Chapter 1

The Magic

Some people have the magic. They are seductive but not weak. They are controlling but not aggressive. They are filled, quite simply, with an intangible power that commands attention and generates success.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thirty-second president of the United States, had the magic. So did Sir Winston Churchill, British prime minister from 1940 to 1945. Each was possessed of that rare ability to convince others of his way of seeing the world, his way of saving the world.

Today, Roosevelt is remembered by Americans—Democrats and Republicans alike—as a leader of unprecedented magnetism. Churchill remains Great Britain's most esteemed statesman. The preeminence of each man is intact, decades after he made his mark on the world.

There is, of course a lesson to be learned from the successes of these leaders. There is an example to be drawn from them. And that is to identify the source of the intangible power that advances people such as Roosevelt and Churchill above and beyond others with similar aspirations and potentially equal talents. And the logical next step is to tap into their magic, the magic that gave them the edge on greatness.

That is the purpose of this book: To demonstrate that the one trait shared by almost all who achieve greatness is the power of communication, and to show you how to acquire that power and incorporate it into your own life.

You may be surprised to discover that successful communication depends largely on effective use of the voice. What may surprise you even more is that, with a little bit of self-awareness and the application of practical principles, a magical voice of success can be yours.

I am referring here to what I call a "right" voice, one that is well produced and natural and healthy. Such a voice is a valuable asset. It can have, quite literally, a hypnotic and powerful hold on your listeners.

By contrast, an inefficient or unpleasant or misplaced sound has a detrimental effect. A voice imbued with negative symptoms or traits will hurt rather than help. It will inhibit rather than enhance. It is a "wrong" voice.

There are exceptions to this rule, as you'll see later in this chapter. But while some people have managed to turn deficient or improperly produced voices to advantage, there is one law that holds fast: The manner in which you express yourself is the key to your identity.

If you doubt this simple truth, consider the extent to which you judge others by their vocal presentation. Reflect, if you will, on the people who have made life's most lasting impressions on you, good and bad. A teacher, perhaps. A parent. An authority. A colleague. A competitor. Any role model from any epoch of your life.
Do you remember their attire? Their posture? The color of their eyes? The shape of their ears? The style of their hair? It's strange how those visual perceptions fade over time, but they do. In most instances, what remains is a voice image.

Though voice image is probably a new concept to you, it is one of the most vital, pervasive, meaningful, and controlling factor in your life. It pertains to sound and persona. It designates the way you perceive your own sound and the way you perceive others' sounds, as well as the interpretive judgments you apply to those sounds.

These judgments constitute a qualitative response. They please or displease you. They engage you or repel you. All too often, they just leave you indifferent. But in any case, it is the positive or negative value that you place on these sounds that lingers, and thus determines not only your immediate impression of another, but your long-lasting recollection of that person.

How often have you said of an acquaintance or colleague: "He's a great guy, but he'd be a lot easier to take if he didn't whine on about things. He makes me uncomfortable . . ."?

This suggests a negative voice image is at work. A wrong voice can cause an individual to be viewed and remembered as an unattractive person.

Conversely, you have without doubt met another whose effect on you was inexplicably positive: "I was prepared to dislike her. In fact, I was dreading meeting her. But she won me over. I don't know what it was about her, but I was taken with everything she said."

Some people call this charisma. Others call it presence. I call it a positive and compelling voice image, a voice that draws you into its spell. Such a voice presents the substance and character of the speaker, as well as the content of his ideas, in a positive light.

That is why I say that your manner of expression-and by this I refer to how you use your voice-is the key to your identity.

THE WINNING COMPONENT IS HOW . . .

In short, others may not listen to what you say-and may not have a flattering impression of who you are-unless they are engaged by how you say it.

My aim is to teach you how to say it-anything and everything you wish to convey to the world-in a manner that will enhance your personal and professional life, as well as your physical well-being.

Yes, the way you use your voice does affect your health. What no one has ever told you before is that incorrect voice usage - amounting to misuse and abuse of the vocal mechanism - can not only hinder your relations with the world, but can physically harm you.

