

# How to be a Dynamic Speaker

## Vocal and Visual Dynamics Make a Difference!

Talking and speaking are different. If you want to speak well, you make conscious choices about how to use your voice and body. This guide explains your different options and how to enhance communicating with any audience.

### I. The Four P's of Vocal Variety

#### Power

- Power refers to the volume you project. At a minimum, be sure that **your entire audience can easily hear you** without straining.
- Turning your **voice volume up or down** adds interest. Use both variations when they match the emotion you want to convey. For example, *speaking loudly* might be used to convey excitement. *Speaking softly* might convey sadness.
- **Breathe deeply and allow the air to supply “power” to your voice.** A loud, clear voice conveys confidence and assertiveness. On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being inaudible and 10 overpowering, speak at a volume level of 7 to 8.

#### Pitch

- Pitch is the frequency of the sound you emit. To some extent, you are born with your voice pitch, whether it be soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, or baritone.
- Too high a pitch – especially for women – can convey nervousness or lack of knowledge.
- Too low a pitch, especially when not mixed with higher tones, can come off as boring and monotone. Monotone delivery puts your audience to sleep, no matter how riveting your content is.
- Along with pitch is intonation/inflection. This refers to how you use your vocal range when you speak.
- The best vocal style includes **all the notes within your vocal range**, used strategically to create an energetic and varied voice that conveys your conviction and enthusiasm for what you are saying. Adopting this strategy will give you greater credibility and aid your audience's attentiveness.

#### Pace

Pace is your speaking rate. Varying it throughout the speech adds great interest. The most basic variations are:

- Speed up to heighten the emotion in a dramatic story.
- Slow down when delivering key phrases.

**Speak at an even pace so they hear you clearly.** You don't want to give listeners the impression that you can't wait to leave or that you don't really want to be there. Don't hesitate too long between words.

The most common pacing problem is **speaking too fast for the audience to absorb what you are saying.**

Two common reasons speakers talk too fast:

- Lack of editing; too much content and too little time. Resulting pace is too fast for the audience to absorb.
- Nervousness. People tend to speak faster when they are nervous.

## Pauses

Pauses are magical. On the lips of master speakers, pauses can be used for a multitude of purposes.

- Short pauses can signal the end of a clause or sentence. Your audience needs these because they can't read the punctuation in your text.
- Longer pauses signal the transition between major points or stories. Experienced speakers will often take a drink of water, ready a prop, or consult notes at these times.
- Pauses before and after key points are wonderful buffers. The preceding pause signals to the audience that you are about to say something important. The following pause gives the audience time to reflect on what you just said and internalize it.
- Pauses can also be used to enhance audience interaction (e.g. ask a rhetorical question, and then wait).
- Pauses allow you to gather your next thought without inserting a vocalized pause, such as "Uh" or "Um"
- Pauses give you room to take a breath, which you need to power your voice.
- You can insert pauses in your script to remind you to use them. Pause symbol / = 1 beat, symbol // = 2 beats, and symbol /// = 3 beats.

The sound of your voice shapes the attitude of your listeners even more than the words you speak. Vocal energy will:

- Hold the listener's attention.
- Display emotion and enthusiasm.
- Bring out the importance of your message.
- Convey confidence.

## II. Visual Dynamics

### Gestures and body language

- Hundreds of gestures are available to help complement your words.
- Gestures throughout your speech make you interesting to watch. If you are interesting to watch, then your audience will be more attentive to your message.
- Failure to use gestures will make your audience drift away or daydream.
- Your body will naturally want to move as you speak. Don't inhibit these **natural gestures** as they convey that you are comfortable & confident in your message.
- Mix in deliberate gestures to coincide with key points. Mimic the actions of your speech (e.g. throwing a ball) or convey concepts through recognizable symbols (e.g. convey "censorship" by covering your mouth).
- Use a variety of gestures. Don't use the same gesture over and over and over again. It's distracting and diminishes the power of your message.
- Increase the size of your gestures to match the size of the room. When presenting to three of your co-workers at a table, your gestures can be small (e.g. hand gestures that start at the wrist). When presenting to a packed auditorium, your gestures should be large (e.g. full-body gestures originating from the shoulders)
- Make use of your facial expressions. Your audience will feed off them. Your expressions should reflect the emotion you are conveying and the words you are saying.
- The larger the audience, the more expressive your face must be.

***If you are interested in becoming a dynamic speaker, let's have a conversation!***