve many vocal effects and nuances with your singing voice that many trained singers find difficult.

EXPERIMENT 17: BEYOND THE CALL: INTO THE MALE UPPER REGISTER OF COVERED TONES AND THE SOFT-PALATE YAWN

A few words regarding the term "registers": Although the human singing voice must be considered one single, noncompartmentalized musical instrument, singing teachers have traditionally used the term "vocal registers" when referring to "chest tones," "head tones," "upper register," "middle register," "lower register," and so on. The male voice, for example, may be considered as spanning three registers: the "chest voice" (or open voice Call tones), the "head voice" (or covered tones), and the "falsetto voice" (or soprano-sounding tones); while the female voice may be considered as spanning the "chest voice" (or contralto tones), the "head voice" (or soprano tones), and the "coloratura voice" (or ultrahigh pitches that seem to come from the pharynx and resonate in the cranial bone). Think of these registers as the different strings on a violin—the violin being a single musical instrument that spans four tonal pitch and quality levels. The human voice can be broken down into three pitch and quality levels, or registers. In the male voice, the Call (hard-palate tones) covers the first register, then shifts or slides into the covered voice (shifts from the hard-palate tones and yawn to include the soft-palate tones and yawn), and then clicks or slides into the falsetto voice register, which can be produced either with hard-palate or soft-palate placement. In the female voice, the Call serves and supports both the chest *and* the head registers (as they shift and slide *into* and *with* each other) before clicking into the ultrahigh-pitched harmonic coloratura register. While not all sopranos (including lyric sopranos) develop the skills and use of the coloratura register and not all tenors (including lyric tenors) develop the skills and use of the falsetto register, those so-called registers do need to be considered and addressed. Singer-artists know, or should know, that the skills and use just mentioned demand that the human voice be creatively experienced as *one single musical instrument* sliding and shifting smoothly, esthetically, and beautifully across and through three vocal interval and quality spans.

- Shifting or sliding from the Call tones into the male covered tones is not easy to describe on paper—one needs to see and hear the action to properly and effectively register the experience. However, I will do my best to present it here in as simple a manner as is possible: Let us return to the "magic of the yawn" (Experiment 8). Starting with a full-body muscle yawn plus a vocalized hard-palate yawn, and while maintaining a genuine yawn intensity and sirening to some higher pitches, gradually spread the yawn action to cover the entire roof of the mouth including all of the soft palate and part of the pharynx. Did your face instinctively take on the expression of ecstasy often visible in Gospel singers? Did your voice naturally move into the highest pitches with impunity? If that is what happened, then you successfully and naturally shifted into your covered register and possibly into a soft-palate falsetto range.

• Now start with a middle pitch call on *h'LLO* and tune in your total awareness to the hard-palate yawn. Then gradually slide your call to several higher pitches while alerting yourself to the need and intent to smoothly and energetically spread that yawn tone to a larger area of the palate until it includes and embraces the entire soft palate and uvula.[16] In this process, the Call modifies somewhat as it transforms itself into a covered tone quality that feels as if it extends and expands the entire palate but continues soaring brilliantly through the nose, forehead, and skull.

• After thoroughly exploring the *h'LLO* Call, repeat the preceding steps with the Calls *aWAY, unTIL, unEARTH,* and *b'WARE.*

As a singer, I can report to you that the physical training and development of the singing voice is really not as complicated as is training and developing the full-range speaking voice (how we use it creatively and how we apply it artistically in our professional exploits is, of course, another consideration). Serious training of the singing voice is in its own way, however, a more patience-driven, specifically detailed, and longer-term endeavor.

EXPLORATION XVI: VENDOR'S CALLS—AN ACTOR'S EXPLORATION AND IMPROVISATION FOR MODERN TROUBADOURS

Vendors have been calling, selling, singing, and even dancing through the ages, and (unless high tech devours this creativity) folklore and a love of history will continue this tradition. Poets and composers have been enriched by this "people's lore," and festivals, Renaissance fairs, theatre games, actors, and singers keep it alive. The following "improv" is designed for modern troubadours to explore creatively from old-fashioned vendor calling and old-fashioned song-and-dance folklore to contemporary song-and-dance folklore.

• It's sunrise, several vendors are setting up their merchandise carts while other vendors move their carts and wheelbarrows about. They're getting ready to sell! Their merchandise is first-rate! They feel great! They sell watermelon, strawberries, old clothes, flowers, fresh fish, cockles 'n mussels, and so on. As one of the vendors, warm up your voice with various Calls—*h'LLO, aWAY, unTIL, unEARTH, it'sGOOD, braVO, oLEY, OK (OH-KEY).* Utilize the *Y*-buzz, +*Y*-buzz, and sundry other melodic-rhythmic modes of expressivity.

• People are arriving and gathering, and the vendors are calling their wares. Your objective is to attract customers through your healthy, pleasurable clarion Calls—the best voices sell the most goods!

[16]*Uvula:* the small, fleshy conical lobe projecting downward from the middle of the soft palate.

"Wawtahmello-ohn—it's fresh, it's goo-ood, it's wo-onndah-fu-ul!"

"Re-e-d Rose-e-s, Yellow-ow Roses, Blue Roses, Flowers Galo-o-ore!"

"Flores para los Muertos! Flores para los Muerto-o-s!"

"O-o-ld Clo-o-othes! Only the Rich have wo-orn them!"

"Straw-awberry-eys! Delicious, delectable Straw-aw-berry-ey-eys!"

"Cockles 'n mussels, alive, alive-O-O-O!"

• It's been a great day for selling. You're almost sold out! Your Calls transform into humorous little tunes that instinctively become singing, rhythmic, short melodic Calls. You and the rest of the vendors are enjoying yourselves; your bodies are wafting and waving, weaving and beckoning! You really don't care if the last watermelon or strawberry or flower goes. Why not bring it home? Your singing takes on the fun and joy of spontaneous folk songs; it is folklore energy in progress—a folk song is born!

• Why not add a step or two while you're singing and calling—but singing and calling in style, in verve, in mirth, in play, in popular creativity. Your whole body dances, sings, and calls with spirit, radiance, and heartiness; sometimes your body rhythms are percussive, sometimes smooth, sometimes syncopated. You repeat the short melodies and vary them each time. You all know what's happening. It's raw, old-fashioned troubadourish, personal culture—spontaneous creativity that will someday inspire a modern poet, composer, director, or performer.

Be aware that the Call is the common denominator in speech and singing, and that once learned, the vendor's Call leads into singing just as you will find in the next chapter that *"the trinity of vocal NRGs"* leads to the best speaking voice.

BRIDGE

By this time, the "yawn dynamic" should be functioning as an enduring and permanent "synergy" factor for all of your tonal NRG experiencing. I have been using terms like "body and facial[17] muscle yawn" (Figure 6-10) and "vocal (Call) yawn" (Figure 6-11) synonymously with "forward facial posture" (Figure 6-12). There is indeed an organic sibling relationship between these three concepts, though one may be more instinctively familiar than the other for different individuals. The Yawn, having served us here as the primary "life support" for tonal NRG and the Call in particular, now serves as a direct bridge to the next chapter, "The Dynamics of Structural

[17]The facial muscle yawn is part of the body muscle yawn.

NRG: The Music of the Vowels," where the *yawn-energized, flexible forward facial posture* becomes the prime factor in our study of vowels in our speech, our acting, and our everyday speaking personality.

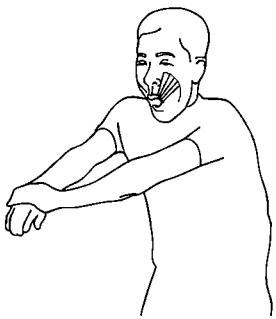


Figure 6-10 Body and Facial Muscle Yawn

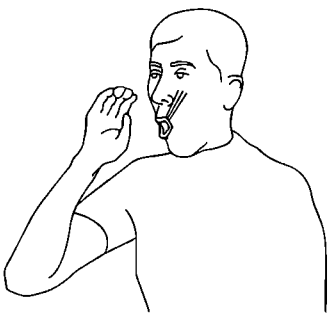


Figure 6-11 Vocal (Call) Yawn

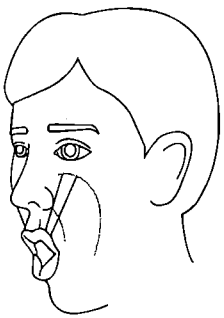


Figure 6-12 Forward Facial Posture

CHAPTER 7

The Dynamics of Structural NRG: The Music of the Vowels

The bridge taking us from tonal NRG and landing us in structural NRG territory continues to be the forward facial yawn. Whether it relates to muscle yawning in body work (Figure 7-1), the hard-palate Call yawn (Figure 7-2), or the forward facial posture in speech work (Figure 7-3), the yawn "structure" and substance constitute a valid and flexible support system for body, voice, and speech training.

Structural NRG refers to the mold, shape, and size of the human voice and speech instrument and its sound-box structure. The first step in this chapter is to mold and shape the instrument; to establish the form and function of the oral cavity and to develop the optimal facial posture. The term structural NRG, or structural action, means three things: (1) the muscle activities in the oral cavity, cheeks, jaw, and lips that control the sound box; (2) the *kinesthetic* action of perceiving these muscle activities

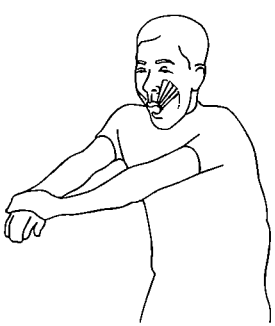


Figure 7-1
Forward Muscle Yawn

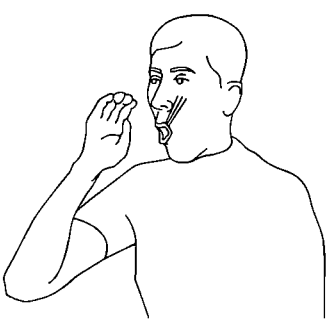


Figure 7-2
Call Yawn

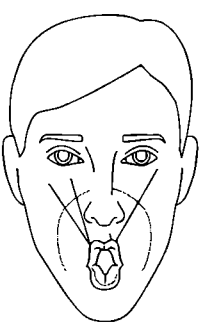


Figure 7-3
Forward Facial Posture with a "Reverse-Megaphone Shape"

and controlling them through sensory recall; and (3) the *kinesensic* application of these concepts to our communicating behavior and personality both onstage and offstage.

The Structural NRG Discovery

Common usage tells us that (1) when we open our mouth fully to say *AH* and then very slowly alter the sound until reaching the vowel *OO*, we automatically feel our teeth gradually coming together while the lips close and (2) by the time the lips reach their smallest opening, our oral cavity is also greatly reduced. This need not be the case.

We all know that the larger the sound box, the fuller, richer, and warmer are the tone and quality emanating from the instrument—the child's violin, for example, sounds quite tinny when compared to the mature violin; and the viola has a deeper tonal quality than the violin. Thus, it makes no sense to use an almost closed and crowded oral sound box in speech and voice. To do so only leads to poor vocal tone, skewed speech pronunciation, teeth gritting, and poor jaw functioning. If this cavity reduction from the *AH* to *OO* vowel were really necessary, the entire theory of structural action would be negated. But a simple experiment will demonstrate that you can and should maintain the cavity size unchanged while sounding all of the ensuing structural vowels—and that you can consistently maintain a sensible and optimal space capacity in the oral-vocal sound box.

EXPERIMENT 1: FEELING THE REVERSE MEGAPHONE

Before we start this experiment, please note that a slice of cork should *never* be used for pronunciation or diction practice; it is used in this experiment merely as a monitoring device to discover and be aware of spatial potential in the vocal sound box.

- Place a slice of cork, ¼ inch thick and approximately 1 inch in diameter, between the upper and lower side teeth (not too far back) on either the right or left side of your mouth (Figure 7-4).
- With a large lip opening, sound the vowel *AH* and gradually reduce the opening until you come to vowel *OO*. Concentrate on feeling the optimal action of the cheek and lip muscles that creates the spatial potential in the vocal sound box. You will find that it is not necessary to bite down on the cork.
- Make the action easier by inducing a mild, comfortable yawn sensation in your cheek and lip muscles as you complete the experiment.

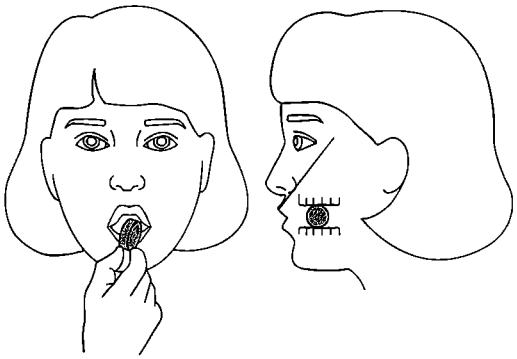


Figure 7-4 Insertion and Position of Cork

You have probably discovered that you can move from the largest to the smallest lip opening while pronouncing an entire series of vowels (*AH, Ŏ, AW, Ō, OO*), without once reducing the space between your teeth and without reducing the overall oral cavity. You have probably also discovered that when you added the yawn energy, you almost reflexively assumed a facial-vocal posture of a reverse-megaphone structural shape, with your lips representing the smaller end. I will be referring to the "inverted," or "reverse-megaphone" shape synonymously with "forward facial posture" and "forward call position" (Figure 7-5). Experiment with a flexible forward facial posture and turn it into a future familiar event.

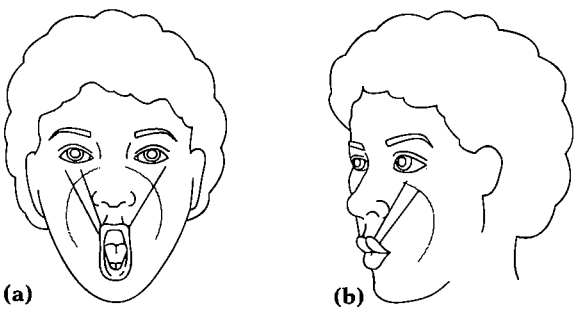


Figure 7-5 Reverse-Megaphone Forward Facial Posture
(a) Large mouth opening. *(b)* Small lip opening.

Figure 7-6 Two-Finger Cushion of Space

• Now instead of using a cork, gently place the tips of your third and fourth fingers on the outside of one cheek between the side teeth, about ¼ inch from your lips (Figure 7-6).

• Remind yourself of the space potential available, and begin with a full, large mouth opening plus a relaxing and energizing yawn sensation. Reduce the lip opening gradually enough to recognize the series of vowels being formed as the size and shape of your lip opening changes while moving from *AH* to *OO*. Do this without biting down on your fingers.

• Induce a yawn sensation in the cheek and lip muscles to help maintain a comfortable two-finger cushion of space.

If you watch yourself in the mirror as you do this action, you will observe that the muscles within the triangular area of the cheeks—along with the yawn component—control the experiment. There are four muscles on either side of the face: one beginning at the nasal bone just under the eye, one starting from directly under the eye, and two originating at the cheekbone (Figure 7-7). All of these muscles converge just above the gum ridge and insert bilaterally into the upper portion of the rounded lip muscle. When you extend or elongate these bilateral muscles and add a yawn-felt facial posture, you can easily maintain the maximum space within the oral cavity while reducing the rounded lips to their smallest opening. Be aware that the yawn feel is part of the natural familiar event to teach yourself the structural NRG facial posture. Observe, too, that if you visualize (1) a line from the cheekbone under the eye to the upper lip, (2) a small oval for the lip opening, and (3) a line from the lower lip to the jawbone, you have created an image of the inverted-megaphone shape. Use this image to achieve a positive facial posture while exploring structural NRG.

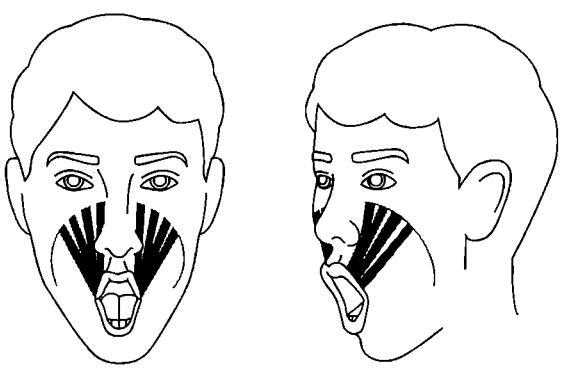


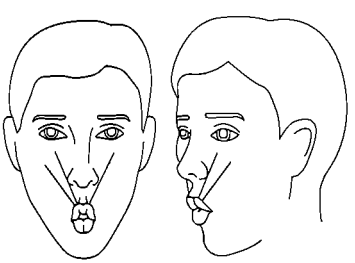
Figure 7-7 Converging Patches of Muscle That Help Form the Inverted-Megaphone Shape

In doing this experiment, avoid the conscious downward pulling of the jaw or facial muscles. Instead, employ a behavioral image to exclusively explore the diagonal forward elasticity of the cheek and upper-lip muscle energy in coordination with a spacious and spirited natural yawn. You will discover that the cheek muscles (see Figure 7-7) cannot be fully extended (diagonally and forward) without optimal space between the side teeth and the concurrent free lowering of the jaw, hence the fascinating discovery that the "yawn-fed" extension of the maxillary[1] muscles automatically and instinctively provides a cause-and-effect freeing of the jaw; the cheek muscle (and the space) action is the "cause," and the equilibrated lowering of the mandible (jaw) is the answering "effect." This cause-and-effect exploring becomes the key toward eliminating tightness, pressure, fixation, or soreness in the throat, jaw, or lips; it is also extremely important in TMJ therapy.[2]

The Structural Vowels

In addition to the secondary benefits to be gained from structural-vowel exploration, its primary purpose in voice and speech work is the instinctive production of natural, proper vowels and the ongoing reinforcement of fine, creative vocal quality to empower all the vowels.

The structural NRG vowels will be designated by numbers that correspond logically to the respective size of the lip opening (the lower the number, the smaller the opening). A diphthong[3] will be designated by a combination of symbols—mostly numerical symbols. As you form these vowels, experiment and explore with a full reverse-megaphone posture supported by the yawn feel and continue to visualize and accommodate a two-finger space between your teeth; keep the fleshy part of your lips cushiony and "flipable." *Discover* the vowels in the structural NRG; don't anticipate them.



#1 *ŌŌ*

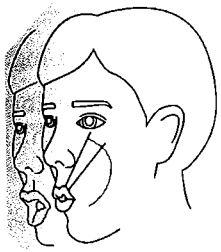
#1 *ŌŌ* *ooze, crude*

FORM: The smallest rounded lip opening and a full forward facial posture with optimal space between the side teeth.

FEEL: Softly protruding unpursed lips.

Note: To produce this *ŌŌ* vowel, reduce your lips for the #1 vowel and then reduce them still further, as if you were forming a *W* to complete the sound.

[1] *Maxillary:* zygomatic and levator cheek muscles; the upper jaw.
[2] *TMJ:* temporomandibular joint.
[3] *Diphthong:* a vowel made up of two sounds; pronounced "diff-thong."



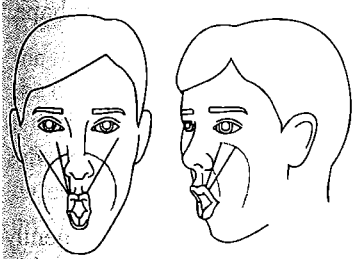
#21 Ō

#21 *Ō* ode, b*oa*t (diphthong)

FORM: A #2 lip opening *continuing* through a #1 lip opening.

FEEL: A full reverse-megaphone shape with a lip opening slightly smaller than #3 and reducing further to a #1 as you sound the vowel (this diphthong is referred to as "twenty-one" not "two-one").

Note: Ordinarily, this lip opening would be called #2—a legitimate sound in dozens of foreign languages; but in American English, this vowel ends with a second #1 sound and therefore becomes a diphthong. (Some hold that the *O* in *OBEY* is not a diphthong; I feel that electronic measuring devices would indicate the presence of a slight #1 vowel. Nevertheless, those who feel they use the shortened *O* should continue doing so, accompanied, however, by excellent structural facial posture.)[4]

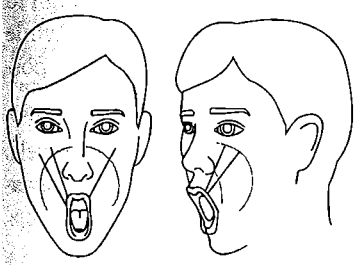


#3 AW

#3 *AW* all, *law*

FORM: A round lip opening midway in size between a #5 and a #1.

FEEL: Optimal space between the teeth, complete cheek-muscle-yawn extension, and a lip opening just large enough to permit easy passage of the vertically positioned thumb.



#4 Ŏ

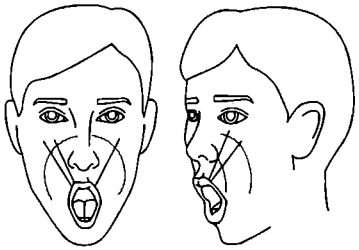
#4 *Ŏ* odd, y*o*nder

FORM: An oval lip opening subtly smaller than a #5 that assumes a somewhat rectangular shape at the end of the vowel sound.

FEEL: An optimal forward facial posture with a full inverted-megaphone shape.

Note: Remember that the lip opening changes slightly from an oval to a slightly rectangular shape.

[4]We certainly can be flexible regarding secondary endings of diphthongs; my first requirement, always, is to avoid even the faintest suggestion of distortion. However, my strongest priority is to actively use the trinity of vocal NRGs (that is, consonant, tonal, and structural NRG); by doing so, not only distortion but also laziness and neglect vanish.

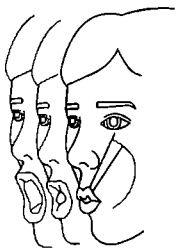


#5 *AH*

#5 *AH* father

FORM: The largest oval lip opening.

FEEL: The most comfortable forward-feeling posture compatible with this opening.

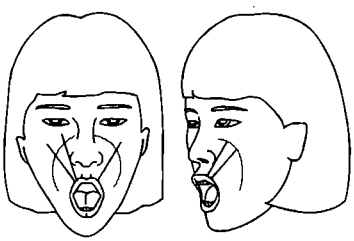


#51 *OW*

#51 *OW ou*nce, *do*wn (diphthong)

FORM: The largest lip opening (#5) moving to the smallest lip opening (#1).

FEEL: Full check and lip action for the largest lip opening and a *rapid* reduction to the smallest lip opening while maintaining a full inverted-megaphone shape.



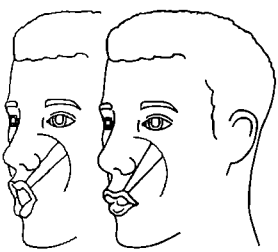
#6 *Ă*

#6 *Ă a*dd, *cla*ss, *a*sk

FORM: The #5 lip shape with the lips slightly widened to an elliptical shape.

FEEL: The tongue tip pressed gently against the lower teeth as the tongue widens a bit and the lips widen just enough to accommodate the widened tongue while maintaining a relaxed forward facial posture.

The preceding seven sounds are the basic structural-NRG vowels. There are two additional diphthongs that start with strong structural vowels and finish with the mildest taste of the *Y* sound.

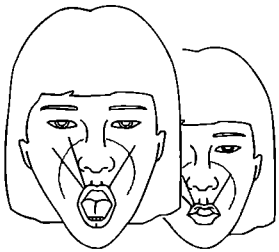


#3*y* *OI*

#3*y* *OI oi*l, *toy*s (diphthong)

FORM: The #3 vowel followed by a slight, gentle *Y* sensation.

FEEL: The #3 lip opening followed by a short, slight resonance in the hard palate and nose as the sound ends with the mildest taste of the *Y*-buzz; the #3 vowel is the dominant element.



#6y *Ī*

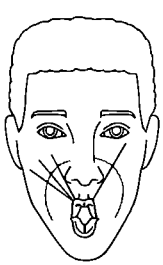
#6y *Ī* *i*sle, *k*ind (diphthong)

FORM: The #6 vowel followed by a soft, gentle *Y* feel.

FEEL: The #6 tongue placement, with the tip pressing the lower teeth as the rest of the tongue widens laterally.

Note: This may seem difficult at first, because this diphthong is often formed with the #5 vowel. But as you master the #6 tongue position, you will find yourself using a subtly modified #6 vowel, which is substantially different from the #5 *AH* vowel. In this diphthong, the #6 vowel is the dominant element.

The last structurally related vowel is the ~~R~~-derivative. As the name implies, the ~~R~~-derivative is a vowel that derives from the consonant *R* and retains part of the color and placement of the *R*. The relationship between vowel and consonant is a subtle one. The ~~R~~-derivative vowel emerges when the firm contact between the undersides of the tongue and the insides of the upper teeth (the necessary tongue position for a legitimate consonant *R*) is loosened to the point where the trombone-like vibration of the *R* is weakened or lost and the resulting vowel sound moves freely through the mouth without friction—as in *early, absurd, divert, worth, sir, journal,* and *myrtle.* Although the ~~R~~-derivative vowel has many different spellings, its pronunciation is always the same and is always followed by the *R* itself. To form the ~~R~~-derivative, begin with a clear consonant *R,* as in *read,* and sustain it. Then form the full inverted-megaphone shape with the *lip opening* as close to the #3 vowel as possible. Continue the sound and *think* the *R,* but slip the tip of your tongue down to the inside of your lower teeth, which will loosen the tongue contact from the side teeth. You should now have the sound of the ~~R~~-derivative, which retains the #3 vowel's shape and form and might be considered a structural cousin to the #3 vowel. The slash through the *R* identifies the ~~R~~-derivative structural vowel.



~~R~~ #3$_r$

~~R~~ #3$_r$ *e*arly, *b*ird

FORM: A consonant *R* with a disengaged tongue position plus the full #3 structural vowel.

FEEL: A full inverted-megaphone #3 lip opening, with a rounded, hollowed back of the tongue positioned close to the upper back teeth.

Exploring Structural NRG

As you work through the following experiments, lightly place your third and fourth fingers on the outside of your cheek and between the side teeth to ensure the maintenance of optimal space. With the possible exception of the *W* flute, do not attempt to impose the full facial posture on consonants. In the following word lists and sentences, test each word with optimal lip and facial posture.

EXPERIMENT 2: WOO . . . WOE . . . WAR . . . WAH . . . WOW

This is an experiment to develop flexible lip movement while maintaining the full inverted-megaphone posture; the *W* flute, due to its particular vowel-like character, is the only consonant that can exercise the lip muscle in this manner.