The physical consequences of voice abuse (leading to voice suicide! ) will be covered fully in Part Two of this book. So, too, will special problems such as stuttering and dysphasia.
My methods for achieving healthy voice techniques evolved over many years, beginning with my early studies at Brooklyn College and at Indiana University, and continuing through an assistantship at Stanford University, a Ph.D. program at UCLA, a period as Director of the Voice and Speech Clinic, Head and Neck Surgery Division at UCLA School of Medicine, and twenty years in private practice.

Throughout my career in the field of vocal rehabilitation, my work has focused primarily on the treatment of voice pathology. I have encountered and treated almost every imaginable type of voice disorder. What I have learned in the process is that most voice disorders could have been prevented by the correct use of the vocal mechanism. And furthermore, it has become increasingly apparent that the vast majority of Americans-those with and without obvious impairment of the voice-know little, if anything, about how to properly use their own voices.

This helps explain why so few people in our society have "the magic"-the magic of a Roosevelt or a Churchill.

Churchill, by the way, was not born to eloquent speech, as you might have imagined. In fact, he was terribly hampered in his early years by a stutter. Hardly an auspicious beginning for a politician who would go on to become a great orator.

And yet he moved many to tears in 1940 when he intoned dramatically before the House of Commons: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

These beautifully enunciated words were spoken in tribute to those in the Royal Air Force who had died fighting for their country. Imagine the same sentence delivered with a stutter. Its impact would have been, to put it kindly, greatly reduced.

But Churchill had by now overcome his deficiency. He had mastered the elements of voice production. He was excellent. And his control of volume was arresting. He had the magic, and he used it to his advantage.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough or often enough that these tools for successful communication can be readily acquired by you. They are simple to learn and demand only some time and self-awareness.

Call the process voice retraining, if you like. Or think of it as a course in self-improvement. Labels are not important. It's the reward that matters.

The obvious reward of achieving correct voice production is that it enables you to realize the full potential of your natural voice. In other words, to make yours the voice of success.

By this, I mean a voice that properly and advantageously represent YOU. It should be both pleasant to listen to and comfortable to use. It should attract, not alienate, your listeners. It shouldn't crack or break and mustn't require constant throat clearing (which may well be a sign of pathology). Yours can and should be a natural voice that guarantees your being heard because others are captivated by the sound you make.
LET'S LOOK AT WHERE YOU WENT WRONG

Perhaps you consider this a formidable task? You've heard your voice on a tape recorder and you already know that your "normal" sound is too nasal, too weak, too high, or too raspy. It whines or it barks. Or else, it simply doesn't work half the time.

Or, worse, maybe you have tried to change your voice in an attempt to assume a voice image that appeals to you. You thus play games with your voice, forcing it to highs or lows that you believe will add authority or sensuality, intelligence or charm, to your presence.

And for those of you who have persisted with tones forced from the lower throat, you've managed to achieve hoarseness or a loss of volume. Your friends and colleagues have ceased listening to you. Either they can't understand you or they can't hear you. A few of you may already have had nodes or polyps surgically removed because of prolonged use of this disastrous voice pattern.

And that is what all voices are: patterns. Habits, actually. In all too many instances, bad habits. By virtue of constant repetition of your particular bad voice habits, you have come to accept the sound you make. You may even dislike it, but by and large you're comfortable with it.

It's...you!

But let's pause for a minute here, and go back to the basics, to see if I can prove you wrong.

You were born with the ability to speak. Producing sound is one of several functions of the larynx, and you probably made your first sound by entering the world with a cry.

Speech came later, for as you developed, you learned to form words and pronounce them. Your parents and teachers and peers taught you how to express yourself in sentences and then to complete your thoughts in whole paragraphs. You advanced, learned a skill or became versed in a discipline. Now, with knowledge and experience, the gift of communication is yours.

Except for one important element: You haven't yet learned, or been taught, how to use your own voice!

The voice you use is one you chose to imitate, either as a child or as an adult. It is perhaps that of your mother, your father, a role model from an impressionable period of your life. Because you lacked voice instruction, you adopted as a matter of course the inflections, rhythms, sounds of someone else. You might even have "chosen" one type of voice in an attempt to dissociated yourself from another that you consciously disliked.

