

# **Effective Techniques For Voice Modulation**

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## **About the Author**



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**6 Figure International  
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- He has conducted 135+ Seminars and has TRANSFORMED the lives of 50,000 people till date
- He has been a Public Speaker since the past 12 Years
- The biggest youth event - 'USP The Survivor', which has been attended by more than 15,000 participants in the past 4 Editions is his brainchild
- His students are placed in world class companies like Infosys, Wipro, LG, Xerox, Transocean, HPCL, IOCL, Indigo Airlines, Godrej, Byjus
- Only Man on Earth who has given 50 Official Speeches on 50 Consecutive Days in different niches, in different cities & in front of different crowds
- He has worked with more than 150 Top Brands
- He has conducted sessions in various Fortune 500 Companies
- His company's case study is taught to management students
- Featured in the Times of India, Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran, The Dehradun Street, Your Story, Himachal Times
- MTV Date to Remember Fame

## **The Power of Voice in pulling off an Effective Speaking Session**



**“He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been greater than the power of sense.”**

**– Joseph Conrad**

Public Speaking is like theatre, where the speakers perform using key tools like words, voice, facial expressions and gestures, and thereby persuading their audience to believe in an idea. 'Voice Change' or 'Voice Modulation' plays an important role in an effective public speaking session.

'Voice Modulation' is an art of moving the pitch of the voice- up and down. It includes use of pauses at required intervals and also emphasizing a few words more than others in order to put forth a point in an authoritative way.

With an efficient 'Voice Change' Technique, you can easily engage a huge gathering that carries high levels of 'Distraction Syndrome'. Okay, the syndrome was made up but I hope you're getting the point.

In the digital age, as I have discussed multiple times before, the average time a speaker gets to grab the attention of his audience is decreasing by each day.

In such a scenario, an effective voice is the only thing that can save you from getting embarrassed at a public speaking session.

## **Why is 'Voice Change' Important?**

- 1. A Plain Voice shows Under-Confidence** - Imagine someone talking to you in a plain monotonous voice. Irritating, Right? This is exactly how your audience would feel if you would keep talking in the same tone throughout your speech.  
Also, it would show that you are not confident.

**2. A 'Voice Change' gives meaning to your words** - If you are saying, “I am so excited to be here.” in a normal voice, you won’t sound convincing enough to your audience. You would rather sound like a robot.

Matching your voice with your words is the foremost rule and a 'Voice Change' from time to time can help you do that effectively.

**3. A 'Voice Change' shows authority** - An intelligent change in pitch and tone of the voice helps the speaker in maintaining authority over his listeners.

Mark Twain once said,

**“There are only two types of speakers in the world.**

**1. The nervous and**

**2. The Liars.”**

So if you are not a liar, you are obviously nervous. This could create a lot of problems in your speech. The effects of nervousness on 'Voice Modulation' are plenty:

**1. High Pitch** - Yes, this is true. High pitch is hard to understand and ends up sounding like a mere noise. Lily Walter said something beautiful in this context, **“The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives.”** A good speech would be judged on the levels of understanding of your audience.

**2. Low Pitch** - If your voice is not audible, your audience would lose interest in what you are saying.

Nothing is more frustrating for the listener than to stress on their ears to understand a speaker who mumbles, whispers or stutters.

**3. Increased Rate** - This is a very normal sign of being nervous.

If you talk too fast, you would obviously end up confusing the audience by the words you're throwing at them.

**4. Vocal Fry** - Ahh! The controversial fry.

Vocal fry is the creaking of voice, that drawn out tone that emerges when you speak below your normal voice.

Studies have shown that it hurts the first impression and makes the audience lose interest in what you are saying.

**5. Failing the two Is - Intonation and Inflection**

**a) Intonation** - It refers to the rise and fall of the tone of voice.

In other words, matching the tone of your voice with the words you are speaking.

If you fail to do so, people will believe your non-verbal actions rather than your words.

**b) Inflection** - It is the emphasis that you place on any word.

Emphasis on a wrong word can change the entire meaning and emotion of the sentence.

A wrong inflection leaves the audience in a state of confusion. For example, “I am so excited to be here” can be said in a number of ways. You could say,

- “I am so excited to be here.” (As if no one else is.)
- “I am **SO** excited to be here.” (Okay. Calm down please.)
- “I am so excited to be here?” (Am I?)
- “**I AM SO EXCITED TO BE HERE!!!!**” (Okay! You just scared us.)

## **How to Master 'Voice Change' in Public Speaking?**

- 1. Record Yourself** - Make it a habit as this would help you in many ways. A recording of your speech would help you evaluate your performance, identify drawbacks and accommodate corrections in your future sessions.