- Prepare for the experiment by forming the yawnful facial posture with the lips in the #1 position.
- Keep a two-finger space between your side teeth. If necessary, use a cork, but use it in *this experiment only,* because no consonant sound is involved.
- Repeat each of the words—*woo, woe, war, wah, wow*—at least ten times in unbroken rhythm; then again as spontaneously as possible.

In repeating *woo, woe,* or *wow,* make certain that each final #1 lip position becomes the beginning of the very next *W.* Work with this basic experiment until you feel reasonably comfortable. Make certain your jaw does not jiggle up and down; know that if your cheek muscles are energized by the forward yawn your jaw will not tire, lock, or tighten.

EXPERIMENT 3: WORD LISTS FOR STRUCTURAL PERCEPTION

Consider the word lists in the pages that follow as body movement training in facial flexibility and facility, not as diction or pronunciation exercises. The *structural* vowels, which are italicized (for both the monosyllable and multisyllable words), take the full inverted-megaphone facial posture. Naturally, you will always reduce the space between your side teeth to comfortably accommodate consonants and unstressed syllables.

- Using the full inverted-megaphone shape, experiment with each column of words from top to bottom.
- Then, with deliberate tempo and inflection, experience the words across the pages, from #1 to #6y. Note the gradual enlargement of the lip opening

while the rest of the megaphone shape remains the same. In working across the pages, you might pause after the first five smaller lip-opening vowels, take a breath, and then do the second five larger lip-opening vowels. Of course, doing them all confidently and vitally in one breath is an excellent creative breathing exploration.

- In the Additional Exploration of NRG Vowels, Diphthongs, and the R-Derivative Vowel list you may explore the four different groupings separately.
- Be aware that while you use your jaw flexibly to accommodate consonants, it will always, in this experiment, retain optimal space between the side teeth to *undistortedly* fully accommodate all the vowels.

Note: Every now and then (especially in the sentences in the subsequent explorations and particularly if you are a nonnative English speaker) doubt may arise as to an acceptable pronunciation. Is the first syllable in *value* a #5? a #6? a #4? or a #3? Is the first syllable in *murky* a #1? an R? The simple but very effective answer is to formally and specifically test each and every one of the preceding vowels with *optimal* structural NRG. The one that sounds best to you will be, in all probability, the proper one, because the well-formed "wrong" structural vowel will certainly stand out as exaggerated. So do your own testing—and your own choosing.

Remember to maintain the full forward facial posture throughout the sounding of the vowel, even when your voice inflects up or down and even at the moment you terminate the vowel. This is particularly important while working with #1, #21, and #51. In pronouncing the #51 vowel, do not fall into the common trap of sounding a #61; the #6 is not as far forward as the #5, and if used in the #51 diphthong, it usually flattens and nasalizes this otherwise bright sound and is therefore not preferred.

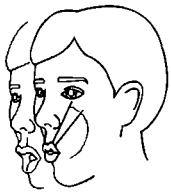
In multisyllabic words, the structural vowel is italicized, but be sure you maintain the constant forward posture throughout all syllables. And by the way, keep the inverted-megaphone shape even during the silent pause as you move from word to word. In fact, a slight space cushion between your side teeth (with the face seemingly ready to hum a quiet, gentle, low-pitched *Y*-buzz) not only helps keep the jaw loose and free, but is an excellent neutral position for the face at rest as well as an important part of dental therapy, especially when it relates to teeth gritting and other TMJ conditions.

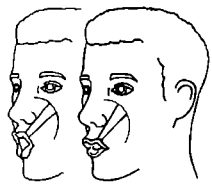
EXPLORATION I: STRUCTURAL PERCEPTION DRILL

The following sentences involve primarily structural NRG words. In the first four sentences, the structural vowels are italicized and given their numerical symbols. For additional practice, assign the correct number to each structural vowel in the remaining sentences. To do this properly, do not rely on the boxed word lists or on memory; *prove each one physically.* Do not anticipate—discover the vowels through a full forward facial posture.*

*This Exploration continues on page 174.

WORDS CONTAINING STRUCTURAL NRG VOWELS*



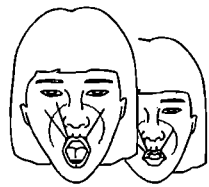

#1	#21	#3	#3y	#R(3r)*
you	*o*ld	*a*ll	*oi*ntment	*ea*rn
w*oo*	w*oe*	w*a*lk	b*oy*s	n*u*rse
c*oo*l	c*oa*l	c*a*ll	c*oi*l	c*u*rse
h*u*mor	l*ow*	l*o*rds	j*oi*nt	b*i*rd
b*eau*tiful	d*o*n't	f*aw*n	ch*oi*ce	w*o*rse
m*oo*n	m*oa*n	m*ou*rn	m*oi*st	m*u*rky
n*ew*	st*o*nes	c*au*ght	j*oy*ful	h*ea*rd
cr*u*el	m*o*ment	b*ou*ght	empl*oy*	f*u*rry
d*oo*m	d*o*me	d*o*rm	d*oi*ly	d*i*rndl
m*o*ve	expl*o*de	dr*aw*ers	destr*oy*	m*u*rder
t*wo*	*o*ver	c*o*rn	m*oi*sture	conv*e*rt
n*ew*s	n*o*se	gn*aw*s	n*oi*sy	n*e*rvous
n*eu*tral	sp*o*ke	m*o*rtal	av*oi*d	b*u*rn
wh*o*	n*o*ble	c*a*lling	p*oi*son	M*y*rtle

These ten structural NRG vowels and diphthongs are so called because they are distinguished by the fact that they are produced perfectly with full forward facial posture; all the other vowels and all consonants also benefit

* Please remember that the *R*-derivative vowel can be done with a full reverse-megaphone shape using a lip opening like a #3 vowel. The *R*-derivative vowel is related to the structural category through its form and shape; it is related to the *R* consonant through its sound.



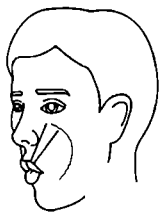


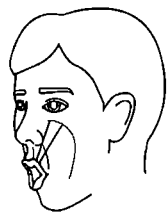


#4	**#5**	**#51**	**#6**	**#6y**
*o*dd	*a*lms	*ou*nce	*a*dd	*I*'d
G*o*d	*a*rm	cr*ow*n	*a*sk	t*ie*d
c*o*lumn	C*a*rl	c*ow*l	c*a*nned	k*i*nd
c*o*l*o*ssus	l*a*rge	b*ow*	h*a*nd	t*i*mes
bl*o*cks	c*a*rd	h*ou*rs	dem*a*nd	wh*y*
m*o*nster	M*a*rne	m*ou*nt	m*a*n	m*i*ne
h*o*liday	d*a*rling	h*ou*se	c*a*t	w*i*ld
f*o*llow	h*a*rd	pr*ou*d	r*a*ns*a*ck	fl*y*
d*o*mino	d*a*rn	d*ow*n	D*a*n	del*i*ght
w*a*tch	sh*a*rp	w*ow*	l*a*d	enq*ui*re
wh*a*t	f*a*rther	th*ou*	l*a*st	l*ie*
n*o*stril	gn*a*rl	n*ow*	n*a*sty	N*i*le
w*a*nt	f*a*ther	m*ou*se	f*a*shion	sk*y*
s*o*rrow	b*a*rred	dev*ou*r	*a*fter	m*i*nd

from maintaining an *optimal* forward facial posture. These structural NRG vowels are categorized by pronunciation choices compatible with good current usage. If your usage differs, simply give your own vowel choice full structural NRG.

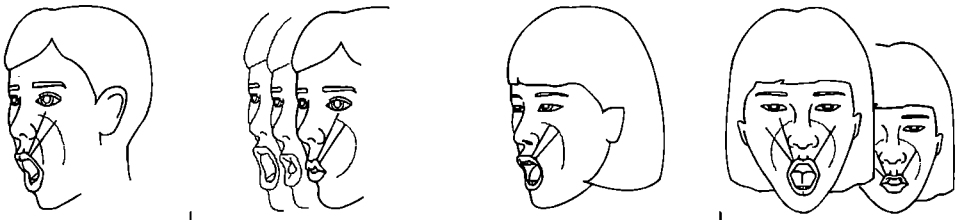
ADDITIONAL EXPLORATION OF STRUCTURAL NRG VOWELS, DIPHTHONGS, AND THE *R*-DERIVATIVE VOWEL





#1	#Y1*	#3	#3y	#R(3r)
c*oo*t	c*u*te	*a*ll	*oi*l	*ea*rl
d*o*	d*u*ty	b*o*red	b*oi*led	b*i*rd
d*oo*m	d*u*el	c*a*ll	c*oi*l	c*u*rl
f*oo*d	f*eu*d	f*a*ll	f*oi*l	f*u*rl
n*oo*dle	n*eu*tral	qu*a*rt	qu*oi*t	qu*i*rk
m*oo*d	val*ue*	j*au*nt	j*oi*nt	adj*ou*rned
n*oo*se	n*ew*s	l*a*wn	l*oi*n	l*ea*rn
rec*ou*p	c*u*pid	m*a*w	m*oi*st	m*u*rder
st*oo*p	st*u*pid	m*ou*rn	Des M*oi*nes	M*y*rna
c*oo*l	c*ue*	p*au*sed	p*oi*sed	p*u*rsed
d*o*	d*ue*	v*au*lt	av*oi*d	av*e*rred
n*oo*n	pn*eu*monia	exp*o*rt	expl*oi*t	exp*e*rt
m*oo*t	m*u*te	c*o*rn	c*oi*ned	k*e*rnal
l*oo*t	l*u*te	Ch*au*cer	ch*oi*cer	ch*i*rped
st*oo*l	st*ew*ard	n*au*sea	n*oi*sier	n*u*rsing
c*ou*pon	c*u*p*u*la	d*aw*n	d*oi*ly	d*i*rndl

* When the #1 structural vowel is spelled with the letters u, ue, eu, ew, ieu, it is usually preceded by a *Y* sound; we will refer to this combination as *Y*1.



#5	#51	#6	#6y
*a*re	*ou*rs	*A*l	*ai*sle
*a*rms	*ou*nces	*a*dd	*I*'d
b*a*rgain	b*ou*nd	m*a*ss	m*i*ce
d*a*rling	h*ou*se	fl*a*tter	fl*i*ghty
d*a*rn	c*ow*ard	f*a*nt*a*stic	f*i*n*i*te
g*a*rden	f*ou*l	j*a*b	j*i*be
h*ea*rt	fr*ow*n	l*a*nd	l*i*ned
p*a*rk	fl*ow*er	p*a*llid	*ey*elid
f*a*ther	m*ou*se	v*a*lue	v*i*olin
f*a*rther	cr*ow*d	l*a*ck	l*i*ke
p*a*rdon	l*ou*sy	cr*a*ss	cr*ie*s
m*a*rch	l*ou*d	f*a*d	confide
st*a*r	n*ou*n	Ch*a*d	ch*i*de
st*a*rving	p*ou*t	n*a*sty	n*i*cety
b*a*rred	dev*ou*ring	Del*a*ncey	del*i*ghtful
h*a*rd	pr*ou*d	c*a*nned	k*i*nd

(Exploration I, continued from page 169)

• Explore each sentence with an optimal inverted-megaphone posture. To accommodate and justify full facial posture, be a bit more emphatic and pay close attention to your delivery of these sentences; personal involvement, intensity, and expressiveness are essential here—as well as during prerehearsal exploring.

• Once you have gained facility in speaking the sentences comfortably and confidently with the formal megaphone shape, repeat them a bit more rapidly, but retain your facial-posture elasticity.

• For effective normal speech, experiment speaking the sentences more rapidly with a slight easing of the full megaphone form.

• For confidential, intimate speech, further reduce the reverse-megaphone size without destroying its basic shape. If your lips and cheek muscles retract tightly backward, you will have lost your desirable facial posture.

Note: Smiling, laughing, humming, or crooning do *not* involve fixed, regressive facial muscular activity; these relaxer-energizers engage a "spirit" energy in and around the eyes that flexibly lights up and radiates all the nerves and muscles of the face. As such, they cannot possibly be considered as *backward* actions.

1. The $\overset{21}{o}$ld $\overset{6}{a}$nd $\overset{3}{f}$or$\overset{3}{l}$orn tr$\overset{6}{a}$veler f$\overset{1}{oo}$lishly f$\overset{4}{o}$ll$\overset{21}{o}$wed the f$\overset{3}{o}$ur n$\overset{3y}{oi}$sy sm$\overset{3}{a}$ll children acr$\overset{3}{o}$ss the l$\overset{6}{a}$st t$\overset{1}{w}$o str$\overset{3}{o}$ngly g$\overset{5}{ua}$rded, w$\overset{3}{a}$r-t$\overset{3}{o}$rn b$\overset{3}{o}$rders.
2. Please d$\overset{21}{o}$n't make l$\overset{3}{o}$ng distance c$\overset{3}{a}$lls $\overset{4}{o}$n th$\overset{21}{o}$se ph$\overset{21}{o}$nes.
3. J$\overset{21}{o}$e R$\overset{4}{o}$bert's p$\overset{51}{o}$werful ch$\overset{21}{au}$ffeur sc$\overset{21}{o}$lded the shr$\overset{1}{e}$wd P$\overset{3}{au}$l J$\overset{21}{o}$nes.
4. $\overset{4}{O}$n T$\overset{1}{ue}$sday m$\overset{3}{o}$rning's c$\overset{3}{a}$llb$\overset{3}{oa}$rd, the st$\overset{1}{u}$dents s$\overset{3}{a}$w the f$\overset{4}{o}$ll$\overset{21}{o}$wing n$\overset{21}{o}$tice: "N$\overset{21}{o}$ m$\overset{3}{o}$re r$\overset{21}{o}$les $\overset{3}{o}$r p$\overset{5}{a}$rts f$\overset{3}{o}$r t$\overset{1}{o}$m$\overset{4}{o}$rr$\overset{21}{o}$w $\overset{6}{a}$fternoon."
5. Howard, who fancied himself a coward, was astonished at being chosen to try his doubtful prowess in the round-by-round bout against his powerful and monster-like opponent.
6. Joe Scott and Paul Pasternak always moved forward far too slowly and cautiously.
7. The large round ball bounced over the huge stone barrier into Jackson's cool, beautiful garden.
8. Martha and Margrit walked arm in arm to the charming park not far from their father's house.
9. The awfully noisy, awkward lawyer ought to be taught to draw.
10. The erratic band manager was shocked, frantic, and angered at the masterfully planned pamphlet which automatically attacked the amateur standing of the fascinating and talented young actress, barring her from acting the important part in the show.

EXPLORATION II: #3*y* AND #6*y* SENTENCES

• Remember in the following sentences that the initial sound in the vowel is the dominant one. Emphasize the full inverted-megaphone shape with the #3 or #6 opening and sense just the barest suggestion of the *Y* as the second sound. Whenever a consonant follows, it should be voiced almost simultaneously with the mild *Y* sound to avoid a second syllable: *oil* not *oi-yul, style* not *sta-yul, child* not *cha-yuld, mind* not *ma-yund.* There are a few exceptions, such as *royal* and *loyal,* which are two-syllable words. The #3y and #6y vowels have been marked in the first sentence of each set. You mark the rest.

1. Dr. D$\overset{3y}{o}$yle from Des M$\overset{3y}{o}$ines carefully v$\overset{3y}{o}$ided the Fr$\overset{3y}{e}$udian opinion as he adr$\overset{3y}{o}$itly depl$\overset{3y}{o}$yed the $\overset{3y}{o}$ily $\overset{3y}{o}$intment for the b$\overset{3y}{o}$y's thyr$\overset{3y}{o}$id g$\overset{3y}{o}$iter.
2. The unemployed oyster pickers, devoid of choice during the embroiled negotiations, noiselessly and fearlessly deployed their boys, while the so called envoy loitered about, voicing his annoyance at these boisterous exploits.
3. Roy filled his small warehouse with all sorts of peculiar items—there were alloy metals, toy quoits, hoisting tackle, pictures of asteroids and a wartime royal convoy, wire coils, old coins, embroidered doilies, stacks of unused invoices, cans of soy sauce, and what not!

1. The exc$\overset{6y}{i}$ting arr$\overset{6y}{i}$val at the h$\overset{6y}{e}$ight of the m$\overset{6y}{i}$ghty mountain made our f$\overset{6y}{i}$nal n$\overset{6y}{i}$ght h$\overset{6y}{i}$ke a del$\overset{6y}{i}$ghtfully enterpr$\overset{6y}{i}$sing ass$\overset{6y}{i}$gnment.
2. The tired dog, wide-eyed and frightened, cried quietly while frantically trying to find his blind master.
3. The high-altitude final trial flight was made in a light Atlas nose cone, which skyrocketed the test pilot and five highly nervous scientists nine miles high into the ionosphere.

EXPLORATION III: *R*-DERIVATIVE SENTENCES

In the following *R*-derivative sentences, remember to use a full forward facial posture, with your lips forming a #3 structural-vowel position. The *r* that follows each *R*-derivative vowel should be pronounced lightly and gently.

1. The b$\overset{R}{u}$rly c$\overset{R}{u}$rly-haired cl$\overset{R}{e}$rk b$\overset{R}{u}$rst into an unreh$\overset{R}{e}$arsed fl$\overset{R}{i}$rtation in order to div$\overset{R}{e}$rt the det$\overset{R}{e}$rmined attention of a c$\overset{R}{e}$rtain th$\overset{R}{i}$rd p$\overset{R}{e}$rson.
2. The dirty worm squirmed nervously and furtively when the early bird returned.

3. The pert nurse had the nerve to flirt with the perturbed surgeon.
4. The sum of thirty dollars spurred the surly clerk on to finish the irksome work for the foreign firm by the third day.

Exploring Tonal NRG and Structural NRG Combined

EXPERIMENT 4: CARRYING OVER BOTH TONAL AND STRUCTURAL NRGS

In the previous chapter, we explored the *feel* of carrying over tonal NRG to the speaking voice. Here we add to that awareness the kinesthetic perception of structural NRG relating primarily to vowel formation. We are moving progressively to the overall apprehension that our speech and our speaking voice should always be fueled, fed, and supported by an emotivated trinity of NRG qualities: consonant NRG, tonal NRG, and structural NRG.

- Begin with a rich, vibrant *Y*-buzz supported by forward, open, cushiony lips.
- Extend from the *Y*-buzz as smoothly as possible into each of the following structural vowels, carrying over as much of the tonal color and tonal NRG as possible without permitting the sound to become throaty.
- Next explore the following phrases, carrying over both the tonal and structural NRGs. Return to the *Y*-buzz feel on the first word, structural NRG feel on the second word, and a tonal carryover on the final word.

Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *OO*	(#1)	Keep *cool,* Mimi.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *Ō*	(#21)	We'll *go* see.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *AW*	(#3)	He *called* me.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *OI*	(#3*y*)	These *toys* break.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *Ŏ*	(#4)	We're *odd* people.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *AH*	(#5)	He'll *calm* thee.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *OW*	(#51)	Read *aloud,* please.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *Ă*	(#6)	He *asked* me.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *Ī*	(#6*y*)	Green *eyes* I see.
Y≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈≈ *R̄*	(#3$_r$)	She *learned* Greek.

Explore these phrases with genuine personal involvement, as if they were significant, emphatic lines in a role you were rehearsing.

EXPLORATION IV: STRUCTURAL NRG, *Y*-BUZZ, AND +*Y*-BUZZ TONAL NRG COMBINED

• The following sentences are designed for experiencing the flexible use of the optimal and minimal megaphone. Optimal structural NRG guides the form of even the minimum megaphone shape, and the concentrated tone of the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz carries rich tone over to the structural NRG vowels. Feel free to employ emotivated involvement or attitude whenever the fancy strikes you for deeper intensity or subtext through applied tonal and/or structural NRG.

1. **Dean always means to phone before leaving the office.**
2. **Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown.**
3. **A mean crowd streamed toward the arena.**
4. **Both babies were sleeping calmly and quietly.**
5. **Oh, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth.**
6. **He needs to be able to see every application.**
7. **We ask you once again: Please don't make long distance calls on these phones.**
8. **I prithee, grieve to make me merry, York.**
9. **And I to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.**
10. **Thou would'st be fee'd, I see, to make me sport.**
11. **Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I.**
12. **All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.**

EXPLORATION V: READING SELECTIONS

• In exploring the following selections, remember to use the full forward facial posture, not only on structural vowels but on all other vowels without allowing any distortion. Also remember that the inverted-megaphone shape may vary in size or degree from word to word but *never* in basic shape. Even during pauses, experience the yawn energy, the law of forward direction, and maintain an appreciative awareness of tonal and consonant NRG as you explore these readings. The arcs above the vowels in the first selection represent structural NRG opportunities. Mark the remaining selections!

Î fo͡ûnd the ra͡ûcous ân̂d persistent hôn̂king of the a͡ûtôm̂ôbile hôrn frustratingly annô͡ying ân̂d wân̂dered dô͡wn the rô͡ad tô̂ investigate the distûrbing nô͡ise ân̂d, if necessary, tô̂ commûnicate mŷ feelings tô̂ the môtorist—Î was pôsitively in a mô͡od tô̂ be rûde.

The autumn leaves in bold golds and deep, dark reds were falling profusely all around me. Each leaf floated slowly, flakelike toward the earth, after which it nestled down as though, with a self-satisfied sigh, it had happily fulfilled its assigned task and was now, without resentment, waiting for its new cycle of absorption and rebirth. Standing right in the middle of this glorious, joyful process, I felt myself in intimate communion with the holiest of all forces—life-giving nature at work.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men [and all women] are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

——From Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

A good sound body, which does not disturb the equilibrium in man, is a divine gift . . . but it is not impossible to conquer a bad constitution by training. Oh, God, Thou hast formed the body of man with infinite wisdom and goodness. Thou hast united in him innumerable forces incessantly at work like so many instruments, so as to preserve in its entirety this beautiful house containing his immortal soul, and these forces act with all the order, concord, and harmony imaginable. If weakness or violent passion disturb this harmony, these forces act against one another . . . then Thou sendest Thy messengers, the diseases, which announce the approach of danger, and bid man prepare to overcome them.

——Maimonides

The flowering moments of the mind drop half of their petals in our speech. Talking is one of the truly fine arts. . . . And its fluent harmonies may be spoiled by the intrusion of a single harsh note.

——Oliver Wendell Holmes

The sky was cool and stormy black, and the newly sprouted saplings rocked from their not yet strengthened roots. The young men in the village were in a pantomime of frenzied action, preparing for the tumultuous grand festival of the year. The farmers, imbued with the spirit of tradition, set aside their farming implements. All was in readiness; a sentinel-like atmosphere endured throughout. The participants eagerly scanned the huge tracts of verdant sod, mist-shrouded and heavily pregnant. Trees in the distant forest placated the heavens, rising with inexorable strength to protect the virgin fragility of this season's magic. Then the music came.

EXPLORATION VI: A PERSONAL PROJECT

You should use full or partial structural NRG at all times, whether in rehearsal, while doing improvisations, or in casual conversation. You should, in fact, be in permanent salutary and creative training. As an aid to such constant living practice, work on the following exploration:

- Select an editorial or a controversial news story from any newspaper, periodical, or text.
- Prepare it by numbering the structural vowels, wherever necessary; in later assignments, merely mark some of them with the half-moon arc, as illustrated in the preceding exploration. In still later assignments, simply sight-read them.
- Now experiment by reading your selection aloud, very slowly at first, with the fullest structural form. Always keep in mind the content of the material you are reading.
- As you improve, read the selection more rapidly, with normal, smooth utterance, while still holding on to the inverted-megaphone shape, if not the full size. Incorporate your intention and your objective into the action; be truly involved, determined, and purposeful.
- After several readings, speak extemporaneously on the subject of the editorial or story. Assume the character of a serious protagonist or antagonist of the views expressed; then take as many other views as possible to make the assignment an exciting one. Always remember to combine your involvement in the subject with structural NRG and vocal life.

The objective in this exploration is: (1) to maintain and carry over the structural posture to spontaneously rapid, or intense and involved, or normal conversational speech; (2) to improvise, characterize, and create at the same time you occupy yourself with your basic training; and (3) to explore the natural and easy application of structural NRG in all sorts of speech situations. If you do this, you will experience, reinforce, and apply creatively, all at the same time, functional, vital, and believable behavior.

EXPLORATION VII: IMPROVISATION IN COMMUNICATION THROUGH STRUCTURAL NRG

The objective of this exploration is to communicate with another person through pure sound—in this case, the sounds of the structural vowels.

- Select a partner and sit facing him or her.
- Conduct a discussion using no actual words but communicating various objectives, emotions, and feelings through the structural vowels. Attempt to influence, persuade, advise, cajole, attack, or entreat your partner using all the possible melodies and inflections of structural action. Communicate a purpose, an idea, or a state of being. Tell a lyric story with the melodies of the structural vowels.

Do not let yourself get into a rut; use all the vowels, the full gamut of structural NRG. You may use any pitch, any intensity, any characterization as long as the inverted-megaphone shape is not destroyed or sacrificed; the shape can

be varied in degree from the full forward stretch to the most reduced facial posture, but it should still be outwardly recognizable and inwardly felt as the inverted megaphone—as healthy and attractive facial posture.

Exploring with All Three Vocal NRG Skills

EXPLORATION VIII: FINDING YOUR FRESHER, RICHER, OUTGOING SPEAKING VOICE—STARTING WITH THE CALL!

This exploration is a comprehensive experience of the three vocal NRGs in which each vocal NRG is highlighted without leaving the other two behind. This exploration can be done with any textual material, but it is best to vary the material daily to avoid setting patterns. If you want to use material from a play in rehearsal, start the first step at different points in the selection. This trinity exploration is an excellent and complete tune-up for the voice; it is a superb daily conditioner and developer if you keep doing it until your progressively growing skills permit you to start on a substantially high Call pitch.

