

Media Tip: Finding Your Voice

Media Tip: Finding Your Way

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Overview

Many people -- especially when anxious or nervous -- speak in a note that is somewhat higher in pitch than their natural note (the optimum pitch). A voice that is situated in its natural pitch is easier to listen to than higher-pitched voices. A 'natural' or optimum pitch also sounds more authoritative than a voice that is pitched in the upper half of the vocal range. Leaders need to understand how to connect with the lower half of their voice. Speaking in this lower vocal range allows the speaker to explore a broader emotional range, and is much less stressful to the vocal folds.

Tension in the face (especially the jaw), the tongue, the throat, shoulders or torso can affect the tone quality of the voice, so it is important to relax those parts of the body. Gentle head rolls will help release tension, as will yawning. Deep slow breaths will help relaxation before beginning to turn breath into sound. Dive bombs (gliding down from the mid-range of the voice to lower notes on an open 'ah' sound) will help the voice become more resonant, as sound is gradually amplified in the mouth, nasal cavities, throat and chest.

The more a leader practices connecting to the optimum pitch using open vowel sounds, the more natural this note will become when needed for public speaking.

Objectives

After this presentation, participants will:

1. Demonstrate exercises leading to relaxation through deep breathing.
2. Find and connect with the optimum pitch note (or natural note) of the voice.
3. Perform practical exercises to build resonant sound in the mouth, throat and chest.
4. Develop a more powerful vocal instrument safely and without strain.

Important Teaching Points

- The optimum pitch voice sounds more authoritative than a higher-pitched voice.
- Practice and use of the optimum pitch will enhance your leadership style when speaking.
- The optimum pitch is the natural lower note of the voice, and it is less stressful for the voice to speak in this range.
- Speaking in the optimum pitch may sound unusual at first because it may not be the sound one is "used" to hearing when speaking; this eases with practice and time.

Resources / References

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