Maybe your mother spoke in a shrill, abrasive voice. Reacting negatively to it, you adopted a soft whisper as a style of communication. Or did you father have a weak, passive tone? If so, you may have countered with a deep barklike sound. In either case, you're as far off the mark in producing your successful voice as the person who elected to mimic the shrill voice or the weak voice, or almost any voice, for that matter.
In all probability, the voice you habitually use is not your natural voice at all.

As I said above, you were born with the ability to speak, much as you were born with the ability to ride a bicycle, drive a car, ski down a slope, climb up a mountain, try a case in a court of law, perform surgery on a patient . . . well, the list is endless. We are all, quite obviously, born with countless abilities.

Yet you wouldn't attempt to maneuver an automobile through city traffic without first learning how to drive. It's unlikely that you would take on Mount Everest without first learning the skills of mountain climbing. Certainly, you wouldn't remove an appendix without learning surgical procedures. And so it is with almost everything we do in life. Whether self-taught with the help of instructive manuals, or educated directly by others possessed of the desired knowledge, we each realize our inherent abilities by learning them.

Don't you think the time has come to learn to use your natural voice to its best advantage?

**A DESIRE FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS ALL YOU NEED**

If you are like most people, my experience shows that you depend on your voice for up to eighty percent of all communication. A good voice can serve you well. Not only does it transmit information, perceptions, emotions, and responses, it describes to the world who you are. As we discussed earlier, the sound of your voice can cause you to be reacted to in a negative manner or received in a positive light. Yet you continue, day after day, month after month, year after year, with a voice that probably sells you short.

This is because you have never learned about, or been trained in, the parameters of voice: pitch, tone, focus, volume, quality, rate. You have never learned proper breath support. These are the six basic attributes of importance in the speaking voice. They are the elements which, once acquired, can produce your "right" voice.

But perhaps you are still having difficulty applying the notion of "wrong" or "right" to your own sound.

If this statement fits you, just say "umm-hmmm" out loud, lips closed, spontaneously and sincerely, as though you are agreeing with me. In fact, continue to say "umm-hmmm" whenever you read something that seems to apply to you. Or even if you come upon a thought that intrigues you.

And ponder, for a moment, the extent to which you accept right and wrong in every other aspect of your life.

There's a right way to eat which affords the maximum nutritional benefits of diet. There's a right way to exercise which produces the best results from aerobic activities. In yoga, there's a right way to breathe which renders the postures most effective. In each case, the correct practices yield psychic and physical success.

Is it not, then, natural to accept the validity of a "right" or "wrong" voice? (Remember to agree with a spontaneous and sincere "umm-hmmm" whenever you are so inspired.)
Keep in mind that the rewards derived from correct voice use can and should extend to many facets of your life experience.

**BECOMING THE BEST PERSON YOU CAN POSSIBLY BE**

"Nothing succeeds like success." So said Alexandre Dumas the Elder. Though he wrote the line in 1854 more than a century ago, the appeal of these four words is undoubtedly greater today than ever before. No longer do class distinctions or family lineage bar anyone from reaching the top. Success can be had by all. It is yearned for by all. But just what is "success"?

Universal in its appeal, the word "success" nonetheless conjures up a different image for everyone who contemplates it. For some it connotes fame; for others, riches. But for those given to more profundity, success relates to achieving the pinnacle of a field or expertise: A singer whose range and vocal quality is unparalleled; a leader who reaches and persuades and helps the masses; a scientist whose work results in a discovery that will have a lasting effect on society; a parent whose time and attention produce a child who will contribute positively to the world community. Success can mean all this and more.

In simpler terms, success means becoming the best person you can possibly be. And in this pursuit, Americans spare little in the way of time, energy, and thought.

It is commonly accepted that presentation of self is a key factor to success. In an increasingly competitive world, the image one projects can make the difference between acceptance or rejection.

Wardrobe says a lot, of course. Ivy League loafers and button-downs suggest a wholesome sophistication. Designer fashions embody chic and elegance. Many in the arts and related enterprises pride themselves on a wrinkled casualness that defies the standards and mores of the Establishment. The variations are countless, but in each there is a message that declares: "This is who I am capable of being; this is what I am; this is me."