- Begin with a new piece of prose material. With an emphasis on tonal NRG, begin communicating with a fully concentrated, sustained call on each syllable at your most *comfortable* high pitch.
- Use added sustention as needed for interpretive emphasis and sense. Take whatever time you need to preserve intelligibility by comfortably, deliberately articulating all consonants and then yawning into full space for the next vowel Call. Don't lose the yawn feeling!
- At the end of each four- or five-word group, slide your Call into the next lower focus-pocket; breathe, and continue at the new pitch.
- As the Calls reach smaller focus-pockets close to your upper gum ridge, gently reduce the space between your side teeth on the next two or three pitches to move gradually but smoothly into the +*Y*-buzz and *Y*-buzz area, while continuing to maintain concentrated tones. You may want to roll some of your *R*s to keep your voice forward.
- After chanting along in concentrated tone on the second or third pitch into your +*Y*-buzz or *Y*-buzz area, shorten the sustention and gradually add inflection without losing tonal concentration; by doing this, you will create your personal "tonal dialect" with a broguelike quality. Use a generous, flexible, *Y*-buzz-like facial posture; be carefree—not careful. Use consonant NRG to ensure continued intelligibility, and roll most of your *R*s to keep your voice prominently forward. Be believable.
- Shift gradually and deliberately from tonal NRG toward a full but flexible use of structural-NRG facial posture to produce fully resonant and rich *dilute* vocal tones with completely undistorted speech. To consolidate the tonal

and structural NRGs, enjoy this mode of communication for three or four sentences before moving on to the next step.

- Gradually increase the speech tempo to a quieter, conversational mode (*Y*-buzz-like focus) in a reduced but still well-formed reverse-megaphone facial posture; consonant NRG should "lead," but you should still feel an optimal degree of rich, dark tonal action in your palate, mask, nasal bone, and forehead. This is your personal and professional speaking voice. Use it freely and enthusiastically in any dynamic, outgoing, or emotional communication; use it spontaneously in any or all communicating activity.

Up to the fifth step of this exploration, ignore the vowel sounds in favor of making free concentrated calls—few vowels that are compatible with (high) full Calls are also compatible with the conversational speech situation—and concentrate on sustaining the stressed syllables, on phrasing, and particularly on clear-cut consonant action to make the words completely recognizable and intelligible. If your words are understood despite the Call treatment of the vowels, you can be satisfied for the time being that your consonant NRG is adequate and that you are preserving the meaning of the text. The use of a rolled *R*, especially on the low pitches, will help maintain a good Call focus and make your consonant NRG more lively. By the fifth and sixth steps, you will be employing full structural NRG plus the strongest carryover of tonal NRG that will permit normal, undistorted vowel pronunciation and speech quality. You will also have gained by this time new and permanent awareness in the use of forward-facial-posture energy.

As a matter of clarification, let me differentiate the terms "*Y*-buzz," "+*Y*-buzz-like focus," "low Call," and "dilute tone." The first and second terms are used to represent the most concentrated focus in the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz range with only a small space between the side teeth; the third term denotes the much more concentrated Call focus on a low pitch but with good yawn-fashioned facial posture and an optimal space between the side teeth; and the fourth term refers to a nonconcentrated vocal focus with the variable use of facial posture. Anytime the Call or *Y*-buzz spreads or lightens in texture, it becomes a dilute tone.

EXPLORATION IX: FINDING YOUR FRESHER, RICHER CONVERSATIONAL VOICE—STARTING WITH THE *Y*-BUZZ

- Start with a rich, resonant *Y*-buzz on "It's easy; it's really easy" or "The evening breeze seems to seep" or "A B C D E F G," then continue with any reading selection.
- Negotiate a gradual transfer to a low-pitched, intimate conversational mode. Use a somewhat intensified consonant NRG plus a gently diffused, yet warmly pervasive rich tonal resonance.
- Continue in a progressively quieter conversational mode while

smoothly diluting the vocal tones into a soft whisper. Use "spark-like" consonants only, and avoid any feeling of throaty air pressure.

- Subtly but gently return to feeling "tone," and build into a rich, warm resonant voice and speech that freely utilizes the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz tonal NRG. This is your private, intimate, conversational, everyday speaking voice.

BRIDGE

The last two explorations will help feed and fuel your speaking voice by examining the full gamut and spectrum of your communicating vocal life both onstage and offstage. But one more area needs to be experimented with to fully explore the fundamentals of the voice-speech discipline before moving on to applied creative exploring and discovering.

Our training so far has guided us to the point of revealing our natural optimal speaking voices and heightened, creative speech skills—we have called, we have sung, we've made music with our consonants, we've tasted delightful articulatory skills and rhythms, and we've learned how to naturally and physically form those rounded "pear-shaped" vowels. The structural and tonal vowels we have covered thus far generally carry emphasis, are usually found in fully stressed or semistressed syllables, and are classified as "strong forms." Conversely, a number of vowels are commonly identified as "weak forms." I don't care for the term "weak forms" or "weak vowels"; there's nothing weak about the vowel sounds in the words "sh*ou*ld," "A*me*r*ica*," "d*i*d," or "b*e*g*i*n." Instead, I will refer to these vowels as the "neutral vowels."

The neutral vowels occur in our speech at least sixty to sixty-five percent of the time. They may play a less colorful part in our speech than the consonants or the so-called strong vowels or strong forms, but without them, our speech would fall apart. The *R*-derivative structural vowel provides an interesting example of both strong and soft "vowel value": words like *murmur, further,* and *nurture* carry strong *R*-derivative forms in the first syllable and soft, unaccented forms in the second syllable; words like *zephyr, mother, actor, fakir,* and *dollar* likewise carry an unstressed neutral *R*-derivative in the second syllable.

So with this peek at the neutrals, let us move on to the next chapter—"The Four Neutrals"—where a few fresh concepts and new theories await us. Have some challenging fun with them.

CHAPTER 8

The Four Neutrals: Exploring the Musical Feel of Staccato and Syncopation in Speech

Without the neutral vowels, we would not have smooth utterance nor would we have much intimate communication!

Classifying the Four Neutrals

Conventional and traditional practice highlights one neutral vowel, the "schwa"; this vowel is pronounced "uh" and is written phonetically ə (International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA; for a comparison of phonetic symbols used by the IPA, *Webster's International Dictionary,* and this text, see Appendix A). It occurs in such words as "*A*meric*a*," "*a*lone," "mol*a*r," and "m*o*ther." The schwa makes a short gruntlike staccato sound and is generally a faint, often indistinct unaccented sound; it is, in truth, a "neutral vowel" and is often used in "familiar forms" (so-called weak forms).

Lessac training, however, postulates that there are *four* neutrals (four schwas, so to speak), as heard in the words "t*oo*k," "t*i*ck," "t*e*ch," and "t*u*ck." These vowels may be described as representing *the shortest distance between two consonants.* Because the "neutrals" occur approximately sixty-five percent of the time in formal communication and much more often in informal conversation, they require serious consideration and attention. My designation for the neutrals will be: N^1 as in "t*oo*k," N^2 as in "t*i*ck," N^3 as in "t*e*ch," and N^4 as in "t*u*ck."[1] In the IPA, the N^4 is represented by two different symbols: the catchall schwa (ə) for the first syllable of "*a*bove" and the circumflex (ˆ) for the vowel sound in the second syllable. In Lessac training, both of these neutral sounds are identified as N^4, the only difference being that the second syllable is stressed and the first is not.

[1]These designations are referred to as "neutral-one" rather than "en-one," and so on.

EXPERIMENT 1: FEELING THE RHYTHM OF THE NEUTRALS

Visualize this at first as a consonant experiment; simply play the drumbeats, and feel the neutral vowel as the shortest possible voiced linkage between the two consonants:

N^1: t-k	N^2: t-k	N^3: t-k	N^4: t-k
o͡o	*ĭ*	*ĕ*	*ŭ*
N^1: could	N^2: kid	N^3: ked	N^4: cud

- Play these drumbeats or tympani beats in a series of four quick taps, with a feeling of syncopated rhythm, very much like a quick brisk 4/4 tune—pu*t* - pi*t* - pe*t* - pu*tt* - pu*t* - pi*t* - pe*t* - pu*tt*—and repeat them briskly and clearly about three times in rhythmic fashion.
- Let your whole body respond to a rhythmic staccato or syncopated "sparky" feel inside you. Note the different spellings for the following neutrals, and don't worry if some of the examples aren't real words. Remember (1) that the sensation is feeling the neutral as the shortest distance between two consonants and (2) to move with smart dispatch from the first to the second consonant. Practice the words vertically, and repeat each group at least twice. Feel their musical, staccato tempos and rhythms.

N^1 (*o͡o*):	put	look	took	full	could	po͡odle	hook
N^2 (*ĭ*):	pit	live	tick	fill	kid	piddle	hick
N^3 (*ĕ*):	pet	lev	tech	fell	ked	peddle	heck
N^4 (*ŭ*):	putt	love	tuck	fuhl	cud	puddle	huck

N^1:	joost	pull	rook	stood	good	goody	pushy	booker
N^2:	gist	pill	rick	still	did	giddy	pretty	bicker
N^3:	jest	pell	wreck	stead	dead	ready	petty	becker
N^4:	just	puhl	ruckus	stud	dud	ruddy	putty	bucker

EXPERIMENT 2: FEELING THE TONAL AND NEUTRAL MELODIES COMBINED

Have fun with the following sentence. It has only one strong vowel—see if you can find it!

> **The dedicated Mexican youngster bitterly condemned the southern Federalist government's persistence."**

Except for the third syllable in the word *dedicated,* all the other vowels are neutrals, even in the word *persistence,* where the first syllable stems from the soft, unaccented *R* derivative form.

- When experimenting with this sentence, play and feel the consonant-tonal melody and unvoiced sound effects. (*Note*: Not every playable consonant is underlined. If you are so inclined, search them out and play them, too.)
- Experiment some more, and experience the delicate staccato and syncopated effects; this time be sure you explore with meaningful emphases, involvement, and conviction—rehearse it as if it were an actor's exploration.

Further explanation for the classification of the four neutrals follows:

1. They are formed with a neutral facial posture; that is, they use the reverse-megaphone shape reduced to a minimum, as is used for the *Y*-buzz vowels and for informal or intimate conversation.
2. The neutral vowels almost always move between and to the consonants with brisk dispatch; with practice, such a syllable becomes thoroughly "neutralized" and feels more like a consonant exploration than a vowel exploration.
3. Although a stressed neutral syllable or word, such as *bush, bit, meant,* or *stuck,* always calls for its specific neutral vowel sound, these vowels, when unstressed, are so phonetically inconsequential that they are interchangeable and often unidentifiable when heard, which further neutralizes the quality and quantity of the vowel (consider, for example, the last syllable in "govern*ment,*" "quintes*sence,*" "*people*").[2]
4. Neutrals may be thought of as short, familiar, or common forms that at one time were more closely related to "parent vowels" with much stronger phonetic coloring: thus the N^1 in *full* might have been related to the #1 vowel in *fool;* the N^2 in *fill,* to the *Y*-buzz in *feel;* the N^3 in *wren,* to the #6 vowel in *ran;* and the N^4 in *come,* to the #5 vowel in *calm* (or the N^4 in *bump,* to the #4 vowel in *bomb* or the #5 vowel in *balm*). This relationship can be seen easily in different versions of the same root word, as in "con'*vent*" and "con`*vent*ion."

In pronouncing the neutral vowels, it is never an error to shorten them, but it is an error to expand them until they begin to sound like the parent vowels. Being aware of this concept is particularly beneficial for nonnative English speakers, as well as for all of us. To achieve cleaner articulation, we must remember always to treat these short staccato sounds as the shortest possible distance between any two consonants. This prin-

[2]We do not question the use and significance of syllabic consonants in words like *rhythm, people, able,* and *label;* but if we do consider them as two-syllable words, and if we accept the fact that every syllable must at least *imply* a vowel, then, technically speaking, a very subtle, soft neutral might be visualized, with the vocal NRGs (especially consonant NRG) doing the rest.

ciple will contribute not only to vowel facility and skillful consonant articulation but also to the naturalness and fluency of our speech, to the principle of liaison in speech,[3] and to rhythmic variety and contrasts.

As already suggested, the neutrals appear in stressed, semistressed (secondary stress), and unstressed syllables; they also occur in many contractions: *she w'z right, river 'v mud, look 't th' book.* If, for special emphasis, we used the strong forms, these phrases would read *she was right, river of mud, look at the book.*

EXPERIMENT 3: SYLLABIC STRESS AND THE NEUTRALS

There are varying degrees and combinations of syllabic stress:

- Except for the familiar forms (discussed in the following section), there is the normal stress of monosyllabic words. Feel yourself moving with deliberate dispatch (not indecent haste) to the final consonant of the following words:

  wood dull till spell fun junk click dunk

- Some words have one stressed syllable and one or more unstressed syllables; experiment with:

  gov'ern-ment ex'it in-dic'a-tive de-lec'ta-ble quin-tes'sence

- Some words have more than one stressed syllable—a primary and a secondary stress—along with one or more unstressed syllables; experiment with:

  con,fla-gra'tion in,con-sis'tent et,ce'te-ra mul,ti-di'sci-plined

- There are double words that carry equal stress on both syllables; experiment with:

  love nest tough luck kid stuff nest egg Good Book pit bull set up

Every one of the preceding syllables can and should be considered as a neutral. (Of course, as already indicated, when there is very special emphasis, the "familiar vowel" may, and will, return to the "strong form." Compare "have 'n apple" (normal use) with "have *an* apple" (strong emphasis), meaning "just one, and one only.") It seems that the whole question of comparative and relative stress of the neutrals is itself overstressed. If a neutral syllable or word requires additional strength or emphasis for whatever reason, it will achieve this quite naturally through tonal, consonant, and structural NRG expressiveness.

[3] *Principle of liaison in speech:* The interconnectedness, confluence, and intercommunication dynamics of speech and the very bonding between speech/voice and people (or human beings).

No matter which neutral you may choose to use in unstressed syllables, if you *move with dispatch* to the following consonant, it will be unidentifiable but perfectly acceptable. The point is that with skillful use of consonant action in the unstressed or familiar forms, concern over the choice of neutral is unnecessary: use the one that comes naturally. In some instances, one vowel or another may seem an equally practical choice: the letter *e* in the unstressed *re-* prefix, as in *repeat,* is preferably N^2 (as in *rid*); the *-ess* suffix in *duchess* may take N^3 (as in *pet*) but will also take N^2 (as in *pit*). In other cases, such as the suffixes *-tion, -ment,* and *-ful,* a particular choice does not seem very essential.

NEUTRAL VOWELS IN FAMILIAR FORMS

A distinctive feature of spoken English is the use of many common words in either a strong form or one or more familiar forms, depending upon the amount of emphasis or lack of emphasis. The familiar forms occur, of course, only in unstressed positions in sentences. The words most commonly softened in informal speech are the connecting words that link nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs into meaningful sentences: articles such as *an, the;* prepositions such as *at, for, of;* conjunctions such as *and, or, but;* and pronouns such as *them, him.* Likewise contractions, such as *they're, we're, you'd, I'm, he's, she'll* are also softened familiar forms, and a few verbs and other parts of speech may sometimes be softened as well.

Although the N^4 will substitute for the strong vowel in most of the familiar forms, the other neutrals are sometimes used as well. Where the softening process seems to eliminate the vowel altogether, the very shortest N^1 is still present (as in *leave 'm*). Note that the designation of a specific neutral is unnecessary because they are actually interchangeable (see Experiment 3).

UNSTRESSED *R*-DERIVATIVE ENDINGS

As already indicated, there are certain unstressed final syllables ending phonetically in *R* that always takes an indefinite neutral vowel. These *R*-influenced or *R*-derivative vowel endings include *ar, er, or, ur, ure, ir,* and *yr: Caesar, dollar; mother, feather; doctor, honor; murmur, femur; pleasure, seizure; fakir, elixir;* and *satyr, zephyr.* Some people choose not to voice the ever-present final *R*s in pronouncing these words, but there is no convincing reason to drop them as long as sufficient structural and tonal NRG is used to soften or dilute them and keep them out of the throat.

Note: Most of these neutral endings may be identified as N^4 or schwas, with a sprinkling of N^1, N^2, and even N^3, depending entirely upon your in-

clination and communicating situation. What is entirely clear, though, is that the unstressed, soft, and familiar *R*-derivative endings are correspondingly synonymous with neutral vowels that precede a *final R* consonant. The soft, unstressed *R* vowel is, of course, the offspring of the strong, definitive, *structurally* formed *R*-derivative parent vowel; and here too, this parent *R* vowel always precedes the *R* consonant, as in "m*u*rm*u*r," "pert*u*rbed," and "sq*ui*rmed."

We already know that the American *R* is a throat-oriented consonant, and when it follows a vowel and precedes a consonant, it tends to pull the vowel and the word toward the pharynx. Still, we don't really want to erase the *R* or lose its rightful place in our speech; in fact any time the consonant *R* follows a vowel and precedes a consonant, you may sound the consonant *R* as strongly as you like *if,* in the rest of the word, you use good structural and tonal NRG and avoid nasality, throatiness, pressed or pinched lips, and a tight jaw. I urge deemphasis of the *R* primarily to (1) reduce tongue-throat-jaw tension, (2) prevent the minimization of the vocal sound box, and (3) enhance the quality of intelligibility. No American, regardless of geography, needs to eliminate the *R* (preceding consonants and pauses) if he or she observes genuine tonal, consonant, structural NRG in the act of speaking or singing (for a review of the *R* consonant, see Chapter 5, "*R*-Trombone").

EXPERIMENT 4: ELIMINATING THE THROATINESS OF THE *R* CONSONANT

• First, test the *R*s in the following words *negatively;* that is, with exaggerated emphasis, moving quickly to the *R* consonant and almost bypassing the vowel. Send the entire word into your throat (feel how there is practically *no space* between your side teeth), and make careful note of the fixed, closed jaw joint and relatively tight jaw muscles.

f*i*rm f*o*rm f*a*rm l*o*rd sh*o*rt f*e*rtile c*u*rses

• Now perform these words with special emphasis on the *structural vowels*—with practically no *R* consonant. Think of the British pronunciation here.

f^{R}ɪrm f^{3}ɔrm f^{5}ɑrm l^{3}ɔrd sh^{3}ɔrt f^{R}ɜrtile c^{R}ʊrses

• Finally, test the *R*s *positively.* Feel the vowels to suit your contentment, and really feel them structurally; then add a very definite but *softened R,* and apply it as the spirit moves you.

f*i*rm f*o*rm f*a*rm l*o*rd sh*o*rt f*e*rtile c*u*rses

Note: Keep in mind that too strong an *R* or moving to the *R* too quickly will drag the preceding vowel (and often the entire word) into throatiness.

Cultivating the Four Neutrals

EXPERIMENT 5: NEUTRAL WORDS

• In the following word groupings, the multisyllable words are marked for primary and secondary stress. Work on each grouping both horizontally and vertically.

N[1] (used in stressed syllables of many words spelled with *u, oo, o,* and *ould*—in which the *l* is silent)

bush	b*u*'tcher[4]	foot	stood	could
bull	p*u*l'pit	good	w*o*'man	would
full	c*u*'shion	look	wolves	should

N[2] (used in stressed syllables of many words spelled with *i* and *y* and sometimes *u* and *ui*)

crib	bridge	*in*,d*i*-v*i*'du-al	built	b*u*'siness	myth
live	sick	*in*'te-gral	guild	b*u*'sy	s*y*'ner-gy
lift	kiss	*in*'f*i*-n*i*te	build	m*y*s'ter-y	i-d*y*'llic
hill	b*e*-g*i*n'	con-v*i*nce'	b*ui*l'ding	s*y*m'pa-thy	ph*y*'si-cist

N[3] (used in the stressed syllables of many words spelled with *e, a, ea, u, ie* and sometimes *ei, ae, eo, ai*)

bed	b*e*s'tial	*e*n-d*ea*'vor	c*e*'m*e*-t*e*,ry	*ae*s-th*e*'tic
left	dead	health	moun't*ai*n	l*eo*'pard
stem	breath	*a*'ny	mi,li-t*a*'ri-ly	b*u*'ry
v*e*'ry	m*ea*'sure	m*a*'ny	said	friend
col-l*e*ct'	deaf	s*e*c're-t*a*,ry	says	h*ei*'fer

N[4] (used in the stressed syllables of many words spelled with *u, o,* and *ou* and sometimes *oe* and *oo*)

buzz	judge	much	*un*'cle	h*un*'gry	s*uc*-c*u*mb'	d*o*'zen
once	*o*'ther	a-b*o*ve'	sl*o*'ven-ly	c*o*'lor	n*o*'thing	does
tough	young	e-n*ou*gh'	s*ou*'thern	c*ou*n'try	c*ou*'ple	blood

Note: Nonnative speakers whose pronunciation of these neutrals is still influenced by the parent vowels will more easily acquire the American idiom

[4]Certain word hyphenation (such as *bu-tcher*) may strike you as somewhat peculiar; however, from the standpoint of clear articulation, advanced remedial reading techniques, and esthetic speech qualities, it is desirable wherever possible to start every syllable with a sounded consonant (see Chapter 5, Experiment 6 for further discussion).

if they remember to color N^1 and N^4 with one another and N^2 and N^3 with one another; practice this not only in the preceding word lists but also in the sentences of the following exploration.

EXPLORATION I: NEUTRAL SENTENCES

- The first sentence in each group is marked for your edification; feel free to mark the other sentences.
- The specific neutral vowel to be explored is identified by a capital *N* and all other neutrals by a lowercase *n*. Remember to explore these neutrals as *the shortest distance between two consonants.* (After experimenting once or twice, you will have no need for the markings—you will automatically *feel* the rhythmic staccato and syncopation and crisp, clear, "sparklike" consonants.)

N^1 (*ŏo*)

Thē gōod-lōoking cōok tōok ā gōod lōok at thē būtchēr wīth thē crōokēd fōot, who stōod near thē wōodēn pūlpīt, hīs hand on thē Gōod Bōok, hīs face fūll ōf sūgāry lōoks.

The rookie crook, who forsook the cook he mistook for a "bull," couldn't pull the bullet out of his foot with the rusty hook, so he took the cushion from the wooden nook and pushed it near his foot.

Do not think of the N^1 vowel sound as a short #1 structural vowel ($\overline{OO}$) but as a very short *ŏo*—the shortest distance between two consonants.

N^2 (*ĭ*)

Mīstēr Smīth and hīs sīx āssistānts dīdn't fīnīsh their vīsīt īn thīs cīty tīll aftēr weeks ōf spīrītēd and īndīgnānt qūībbling wīth Mīstēr Mīllīgān.

The written permit admitted him to the political ritual in spite of the indignant prison administrator.

Despite her timidity and morbidity, she impressed me with her intrepidity, her natural dignity, and thought rapidity; yet Bill was dismayed at her frigidity and seeming inability to smile.

Do not think of the N^2 vowel sound as a short $\overline{EE}$ but as a short *ĭ*—the shortest distance between two consonants.

N^3 (*ĕ*)

Thē vērY bēst and ēfficient mēn ōf thē rēgimēnt bēllied thēmsēlves toward the ēdge ōf thē prēcipice and were gētting rēady to frūstrate thē bēstial ēffōrts ōf the ēnēmy.

Tell Dennis to let Emma's best friends enjoy themselves whenever they come, even if they raise merry hell.

Fred Perry sent his secretary to collect the September rent from the restless and ever-murmuring tenants.

Do not permit the N^3 vowel to sound like a short #6 structural vowel (*Ă*) but as a very short (*ĕ*)—the shortest distance between two consonants.

N^4 (*ŭ*)

Aside from the customary stuff about the public good, the tough young southerner once again stood head and shoulders above the slovenly official judge.

Once nothing but hungry destruction succeeded, the blood of dozens of other countries was the unutterable by-product.

The N^4 is the most frequently occurring neutral sound; do not permit it to sound like a short #5 structural vowel (*AH*) but rather as a very short *ŭ* (this is particularly important for nonnative English speakers)—the shortest distance between two consonants.

The Neutral Diphthongs

There are four diphthongs that include neutral vowel sounds. N^1, N^2, and N^3 each provide the first sound for the first three diphthongs, and the #3 structural vowel (*AW*) begins the fourth. The second sound is always N^4 and is indicated by a lowercase *n*. Thus, we have N^1n, as in *poor;* N^2n, as in *peer;* N^3n, as in *pear;* and $3n$, as in *pour.*

These diphthongs (referred to as "neutral-one-neutral" rather than "en-one-en" and so on) are always followed by an *R*, which is always pronounced distinctly when it leads directly into another word or syllable that starts with a vowel; otherwise, it should be somewhat deemphasized. The danger in pronouncing these neutral diphthongs with a very strong *R* is that in reaching for the *R*, there is an infinitesimal break that tends to split the vowel sound into two syllables: *poor* becomes *poo-wer, peer* becomes *pee-yer, pear* becomes *pay-yer,* and *pour* becomes *poh-wer.*

EXPERIMENT 6: DIPHTHONG WORD LISTS

- Work on the following groupings vertically and rhythmically. Remember to pay close attention to deemphasizing the *R* while performing the words.

N^1n:	poor	tour	cure	lure	pure
N^2n:	peer	tear	clear	leer	cheer
N^3n:	pear	tear	care	lair	chair
$3n$:	pour	tore	core	lore	chore

N^1n:	manure	dour	boor	Ruhr	sure
N^2n:	near	dear	bier	rear	sheer
N^3n:	ne'er	dare	bare	rare	share
$3n$:	more	door	boar	roar	shore

Note: Pronounce words like *cure, pure, endure, during, manure,* and *lure* as if a consonant *Y* followed the initial consonant of the stressed syllable: *kyure, pyure, endyure, dyuring, manyure, lyure* (the last four are considered by some as optional pronunciations). The $3n$ is designated as a diphthong since it ends with an *R*. Were the *R* followed by an unvoiced consonant (as in *import* and *porch*) the vowel would shift to the #3 structural vowel (*AW*).

EXPLORATION II: DIPHTHONG SENTENCES

• Do not read the following sentences rapidly or carelessly. Rather, concentrate on speaking them deliberately and in character, with behavioral inflections, intonations, and pauses.

N^1n

D^{Nn}uring the soup du j^{Nn}our course, the two b^{Nn}oors were successfully l^{Nn}ured into taking the t^{Nn}our through the R^{Nn}uhr Valley after being reass^{Nn}ured regarding the p^{Nn}oor accommodations.

N^2n

The sinc^{Nn}ere speaker app^{Nn}eared to be in t^{Nn}earful f^{Nn}ear of his b^{Nn}eer-drinking h^{Nn}earers, but by sh^{Nn}eer luck the s^{Nn}earing j^{Nn}eers turned to cl^{Nn}ear ch^{Nn}eers.

N^3n

M^{Nn}ary handled the v^{Nn}arious w^{Nn}ares at the F^{Nn}air with great c^{Nn}are while her ^{Nn}Airedale was perched prec^{Nn}ariously on the st^{Nn}aircase.