**2. Work on the various parts of your voice** - Make sure that the various parts of your voice are doing all right things.

**a) Pitch** - Everyone has a natural pitch. Women's pitch generally tends to be higher than men's. Everyone has a pitch range, that is the number of notes used customarily. You need to broaden this range.

The major portion of your speech needs to be in your normal pitch while modulating it from lower to higher as per the situation demands.

For example, a low pitch would help you gain authority over your audience. Similarly, a high pitch can lighten up the otherwise monotonous topic.

**b) Tone** - It is the emotional part of your voice that demands the maximum variation. Make the tone of your voice match the words you are speaking.

**c) Volume** - The volume of your voice should be such that the audience sitting in the corner of the space is able to hear you without straining his ear.

**d) Rate** - The speed of your voice also has to play an important role in your speech. You need to keep it at a normal pace so that your audience can understand each and every word you are saying.



**3. Exercise** - There are many exercises that you can do in order to master the 'Voice Change' Technique. I am breaking it part wise:

**a) Exercises for Pitch**

- **One Note Charlie** - Take a deep breath and start speaking on any topic you want until you run out of breath.  
During a single session, make sure the pitch of your voice is at the same level throughout. Repeat this for various pitches and eventually you would begin to feel the difference between them.
- **See-Saw, Up-Down** - This one might sound a little stupid but fun at the same time. Take a newspaper or magazine or any piece of text.  
Read it swinging between your upper and lower range that is one sentence up and then down.  
Spice it up with three words up and down.  
You can play with variations. This exercise will help you gain more control over your pitch during public speaking.

### **b) Exercises for Tone**

- **The Ham Sandwich Exercise** - This one could be turned into a game to make it even more fun. Pick any word or phrase and speak it in variety of tones that convey emotions like happy, angry, loving, sad, seducing, sly, shy etc.  
Keep doing this until you run out of variations and then repeat.
- **Read Children's Stories** - You can do this with your nephew or niece if you have one.  
Pick any story and recite it in a way that your voice carries the meaning of each and every word you are speaking.  
For example, if you are talking about a witch, use a scary voice. If it demands bossy, sound bossy and so on.

### **c) Exercises for Volume**

- **Practice Breathing Using your Diaphragm** -  
This practice involves the following steps:
  1. Stand in front of a mirror and place your feet at a shoulder width apart.
  2. Pull yourself up straight.
  3. Make your head sit square on your neck.

4. Place one hand on your stomach and breathe in through your nose. You should feel your stomach rising and falling while you breathe in and out.

If this is not happening, you are probably not breathing on the top of your lungs.

5. Repeat.

- **Read-out Loud** - Ask a friend to stand at a distance in a big hall or room, probably at the back wall of the room. Choose a text and read it out loud using as much variety in your voice as you can to make sure that you maintain a relaxed state at the same time.

**4. Work on your pronunciation** - A correct pronunciation of words can help you change your voice flawlessly. Use of good pronunciation in your speech would help you transition easily without anybody noticing any weird change in your voice.

**5. Learn the art of Pause** - Mark Twain most aptly said, “The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.”

There is nothing more important than a pause. It helps in understanding the meaning of words spoken.

You can use it effectively in following ways:

- a) After you introduce yourself.
- b) Whenever you want to put emphasis on something.
- c) Always pause after questions. This gives audience a chance to react.
- d) Use the pauses to make the best out of your jokes.
- e) Use your pauses effectively in between your sentences.

**6. Refrain from fillers** - Some words are known as a disaster to the listeners during a speech.

Never use words like uhh, umm, errr, ahh, well, etc.

**7. Visualise your speech** - Try to create a moving picture of your speech in your head as you say it. This would give you a sense of timing and would also improve your vocal quality.

**8. Feedback** - Try to get feedback for your prepared speech in any possible way. An honest negative feedback can help you improve in a lot than a made up positive feedback. You can collect feedback forms from the audience or ask your friends and family for it.

Recording yourself, as I mentioned earlier, can help you get feedback as well.

**9. Speak in front of the mirror** - This formula can never grow old.

Speaking in front of your mirror and noticing yourself as you speak.

It will not only help you with your expressions and gestures but will also help you improve your voice change technique when you stand in front of mirror.

It gives you a sense of understanding regarding what kind of voice will closely relate to your expression.

This was all I could tell you about 'The Power of Voice'. I hope this article brought some necessary changes in your speech to your notice so that you too, can work on your public speaking skills.

With Love

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