Meanwhile, hair has been cut and blown into place. Nails are manicured. Bodies are built up at the gym, streamlined on the track, slimmed via the current diet fad. Skin tones enhanced with facials. Among those driven to extremes, wrinkles are smoothed at the plastic surgeon's office. Ah, at last the picture is complete. Armed with a body of knowledge, a talent honed to its peak, and a "look" that sums it all up, one is ready to present oneself for judgment. "Here I am, world."

In this quest for self-improvement, in this era of self-development, however, the voice is the one detail that is usually overlooked.

And yet, the voice is your primary tool of communication.

As you have already seen, a "wrong" voice can misrepresent you. It can physically hurt you. In either case, a "wrong" voice can counteract the care and attention you have given the rest of your body.

Your "right" voice can help you become the best person you can possibly be. It is an important element of success, then, regardless of the spiritual, professional, or financial success that is already yours.
Film star Henry Fonda sought my help in attaining and sustain the use of his right voice. So did Academy Award-winning actress Anne Bancroft. And comedienne Lucille Ball. And Metropolitan Opera basso Jerome Hines, whose problems with his speaking voice threatened his singing voice. Famed entrepreneur and art collector Norton Simon had been experiencing difficulty with his voice for thirty-five years before he came to me for voice retraining. As for the result of his therapy, he exclaimed: "It's really miraculous."

In truth, the dynamics of correct voice technique are not miraculous. They only seem that way because so few in our society know how to properly use - as well as protect - the natural gift of voice.

As you'll soon see, the fundamental elements of voice production apply to everyone. They're easy to learn. The desired result is always the same, and that is to improve the quality of the voice -to make it listenable, attractive, healthy, and effective-to give it the magical ring of success.

GREAT VOICES

The fact is, most spellbinding voices were not born of "good luck," or mystical intuition. More often than not, they are the product of a desire to learn, and the discipline to perpetuate, correct voice technique.

It's a simple process of unlearning bad voice habits and adopting good voice habits. That's what Ann Bancroft did.

This dynamic actress was experiencing pain in her throat at a time when she was preparing her return to the stage. The pain interfered with her ability to perform. She clearly needed help if she hoped to last beyond her opening night on Broadway.

Miss Bancroft expressed some skepticism when I analyzed the source of her difficulties: She was forcing her voice to the lower throat, and breathing from the upper chest. She needed to raise her pitch, achieve facial (oral-nasal) resonance in the mask area, and learn to provide breath support from the diaphragm.

She hastened to remind me that Golda was opening in New York in only three months, hardly enough time, she worried, to get her voice in shape.

What she didn't anticipate was the ease and speed with which she would carry effortlessly to the last row of the theater. (Her voice retraining also brought about a complete resolution of a small contact ulcer on her larynx, caused by misuse of her voice, that had been previously diagnosed by a Beverly Hills ear-nose-throat specialist.)

By the time she completed her voice therapy, Miss Bancroft was producing a healthy, natural sound, as well as an aesthetic quality of voice that could have been hers all along.

And now I rank hers among the great voices, the voices that, like Franklin Delano Roosevelt's have the magic. They belong to such people as Gregory Peck, Laurence Olivier, Cary Grant. And Richard Burton, Johnny Carson, and Burt Reynolds. The late Rosalind Russell and the late Fernando Lamas.
These voices mesmerize, captivate, seduce their listeners. They command attention. They are spellbinding. But you know this, of course. What you don't know is why.

All of these voices-as different as they are, for each represents a unique personality and defines an individual character-are correctly projected from "the mask."

The mask includes the bridge and sides of the nose down to and around the lips. It is so called because in ancient Greek times stage actors, playing both male and female roles, spoke through masks that covered this part of their faces and amplified their voices.

By producing sound through the mask (as opposed to the lower throat or the nose alone), the voice opens up, becomes flexible, and is filled with expression and warmth. It has carrying power and range. Speaking through the mask gives the voice oral-nasal resonance which relates tone focus, which, in turn, gives the sound aesthetic appeal. It is correct tone focus that gives properly used voices a hypnotic effect.