$3n$

During the w^{3n}ar, m^{3n}ore and m^{3n}ore people looked up at the r^{3n}oaring, s^{3n}oaring ^{Nn}airplanes with apprehension, thinking back to the sc^{3n}ores or m^{3n}ore y^{Nn}ears ago when they had thrilled to the same sight.

Note: Words like *various* and *precarious* are pronounced by some with the #6 structural vowel (*Ă*). If that happens to be your preference, then, of course, the N^3n ceases to be a neutral diphthong.

Once you are at ease with and can easily identify the neutrals and the neutral diphthongs, you will not need any of the numerical symbols in your "marking reminders"; instead, you can shorten your markings to *N* or *Nn*.

EXPLORATION III: THE FREQUENCY OF NEUTRALS IN GENERAL SPEECH

• The following paragraph shows how often the neutrals occur in general communication. Explore it, and compare the proportion of neutrals to nonneutrals.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful experiment if this intrinsically physical but nonlistening method could be initiated in six or seven different sections of this country. It would appear inevitable that with one year's training, the students—the Texans, the Midwesterners, the Californians, the Southerners, the Alaskans, the New Yorkers—when getting together, would recognize upon this confrontation, an intrinsic similarity and effectiveness in the form and facility of their speech and voice functioning, yet each group would retain its own particular local, indigenous charms. Everyone involved in this experiment, bringing with him or her different opinions and interests as well as conditioning, would nevertheless find it significantly more comfortable and pleasurable to engage successfully in the kind of serious intercommunication that could lead to a better, more fulfilling common understanding.[5]

EXPERIMENT 7: STRONG AND FAMILIAR FORMS OF THE *Ŕ*-DERIVATIVE VOWEL

• The following words contain both the strong and familiar forms of the *Ŕ*-derivative vowel. As you say each word, experience the difference between the full forward facial posture of the strong *Ŕ*-derivative in the stressed (first) syllable and the minimal facial posture and "softened" (almost neutral) sound

[5]The count is eighty percent neutrals and 20 percent nonneutrals. Did your figures match these?

of the *R*-derivative in the unstressed (second or third) syllable. In both cases, use as much of the *R* consonant as you wish, but remember that too much *R* will drag the preceding vowel into throatiness.

worker	cursor	sterner	nurture	burner	firmer
further	dirtier	murkier	worthier	earlier	worshipper[6]

EXPERIMENT 8: FAMILIAR SOFT FORMS

• Both the strong vowel form used in primary stress and the neutrals used in the familiar form are shown in the following table. Practice both forms and note the effect of each on meaning and naturalness.

Word	*Strong Form*	*Familiar Form*	*Familiar Form Phrases*
an	#6	N^4	Have 'n apple
the	*Y*-buzz/N^4	N^2 before a vowel	Cover th'_yearth
		N^4 before a consonant	Cover th' world
at	#6	N^2 or N^4	Look 't th' book
for	#3	N^4	I did it fuh fun
			I did it f'r Emma
from	#4	N^4	I come fr'm
of	#4	N^4	river_'v mud
on	#4	N^4	depending 'n the weather
to	#1	N^1 or N^4	I intend t' go
are	#5	N^4	The boys'r in
			The boys uh' there
was	#4	N^1 or N^4	He w'z right
were	*R*-derivative	N^4	They wuh' very kind
			They wuhr_in
have	#6	N^4	What've y' done?
has	#6	N^4 or N^2	This's been proved
do	#1	N^4 or N^1	How d' y' do it?
shall	#6	N^4 or N^1	How sh'll it be?
will	N^2	N^2, N^4, or N^1	The church'll be full
can	#6	N^2 or N^4	He c'n go

[6]*Worship,* with an *R* in the first syllable, is often pronounced incorrectly as *warship,* which starts with a #3 structural vowel (*AW*); except for the word *Colonel,* the only *R*-derivatives spelled with *o* are preceded by a *w* (*worm, work, word, worse, worst*).

and	#6	N^1, N^2, or N^4	You‿'n I
			You‿'nd I
them	N^3	N^4	Look't th'm
him	N^2	N^4	Look't 'm
her	$\not{R}$-derivative	N^4	Take it to 'ur

Nonnative English speakers should not practice the familiar form independently. They must experience the etymological process of phonetic change while doing it and should therefore start with the strong form in these phrases, with the idea of constantly accelerating the speed of pronunciation while at the same time deemphasizing volume and stress. It is this smooth-uttering speed and deemphasis that automatically and physically fashions the natural and perfectly acceptable familiar form used in everyday business, social, and colloquial communication. Such sensory experience provides nonnative English speakers with the kinesensic pathway to intrinsically *feel* the evolving maturation of the familiar event leading to organic instruction. It is, generally speaking, something all of us need to experience, sooner or later, as part of our "neuroscience" training in the "ecology of the human organism."

A Summary of the Tonal, Structural, and Neutral Vowels

You have now covered all of the English vowels—tonal, structural and neutral, representing the solo instrument that is supported by the consonant orchestra—and have learned to form them with kinesensory awareness. They fall into six specific categories:

1. The structural vowels (based on optimal structural NRG)
   #1 as in *ooze, you,* and *smooth*
   #3 as in *all, norm,* and *laud*
   #4 as in *odd, bond,* and *doll*
   #5 as in *alms, gnarl,* and *father*
   #6 as in *add, nasty,* and *back*
   #$\not{R}$ as in *worm, early,* and *urn* (this is the $\not{R}$-derivative structurally formed vowel based on a diffused *R* vibration with the front of the tongue disengaged plus a solid #3 structural lip opening)
2. The structural diphthongs
   #21 as in *ode, no, foam,* and *throw*
   #51 as in *ounce, now,* and *outhouse*
   #3y as in *boil* and *boy*
   #6y as in *wild, aisle,* and *why*

3. The tonal vowel (based on the *Y*-buzz)
   Y-buzz as in *easy, seethe, yeast,* and *evening*
4. The tonal diphthong (based on the +*Y*-buzz)
   +*Y*-buzz as in *aim, made, bay,* and *reign*
5. The neutral vowels (schwas) (based on neutral facial posture and short staccato sounds [v i e ə *or* ^] [I.P.A.])
   N^1 as in *took*
   N^2 as in *tick*
   N^3 as in *tech*
   N^4 as in *tuck*
6. The neutral diphthongs
   N^1n as in *poor, tour,* and *sure*
   N^2n as in *peer, pier,* and *mere*
   N^3n as in *pear, pare,* and *pair*
   $3n$ as in *pour, fore,* and *door*

EXPLORATION IV: TRINITY VOCAL NRG READINGS INCLUDING THE NEUTRALS

In the selections that follow, all the vowels produced by structural and tonal NRG are indicated by their appropriate symbols in the first line or so.[7] The neutrals are not numbered but indicated simply as *N* or *Nn.* The *Ꞁ* represents the *Ꞁ*-derivative vowel. After probing and exploring the vocal NRGs and experiencing what they reveal, copy these selections and look through them for your playable, affective, responsive opportunities (and, if so inclined, notate them, including, if needed, the consonant NRG markings). Then with your perception and awareness at high pitch, turn these readings into an actor's exploration and discovery process, with the intention to be involved, honest, and perhaps even outrageously believable.

I $\overset{N}{\text{ap}}$pe$\overset{\bullet}{\text{a}}$l tô $\overset{N}{\text{a}}$n$\overset{\bullet}{\text{y}}$ whîte mân tô say $\overset{\bullet}{\text{i}}$f $\overset{Nn}{\text{e}}$v$\overset{N}{\text{e}}$r $\overset{N}{\text{he}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{e}}n\overset{N}{\text{t}}$ered Lô$\overset{N}{\text{g}}$an's câ$\overset{N}{\text{b}}$in $\overset{N}{\text{hu}}$ngr$\overset{\bullet}{\text{y}}$, ân$\overset{\bullet}{\text{d}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{he}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{ga}}$ve $\overset{N}{\text{hi}}$m nôt m$\overset{\bullet}{\text{e}}$at; $\overset{Nn}{\text{if}}$ $\overset{N}{\text{e}}$v$\overset{N}{\text{e}}$r $\overset{\bullet}{\text{he}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{ca}}$me côld ân$\overset{\bullet}{\text{d}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{na}}k\overset{N}{\text{e}}$d, ân$\overset{\bullet}{\text{d}}$ $\overset{\bullet}{\text{he}}$ clôthed $\overset{N}{\text{hi}}$m nôt. During the course of the last long and bloody war Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed at me as they passed, and said: "Logan is the friend of white men." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man, Colonel Cresap, who last spring, in cold blood

[7]The horizontal arc (⌒) designates structural vowels; the heavy dot (•) designates tonal vowels.

and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature.

This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not think that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. Logan will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one!

—Logan

Ī jōīn wīth yōū mōst cōrdīallȳ īn rējōīcing ât thē rētūrn ōf peace. Ī hôpe īt wīll be lâsting ând thât mânkīnd wīll ât length, âs they câll themselves reasonable creatures, have reason enough to settle their differences without cutting throats; for in my opinion, there never was a good war or a bad peace. What past additions to the conveniences and comforts of life might mankind have acquired, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of utility! What an extension of agriculture, even to the tops of the mountains; what rivers rendered navigable, or joined by canals; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices and improvements, rendering England a complete paradise, might not have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief—in bringing misery into thousands of families, and destroying the lives of many working people who might have performed the useful labors.

——Benjamin Franklin

Thē cōrnerstōne ōf thē rēpublīc līes īn ōūr treating each mân ând wōmān âs wōrthȳ hūmān beings, paying no heed to their creed, birthplace or occupation, asking not whether they are rich or poor, whether they labor with head or hand; asking only whether they

act decently and honorably in the various relations of their lives, whether they behave well to their family, to their neighbors, to the state.

BRIDGE

At this point in the book, you will proceed from the organic cultivation of your body's vocal NRGs to the reaping, discovering, exploring, and exploiting of your creative vocal life. In Part 3, you will learn to vitally, artistically, and personally forge for yourself the holistic trinity of *vocal life, physical life,* and *emotional life.*

PART THREE

Reaping What We Sow

No action stands alone. It comes from somewhere as an expression of something; it creates an answering action and becomes, along with that response, a part of something else. A beautiful voice remains a sound; articulated speech, a rhythm—until you put them to use. Through mastering the trinity of vocal NRGs, you have experienced the vital qualities of vocal life as integral parts of your own individuality, as an extension of yourself, deeply rooted in yourself. You have learned *use and skills,* and all that remains is to extend those skills into your talents; your talents, into artistry; and artistry, into virtuosity.

In the four chapters of Part 3, we will consider the deeply searching role of voice and speech in the communicating personality. Although this textbook is directed primarily to the actor/performer, it does not bypass the interests of other readers. Acting is basically communication, and the instruments of the actor, properly used, are as essential offstage as they are onstage. Whatever the type of stage space or platform, we are all performers, and we are all interested in creative achievement.

Today, there is dangerous deterioration in the caliber of our speech and voice capabilities. We are losing the music, the poetry, and the

spirit in our vocal, physical, and emotional life. Like rhythm and balance, our body-whole desperately needs poetry, music, and spirit to maintain harmonious, meaningful, exciting existence. Because poetry is an exciting way to introduce music and spirit into the spoken word and into experiencing vocal expressiveness, we will cultivate and utilize this artistic medium to explore and exploit our creative vocal life.

The earliest theatre, and some of the finest and most universally popular theatre, in its own time (circa the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth centuries), was largely a theatre of poets. Because it was so popular, we can assume that most of the audience did not consider a physical, imagistic, emotional use of language to be over its head; from that, we might at least wonder if they did not, to some degree, use language in the same way themselves . . . and whether the right- and left-brain hemispheres were not in greater balance then than perhaps in our own super high tech existence.

Even as late as the nineteenth century, the works of poets like Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, and others were best-sellers. These poets made fortunes or became household names from poetry alone. Thus, the creative use of language has not always been an esoteric art.

CHAPTER 9

Exploring Creative Vocal Life: General Exploring and Discovering

Creative vocal life is our guard against the esoteric and our guide into the wonderland of poetry and elevated prose. Vocal life cannot stand alone; it is integrally *ensembled* with physical life, emotional life, and spiritual life. These entities organically synergize each other so that the combined whole is always fresh, unique, intriguingly creative, and infinitely diverse in its body, voice, and speech communication, transmission, and intelligence gathering.

Speech and voice training is body training, and body training is language/communication training. The eyes, the vocal tones, the face, the gestures, the body-whole certainly divulge and transmit more meaning, interpretation, information, and intelligence than do words and sentences. Thus, "creative vocal life" is much more than verbal vocal life. Creative vocal life includes all the other vital "life NRGs" within the inner human body environment.

This textbook hasn't devoted much space to a profound study of the body and its intrinsic wisdom, but here, in our beginning chapter on creative vocal life, we will begin with an emphasis on "body support." Within our frame of reference, nonvocal physical life involves a "self-use" sensing of the neurological and emotional experiencing systems—the use of the eyes, face, smile, gestures, body rhythm, body balance, and body humor (you can probably add to this list from your own experience). Body support for creative vocal life implies a perception and awareness of what it is that "turns you on" and "tunes you in" when you feel the **reality** of weightlessness, floating, or smooth-flowing currents inside your body; or when your body experiences "inner sparks," humor-sensing, electricity, or childlike eagerness; or when your muscle-yawning strength and power, your ecstasy, or your inner vivid intensity pervades and courses through your body. From what you have already learned in earlier chapters about breathing, body postures, the dynamics of relaxation, relaxer-energizers, and the art of resting (and, perhaps, some familiarity with

my text *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body*), you should be ready to engage the creative process of "general exploring and discovery."

Discovering Your Inner Environment

EXPERIMENT 1: EXPERIENCING CREATIVE VOCAL LIFE THROUGH BUOYANCY NRG[1]

- Select one of the short exploration selections that appear later in this chapter, familiarize yourself with your selection, and keep it ready.
- Warm up with the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz; feel the buzzes humming warmly and gently inside you. Close your eyes and feel the buzz radiating within you from your head and face down to your toes. Hum on the violin, viola, oboe, and viola and violin combined. Feel yourself "filling up your tank" and "warming up your motor" with your humming.
- Find a blindfold.[2]
- Shift your body into a wafting mode, and get as close to a floating, buoyant body expressiveness as you can.
- Waft down to a sitting, lying, or kneeling position on a mat or carpeted floor, put on your blindfold, and remember your poetic text. Begin a smooth-flowing body motion, such as swaying and weaving, wafting and waving and slightly rolling; feel like a sailboat on calm, smooth, undulating waters.
- Whenever the spirit moves you, let the lines of your poetic text come sailing through on that sailboat—invest the words with this inner body motion, rhythm, and calm gentle legato energy. Experience the difference between a *rising float* (balloon), an even, *level float* (sailboat); and a *settling-down float* (leaf drifting to the earth).
- Repeat this experience—the first time in a sailboat, the second time in a gondola, and the third time perhaps on a magic carpet—so that each time your text reveals a different experience.

If vocal life is to be an organic experience, you must feel it. You must feel it as an activity within yourself, and you must feel an involvement in this activity.

[1]For all body expressiveness such as buoyancy, potency, and radiancy NRGs, refer to my book *Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body* (1981; distributed by Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance, Claremont, CA).

[2]Please note that closing your eyes is not a substitute for using a blindfold in these general creative explorations. Although closing your eyes certainly turns you inward to see and feel your vast kaleidoscopic inner space, the blindfold tends to release and liberate you to fly through that misty, multivaried inner atmosphere—to wander innocently and outrageously through your inner wilderness.

EXPERIMENT 2: EXPERIENCING CREATIVE VOCAL LIFE THROUGH POTENCY NRG

You're still blindfolded and on the mat or carpeted floor:

- Your body has shifted into a state of potency NRG; you feel invigorated and strengthened. Experience the muscle yawning of a cat.
- Feel a powerful body expansion. You want to stretch your muscles, but you yawn them instead. It is positively exhilarating. It is sheer physical ecstasy!
- In the midst of this catlike muscle-yawning power, release the lines of your text. Do it three times, using three different styles or interpretations—as a cat waking up on a warm window sill, as a giant balloon floating heavenward in a parade, or as if you were walking underwater or against a powerful but "pleasure-feeling" warm wind.

Each time you release the lines of your text, be sure to retain and maintain the vigor, quality, and vivid expressiveness of your varied vocal- and **body-support NRGs.**

EXPERIMENT 3: EXPERIENCING CREATIVE VOCAL LIFE THROUGH RADIANCY NRG

You're still blindfolded and on the mat or carpeted floor:

- Your body feels alive with a brilliant radiancy, an inner vibrato, a staccato syncopation. It might feel like little sparks are darting throughout your body; like an internal jitterbug dance; like a humor-sensing "Charlie-Chaplin feel." Or it might feel like an enthusiastic trembling, a quivering childlike eagerness, or a cold shivering.
- While maintaining this body-radiancy, let the lines of your text crackle, vibrate, and sparkle through to reflect how your body feels inside.
- As you explore the experiment another two or three times, be sure to vary the nerve-tingling or humor-sensing or innocent, gleeful, childlike expectation or vibratory sparks in your body support. Make sure you feel this body-support NRG before, during, and after the release of text.

Don't listen to yourself—just do it! Don't be concerned with the "outside" at this time; your ears and eyes are responding to your vast and almost mysterious inner space. It is pure "self-to-self" behavior, not "self-to-other" at this point. Besides, your ear is never a reliable judge unless you are listening and responding to outside cues, signals, or happenings. So visualize, look, hear, taste, and touch only within your inside environment. Your blindfold will help you ignore, for the present, any cues that might be coming from the outside environment.

"Vocal life" cannot be worn like a cloak, to be put on or taken off as the whim strikes you. As part of the higher or deeper trinity (physical life, vocal life, and emotional life), it is as much an inner energy as is emotion; it is as

much a function of the body as is gesture. If vocal life is to be an organic experience, you must feel it as a truly private and intimate personal involvement—you must feel your inner NRGs instinctively, spontaneously. Think of this organic experience as "inner sight-reading" and "intuitive image-feeding"—a sort of "organic improvising." I call it "experiencing the feel in order to feel the experience"; *it must not involve any preparation or previous contemplation.* You must feel it as a spontaneous, instinctive activity within yourself; it is a bioneural response to your involvement in this activity.

EXPLORATION I: EXPLORING THE VOCAL NRGs THROUGH BODY-SUPPORT NRG

Remain blindfolded and on the mat or carpeted floor. With your selected text:

- Choose any one or a combination of body-support NRGs from the three preceding experiments, but be quite clear about which body NRG (or combination) you've chosen.
- Think back to the vocal NRG states and decide which one you're inclined to start with. Is it consonant NRG? tonal NRG? structural NRG? No detailed or concentrated treatment of the vocal NRG—just a "taste," just a "seasoning" of it, just enough to feel a "direction" with it?
- Establish your body-support environment. Live and move in that climate for a minute or two, and enjoy your body behavior in that environment.
- Rather than letting your text simply release itself, this time send and communicate a message.
- Do this at least three times, but each time be sure to change the climate of your body support so that you evoke different communicating experiences.
- Do the same text with each vocal NRG, accompanied and shadowed by a different body-support NRG, and feel the added taste and essence of each vocal NRG.
- Now use any body support, and accommodate all the vocal NRGs as the spirit moves you. Use the vocal NRGs as a trinity-NRG experience—as if the consonant, tonal, and structural NRGs were moving and functioning arm in arm. Experience this application three different times in the three different body environments. Don't be at all concerned about "doing it right"; every exploration done as genuinely as possible will be valuable and informative and will increase your skills, your imagination, and your unique creativity.

Give yourself the joy of discovery. It is indeed both a labor of love and a love of labor!

Short Selections for General Exploration

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
So long attended thee.

—From William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*

O, mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down and this unnatural scene
They laugh at.

—From William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*

Now entertain conjecture of a time
When creeping murmur and the poring dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have.

—From William Shakespeare, *Othello*

What fire is in my ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?

—From William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*

I, an itching palm!
You know that you are Brutus that speak this
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Do not think so; you shall not find it so:
And God forgive them that so much have sway'd
Your majesty's good thoughts away from me!

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry IV*

Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humor . . .

—From William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

Why do you say that you kissed the earth on which I walked?
I ought to be killed. I am so tired.

—From Anton Chekov, *Sea Gull*

All right, let's talk. Let's talk about my radiant and beautiful life. Well, where shall we begin?

—From Anton Chekov, *Sea Gull*

When I think of my calling, I'm no longer afraid of life.

—From Anton Chekov, *Sea Gull*

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:
Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

—From the Bible

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

—From William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

I'm sure if we peeked into your past,
You'd be caught with your robes askew a few times.

—From Jack Richardson, *The Prodigal*

You're a beautiful furry wildcat, that's what you are!

—From Anton Chekov, *Uncle Vanya*

Ay, but to die and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot.

—From William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

My smooth words built a circle of sharp stakes
That even that great beast could not leap over.

—From Robert Bly, *The House of Atreus*

Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!

—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Discovering Your Unique Interpretation and Artistry

During the next stage of the general exploration process, you will be working with your vocal NRGs more definitively, with more imagery. You'll be

more interinvolved with the different qualities of each NRG state, which should lead to deeper sensing, perceiving, and responding. You will learn to "taste" the "sound-feel" of the words with more relish and to "touch" the music of the consonants more evocatively.

You are becoming more intimately involved with the physical behavior of vocal life; you now have something to "chew on." You're now enjoying the "verbal wine" as it goes down and responding to the exciting music and rhythms more provocatively. However, don't just look and feel for the vocal rhythms, effects, and power; don't experience sound imitating emotion—instead, *experience sound inspiring and creating emotion!*

EXPLORATION II: EXPLORING YOUR VOCAL NRGs TO REVEAL INNER IMAGES

- Select a four-line poetic text, and become familiar with it.
- With your blindfold in place and yourself on a mat or carpeted floor, warm up with the *Y*-buzz, +*Y*-buzz, and gentle Calling.
- Select your body-support NRG, and work with it. Is it the floating support? Is it the powerful muscle-yawn support? Is it the sparklike, humor-sensing, or childlike-eagerness body support?
- Decide on which vocal NRG to use, and feel that you are indeed leading and steering with that same vocal NRG to discover, reveal, and release your inner images—your "subtext" tones, sensations, and emotions. Explore this three times, each time using a different body-support NRG.
- Now, with your blindfold still on, do the same for the other two vocal NRGs—each leading with its own NRG mode and quality, each with its own style, character, and spirit. Explore each vocal NRG three times, using a different body-support NRG each time. *Do not be bound by the context of your material* if a particular NRG state evokes an unexpected emotion or interpretation, and it surely will; welcome it as new discovery or as a possible subtext resource. With your blindfold on, these general explorations are "self-to-self" events—that is, "self" to your own inner universe.

You need not mark or specifically search for all the individual structural, consonant, or tonal vocal opportunities, *but you do want to lead and be physically, vocally, and emotionally affected by the particular vocal and body-support NRGs being used.*

EXPLORATION III: ADVANCED EXPLORING OF YOUR VOCAL NRGs TO CREATE YOUR UNIQUE ARTISTRY

- Now that you have explored the individual vocal NRGs for various images, subtexts, and effects, remove your blindfold, stand up if you wish, and do a freewheeling exploration using any or all of the vocal NRGs and any or all of

the body-support NRGs with the fullest freedom, spontaneity, and imagery. You're on your own! Lead with whichever vocal NRG suits you at the moment. The only proviso is to *always* stay connected viscerally, instinctively, affectively, and provocatively with a leading vocal NRG and to *never* lose engagement with the other two vocal NRGs. With your blindfold off, you are now exploring "self-to-other"—that is, "self" to the outside world.

- Now, explore through the combined NRG qualities *your own interpretation,* your own choices, carrying your own creative imagery and artistry. Supported by the two NRG trinities (vocal and body) you are now exploring text and probing choices in anticipation of the rehearsal experience; you are now ready to link prerehearsal creative exploring to formal-rehearsal testing and applying.

Additional Selections for General Exploration

Following are three- to six-line suggested selections for you to explore and discover; but don't hesitate to find your own! Keep in mind that if you explore the text freely with your voice and your body, without fear of appearing silly or wrong, the result, hopefully, will sometimes be unorthodox, sometimes even a little eccentric, but you will find in these experiments unexpected meanings and interpretations. You will be exploring the full potentialities of your body-voice and acquiring a physical sense-memory of range that you can utilize to its fullest capacity.

You must use each energy with a complete awareness of and a complete involvement in the emotional nuances created by the sound. Never use your voice by rote: let it be part of the searching process—a search for sounds, moods, rhythms, emotions, and meanings; a search for *new* behavioral sensations, and the facile diffusion of old patterns. Be very sensitive to even the slightest suspicion of repetition or of following any kind of pattern, for that will immediately destroy your original and unique creativity.

Enjoy these explorations! Don't shy away from the outrageous or lose your curiosity regarding them. At the same time, *never distort or regiment them into preconceived or habit-patterned, imitative, mechanistic exercises;* these are actor's explorations in search of unrevealed subtext, yet "unborn" inner images, and brand new discoveries. The search requires a constant connection with your innocent curiosity and your healthy, vulnerable imagination and innovative originality. Surprise, excitement, and unanticipated energy surges with them.

I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,

I had as lief not be, as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

What! Were you snarling all before I came,
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?
—From William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
Knew you not Pompey?
—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Why give you me this shame?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flow'ry tenderness? If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride,
And hug it in my arms.
—From William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

A wicked day, and not a holy day!
What hath this day deserv'd? What hath it done
That it in golden letters should be set
Among the high tides in the calendar?
—From William Shakespeare, *King John*

I spoke so many empty words
Words of love and my heart a cinder of hate.
Now I throw them all to the ground and think no shame on it.
The gods know how long this was in coming,
How many times he earned his due.
—From Robert Bly, *The House of Atreus*

O, sir! you are old:
Nature in you stands on the very verge

Of her confine; you should be rul'd and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than yourself.

—From William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

I acted badly.
Didn't know what to do with my hands,
how to stand on the stage,
how to control my voice.
You've no idea what it feels like
to know that you are acting badly.

—From Anton Chekov, *Sea Gull*

What! dost thou turn away and hide thy face?
I am no loathsome leper; look on me.
What! art thou, like the adder, waxen deaf?
Be poisonous too and kill thy forlorn queen.

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry VI,* Part 2

What are they dragging through the streets
They carry stakes but what's impaled on those stakes
Why do they hop what are they dancing for
Why are they racked with laughter

—From Peter Weiss, *Marat-Sade*

You, yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm;
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To underservers.

—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Fond? were you fond?
Oh, if only I'd been fond,
and not lost,
not damned,
past saving in love.

—From N. C. Hunter,
A Day by the Sea

Sir,
I am about to weep; but, thinking that
We are a queen, or long have dream'd so, certain
The daughter of a king, my drops of tears
I'll turn to sparks of fire.

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*

Do you know what it is that makes people grow older than their years?
It's not hard work,
it's not even failure.
It's shame, disgust with one's self, living vulgarly—

—From N. C. Hunter, *A Day by the Sea*

Go; speak not to me; even now be gone.
O! go not yet. Even thus two friends condemn'd
Embrace and kiss, and take ten thousand leaves,
Loather a hundred times to part than die.
Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee!

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry IV,* Part 2

You have found your path;
you know which way you are going.
But I'm still whirled about in a maze of dreams and images,
not knowing what it is all about and who wants it.
I have no faith, and I do not know what my calling is.

—From Anton Chekov, *Sea Gull*

A widow cries; be husband to me, heavens!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace; but, ere sunset,
Set armed discord 'twixt these perjur'd kings!
Hear me! Hear me!

—From William Shakespeare, *King John*

You're shaking as if you were cold!
It's all right little orphan.
God is merciful.

A hot drink and you'll be all right.
Don't take it to heart so, little orphan.

—From Anton Chekov, *Uncle Vanya*

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

—From Martin Luther King's speech in Washington, D.C., August 27, 1963

This exploration process applies to any and all texts, whether classical or contemporary, comedy, farce, or tragedy. Feel free to add your own choices to these selections and to those in the next chapter. If you are working on a particular play, select some part of the text and explore with that—at least experimentally.

BRIDGE

Our general exploration of creative vocal life is a logical bridge to and natural preparation for the more finite skills of specific exploration in Chapter 10. Go to it!

CHAPTER 10

Exploring Creative Vocal Life: Specific Exploring and Discovering

Enhancing Your Newfound Skills and Creativity in the Advanced Exploration Process

When you were working with consonant NRG in Chapter 5, you learned that sustainable consonant instruments are marked with a double underscore and percussive consonant instruments with a single underscore. In Chapter 6, you learned that the tonal vowel is identified by a *Y* or a heavy dot (•); please note in the following experiment that the dot is also used to designate Call words or syllables. And in Chapter 7, you saw that the structural vowel is marked with a horizontal arc (⌒).

stône stoned stȯne

These symbols[1] distinguish the special consonant, tonal, and structural opportunities for specifically *playing and feeling* these vocal NRGs with particular emphasis, inflection, stress, accent, intonation, rhythm, sustention, and so on. They also signal opportunities for unique (rather than familiar) vocal and body expressiveness—for risk taking, for intrinsic image gestation, and for image creation. In vocal life, such opportunities should not be overlooked or neglected. Even when several actors explore the same material, they each produce unique experiences. Although you may not be aware of it, it is your personal life experience, your creativity, your musical facility, and your emotional flexibility that take advantage of these "opportunity dynamics." To illustrate, the following line has been marked three times, each time distinguishing a different vocal NRG.

[1]These diacritical scoring symbols work best for this textbook; however, if other markings are more suited to your personal purpose and preference, please feel free to use them.

Identifying Consonant NRG

Take all my dreams but how dare you touch my soul.

Identifying Structural NRG

Take âll mŷ dreams but hôw dare yoū touch mŷ soūl.

Identifying Tonal NRG

Ṫake ȧll my dreȧms but how dȧre you touch my soȧul.

EXPERIMENT 1: EXPLORING THE VOCAL NRGs INDIVIDUALLY AND COMBINED

Let's explore the vocal NRG opportunities in the following extract from Shakespeare's *Richard II.*

• First, explore the consonant NRG opportunities in the following lines. Remember that the consonant instruments are playable when (1) they are the final sound of a word, (2) they precede another consonant, and (3) they precede a pause.[2] Notice that some words are linked ("are_amazed" and "thought_ourself"). Although you are exploring with only one vocal NRG at a time, do not neglect sensing your body NRG, as well as the other two vocal NRGs.

We are_amazed; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought_ourself thy lawful king:
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their_awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show_us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from_our stewardship;

• Next explore tonal NRG in the same lines. The tonal NRG opportunities stem from the Call words *h'LLO, aWAY, unTIL, unEARTH, it'sGOOD, aGAIN, b'WARE.* The Call and *Y*-buzz opportunities are marked with a dot; the *Y* beneath the word is to remind you of its low-pitched tonal NRG. The Call on *b'WARE* (as in "dare") gets excellent tonal NRG on the higher pitches.

We are amȧzed; and thus lȯng have we stȯȯd
To watch the fearful bȅnding of thy knee,

[2]Not every single vocal opportunity has been marked; prepositions, articles, and conjunctions are often passed over to avoid artificiality, unless they are invested with special meaning or effect. As you begin your specific exploring and discovering, please remember that none of the markings are intended as suggested interpretations but rather as *freewheeling, unanticipated, risk-taking exploration.*

Becaȧuse wẹ̇ thoȯught ourṡelf thy laẇful kẏng:
And ȯif wẹ̇ bẹ̇, how dȧre thy joints forgẹt
To pȧy their ȧwful dȯuty to our prẹsẹnce?
Ïf wẹ̇ bẹ̇ not, shȯw us the hand of Gȯd
That hath dȯismiss'd us from our stẹẇardshȯp;

• Now explore the lines for structural NRG opportunities. Remember to maintain a strong inverted-megaphone shape when voicing the structural vowels.

We âre amazed; and thus lông hâve we stood
To wâtch the fearful bending of thŷ knee,
Becaȣse we thoȣght oȣrself thŷ lâwful king:
Ȧnd if we be, hôw dare thŷ joȣnts forget
To pay their âwful dûty to oȣr presence?
If we be nôt, shôw us the hând of Gôd
Thât hâth dismiss'd us frôm oȣr stêwardship;

• Finally, experience the vocal trinity in these lines. Make any choices you wish, but always maintain a trinity of consonant, tonal, and structural NRG. Be sure that one of the vocal NRGs "leads," with the other two following right at the "leader's" heels (see Explorations I, II, and III later in this chapter). Feel free to mix these choices at any time. Consider this version as a "self-to-other" exploration.

We are amazed; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king:
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship;

EXPERIMENT 2: DEVELOPING A FACILITY FOR SIGHT-READING VOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

• Study the symbols used in Experiment 1.

• Use these symbols as notations for your own spontaneous, virginal, creative opportunities. Practice by marking some of the selections in Chapter 9.

• Choose any of the three- to six-line selections from Chapter 9, make four

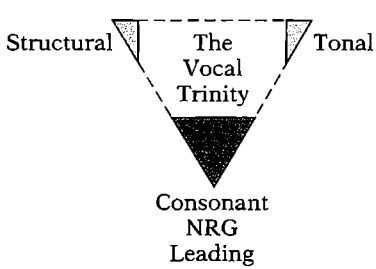
copies of the selection, and work on developing a facility for spontaneously sight-reading vocal NRG opportunities. Start with any vocal NRG (my suggestion is to start with consonants), and don't forget your body-support NRG!

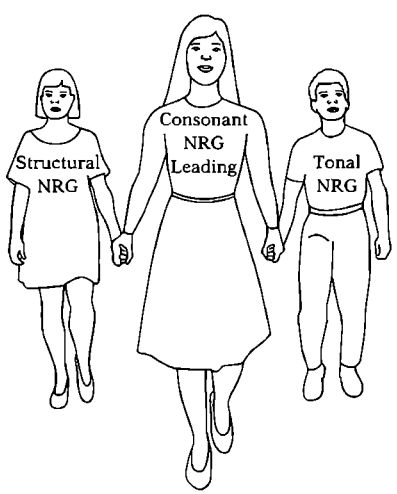
EXPLORATION I: COMMUNICATE THROUGH THE CONSONANTS (CONSONANT NRG)

When consonant NRG leads, tonal and structural NRGs follow. Picture a parent crossing the street leading her two children by the hand—never letting go! The vocal NRGs as a trinity always support each other and synergize each other.

When consonant NRG leads, tonal action is confined primarily to the range of the *Y*-buzz focus, but the spectrum can include gentle whispering, rich diluted tonal resonance, and even some occasional concentrated tone on a low pitch. The consonants naturally minimize structural NRG, especially when they provoke an ominous, conspiratorial expression, but an optimal form and facial posture should nevertheless always be maintained as part of the trinity dynamics.

- If you have not already done so, begin by reading the selection you chose in Experiment 2 for literal meaning, but don't let this meaning become the guide to your vocal exploration. Simply use it as a springboard.
- Experiment with the material primarily to get the consonant *feel* and to sense where the real opportunities lie; while doing this, you will be familiarizing yourself with the text without memorizing it mechanically. Mark the consonant symbols wherever you feel it is necessary to do so. A reminder or two is always helpful, but please remember that "playing" the consonants so as to saturate the word with unplanned, unfamiliar, yet honest behavior is the "actor's adventure" you are reaching for. You should be in constant search of that adventure: you are wandering through a wilderness of feelings, sensations, and





perceptions, yet you remain constantly alert, constantly inquisitive, constantly in a flight of fancy.

• Taste, touch, and smell the consonant opportunities, but don't *listen* to them. Just *feel* them with your nerves, your guts, your spirit, your heartbeat. Don't concentrate on particular word meanings; let your feeling of the NRGs provide you with unexpected subtext meanings.

• Do the exploration three or four times—each time with a different "menu," a different venue, a different body-support NRG!

Remember that when you are wandering through wilderness you are picking up all sorts of strange things you may never have imagined, tasted, touched, seen, or heard before; but they are, nevertheless, unique, curious, quaint, powerful, mysterious, or delightful. All these sensations will spontaneously occur to you through the playing, caressing, or reaching out to the available opportunities.

You will find yourself experimenting with new kinds of rhythms, tempos, and melody—an interplay between the dynamic tempos tapped out by the percussive consonants, the sustained legato of the melodic consonants, and the clear, cutting sibilance provided by the sound-effect consonants. You can experience an intimate intensity, a quiet excitement, a subdued persuasiveness. A light, tripping, percussive use of consonant NRG can also lead your vocal characterization to an impish, mischievous lyricism. You can find quick comic rhythms, whispered conspiracies, light social insincerities, as well as crisp incisiveness, cynicism, and anger as you begin to cut and bite with the consonants. But most importantly, if you play and fully exploit the consonants, you will find your own inspirations—you will find in the random results many potential subtleties of characterization spanning the range from sudden whimsy to tragic bitterness. Your own emotional experiencing system will be challenged to uniquely and virginally fuel and feed your consonant NRG's vocal life.

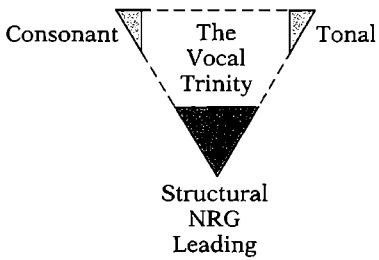
EXPLORATION II: COMMUNICATE THROUGH THE VOWELS (STRUCTURAL NRG)

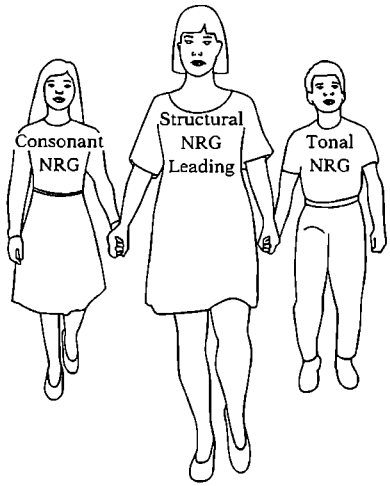
When structural NRG leads, you must also feel the resonant sensation of tonal NRG in its diffused, dilute form. Welcome the occasional Call essence that drops in periodically during emphatic accents on such vowels as #1 and #21 and the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz. Remember that although the esthetic role of the consonants is played down in this exploration, good consonant NRG is always necessary for intelligibility.

• Now do essentially the same thing with structural NRG as you did with consonant NRG in the preceding exploration. Use the same text, but explore a different wilderness.

• Mark the text, and explore it with structural NRG leading but with the vocal trinity alive.

You may experience all of the following qualities: With the full inverted megaphone, you may find yourself singing on the vowels, experi-



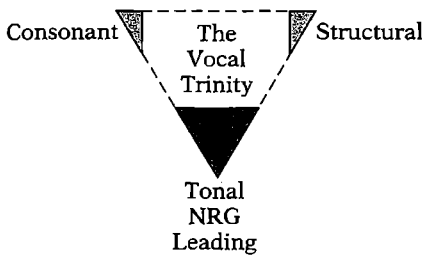


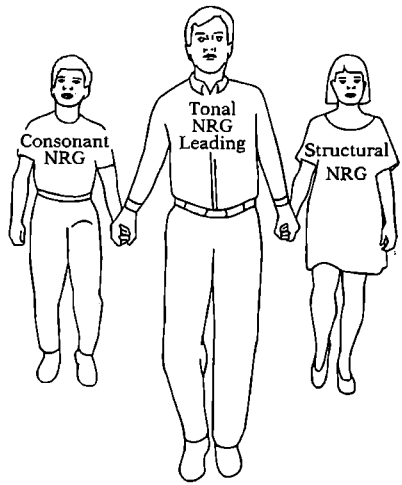
encing all their poetry, intonations, colors, and inflections. At the same time the use of the dilute or diffused tonal NRG might produce feelings of quiet confidence and projection, gregariousness, expulsive emphasis, a warm enthusiasm, a rounded, gentle passion quietly but firmly contained. With continued exploration, you will find a much more colorful "palette" than mere words can describe. Vowels shaped by facial posture can be genial and sympathetic in sound—like speaking to a child—and can also be outgoing enough for the special lyric qualities of certain kinds of poetry and storytelling. You may experience a reminiscent quality—like the communication of memories. The use of structural NRG can induce a warm, relaxed feeling. The colors it evokes might be soft, warm, or even rich pastels. The tempo may be fluid and slow since structural vowels are often *played* with more sustention and fuller emphasis. When used alone—without consonant NRG to stir it up and without tonal NRG to carry it off on flights of excitement and potency—structural NRG turns into expository or declamatory speech, which may sometimes seem a bit conservative or formal, but it can also soar on wings of spoken song or poetic fancy.

- Do this exploration three or four times, each time using a different menu, a different venue. Don't forget your body-support NRG throughout, and keep the "fueling and feeding" faucet open and always running.

EXPLORATION III: COMMUNICATE THROUGH THE CALL FOCUS (TONAL NRG)

When tonal NRG leads, structural NRG is so much a part of the form for the Call focus that you cannot leave it behind. Because the full Call opportunities





tend to modify and even distort the vowels, you will need good consonant NRG to maintain intelligibility. The very nature of the Call puts distance between the speaker and the listener—if not distance in space, then a distance in station or attitude.

- Focus now on the sometimes bold and vigorous, the sometimes "healthy-angered," and the sometimes firmly gentle tonal NRG leading the vocal trinity.
- Prepare your body-support climate and environment.
- Is your exploration turning you into a gypsy? a troubadour? an adventurer? a cynic? a risk taker? Are you outrageous? aggressive? passionate? ecstatic? Be an honest, liberated actor while going through the same regime as used in the two preceding explorations—mark, sight-read, then *do!*
- Remember to involve yourself and immerse yourself in genuine, wonderful Call-focus NRG—but remember also to avoid reaching for the highest pitches in your vocal range, or the loudest.
- Do this exploration three or four times—each time using a different menu, different venue, different climate, different body-support NRG, so as to discover and reveal different personalities and different attitudes and emotion.

The Call is explosive speech; it is enthusiastic, exhilarating—the voice of command. Be "on the offensive" with a full range of volume and pitch for exuberance, anger, hysteria, or passion. You can roar and shout; you can laugh; you can cry. You may feel a wild Dionysian freedom surging through *you* as well as through the words; you may feel rising despair, a mournful keening. The Call focus is also diverse: There is a definitive emphasis and confident security in the calmer, more cultivated Call, especially in the low and middle-pitch range, along with the sharply concentrated *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz. There is mystery, too, in the quiet Call, which can be gentle, loving, light, high, or ghostlike; it searches, questions, reaches out. Concentrated tonal NRG brings

out the greatest strength and the greatest tonal variety and contrast. It stretches sound and focuses it; at the same time, it contributes to the feeling of great energy as well as dynamic relaxation.

EXPLORATION IV: COMMUNICATE THROUGH THE VOCAL TRINITY

• Communicate and perform with your own unencumbered, undirected, indulgently personal trinity exploration—with full options! Explore the trinity to reveal your own interpretations—your own physical, emotional, and vocal expressiveness. (This exploration is, of course, a "self-to-other" event.)

• *Do not* mark, read, or repeat your selected text; however, *do* continue to search, question, wonder, probe, but not yet to finally mold, form, or choose. During the first or second excursion through this trinity event, you will find yourself wandering at random down the paths of the three NRGs; they will intersect and lead you back to each other. As you become totally involved with the moment-to-moment reality, let the NRG you intuitively feel do the leading; let the interpretation and the use of the NRGs remain free and unstructured; let yourself wander—with awareness—through wilderness to find new insights as you go; let your vocal life both inspire and express your emotional life. Go with the physical flow! *Always* lead with a physical sensation or action, whether it be with your eyes, your head, your gestures, your breath, your sensual rhythm, your vocal tone, your body movement. Be aware that your healthy body organism is in a constant state of gentle turbulence and motion—which I refer to as *body spirit!* After experiencing your third or fourth trinity event, you will know you're becoming eminently ready, willing, and eager to bring what you now have to rehearsal, to the director, to the play!

By now, your three exploratory interpretations of the individual vocal NRGs should have shown you the infinite possibilities of vocal life and the individual colors and dimensions given the words by each of the NRGs. By putting them all together, you can see how the complexity of the character grows.

As you gain confidence with these explorations, you will realize how the trinity of NRGs is a totality—one energy easily leading into or blending with another. When tonal NRG leads, the structural form is also constant; when structural NRG leads, many accented syllables fall into natural Call focus for emphasis; and consonant NRG plays in and out between the other NRGs, adding percussion and melody, color and vitality, rhythm and intelligibility. This is the time for exploring still greater variations and uncovering still more ideas; it is a step toward fashioning your choices as an actor and providing the materials with which the director, too, can create.

Take a risk! Perhaps the most devastating thing that can be said about an actor is, "he never took a risk." If you never take a risk, if you never violate the rules of taste, order, or form, you will never truly investigate the range of possibilities within a role or, more importantly, within yourself. The new, the exciting, and the true often lie *outside* the accepted boundaries.

Searching for Opposites

As you let your vocal life freely explore the text and your own emotional life, many different sides of a character, many unexpected glimpses into his or her depths, will begin to evolve. You may find cruelty in Hamlet and kindness in Iago, petulance in Juliet and beauty in Mistress Quickly. *Don't look for reinforcement of emotion that seems implicit in the text.* Instead, look for possible contradictions: the quick comic rhythm where the meaning is sinister or the tone of caress is an expression of hatred. A search for opposites can uncover and help create subtle nuances that will escape the actor who approaches the text directly. If you cannot quite find the precise quality of a word or speech or scene, try the opposite of what you think that quality is. Work on this opposite, and then return to the original quality, which may surprise you as being more appropriate than you first thought. Sometimes you may even come upon a quality you had never thought to look for. Moreover, when opposites seem equally valid, you will gain a better grasp of a character's real contradictions.

The search for opposites is particularly adapted to breaking preconceived patterns. If in reading a strongly rhythmic text, such as Elizabethan blank verse, you find it difficult to free yourself from the internal rhythm of the meter, you might try an opposing rhythm. If the accent is on the second beat, explore the effects of accenting every third beat or every first beat. Play with it like a musician exploring the quality of a fox-trot melody by experimenting with it as a waltz or rhumba. One energy can also break the emotional pattern of another: try suppressing the intense emotion of a Call with sharp consonant NRG or taming the Call with a more confident surfacing of structural NRG.

Uncovering the Subtext

By alternating the same speech repeatedly with consonant, structural, or tonal NRG—thereby creating different psychological atmospheres, moods, vocal music, and inner imaging each time—you can illuminate the subtext of the lines, the subconscious of the character, and even possibly your own subconscious. As you explore all the possible ways of expressing something, you are at the same time becoming more acutely aware of all the possible ways of feeling. Now, when you synthesize the energies and put together the insights you have gotten from each exploration, you can create original, valid total characterizations that contain the complexity and the inevitability of life on a larger scale.

Exploring the text of a role with each of the vocal NRGs is not just an

early training exercise; it can be a useful approach throughout an actor's career. With experience, you will learn to shortcut some steps mentally, but this basic use of the NRGs *with true involvement* will always uncover unsuspected truths. Not only is it useful for getting a thorough grounding in a role early in rehearsal, but a quick return to it now and then can break undesirable patterns that may accumulate in rehearsal or performance. It may add new insights and restore vitality when your playing has gone stale through custom—although custom should never have that effect if you maintain your involvement with the two trinities: structural-tonal-consonant NRG and vocal-physical-emotional Life.

Don't Listen to Yourself—Don't Intellectualize!

You have already been cautioned against listening to yourself—against using the ear as a guide to your own tonal quality—but neither can you create an organic vocal life by thinking the sound first. Indeed, listening and thinking deemphasize the true role of vocal life and can even block out a genuine, productive vocal life altogether. If real vocal life is to emerge, *it must grow out of the moment, the result of your intrinsic feeling of the action.* Vocal life acts in synergy with emotional life and physical life, and each of the NRG states enhances the others to create a single spontaneous gestalt effect made up of a lot of smaller gestalt effects.

The perceptual insight into vocal life involves the added perception and control of emotional and physical behavior. When vocal life takes its proper place in this trinity, it both expresses and helps to create emotional life; it becomes a discriminating force that explores the possibilities and determines the degree and quality of an actor's emotional life onstage. Just as you can be moved emotionally by a piece of music, so can you find new feelings, new images, and new meanings in the dynamics of your own voice and speech as you experience the music and the life of the consonants, the vowels, and the bone-conducted tonal resonance.

EXPLORATION V: PROBING AND PLUMBING THE DEPTHS OF ADVANCED EXPLORATION

- With what you've learned so far, explore the selections in the following section and let the sensations you experience lead you where they will, remembering always to stay with them, to be aware, to be involved. Reexperience each rendition several times, to explore all the parameters and all the poten-

tials and exploit all the variations of each energy, including the nonvocal body NRGs.

- Concentrate on letting an understanding of the text grow out of your vocal life rather than letting your tonal quality be predetermined by an intellectually perceived meaning in the text. Only through the internal experience of vocal life probing emotional life, can you, the actor, hope to perceive such meaning for yourself and externalize it for the audience.
- Explore some or all of the following selections regardless of the role's gender. Then find your own roles, and apply the explorations to them to your satisfaction—and to your excitation. These explorations are veritable adventures—sometimes risky, sometimes daring, sometimes outrageous. But isn't that what acting is all about? So just do it, and enjoy the "happening."

Suggested Selections for Specific Exploration

RICHARD:

We are amazed; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king:
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship;
For well we know, no hand of blood and bone
Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,
Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.
And though you think that all, as you have done,
Have torn their souls by turning them from us,
And we are barren and bereft of friends;
Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,
Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf,
Armies of pestilence, and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my head,
And threat the glory of my precious crown.
Tell Bolingbroke—for yond methinks he stands—
That every stride he makes upon my land

Is dangerous treason: he is come to open
The purple testament of bleeding war;
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons
Shall ill become the flower of England's face,
Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace
To scarlet indignation, and bedew
Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood.

—From William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (act 3, scene 2)

OPHELIA:

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers quite, quite down!
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music'd vows;
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

——From William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (act 3, scene 1)

HAMLET:

Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba?
What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba

That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty and appall the free;
Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing . . .

—From William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (act 2, scene 2)

VIOLA:

(I would)
Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
And sing them loud, even in the dead of night;
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out Olivia! O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth,
But you should pity me.

—From William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (act 1, scene 5)

His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes glow like the eyelids of the morning.
Out of his mouth go burning lamps,
And sparks of fire leap out.
Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,
As out of a seething pot or caldron.
His breath kindleth coals,
And a flame goeth out of his mouth.
In his neck remaineth strength,

And terror danceth before him.
The flakes of his flesh are joined together:
They are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

His heart is as firm as a stone;
Yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

—From the Bible, Book of Job

Beside you prone,
my naked skin finds
fault in touching.
Yet it is you
who draws away.
The tacit fact is:
the awful fear of losing
is not enough to cause
a fleeting love
to stay.

—From Maya Angelou,
"Prelude to a Parting"

There is sweet music here that softer falls than
petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls of
shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies, than tir'd
eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

—From Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Choric Song I*

OTHELLO:
It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!

It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It needs must wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more—
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love. — She wakes.

—From William Shakespeare, *Othello* (act 5, scene 2)

ANTONY:
O! pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers;
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy—
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue—
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
'Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,

That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds:
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry Havoc, and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

—From William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* (act 3, scene 1)

LADY MACBETH:

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood;
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry 'hold, hold!

——From William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (act 1, scene 5)

RICHARD:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose

The deputy elected by the Lord:
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.

—From William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (act 3, scene 2)

QUEEN MARGARET:
Alas, poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee, grieve to make me merry, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient man? thou should'st be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou wouldst be fee'd,[3] I see, to make me sport;
York cannot speak unless he wears a crown—
A crown for York!—and lords, bow low to him.
Hold you his hands whilst I do set it on.

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry VI*, Part 3 (act 1, scene 4)

HENRY V:
Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favor'd rage;
. . . . . .
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide;

[3]*Fee'd:* paid.

Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height!
On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!

. . . . . .

Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war! And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry "God for Harry, England, and St. George!"

—From William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (act 3, scene 1)

GONERIL:
This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech
You understand my purposes aright;
As you are old and reverent, should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires,
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or brothel
Than a great palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy; be thou desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train,
And the remainder that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
That know themselves and you.

—From William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (act 1, scene 4)

OTHELLO:
Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't;
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdu'd eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus . . . [*stabs himself and falls on Desdemona*]
I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee; no way but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

—From William Shakespeare, *Othello* (act 5, scene 2)

CLEOPATRA:
Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither. This mortal house I'll ruin,
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir, that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court,
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! rather, on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies

Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains.