Remember the "Tonight Show" on television with Johnny Carson and how he used his voice? His manner of speech had color and versatility. He understood the voice as an instrument, keeping it forward, in the mask. If you heard him, you would have noted, too, that this healthy means of producing the voice in no way detracted from his naturally deep baritone. Indeed, it made it fuller, richer, livelier.

All great voices are produced in this manner. They engage you and convince you. They lure you into their magical spell. They certainly contribute to success. Jack Benny had a great voice. So does Bob Hope. Power is another by-product of good voice production. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain has a superbly used voice, projected through the mask with lovely resonance and clarity.

PREMIUM VOICES

By now, however, it may have occurred to you that some success stories defy my rules. You're right, of course. There do exist unattractive voices, misused voices, that generate money and visibility.

These are the voices that I call premium voices, or money voices.

The most notable American example of a money voice was that of the late Howard Cosell. Cosell spoke right through his nose. Sports fans from coast to coast may have frowned when they heard him announcing a game. But it was this nasal tone that made him-as well as his television network-immediately recognizable. He used his voice as a weapon.

So does Barbara Walters. She has managed to combine the worst of everything in her voice: nasal tones, hoarseness, even a peculiar speech pattern.

Yet Cosell and Walters have turned a liability into an asset because the sound of their voices was and is so noticeably different from others’. This sound distinction instantly calls attention to individuals, making them identifiable.
Julia Child has such a voice. As does actress Sandy Duncan. And film critic Gene Shalit. These personalities have all managed to project voice images that are, however unattractive and displeasing to the ears—distinctive and lucrative.

Henry Kissinger’s voice is manifestly his. He speaks with guttural tones from the lower throat. Such a speech pattern is disastrous, actually. It is not only difficult to listen to but can result in voice pathology.

This low pitch—called a basal or near-basal pitch level—is defined as the lowest note on which the speaker can sustain utterance. It is used commonly as a bedroom (or sexy!) voice, as a telephone voice, as a confidential voice, and most notably as an authoritarian voice.

Kissinger’s deep tone suggests authority (a suggestion that is really no more than a vocal stereotype perpetuated by our culture and the mass media, as I’ll demonstrate later). But while it has many negative aspects, including a lack of carrying power, a lack of intelligibility, and a lack of flexibility, it nonetheless helps promote an authoritarian or intellectual image. And that is precisely how such a sound has managed to serve our former secretary of state.

And so, sometimes these voices that I refer to as "wrong" do further the causes of their users.

The wonderful actor Eddie Anderson, best known as Rochester on "The Jack Benny Show" earned fame and money with his raspy sound. But what no one ever mentioned was his paralyzed vocal cord, the result of too much voice strain during the years he spent hawking newspapers in San Francisco.

If yours is a premium voice, then it’s "wrong" but has helped you get where you are today, and that happens to be somewhere where you want to be—use it to your best advantage. But use it cautiously and with fair warning.

I, for one, started with a voice of negative traits. I was a Brooklyn/Bronx kid, with the accent and nasal tones to prove it. This voice did not happen to serve me well. A college speech professor insisted that I use the deepest voice possible, so I did...

I went from Howard Cosell to Henry Kissinger in no time at all. This new voice brought positive comments from my professor and some girl friends—and caused lots of problems. Forcing my voice from the lower throat irritated my larynx and finally caused voice loss. Mine was not a good voice. Nor was it a money voice. And yet, I had always been fascinated by voices, aware that some had a hypnotic effect on me.

The Lone Ranger’s, for example. As a child, I listened for his voice on the radio. It had a commanding tone, pure and clear and arresting.

But it was the voice of Martin Block that made the greatest impression on me. An entire generation of radio fans will remember his as the host of "The Make-Believe Ballroom." His voice was rich and lively and totally captivating. I wanted to sound like him, but I didn’t know how.
And so I eventually began a personal odyssey. What were, in fact, the fundamentals of voice success and vocal health? How were they achieved? In the years to come, I finally discovered practical solutions to my questions.

I now invite you to share in what I have learned in the past thirty-three years, and to benefit not only from my experience but from that of my former patients, patients who have joined company with the great voices, patients such as Diahann Carroll, Richard Crenna, Richard Basehart, Kirk Douglas. Also, Anne Bancroft, Norton Simon, Jerome Hines. And many more.