—From William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* (act 5, scene 2)

LEONTES:

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
Of laughter with a sigh? — a note infallible
Of breaking honesty—horsing foot on foot?
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes
Blind with the pin and web but theirs, theirs only,
That would unseen be wicked? is this nothing?
Why, then the world and all that's in't is nothing;
The covering sky is nothing; Bohemia nothing;
My wife is nothing; nor nothing have these nothings,
If this be nothing.

—From William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (act 1, scene 2)

HERMIONE:

Sir, spare your threats:
The bug which you would fright me with I seek.
To me can life be no commodity:
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour
I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went. My second joy
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence
I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort,
Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast
The innocent milk in it most innocent mouth,
Hal'd out to murder: myself on every post
Proclaim'd a strumpet; with immodest hatred
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs

To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried
Here to this place, i' the open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,
That I should fear to die? Therefore, proceed.
But yet hear this; mistake me not; no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigour and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle:
Apollo be my judge!

—From William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (act 3, scene 1)

CONSTANCE:

And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven.
If that be true, I shall see my boy again;
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him: therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

. . . . . .

(Say you I am too fond of grief?)
Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,

Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
Then have I reason to be fond of grief?
Fare you well: had you such a loss as I,
I could give better comfort than you do.
I will not keep this form upon my head
When there is such disorder in my wit.
O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

—From William Shakespeare, *King John* (act 3, scene 4)

EXPLORATION VI: SCENE WORK

Exploring with a partner a scene in which you both have dialogue is the natural extension of specific vocal-life exploration and the bridge to your creative vocal life—onstage.

- Choose a scene (or use the suggested scene that follows this exploration), read it through for content, and mark it for your three specific vocal NRGs. At this point, remain open to all interpretations of the text, just as in the previous explorations.
- With blindfolds on, try a few general explorations with your partner. Remember to select your body-support NRG, and work with it. Allow some time to explore your body environment before beginning the text exploration. Then select the vocal NRG you will lead with, and begin to explore; discover, reveal, release your inner images, your subtext overtones, sensations, and emotions.

Remember that the use of blindfolds tends to intensify the inner experience; you will find that your sense of hearing is more acute. You will have to listen to your partner to stay in contact; however, *don't listen to yourself!* Stay in contact with your internal wilderness, and search for and discover sounds, moods, rhythms, meanings, and new behavioral sensations. You will be listening and hearing on the outside while feeling intuitively and sensing harmonically on the inside—a giant step in the direction of *synthesizing, synergizing,* and *synesthizing*[4] left- and right-brain dynamics.

While listening to your partner, feel free to react in your body-support NRG to whatever you hear. A certain tone may cause you to shrink away; a particular sound may draw you to your partner. You may be startled to dis-

[4]*Synesthizing:* Comes from the word *esthesia,* which means rudimentary and primitive sensation; ergo, **synesthesia** means putting together a lot of rudimentary and primitive inner sensations. For further information on synesthesia see the glossary.

cover your partner's voice coming from an entirely different part of the space! Whatever your reaction is, go with it, and allow it to feed into your next line.

Take your time! Discover the rhythm of each exploration through your body-support NRG, your vocal NRG, and your own inner sense. You may find that the tempo of the scene varies drastically from that which you initially felt on your first reading: enjoy that, go with it, explore it! It may bring new insight to the scene!

- When you have done several different general explorations, take your blindfolds off. Now, with the added element of outer sight, do a few more general explorations. As you work, keep in tune with your body-support NRG, and be clear about your vocal NRG choice. Use both to affect your partner: if you discover an element of wooing, then start your wooing with your body, and follow with your voice. If you discover anguish, then explore it fully with your voice and body, and make your partner a part of it.
- Switch now to a specific-explorations mode: be quite specific about your body-support NRG and particularly about your vocal NRG. Let your vocal NRG lead you through the text; discover how you can affect your partner with the implicit vowel, consonant, or tonal choices you have made. Remember that the other NRGs have not disappeared—they are actively supporting rather than leading. Always remember to explore with curiosity, imagination, and creativity; avoid making sound for sound's sake; don't allow yourself to become mechanistic with the exploration. You are always searching for that which *moves* your partner, pushes a little further in the direction you wish him or her to go; in short, searching allows you to achieve your instinctual direction, *whatever it happens to be at that point in the exploration.* If you are true to your instincts and respond honestly to what you are feeling, you will uncover a wealth of material about your character and your relationship with the other character.

Note: In rehearsing your general and specific explorations, avoid the slightest suggestion of separating NRGs or of depriving the use of one of the senses. Instead, strive to voluntarily and improvisationally select different paths to help you work and live through an adventure that combines *vocal, body,* and *inner life* (with all your senses, both fundamental and harmonic) into one holistic experience. You will obtain this experience whether you lead with a particular voice or body NRG over a given path on land or whether you fly with the combined trinities while ignoring the "footpaths" beneath you.

Working with body- or vocal-NRG qualities is simple if you experience them holistically.

- Still working with your partner, each of you choose a different body-support NRG, but explore the same vocal NRG. Then reverse body-support NRGs, and lead with your body NRG.
- Each of you choose the same body-support NRG, but explore a different vocal NRG. Then reverse vocal NRGs, and lead with your vocal NRG.
- Both of you choose the same body-support NRG and vocal NRG. Now lead with either body or vocal NRG.

If you were to do all the NRG combinations in both general and specific

explorations, and you did each one only once, you would discover *ninety* unique and exciting explorations of your piece of text! It's a gold mine!

- When you have done at least three specific explorations in each vocal NRG, then you are ready to try a trinity exploration with your partner. Use anything that you have discovered—and keep on discovering by varying your choices and surprising your partner, as well as yourself. *Listen to and watch your partner.* Whatever he or she does will affect you, and you must respond honestly, even if your response is to cover up what you really feel. The sky's the limit on these explorations: be bold, be daring, take a risk, and let nothing stand in your way!

Suggested Scene for Specific Exploration

KING EDWARD AND LADY GREY:

Lady Grey: Why stops my lord? Shall I not hear my task?

King: An easy task: 'tis but to love a king.

Lady Grey: That's soon perform'd, because I am a subject.

King: Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

Lady Grey: I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

King: But stay thee, 'tis the fruits of love I mean.

Lady Grey: The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

King: Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.
What love think'st thou I sue so much to get?

Lady Grey: My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;
That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

King: No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

Lady Grey: Why, then you mean not as I thought you did.

King: But now you partly may perceive my mind.

Lady Grey: My mind will never grant what I perceive
Your highness aims at, if I am aright.

King: To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

Lady Grey: To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.

King: Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

Lady Grey: Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower;
For by that loss I will not purchase them.

——From William Shakespeare, *Henry VI,* Part 3

Should your performance enjoy a successful "long run," periodic reexploring with all the NRG states can be a refreshing, refueling, and relaxing experience. It can certainly help to keep you in condition, to ward off enervation, creeping staleness, patterned performing, or even that suspicious twinge of boredom.

BRIDGE

You have now thoroughly and innovatively explored vocal life for creative functioning both onstage and offstage. You have acquired a multifaceted vocal life that can explore and communicate personality, whether it be your own personality or the assumed personality of a character in a play.

But even creative exploring is not the entire story. You must know how to *exploit* your vocal life, especially under challenging circumstances, such as performing with poor acoustics or in unusual or unfriendly performing spaces and having to convey deeply felt emotions without harming your voice. These and other issues are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

Exploiting Your Creative Vocal Life Onstage

Throughout this book, you have been working with the NRGs within yourself, exploring and acquiring the physical sensations of a number of inner dynamics, and synergizing these into an integrated skill that makes the fullest use of your vocal instrument and your communicating self. With all your skills and insights acting together, you are now ready to integrate with another larger whole consisting of other actors, the stage, the lights, the sounds, the audience—in other words, the assembled environmental stimuli of the contemporary stage world. Out of this interaction, something must be created—not just something that happens on the stage, but something that happens from the back of the house to the top of the grid as well as from backstage.

You may reasonably wonder, Will what I have learned so far be affected by this interaction? Here, then, are some of the situations you may encounter onstage and some of the ways, both specific and general, in which they might affect, and be affected by, your vocal life.

The Offstage Voice Onstage

Is there, or should there be, a difference in quality between normal conversational speech and stage speech? Is there really a difference in quality or form between dynamic communication onstage and offstage? The answers are yes and no. If, for example, the theatre space is not much larger than a full-sized living room, the answer is no; if, however it is a 700-seat house (or larger) with nooks, alcoves, and hallways, the answer is yes. Generally speaking, what passes for conversational speech and normal behavior can rarely be transferred intact to the stage, and both director and actor should beware of trying to do so, because objective reality pales and becomes dull under the brighter lights or darker moods of even the most

representational theatre. It is also true, however, that whatever goes into dynamic communication offstage is part of the actor's craft onstage; anytime you converse in a new setting with new people and attempt to communicate your feelings, enthusiasms, beliefs, you instinctively increase the creative NRG of vocal life to make for more effective communication. The stronger inflections and colors of this speech are not that different from those of the actor at work onstage.

When you speak offstage, whether in quiet conversation or calling across an open space, you instinctively match the amplitude, pitch, and intensity of your voice to the distance between yourself and the listener. When the distance is short and the speech situation is intimate, you tend to reduce to a quantitative minimum the NRGs involved; however, when the perceived distance or background interference increases, you instinctively adjust the intensity and balance of the three NRGs to compensate for these changes.

Conditions onstage at first seem quite different from the variability of everyday life; the rehearsing actor is aware that an audience in a theatre is more spread out and farther away than, say, a gathering of people in an average-size room. Nevertheless, in a full house, the actor, who has been rehearsing in an empty theatre, may feel that his voice suddenly needs a superimposed power and range. To provide this, he may resort to higher pitch levels and greater volume and thereby destroy most of the creative qualities of vocal life in order to project. To the actor, the communication with the audience is important, but to the audience, no matter how strongly it identifies with the performers, *the perceived communication should be between the actors onstage.* If this communication is conducted continually in a middle to high concentrated focus—as if across wide spaces—the stage illusion is lost.

Most of the time the acoustics of a theatre or auditorium are intended to support performers with additional reverberation, resonance, and well-structured space. Fine acoustics permit the conveyance of onstage communication across the distances of the auditorium, and the audience receives a communication that enhances what it perceives as the stage reality. If, however, the acoustical properties are very poor, if particular positionings and special stage business tend to misdirect sound for the audience, or if there are "dead spots" in the house, the actor or singer can opt for an interesting conversion device. He or she can avoid attempting to fill dead spots or avoid struggling against acoustical inequities by:

1. Visualizing the removal of the audience from the theatre proper and transferring it to her own voice's inner, three-tiered "theatre" of the mouth, face, and head. By doing this, the actor or singer can see the

audience out in front but feel and hear his or her vocal life internally. The performer can *feel* what the audience *hears;* they can feel and hear within their own *inner biophysical theatre* while seeing the audience in its own extended *outer theatre*.

2. Trusting the inner transmission feeling to the extent that if he or she has a cold and stuffy nose, he or she can keep sensing bone-transmitted inner harmonic resonating and be confident that the audience hears good bone-conducted tones rather than a muffled voice. It is as if the actor or singer plugged his or her ears to hear even better on the inside where resonance and reverberation do function wonderfully well and where there are no dead spots; think of this device as an actor's personal "virtual reality."

Even if you are performing in warm-sounding, acoustically correct surroundings, you should still rely on how and what you feel inside rather than how you are projecting to the outside. Be aware that you are intimately feeling the *quality* of your NRGs rather than hearing them as a *quantity.* Be further aware that feeling the quality of your vocal NRGs represents a unique built-in control valve that helps to free and release your physical and emotional life. Projecting and "filling up" your own inner bone-conducted theatre is much more "acoustics friendly" than the same task within the extrinsic theatre or auditorium. The former objectifies a qualitative turbulence experienced in a climate of delicate balances, of gentle colorful inner rhythms, of resilient exciting vibrations, and of ringing resonance; the latter, even at best, tends to influence and quantify effort, volume, pitch, amplitude, and forced energy.

ONSTAGE CONVERSATION ACROSS VARYING DISTANCES

For conversation at fairly close range, consonant NRG must lead, with the *Y*-buzz following closely. The voice should stay primarily in the *Y*-buzz pitch range. If a particular stage position or special stage business tends to muffle sound for the audience, then instead of resorting to volume, the actor tunes into a more vivid, concentrated *Y*-buzz timbre while, at the same time, turning up the consonant NRG.

For conversation across a full-sized room or small stage, structural NRG leads. The tonal focus is strong but spreads throughout the low and upper-middle range; an occasional low or middle Call may come through for emphasis. This conversational and relatively quiet Call quality should always be naturally available to the actor onstage as, indeed, it should be to any trained person offstage.

In a very large room (or when the listener is in another room or some

distance away outdoors), tonal NRG leads, followed closely by structural NRG. When this happens, the flexible gamut of the Call focus is brought into use as needed, including somewhat higher pitches, sustained tones, sharper accent, and increased tonal concentration. Of course, optimal consonant NRG must be constantly maintained to ensure intelligibility.

Onstage, the Call is more often employed due more to situation or character than to distance. Tonal NRG leads for excited communication, for the vigorous build, for addressing large crowds, for calling across or offstage, for creating the illusion of distance, for emotional outburst, or for projecting over other voices or noise or music. The heightened emotional quality of classical Greek and much Elizabethan drama often demands full use of the sustained Call focus. Obviously, not all plays demand such consistent intensity, but even when the intensified Call is used sparingly, the actor will find that the well-focused voice will tend, comfortably and naturally, toward lower Call quality. On the other hand, certain intense emotion or Dionysian passion might most effectively be expressed by sidestepping the easy and well-balanced Call focus and, with impunity, relying instead on a highly intensified vocal life at the extreme upper end of the tonal-vocal spectrum—and all this with full protection against strain, negative stress, or undue pressure through the inner *self-use* of our three vocal NRG states.

The sensitive actor should always avoid being pushed to what is felt as the vocal limit. He or she should always feel the accessibility of at least one more comfortable pitch or just a little more volume—but never use it. When our voice sounds as if there were no more where that came from, we are not only straining toward premature vocal fatigue and general exhaustion, but telegraphing weakness and inadequacy to the listener. In the theatre, an actor who reveals physical limits to the audience betrays unfortunate limitations and loses the chance to prevail as part of the stage illusion.

The Open Stage

A special problem in voice projection for the actor is the changing form of the stage. More and more theatres have moved toward an open stage—that is, a stage with one back wall and the audience on the three remaining sides or a stage entirely surrounded by the audience. With their backs to a large part of the audience, actors are confronted with the complex task of being audible and intelligible to all the audience while at the same time remaining real and natural; and in the relative intimacy of the open theatre, reality and naturalness are often at more of a premium than on the tradi-

tional proscenium stage. To cope with this dilemma, the actor often attempts to open his or her lips more or to project the voice more forcibly out through the mouth—both poor solutions.

Playing with much of the audience behind you may create problems for certain kinds of acting, but if you have fully assimilated the training presented here, you should have little concern about the effective functioning of your body or voice and speech on any stage. Even within a proscenium, you may find yourself far upstage facing a wall, or in a crouching or kneeling position or talking to an actor on the ground, yet you still must be clearly heard and easily understood, even in a low, quiet voice. The key is to use low, quiet tones as concentratedly as possible. Even in intimate, informal, and close-range conversation, use more of the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz tonal action with a relatively reduced inverted-megaphone shape to produce darker tonal focus sufficient for any purpose. You also need to feel the consonant NRG a little more incisively; at the same time, you also need to feel the tonal NRG a bit more vividly in the gum ridge and nasal bone. With these actions in easy, comfortable balance, the combination will enhance rather than interfere with the stage illusion.

Be aware always that the *Y*-buzz focus is a free-flowing yet extremely concentrated form of vibrating sound energy that conveys to the audience an impression of ease and intimacy. Also be aware that although you should not push for projection, for loudness, or for a "stage voice," you should also avoid *carefulness* or *timidity* in the vital use of your vocal instrument.

What you should strive for is to use the trinity of vocal NRGs onstage as an intelligent extension of your dynamic offstage vocal life. Instruct yourself, *organically,* to "rev up" the trinity of NRGs as an essential professional dynamic for onstage vocal life. Embrace the important concept that this dynamic trinity cannot tolerate carefulness or timidity any more than carelessness or forcing. If you are "careful," it really means you are "full of care" (or concern). If you are careful and rationalize by calling it "sensitivity," your voice will not lend confidence, security, or vitality to your role; you will not play with that acquisitive strength, healthy curiosity, and joy that make acting exciting and an actor exciting to watch. You will not be a part of that greater majesty of the stage. If you find yourself in the ambivalent position of being half-trained and uncertain in your voice and speech, your performance can only become the confused product of fear and desire glaring at one another.

Strictly speaking, I do not consider the organic, kinesensic training in this text as simply voice and speech training. I consider it as full-blown and ongoing actor training; actor training based on "feeling"—instinctively, viscerally through the senses—and experiencing vocal, physical, and emotional characterization and personality. If genuinely experienced,

this kinesensic training will reveal and provide you with sharpened creative skills that will grow into exciting talents that will blossom into inspiring artistry. Put them together creatively and you will certainly come close to that elusive *magic!*

Crying and Laughing

Onstage, your action often requires the use of natural, unforced, deeply felt emotions. Whenever your role specifically calls for intense crying or laughing, a most effective and nontechnical way to manage this is to work for opposites. Trying mightily *not* to cry while crying, or *not* to laugh while laughing, reveals even deeper emotions and results in an amazing "feeling and response" experience for both the audience and the performer. Suppression is a valuable facet of an actor's emotional expression: the more the actor tries to hold back, the more intense and dramatic is the emotion (and the acting itself).

During the process of creative suppression in both crying and laughing, try to apply the "holding back" action through the use of the *S, F, H,* or *SH* sound effects and the *N, M, or NG* melody instruments. In laughing, you might add after-effects: the *Z, V, ZH,* and even the *L* as well. The more you suppress through the use of these consonant instruments, the more the emotion will burst through and, if necessary, reach epic proportions of either tragedy or roaring belly laughs. With just the pure sound of the consonants and the feeling it stimulates, you can both control and release the emotion. Clean and properly articulated consonants are not necessary in creative emotional suppression; here, we are not dealing with formal diction or enunciation but rather emotional expressiveness.

As the consonants progressively permit a greater intensity or projection of emotion, the experience may impose a breathiness, a jerkiness, a tightness or trembling in the stomach and abdominal area, a shaking and quivering, a contorting of the face and body, and so on. The intermittent injection of effective vocal sounds or tones will further heighten the intensity or projection of the emotion expressed with the consonants. If you are engaged in laughter, for example, then the shaking tremor of excitement and the dynamic abdominal pressure activity supports the joyful, high-spirited responses, and the face reveals and experiences sheer ecstasy.

Screaming and Shouting

In scenes involving screaming and shouting and other hysterical outbursts, always keep in mind that the voice is the first thing to go if sheer

force or tight pressure is applied; in this case hysteria becomes "real" rather than talented performing. As with the highest pitch in singing, always feel you can—if you wanted to—scream or shout even higher, even louder, or even stronger; remember, the *optimum* is our gauge not the *maximum*. The optimum provides qualitative objectives and is right-brained; the maximum, in our frame of reference, suggests quantitative limits, often painful and harmful, and is left-brained.

To help you achieve optimal effects in screaming and laughing, reexperience the facial yawns, but focus primarily on your backward facial yawn (Chapter 4) because hysterical screaming involves the highest pitches most of the time. Remember that in singing, laughing, or screaming on high pitches, the face experiences an ecstasy-like expressiveness.

Just as vigorous muscle exertion *always* requires a conscious feeling of the *rest* or *relaxation* component, so does the voice. Familiarity with vocal esthetics and/or viscerally felt built-in body-vocal control valves permits the use of about five percent of the resting ingredient during even the most strenuous use of the voice. This is what I call "doing the incorrect thing correctly." All motion, movement, and energy possesses a rhythm and balance, and therefore, even screaming, crying, and sobbing have a rhythm and balance all their own. You should be aware that when you experience intrinsic body rhythm and balance, you will not feel fatigued or exhausted, and *it is possible* to feel rhythm and balance ingredients while playing these emotional scenes.

Warm-up Suggestions

Before you go onstage or into rehearsal or even when you get up in the morning, run through the following series of warm-ups to prepare yourself for the performance or the day ahead. These reinforcing activities will help tone up not only your voice but your body and your concentration as well.

BODY TUNE-UP

- Reexperience the powerful muscle-yawning, the Tai-Chi-like muscle floating, and the sparkling muscle shaking experiments in Chapter 4. You will recall that these are the three natural, therapeutic body relaxer-energizers.
- Pick out three or four other body events from Chapters 3 and 4, and reexperience them as part of your warm-up.

Y-BUZZ

- Sustain an easy, calm, and vibrant *Y*-buzz on five or six of your lowest pitches.
- Slide the *Y*-buzz up and down over a very small range.
- Sing a melody on the *Y*-buzz, using only the lower third of your vocal range.
- While singing and sustaining the *Y*-buzz, communicate (in self-to-other mode) meaning, attitude, need, personality, and style through the "masculine" *Y* and the "feminine" $\overline{EE}$ French-horn *Y*-buzz.

Y-BUZZ INTO +*Y*-BUZZ

- From the *Y*-buzz, slide into the +*Y*-buzz on a pitch slightly higher than that of the *Y*-buzz itself. Don't dilute the tone; feel the beginning of the +*Y*-buzz fully focused in the nasal bone and reaching toward the forehead.
- Recite the alphabet, maintaining the *Y*-buzz tonal stream on all $\overline{EE}$ and *EY* (as in "a*way*") sounds—don't forget the *h* (*"aytch"*). If the structural form is good and if your intonations are alive and vital, then the letters *o, q, u,* and *w* should bring a low, quiet Call sensation.

THE CALL

- Do a series of easy concentrated Calls on medium pitches, using *h'LLO, aWAY, unTIL, aGAIN, b'WARE, unEARTH,* and *it'sGOOD.*
- Do a sliding Call on *h'LLO, aWAY,* and *unTIL* (see Experiment 14, Chapter 6); make it sound and feel like a wind-effect exploration.
- Do a vendor's Call realistically and musically on a medium pitch level. Call "Strawberries . . . watermelon . . . cockles 'n mussels." Sing it out as an experienced, successful vendor who may, conceivably, double at night as an opera tenor or baritone or as a gospel singer.

REVERSE-MEGAPHONE FACIAL POSTURE

- From a *Y*-buzz, slide into the structural vowels for diluted focus. Feel the dilute focus resonating throughout the mask as the rich *Y*-buzz diffuses into a #5, #51, #6, #6*y*, #4, ʁ (3r), #3, #21, and #1. If the structural form is good, the last four will come closest to a calm, richly dark, low-pitched Call.

FORWARD FACIAL POSTURE

• Using a comfortable yet spirited forward facial posture and a rich diluted tone, smoothly and with spontaneous tempo, count energetically from one to twenty. Next, recite the months of the year and then the days of the week.

ONE FINAL WARM-UP

• Do a few comfortable but short sustentions of the medium call on *h'LLO, aWAY, unTIL, PLACES, braVO, oLEY, it'sGOOD, ta'CARE* ("take care"), and unEARTH.

• Perform a vibrant, clean, but very gentle and private *Y*-buzz until you are ready to go on!

Some General Reminders

Feel but don't listen to your voice or your speech onstage or offstage; listen only to the voice and speech of others. Listening to yourself can only make you nervous and self-conscious; it is energy dissipated. Listening to yourself onstage tends to shut out what—and who—is around you and to disconnect you from the stage action; it creates a vicious cycle of fear and withdrawal into greater fears, which totally disrupts stage excitement and stage illusion.

Avoid spitting and spraying when you speak. Spraying and spitting onstage is unhealthy, unprofessional, unesthetic, and self-indulgent; it is almost totally unnecessary, and it impairs good, clean diction—wet speech makes artistic consonant NRG very nearly impossible. Fellow actors certainly find the experience artistically disconcerting and an impedance to spontaneous emotional life onstage. Although a dry mouth and throat is one manifestation of nervousness, a mouth full of saliva does *not* indicate relaxation. Both underactivity and overactivity of the salivary glands reflect physical and mental discomfort. Those with underactive glands must learn to collect saliva skillfully—to maintain reasonable oral moistness—and to swallow the saliva in order to lubricate and relax the throat; those with overactive glands must form the habit of swallowing frequently to prevent the mouth from flooding. The key in both cases is, during convenient intervals, to coordinate vocal action with swallowing, which is in itself a natural relaxing technique. Actors, speakers, and singers who *throw* their voices out through their mouths are equally likely to throw a fine spray as well. If, during vocal use, you project your tonal stream through

bone-conducted transmission rather than projecting your breath stream through your mouth, you will avoid spraying your listeners or your fellow actors.

Remember that relaxation, or muscle resting, is not a reaction; it is rather its own original action. Tightening a muscle and then letting go does not produce genuine active relaxation; it merely stops the rigidity and results in limpness and flabby dead weight. Genuine active relaxation, however, produces its own inherent esthetic components such as weightlessness, buoyancy, graceful flow, and effortless motion, whereas a reactive letting go of tightness simply produces flaccidity and sagging heaviness. Stiff muscular tension[1] can never benevolently support the voice or, for that matter, the rest of the body. Muscle *tightness* is not really the same as muscle *firmness*. Tightening the muscles in one part of the body to offset tension in another part is unrealistic, unscientific, and harmful. If we consider the human being as an *organic whole* rather than a collection of different parts, tightness and heaviness in *any* part of the body can only induce impingements, fixations, heaviness, or listlessness elsewhere.

Keep your body in good physical condition with regularly scheduled workouts and a good sensible diet. Your voice reflects your physical condition. Also, before a performance, don't eat a heavy meal, and *never* eat chocolates, milk products, or nutty, syrupy, sweet foods. If you must have something, eat a peeled slice of a crisp apple before going on; it will soothe and clean your throat. Likewise, you should avoid alcohol and smoking before a performance; the vocal mechanism and vocal life both respond negatively to these substances. And, incidentally, while waiting in the wings, try humming gently and softly on a clean, low-pitched *Y*-buzz; this brings on much better physical and mental tension relief than does simple silence.

Always nurse a sore throat. For temporary relief, when you can't get to a doctor, try gargling every two or three hours with a cup of hot (not scalding) water mixed with a quarter teaspoon of sea salt, a quarter teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda, and an aspirin (take care not to exceed the dosage limits prescribed on the aspirin container); when the pain is assuaged, leave out the aspirin. If gargling is inconvenient, chewing aspirin gum may be helpful, but use it sparingly (as directed on the box).

Never force your voice. Remember to strive for the "optimum," not the "maximum"; don't mistake volume for projection or potent tone.

[1]The term "tension" has a twofold definition: (1) the natural physical process of "extension"; and (2) a state of: rigidity, stiffness, strain, tightness, tautness, flaccidity, heaviness, flabbiness, weakness, friction, nervousness, and disharmony. Our discussion refers to the latter definition.

Use the Y-*buzz to enrich and protect the lower third of your voice.* Be always aware that with the *Y*-buzz and +*Y*-buzz your voice will easily and comfortably reach down at least four or five half-pitches below your customary low conversational tones. Properly trained, the voice develops up *and* down at the same time.

Remember to physically experience the feel while neurophysically feeling the experience; in most human behavioral functioning, this is when real learning begins. This is particularly true in the development of skills and talents. Learning kinesensic awareness occurs only through consistent, concordant doing—*not* through intellectual grasp. We learn through teaching, and first we teach ourselves. So ask yourself questions and instruct yourself organically; it is called **heuristic** problem solving.

Do not allow your technique to show. Pure technique that *shows* is poor technique. Any drill brought to mechanical perfection is most difficult to apply creatively. Mechanical perfection is a dead end; it really has nowhere else to go! No actor—or anyone for that matter—ever feels any experience precisely the same way twice. Thus, strive to be an integral part of what is happening onstage by contributing and responding to the experience.

BRIDGE

Hopefully, it is clear that nothing in Lessac training even implies a process that relies on imitation or learning by rote, through mechanical repetition, or through establishing habit patterns. The only habit suggested or recommended is "habitual awareness." Within our frame of reference, "habitual" means a continuing, reflexive awareness of your creative body NRG as well as an awareness of having *missed* the *feeling* of an essential sensory ingredient—an awareness of having felt a wrong or undesirable sensation that is instantaneously and instinctively replaced by a desirable sensation. This **proprioceptive**[2] device and self-use organic instruction will keep you progressively tuned in, turned on, and always feeling good.

Keep in mind that this kinesensic training is also applicable to functional and clinical therapy. Therefore, adopting and adapting to such kinesensic training sets for us a therapeutic *standard* for feeling good, sounding good, staying strong and young, and being creative with elegant impunity—the subject of this book's final chapter.

[2]*Proprioceptive:* refers to the dynamics of the **proprioceptor** nerves.

CHAPTER 12

What About a Standard?

The human organism can be visualized as a Stradivarius bass fiddle that spawns and generates a number of smaller, but certainly not minor, Strads, which include the human voice, human laughter, body-humor sensing, the "child within you," the orchestral consonants, and the various NRG states. When these individual Strads are recognized, identified, and properly played, they function as esthetic, synergistic, creative agents within our vocal, physical, and emotional life. By artistically and healthfully playing these Strads, we develop (1) exciting tonal quality in song and speech, (2) fascinating articulatory skills, (3) a healthy natural form, size, and shape of the vocal instrument that organically produces beautiful, rounded pear-shaped vowels, and (4) a general self-use of body esthetics, body rhythms, body synergies, and balanced behavioral emotions.

Our research and practice (onstage, offstage, and in therapy) strongly suggest that when the human organism functions in this fundamental and progressive modality, resulting in rich full vocal tones, pleasurable and easy audibility, optimal intelligibility, and excellent facial form and posture, it is quite ready to adopt and adapt to *any* regional or social mode of pronunciation and enunciation. Actually, that's what the major argument regarding standards is all about—choice of pronunciation! The question of choice regarding particular pronunciation, syllabification, or stress is just that—a matter of choice. But before that choice can be made, it is necessary to achieve a vocal life with perfect intelligibility, easy audibility, proper vocal-body NRG, and, most importantly, a fine-quality speaking voice that avoids affectation, distortion, imitation, or rigidified meticulousness. In our frame of reference, the choice of pronunciation pretty much becomes a matter of electing from the "strong" and/or "familiar" forms of our "vocal life" expressiveness to provide us with a language strong and elevated enough for the best of Shakespeare, Shaw, or Wilde; familiar, neutral, and flexible enough to communicate on the street, at home, in school, in commerce; and soft, neutral, and resilient enough onstage to play Mamet, Churchill, Shepard, Odets, Hansburg, or Pinter.

Avoiding Authoritative Standards

Any responsible search for authoritative standards of proper speech often results in some rather confused findings. One expert will say that the standard falls somewhere between too-careful, over precise, pedantic speech and careless, negligent, and virtually unintelligible speech. Another authority might point out that the proper standard is achieved when so-called competent critics or informed observers and listeners concede that a particular person's (or people's) speech is "good."

It ought to be abundantly clear that good standards of speech and an exciting speech style are not necessarily one and the same thing. Through listening to politicians, business leaders, newscasters, or stage and screen stars, we may be impressed by some pretty effective and exciting speeches, but that does not mean necessarily that any or all of these communicators lead the way to proper speech and voice standards. Nor can we, as a rule, depend upon the informed listener or critic, despite background or erudition, for leadership in this area. It is also misleading to favor a particular classification such as "New York speech," "British speech," "stage speech"; or to call New England speech "good" on historical or geographical grounds; or to insist that the Midwesterner's standard is preferable because "so many Americans use it."

There is surely a strong desire and need for vital, vibrant American speech and a good strong standard; but a standard of speech should not be derived from such things as personality, talent, effectiveness, ethics, character, intellect, or political, social, or economic status. All of the above, together with regional patterns, may quite properly be partial or subliminal considerations, but the primary concern here should be a more fundamental approach to standards of enunciation, pronunciation, articulation, vocal quality, and vocal NRG.

Evolution or Devolution?

Standards of diction, generally, are too closely defined. When someone says "reyan" instead of "ran," the important thing is not that the pronunciation differs but that the sound is generally too nasal and thus adversely affects the voice and personality. When the word "board" is pronounced with a strong and prominent *R*, consideration should not be given to regional pronunciation differences but to the fact that the *R* has a throaty, backward-pulling influence that produces poor tone color, a tight jaw, and a loss of clarity in articulation.

If the word is pronounced "Febyewary" rather than "Febrewary," the

deviation from the original pronunciation ought not be considered as "language evolution." In our frame of reference *evolution* should mean a "positive, gradual development"; I prefer the definition, "to develop by evolution to a more highly organized state or condition."[1] It seems to me that a standard should serve to maintain *elevated* levels of practice, activity, or attitude and to protect against deterioration, carelessness, and neglect. Of course, a living language is never static. Words, meanings, spellings, and pronunciations are constantly modified and adjusted along with other, more important social changes; but when we hear *library* pronounced "liberry," *nuclear* pronounced "nucyuler," or *deterioration* pronounced "deteriation," let us call it what it is—a tearing down of standards or positive goals. The problem does not concern dialects, regionalisms, and cultural influences or mores—these all have standards of their own, and actors certainly understand that—but it does concern the need for a kind of *growth* that reaches out to new and higher NRG qualities and sensitivities rather than a surrendering to a downward trend, thereby unconsciously succumbing to a form of ennui.

Working Toward a Fundamental, Universal Standard

As already stated, we do want and *need* fine American speech, but what we truly need is a more fundamental and universal standard—one that honors the principle that posits: If the human organism plays its body's Stradivarius instruments in salutary, esthetic, creative fashion, then surely it has the tono-bio-neural foundation to speak effectively in almost any local, national, or artistic mode of delivery.

What are our criteria for a desirable standard of speech?

1. The standard of speech should be governed by the biodynamics of voice and speech, the results of which are reflected in a pleasant, warm voice quality, as well as euphony, vitality, good form, and complete intelligibility.
2. The standard should resist lethargy, ignorance, and slovenliness.
3. The standard should entail a dignity, self-respect, and concern for a voice and speech quality equal to that which is given to appearance, dress, and physical well-being.
4. The standard should assert a realization that high-quality voice and speech are easily made part of one's personal culture pattern and that such culture is readily attainable and highly desirable.

[1]*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* Unabridged edition.

After testing and experiencing some of the kinesensic training presented in this text, you must know that the American Westerner's *Ō* or *AH* or *Ă* or *ER* fortified by proper facial posture and structural energy will sound remarkably like that of the Easterner or Southerner using the same training discipline. Learning to play and feel our consonants with skill and finesse is as easy for the resident of one part of the U.S. as it is for another in any other region of this country; the recognition that nasality, throatiness, "lippiness," and jaw tension are detriments to good speech standards acknowledges no state boundaries.

Because I do not criticize the specific pronunciation itself but rather the manner in which the basic mechanism is used, I am *not* attacking regionalisms or dialects. But by playing our consonants instrumentally for contrasts, rhythms, and tonal qualities, by fortifying our vowels with the vibrative beauty of tonal NRG and the lovely roundedness of structural NRG, we can all transcend any detrimental regional influences. Here is a case where we can have our cake and eat it too. We can actually retain our regional culture and individuality while building an effective common speech and voice culture.

If communication is an art and a science, then speech and voice, which represent the major vehicles of communication, are part of that art and part of that science. If singing and acting are art forms, then the use of voice and speech—your own voice and speech—are part of that art form. If voice and speech are both a science and an art, certainly they should be an integral and intrinsic part of each individual's personal culture—a fact that is often disregarded.

Indeed, voice and speech standards must be elevated enough to compel a feeling of respect, pride, and dignity in one's own language and communicating capabilities; they must be broad enough to stimulate admiration, and they must be popular enough to be endemic.[2] It would be wonderful if our schools taught voice and speech appreciation along with music appreciation at an early age. Adults must become real live models for the young: the parents, for their children; the teachers, for their students. If this dream could become a reality, and it should, then much valuable time now wasted on tutoring, therapy, and special classes in our schools and colleges could be put to better use.

If it is acknowledged that voice and speech are part of one's personal culture, then the personal culture of all individuals combined is the profound culture of the community and the nation. The kind of voice and speech culture discussed here does not lead to regimented practices, but it does lead to a quality-controlled order that in turn leads to a better quality

[2] *Endemic:* infectious and contagious; intrinsic or indigenous.

of creativity and to a better quality of common understanding. The kinesensic training you have been working with represents a universal human resource that can be applied to most all other languages. With the exchange or addition of a few orchestral consonant instruments, this training has already been tested and used by German, Spanish, Persian, Japanese, Russian, French, and Greek speakers.

What a wonderful experiment it would be if the methods espoused here could be taught in five or six representative sections of our country. After a year's training, the students from the South, West, North, and East—the Texans, the Midwesterners, the Alaskans, and the New Yorkers—could come together and find that we all talk one another's language easily, without sacrificing or surrendering any local charm, color, or style. Student actors, coming from all over the country could be part of the same theatre ensemble, presenting a common, attractive, yet personal speech and voice front. Even though coming from different sections of the country, we might all find it easier to listen and to talk to each other. Under such circumstances, social intercourse might lead to more serious communication and to more fulfilling and meaningful understanding and interrelating.

APPENDIX A

A Comparative Guide to Pronunciation

The following chart lists a Lessac phonosensory symbol for each of the diacritical markings found in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and in *Webster's International Dictionary.* In the list of consonants, most of the representations refer to the same alphabet letters; the Lessac consonant symbols, however, are identified as orchestral musical instruments. Throughout the chart, each Lessac symbol represents an economical, kinesensic choice from the accepted variants recognized by most Americans.

VOWELS				
	IPA	*Webster*	*Lessac (structural NRG vowels and diphthongs)*	*Examples*
	u	$\overline{\text{oo}}$	#1 ($\overline{OO}$)	t*wo*, l*oo*t, sch*oo*l, s*ou*p
(diphthong)	ov	ō	#21 ($\bar{O}$)	t*o*ld, d*o*n't, m*o*lded, foll*ow*
	ɔ	ô	#3 (*AW*)	*aw*kward, *o*rb, d*o*rmant, b*ou*ght
	ɒ	ŏ	#4 ($\breve{O}$)	*o*dd, y*o*nder, bey*o*nd, d*o*ctor, c*o*llege
	a	ä	#5 (*AH*)	*a*rm, f*a*ther, l*a*rge, M*a*rtha
	ɐ	ȧ	#6 ($\dot{A}$)	m*a*ster, cl*a*ss, *a*sk, r*a*nsom, f*a*mish
(diphthong)	av	ou	#51 (*OW*)	*ou*st, f*ou*nd, s*ou*th, d*ow*n
(diphthong)	ɔi	oi	#3*y* (*OI*)	*oi*l, empl*oy*ed, n*oi*se, l*oi*ter

(diphthong)	æi or ɑi	i	#6*y* (*I*)	*ai*sle, *i*ce, *ey*es, cr*y*, si*g*ned
	ɜ or ɜʳ	u	ɮ (3r)	*u*rn, ne*r*ves, t*ur*moil, di*r*t, wo*r*k

	IPA	*Webster*	*Lessac (tonal NRG vowels and diphthongs)*	*Examples*
	i	ē	*Y*-buzz (*EE*)	*e*ven*i*ng, rep*ea*t, fr*ee*dom, rec*ei*ve
(diphthong)	ei	ā	+*Y*-buzz (*EY*)	h*a*ze, gr*ea*t, r*ei*n, pla*ca*te, b*ay*

	IPA	*Webster*	*Lessac (neutral vowels and diphthongs)*	*Examples*
	ʊ	o͝o	N^1	f*oo*t, t*oo*k, g*oo*d, p*u*ll, sh*ou*ld
	ɪ	ĭ	N^2	t*i*ck, k*i*ss, t*i*mid, f*i*ll, ev*i*l
	e	ĕ	N^3	k*e*ttle, fr*ie*nd, s*e*cret*a*ry, *e*nd
	ʌ (stressed)	ŭ	N^4	*u*p, ab*o*ve, s*o*n, c*u*nning, ro*u*gh
	ə (unstressed)	ȧ	N^4	*a*lone, s*u*ccess, c*o*nnect, *o*ffic*i*al
(diphthong)	ʊə	o͝o	N^1n	t*our*, d*our*, p*ure* ("pyure"), s*ure*
(diphthong)	iə	ē	N^2n	f*ea*r, p*ee*r, qu*ee*r, end*ea*red
(diphthong)	ɛə	â	N^3n	decl*a*re, f*ai*r, th*e*re, ne'er, p*ea*r
(diphthong)	ɔə	ō	$3n$	p*our*, d*oor*, rest*o*re, r*oa*r
	iu	ū	Y^1(*Y* plus #1)	c*u*be, t*u*ne, b*eau*ty, l*u*te, d*ue*, d*ew*
	iu	ů	Y^1(*Y* plus #1)	*u*nite, men*u*, arg*ue*

CONSONANTS			
IPA	*Webster*	*Lessac (based on symphonic musical instruments and sound effects)*	*Examples*
n	n	*N* violin	*n*oon, i*n*stan*t*, govern*m*en*t*
m	m	*M* viola	*m*i*m*e, anthe*m*, e*m*bal*m*
v	v	*V* cello	*v*er*v*e, li*v*ed, del*v*ed
z	z	*Z* bass fiddle	*z*ooms, bu*zz*, wis*d*om
ʒ	ʒh	*ZH* bassoon	mi*r*age, plea*s*ure, bei*g*e, vi*s*ion
ŋ	ng	*NG* oboe	pi*ng*-po*ng*, si*ng*so*ng*, lo*ng*
l	l	*L* saxophone	*l*isle, e*l*ves, *l*aure*l*
w	w	*W* flute	*w*indow, a*w*ard, d*w*ell
y	y	*Y* French horn	be*y*ond, *y*onder, *y*es
r	r	R trombone	*r*ider, *r*ewri*t*er, al*r*ight
h	h	*H* sound effect	*h*igh, be*h*old, *h*orse
ʃ	sh	*SH* sound effect	*sh*u*sh*, wi*sh*ful, mi*ss*ion, men*t*ion
ð	th	*TH* clarinet	ba*th*e, *th*ese, loa*th*some, wri*th*e
θ	~~th~~	*TH* sound effect	my*th*, bir*th*day, *th*rash, *th*in
f	f	*F* sound effect	*f*i*f*e, bere*f*t, nym*ph*, enou*gh*
s	s	*S* sound effect	in*c*estuous, *s*uspicious, *s*ystem
d	d	*D* tympani drumbeat	a*d*vertise*d*, han*d*ma*d*e, *d*eed
b	b	*B* tympani drumbeat	co*b*we*b*, *b*a*b*e, im*b*i*b*ed
g	g	*G* tympani drumbeat	*g*ig, intri*g*ue, quag*m*ire, *g*agged
t	t	*T* snare drum drumbeat	*t*oo*t*, inci*t*emen*t*, depar*t*
p	p	*P* bass drum drumbeat	*p*eep, clam*p*, la*p*se, *P*ope
k	k	*K* tom-tom drumbeat	*c*a*k*e, *c*oo*k*ed, che*ck*mate, che*ck*, qui*ck*, *ch*aotic, e*c*centri*c*
dl	—	(voiced) *D̊L* woodblock click	mau*dl*in, han*dl*ing, me*dl*ey
tl	—	(unvoiced) *T̊L* woodblock click	gaun*tl*et, gen*tl*y, unset*tl*ing
tʃ	ch	*CH* crash cymbal (*T*+*SH*—no sustention)	*ch*air, mar*ch*, *ch*urch, mat*ch*maker

dʒ	j	*DG* Chinese cymbal (*D*+*ZH*—no sustention on the *ZH*)	*j*u*dg*ment, pigeon, *G*eorge
—	ts	*TS* high-hat cymbal (no sustention on the *S*)	trac*ts*, adop*ts*, scientis*ts*, sit*s*
—	dz	*DZ* tambourine (no sustention on the *Z*)	ai*ds*, husban*ds*, hol*ds*
—	d̬u̬	aspirated *D* plus *Y*	ver*du*re (verdyure)
—	t̬u̬	aspirated *T* plus *Y*	sta*tu*re, ques*ti*on, fix*tu*re
hw (ɯ)	hw	aspirated *H* plus voiced *W*[1]	*hw*at (what), *hw*en (when), *hw*ere (where)
ə^{r}	ẽ	℞[2]	moth*er*, zeph*yr*, nad*ir*, doct*or*, doll*ar*

[1]These are two separate consonants that are pronounced precisely the same way that *K* and *W* or *T* and *W* are pronounced in *queen* or *twenty*. It is definitely not an unvoiced *W*.
[2]Lessac training considers the final, unstressed "er" sound (as in *lawyer*), as an *N*[4], or a very soft form of the ℞-derivative. If stressed, it becomes a "strong form" *R* (as in *bird*).

APPENDIX B

Some Related Comments

• "Vocal tones" are to the spoken word as "harmonics" are to the fundamental, as "subtext" is to context, and as the "subconscious" is to the conscious.

• If you want to be responsive, always find yourself in a state of inner motion; the organic feeling process works best when the body is in a state of gentle turbulence.

• The more we learn to feel things, the more things we learn to feel.

• Perception of the mysterious is the origin of discovery.

• "Pure technique" is poor technique.

• To be temperamental is both a self-indulgent and mischievous misuse of temperament.

• Human laws and rules are human inventions; the law of logic that states "you can't change human nature" is indeed a human invention.

• Subtext without context is like tracks without a train; context without subtext is like a train shunted to a siding, with nowhere to go.

• To wonder is to ask questions; to ask questions is to teach; to teach is to learn. Wonder feeds rationale, and sensitivity fuels control; the reverse in both cases is not necessarily true.

• The urge to search and discover is a pioneering spirit; the child is the greatest pioneer of them all.

• One of the most sensitive and subtle instruments within the overall body Stradivarius is "the child within you Strad." In our frame of reference, that Strad ought not be the child you *were* but rather a new, vital, innocent "other child" functioning wholesomely and unfettered inside you.

• Although a child knows nothing about and cares little about self-

image, the child's response mechanism functions in a "self-to-self" mode; the child's response stems from his or her own inner environment.

- The child, whose drive to explore is very active at birth, requires ever growing space for his or her discovery process during both play and work. If the child's world is limited to a highchair, a swing, a playpen, or a single room, then the child's learning opportunities are limited accordingly. If the child is restricted to what we tell him or her to do, then what he or she *can* do well may not be revealed.

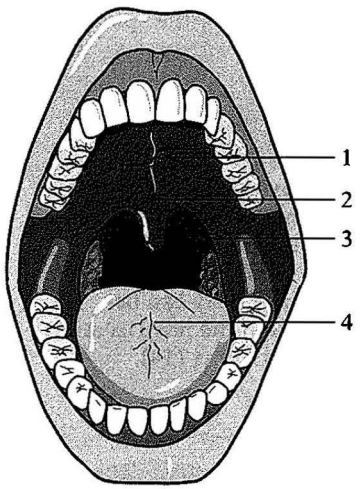
- The adult is, or can be, as much of a pioneer as the child—when and if he or she can, during the creative experience, avoid conditioned, judgmental attitudes imposed by existing patterns of behavior and practice.

- The kinesensic speaking voice is also a natural singing voice.

- Speech training should be preceded by voice training; just as voice training should be preceded by body training.

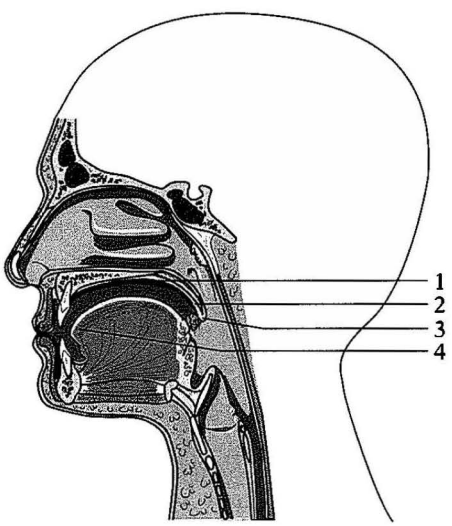
Some Relevant Anatomical Illustrations

1. Hard Palate
The bony part of the roof of the mouth. The hard palate is easily identified by tracing the tip of the tongue across the roof of the mouth.



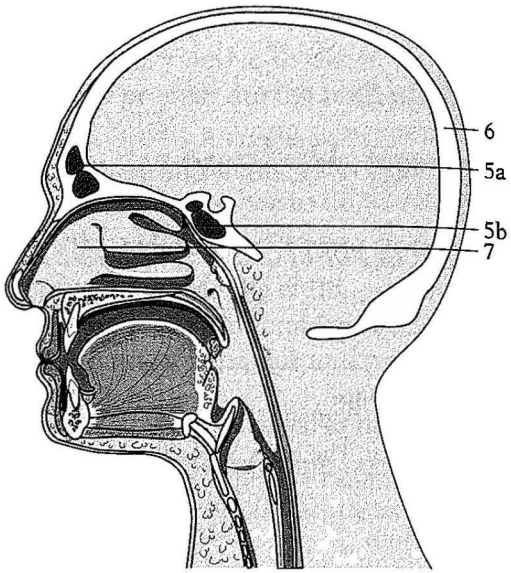
2. Soft Palate
The continuation of the hard palate process at the back of the roof of the mouth. It is a soft muscle tissue.

3. Uvula
A small, soft lobe that hangs from the free edge of the soft palate. The uvula forms the completion of the soft palate.



4. Tongue
A versatile body organ that is formed by many supple, flexible muscles.

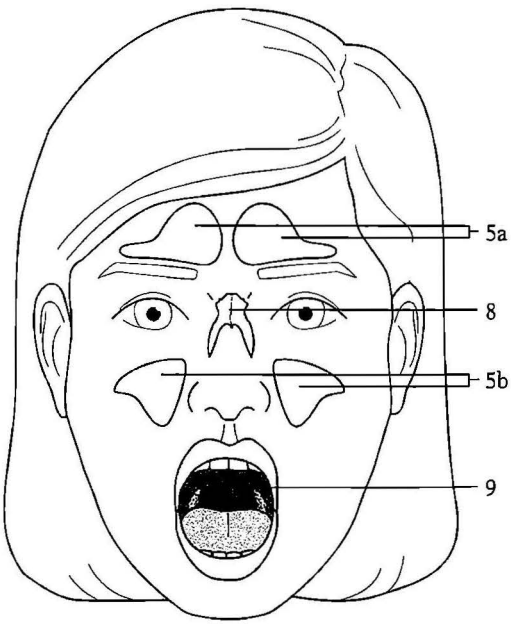
5. Facial Sinuses
The cavities in the bony forehead and the upper jawbone (12b). The most important are the frontal sinuses (5a) and the maxillary sinuses (5b); there are two of each.



6. Cranium
The skullbone that covers the entire brain, starting from the frontal sinus area and proceeding around to the top of the spinal column.

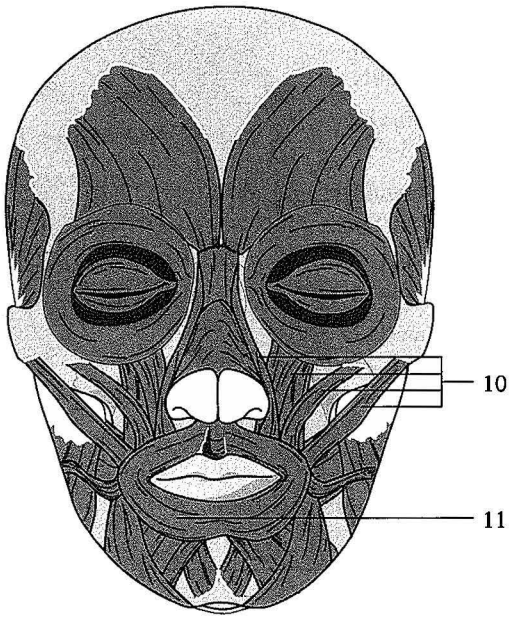
7. Nasal Cavity
The area situated above the roof of the mouth and below the facial sinuses and front of the cranium. This cavity can be entered through the nostrils and through the pharynx (14).

8. Nasal Bone
This bone is contiguous to the bony wall of the frontal sinuses (forehead), which in turn is contiguous to the cranial bone. Along with the hard palate, these bony structures represent the direct resonating and amplifying agents for voice production.



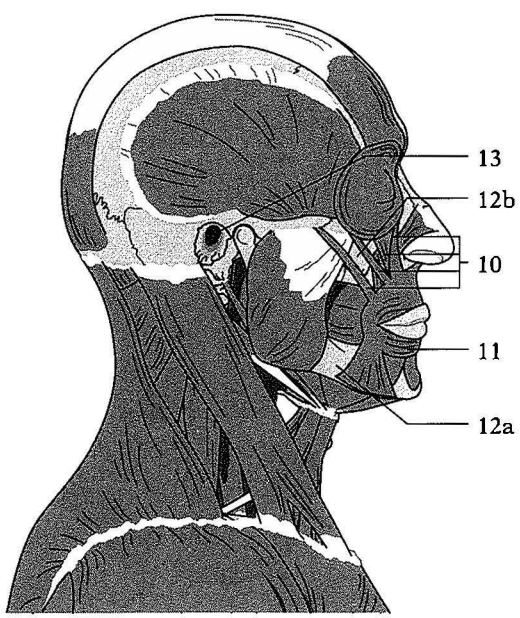
9. Mouth Cavity
Also known as the *buccal cavity,* this is the most important cavity area for voice and speech training and constitutes what is called the vocal sound box.

10. Cheek Muscles
The four separate muscles on each side of the face that originate in facial bones and insert into the upper lip muscle (11). They are of major importance in the proper training of facial posture and vowel formation.

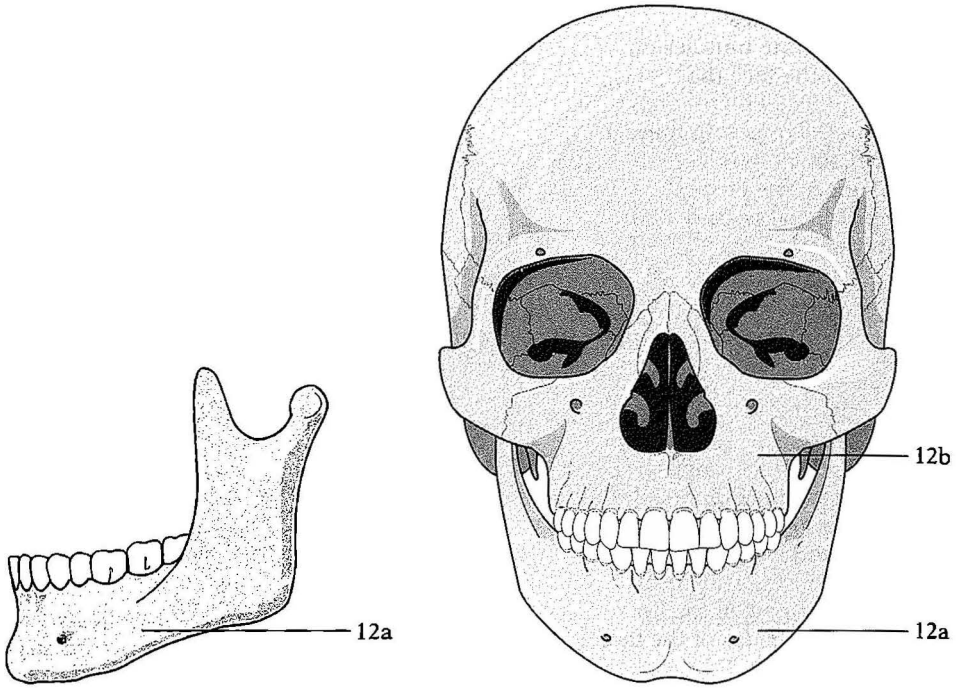


11. Lip Muscle
The single, flexible, round-shaped muscle encompassing the entire upper and lower lip. The zygomatic and levator cheek muscles synchronously insert into the upper part of the lip muscle on both sides of the face.

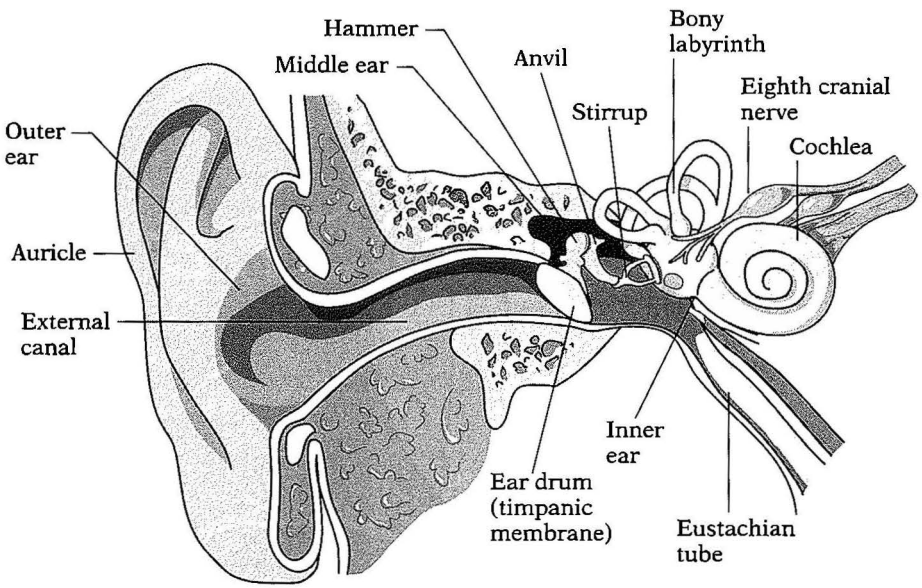
12. Mandibular Jaw
The "jaw" consists of two parts: the lower jaw, or *mandible* (12a), and the upper jaw, or *maxilla* (12b). (The supple and responsive extension of the cheek muscles induces an effortless "floating down" of the mandible, thus freeing it from a climate of rigidity and fixation.)



13. Ear
The hearing mechanism consists of three parts: the outer ear, middle ear, and inner ear. This remarkable mechanism is designed to relay air-conducted sound waves to the eighth auditory nerve and the brain.

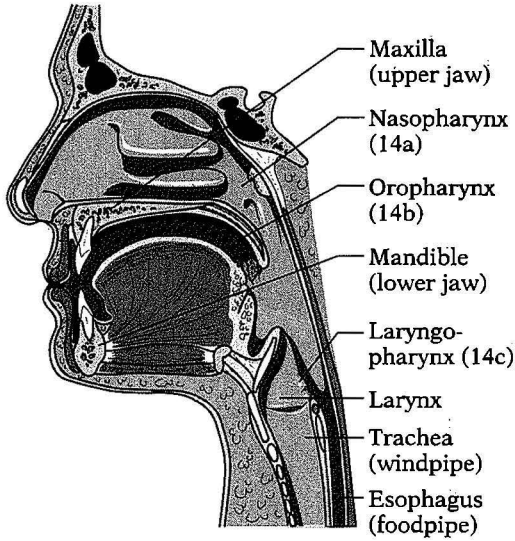


12. Mandibular Jaw

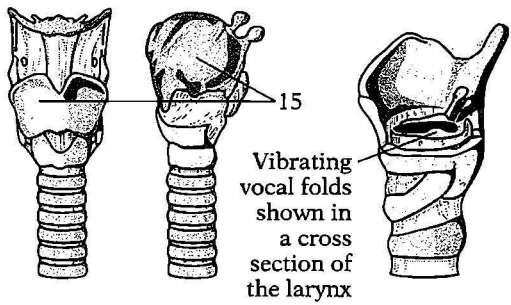


13. Ear Mechanism

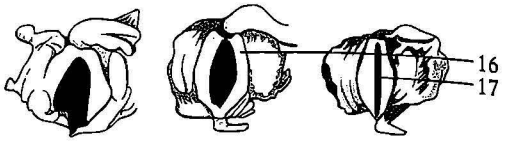
14. Pharynx
The area— commonly thought of as the throat—that leads into the nasal cavity (called the *nasopharynx*), into the mouth or oral cavity (called the *oropharynx*), and toward the larynx (15) and esophagus (called the *laryngopharynx*).



15. Larynx
The topmost section of the windpipe. Shaped somewhat like a gravy boat, the larynx is made up of a cartilage and ligament structure and is lined with a mucous membrane. It houses the vocal folds (16) and is therefore the structure wherein sound waves are initiated.



16. Vocal Folds
The two little fibrous-like strands of the larynx that can be stretched, vibrated, and occluded. During inhaling and exhaling, the vocal folds are open; during phonation, they approximate toward closure or occlusion. The vocal folds are believed to be devoid of nerve endings.



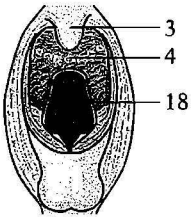
Breathing position (open glottis)


Voiced position (closed glottis)

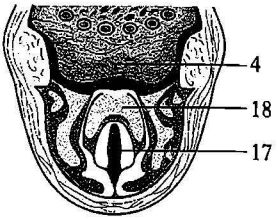

Vocal folds during a cycle of phonation

17. Glottis
The space between the vocal folds.

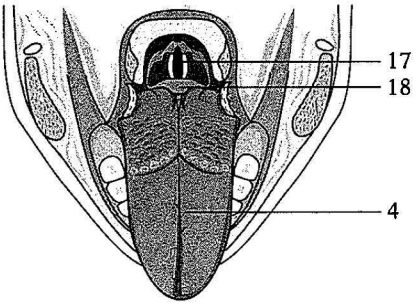
18. Epiglottis
The tongue-like upper portion of the larynx. Its purpose is to flap itself over the laryngeal opening in order to facilitate the swallowing of food solids and liquids into the food pipe, or *esophagus*. Occasionally, while talking or eating or drinking, a particle of food or drop of liquid may accidentally slip into the windpipe, or *trachea*, because the epiglottis did not successfully cover the larynx at that particular instant.



Viewed from back

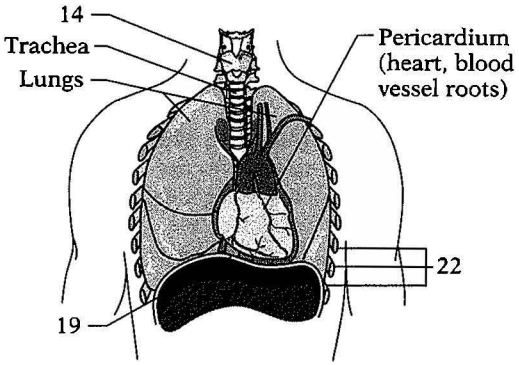


Viewed from back and above



Viewed from front and above

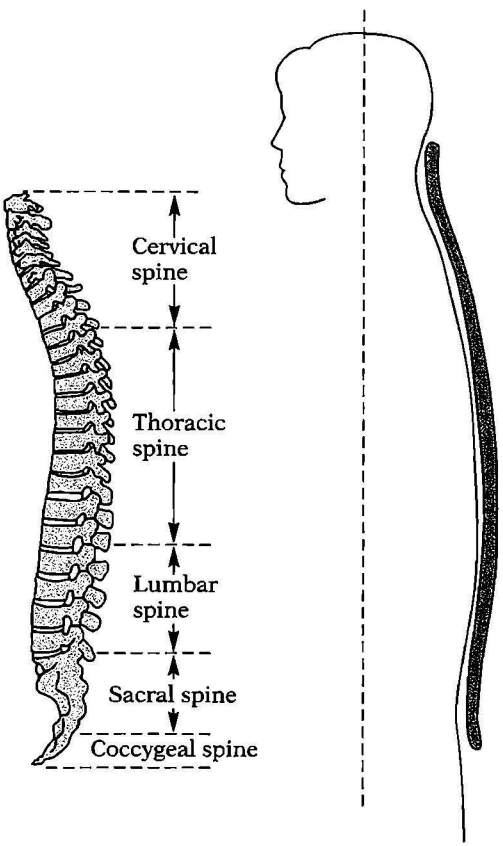
19. Diaphragm
A dome-shaped sheet of muscle separating the chest cavity from the stomach and abdominal area. It lowers and flattens itself during inhalation and rises to its original state during exhalation. When diaphragmatic protrusion is observed, the lowering and flattening of the diaphragm is creating pressue against the stomach wall and abdominal muscles.



Chest cavity (20)

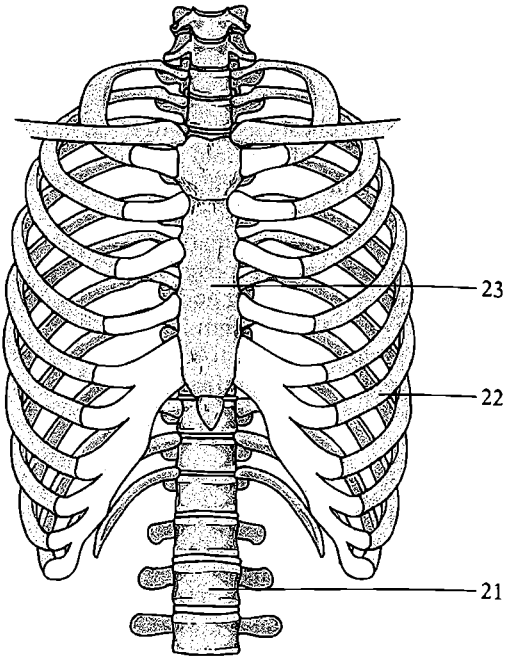
20. Chest Cavity
Called the *thoracic cavity*, it includes the heart, lungs, bronchial tubes, and ribs. The diaphragm forms the bottom of the chest cavity.

21. Spinal Column
The bony column consisting of thirty-two vertebrae that forms a parenthesis-like curve from the base of the skull to the coccyx. The spinal column is divided into five sections: the cervical spine, thoracic spine, lumbar spine, sacral spine, and coccygeal spine.



22. Ribs
The bony cage of the chest. The ribs are attached in front to the *sternum* (23) and in the back to the spinal column. In effective tone production, chest resonance is produced through bone-conducted vibrations transmitted, for the most part, via cranial, vertebral, and rib-cage resonance.

23. Sternum
Also called the *breastbone*.



Glossary

aesthetic Pertaining to a sense of the beautiful or to the (philosophy) science of aesthetics; having a sense of the beautiful characterized by a love of beauty.

awareness Awareness is a "tuning-in" to inner harmonic sensing; it implies an awakened capacity of perception and the identification of internal sensation as a new tool and instrument of "doing." It is a cognitive gestalt of "self-use" and "self-to-self" involvement; it is a conscious, qualitative awareness experience in response and reaction to the *feeling* of sensation itself.

behavior-affective Relating to any behavior (such as breathing) that is affected by sensory involvement, spontaneous curiosity, and inner harmonic excitement or incitement.

body NRG The four nonvocal body states identified in Lessac training: (1) *potency NRG*—power, strength, muscle yawning, muscle therapy; (2) *buoyancy NRG*—relaxed energy and active relaxation, creative calm, floating, flowing, antigravitational lightness, sense of weightlessness; (3) *radiancy NRG*—sparklike, lambent, body vibrato and body shaking, body humor, "Chaplinesque," clownlike, childlike eagerness or glee, the adrenaline-alert feel; (4) *interinvolvement NRG*—a magnetic force diametrically opposed to sheer brawn (in emergency situations, where instead of sensing fear or dread, the body is fed by the instinctive needs and emotions rather than by muscle awareness).

body-support NRG The use of the four body NRGs in full support and accompaniment (carryover) of vocal and verbal behavior and performing.

esthetic From the Greek *esthesis,* meaning the nature and study of sensation, especially rudimentary sensation. It is related to "body esthetics" as opposed to "body anesthetics" and is an intrinsic component of the "feeling process": anything that promotes sensitivity and induces awareness of sensation and perception in the body is an esthetic, a body esthetic; anything that deadens and tightens sensitivity or lessens awareness of sensation and perception in the body is an anesthetic, a body anesthetic.

euphonics (euphony) The production of a pleasing sound that is agreeable to the ear; an especially pleasant sound or the harmonious combination of successive words or vocal tones (phonetically); harmoniousness or economy of the utterance of speech sounds supposedly resulting from combinatory phonetic change with an effect considered pleasing to the ear.

eustress Hans Selye's term for good, pleasing, qualitative, esthetic stress; to distinguish between distress (or stressful, effortful exertion) and salutary effortless vitality.

familiar event A body activity that is always performed with ease because of some special talent or gift or natural instinct. The familiar event may involve a particular act that always functions pleasurably, gracefully, efficiently, or it may be a learned activity that feels so good and right that it feels uniquely better each time. Such a familiar event can become a self-teaching, reprogramming training tool used as a carryover model for another body activity.

genuine Free from pretense or affectation; devoid of habit-patterned conditioned behavior; doing both skilled and unskilled activities with the awareness of experiencing *fresh* behavior and functioning.

gestalt A configuration that asserts that the whole is greater than the sum total of all its parts; in our frame of reference, "gestalt" refers to a unified "whole" that is always made up of smaller unified "wholes." It is an organized field having properties that cannot be derived merely from the summation of its so-called component parts; each component part is a smaller "whole" gestalt, which stands on its own and is itself made up of still smaller "whole" gestalts.

habitual awareness The use of observation, concentration, curiosity, interest, and vulnerability to achieve heightened awareness. "Habitual awareness" is not a contradiction in terms; it relates to a "signal alert" that is intended to reveal awareness of (1) the *presence of something desirable,* (2) the *absence of something desirable,* or (3) the *presence of something undesirable,* in which case the awareness mechanism reflexively dispatches an "organic instruction" to the body-mind. Should the "signal alert" not be working, then the body-mind is, to that extent, shut off or temporarily only semiconscious. Habitual awareness is a potential body NRG state that is part of one's salutary condition; the absence of it signals a return to anesthetically patterned conditioned behavior.

heuristic From the term *heuretic,* "the logic of discovery"; relating to the "self-teaching method" that is applied to arguments and demonstrations that are persuasive rather than logically compelling or that lead people to "discover for themselves." Serving to discover or reveal, to point out or indicate; stimulating interest as a means of furthering investigation. The more heuristic the approach, the more holistic the process!

holistic Relating to the philosophic doctrine that maintains that the determining factors in nature, and particularly in evolution, are "wholes" (such as organisms) and not their constituent parts; the theory that whole entities, as fundamental components of reality, have an existence *other* than as the mere sum of their parts.

inner harmonic sensing A bio-neuro-psychic system of intelligence gathering. "Harmonics," which are derived from related fundamentals, create new dynamics, new essences, new intelligence. In our frame of reference, "harmonic sensing" represents the internal production of overtones or "partials" as a carryover from the outer fundamental senses. We search to discover the feel of these harmonic overtones through the experiencing systems of our own body NRG states and body esthetics. I suggest that "harmonic sensing" not only takes the

place of the so-called sixth sense but serves as a major creative partner in conjunction with the many other experiencing systems and communicating intelligences within the individual body environment as an organic member of the overall ensemble.

instinctive Spontaneous; infused or filled with some animated principle; urged or animated by some inner force; resulting from a natural or innate impulse, inclination, tendency, or intuition.

intrinsic From within; belonging to the inside or to the core of a thing by its very nature; relating to the awareness of internal registering/programming/experiencing.

kinematics The study of pure motion without reference to the masses or forces involved in it. Also called *applied kinematics,* which deals with the theory of converting one kind of motion into another.

kinesensic (kine/esens/sic) A term encompassing the concepts of: *kinematics, kinetics, kinesics, kinesthetics,* and *esthetics.* I coined this word in order to better describe for ourselves the neurophysical "feeling" process; it refers to intrinsic, "self-to-self" sensation, perception, and response: *kine,* for movement or motion; *esens,* for the basic essence, nature, spirit, and study of sensation; *sens* (or *sensing*), for the actual identifying and dealing with internal cues, signals, language, and messages; and *sic,* for familiar occurrence. In as much as our body organism is constantly in a state of motion and gentle turbulence, kinesensics relates to learning how to experience these inner harmonic dynamics for use as organic instructions in our training and how to form a new or fresh quality of awareness that can grow into habitual awareness.

kinesics The study of body motion as related to speech and voice; particularly the movement of the face.

kinesthetics The study of the physical sensation of position, movement, tension, stress, and so on as perceived through the nerve-end organs in muscles, tendons, and joints; muscle sense.

kinetics The study of any action, energy, or dynamic resulting from motion. Dance is a kinetic art.

legato Smooth, connected, gliding, floating music and movement; a continuous easy flow or current without breaks between successive tones or moves.

modality A "modus operandi"; a special attribute, emphasis, or way of working that marks certain energies, individuals, things, groups, innovations, and so on; one of the primary forms of sensation (vision, touch, taste, and so on).

NRG An acronym that stands for "*energy*" and refers to pure, harmonic, intrinsic, vitalistic motion as opposed to movement.

optimal (optimum) Relating primarily to quality and creativity rather than quantity or records ("optimal" never relates to a fixed or finite amount). The optimal effort should always be more successful than the so-called maximal effort as far as qualitative results are concerned (which includes wear, tear, and damage to the human body); an "optimal result" is the best, most favorable condition for growth, development, reinforcement, and maturation.

organic Fundamental, essential; pertaining to the internal constitution, structure, or organization of a living thing. Related to elements fitting together into a unified, organic whole;

developing in a manner analogous and instinctive to the organisms; arising as a natural outgrowth and evaluation intrinsic to and characteristic of living organisms.

organic instruction The search and use of holistic unifiers to reduce complexity; a powerful, experienced motor-image pattern that reduces complexity; the concept that involves a *conscious* capacity to perceive the body in motion—in a state of constant gentle turbulence—as internal, physicalized experience; a first step in the self-teaching process of identifying sensations, acquiring perceptions, responding to awareness, and, through inner harmonic sensing, training oneself to use these feelings and their memory images as organic directions to the body.

percept A meaningful impression of any object obtained by the use of the senses; a recognizable sensation or impression received by the mind through the senses (not to be confused with *precept,* which relates to rules—nonorganic instruction—of action or conduct, or *concept,* which relates to an idea or thought); the meaningful interpretation of a sensory stimulus. A percept is a combination of subjective and objective elements and affords a link between an individual and his or her environment.

perception An awareness or identification of "what is" through feeling or tasting; that then becomes "consciousness"; a single, unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present; an immediate or intuitive recognition; an insight; a discernment.

practice In our frame of reference, the "practice of behavior" itself. The *doing,* the *experiencing,* and the *feeling* are the "practice." The practice of our skills, talents, and capacities must be understood in precisely the same ongoing manner as the "practice" of medicine, law, religion—indeed, the practice of life itself. Practice that leads to conditioned patterns is undesirable. Practice that is also "involved behavior" is a living, dynamic practice that grows and matures as creative familiar events, which are always unique experiences that function as organic instruction to the body whole. Practice without "feeling" or awareness is nothing more than mechanical repetition and is something like "built-in obsolescence"—it does the job for a while but leaves little room for fresh creativity.

propioceptive Noting impulses from afferent nerves in an organism stimulated by its own tissues; Lessac training, in a manner of speaking, is a propioceptive approach to inner sensation and response (kinesensics).

propioceptor A receiver (receptor) stimulated by action of the organism itself; any of the sensory-end organs in the muscles, tendons, and so on that are sensitive to the stimuli originating in these tissues by the movements of the body or its parts; muscle sense.

reality In Lessac training, what you *feel,* not what you *think you feel.* The "feeling" process is reality in that it is the physical continuation of preintellectual awareness, thus prolonging the awareness itself on a nonintellectual basis—the moment of vision *before* intellectualization takes place.

relaxer-energizer Any body activity that frees muscles, loosens joints, relieves tension, sustains body vitality, maintains body awareness, supports personal pleasure and salutary feeling, and foments body inquisitiveness.

right-brain / left-brain Relating to twin-brain, or split-brain, research, which argues that there are two brain dominances within each of us; the intuitive right-brain hemisphere (devoted to the artistic, the qualitative, the conceptual, and so on) and the logical left-brain hemisphere (devoted to the sequential, the ordered, the quantitative, and so on). The theory implies that each hemisphere feeds, fuels, and reinforces the other.

salutary Favorable to or promoting good health; promoting or conducive to some beneficial purpose; wholesome.

spontaneous Radiant, relating to innocent impulse, willing vulnerableness, and an unquestioned eagerness to share.

staccato A musical term meaning a sharp, spring-away contact; a keen, crisp unsustained drumbeat.

stentorian A musical term meaning powerful in sound; penetrating, brilliant, ringing, resiliently strong.

stress The physical pressure, pull, or other force exerted on one thing by another; the normal body functioning that is essentially reflected by the rate of all the wear and tear caused by life; the action on a body of any system of balanced forces whereby strain or deformation results. Stress refers to bodily changes produced whether a person is exposed to nervous tension, physical injury, infection, cold, heat, x-rays, hateful insult, and so on. (For contrast regarding "healthful" stress, see the definition for *eustress*.)

stutter and stammer One does not stutter and stammer with speech alone; one can stutter with the voice, eyes, fingers, feet, and even with the whole body.

synergy A combined action and interaction; a cooperative and integrating action of two or more muscles, nerves, stimuli, energy states, or body esthetics; the intermixing of quality-quantity changes that creates genuinely fresh, unique, and new quality-quantity values. Unlike a catalytic agent, which mixes two or more agents and can then be withdrawn, a synergistic agent can never be withdrawn; by pervading and imbuing the "whole," it matures and changes the "whole" itself.

synesthesia A sensation produced in one modality when a stimulus is applies to another modality, as when the hearing of certain sounds induces the visualization of certain colors; the feeling of "tasting touch," of "touching sounds," or "hearing colors," of "seeing smells," and so on; sensation felt in one part of the body when another is stimulated; a process in which one type of stimulus produces a secondary and tertiary subjective sensation, perception, and awareness.

vibrato A pulsating, vibrating singing tone that has a positive, freeing effect on the voice.

vocal life The synergy of all the energies involved in vocal and verbal communication. "Vocal" relates to any and all phonated activity, whether it be speaking, singing, calling, screaming, yodeling, laughing, crying, humming, and so on. "Life," in our frame of reference, implies vitality, energy, involvement, spirit, imaging, awareness, and perception through the senses rather than through the intellect.

vocal NRG The three vocal states identified in Lessac training: (1) *structural NRG*—a kinesthetic and yawnlike NRG state that is related to facial pos-

ture and refers to the mold, shape, and size of the vocal sound box that self-regulates color, body, warmth, and esthetics of vocal tone and provides continuing tension relief for the jaw, neck, and throat areas; (2) *tonal NRG*—a vibrative energy state relating to phonation, voice production, tonal resonance, stentorian quality, and vocal expressiveness and a natural relaxing agent integrally joined in a one-to-one relationship with the emotional experiencing system; (3) *consonant NRG*—a musical-instrument energy experience related to rhythm and music in speech, intelligibility, and articulatory skills (it also has clinical uses in speech and voice therapy for such conditions as stuttering, cleft palate, hysterical aphonia, deafness, and hearing impairment). The symbol NRG is an acronym for Neurological Regenerative Growth.

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