THE VOICE

In every voice there may be two pitch levels: an optimal or natural pitch level; and a habitual or routine pitch level which the speaker normally uses. If the speaker's "natural" (or correct) pitch is different from the pitch level routinely used, the voice is being misused. Misused pitch may be too high or too low. Americans tend to use too low a pitch.

To facilitate your understanding, imagine the throat as a megaphone that projects the voice. Divide the throat into three areas: the lower throat, the middle throat, and the upper throat. The upper throat centers around the nose; the middle throat centers around the mouth area; the lower throat centers around the voice box or larynx. Resonance or tone focus should be produced from all three areas. Too much emphasis on any one area can create a misused voice.

For example, too much nasal resonate produces a nasal sound. Too much lower-throat resonance produces a forced, guttural sound.

Good voices have balanced upper-and middle-throat resonance-oral-nasal resonance, which I call the two-thirds solution-with natural lower-throat resonance. The area around the mouth and nose, as you will recall, is called the mask area. Tone focus in the mask makes voices sound rich, full, vibrant, and flexible.

Voice quality is affected by pitch and tone focus. Good quality may be described as clear and resonant. Misused quality can be termed nasal, thin, hoarse, foggy, harsh, whiny, breathy, sharp, or squeaky, to mention a few types.

Breath support for speech should be centered at the level of the diaphragm, which is located in the midsection of the body. Upper-chest breathing, in which the upper chest or shoulders heave up and down as one breathes, is incorrect and detrimental because of the tension it creates around the throat area. Such breathing is exhausting, both physically and mentally.

Correct volume is measured by its moderate level. Volume should be produced comfortably, without strain, and should be appropriate for each situation; inappropriate volume is too soft or too loud.

Rate of speech should be easy, natural, and flexible in response to the demands of the circumstance. Fast delivery can set the listeners' nerves on edge. A slow, monotonous rate can bore listeners.
Keep in mind that the voice is an instrument that permits animals to make sounds. But in the human animal it is all the more precious, as it allows for speech, that is, controlled sounds that communicate ideas and emotions.

The well-produced voice commands, persuades, instructs, conveys—successfully. Because it is produced as nature intended, such a voice seldom tires and should basically never fail. It flows easily, mellifluously, enunciating thoughts in a manner that elicits attention and respect. It draws positive notice to the personality of the speaker and to the content of his speech.

If you believe, as I do, the you can and should incorporate these simple elements of proper voice production into your life, say "umm-hmmm" with your lips closed, as though you are spontaneously and sincerely agreeing with me.

If you think that mine is a voice in the wilderness speaking out on an ignored subject, say "umm-hmmm" once more.

If you wish to improve the sound you make every time you speak, say "umm-hmmm" yet again.

**FINDING YOUR RIGHT VOICE**

The first step in improving your voice is finding it. By this I mean locating its optimal, or natural, pitch. This is of primary importance because incorrect pitch and tone focus, used over time, are responsible for causing and perpetuating most voice misuse. Various approaches have been used to determine optimal pitch, but most have built-in flaws.

For many years, a piano was commonly used to locate vocal range. This was at best a tedious procedure and at worst impractical. Who, if anyone, is capable of carrying around a piano during the voice retraining period to sustain (or remind one of) the proper tones? In addition, it requires, if not a trained musical ear, a very good ear.

Another traditional approach, more effective than the use of a piano but still less than ideal, is the chewing method. Here, the patient is advised to chew naturally and at the same time to produce sound. This sound is assumed to be at the proper pitch level.

In some cases, this presumption is borne out. But it doesn't take long to discover that one can chew and make sound at an incorrect pitch as easily as at the correct pitch level. This method thus requires careful supervision of the patient, which is the element it was devised to do away with.

In addition, many people find it objectionable. They complain, quite understandably, about the abnormality of these obvious movements. And the necessity for constantly thinking of chewing becomes burdensome and distracting.

It therefore became clear that a new method was needed, one that would assure accuracy of pitch level, while at the same time affording simplicity and practicality. The device which evolved is so simple that you can carry it out yourself and instantaneously discover both your optimal, or natural, pitch level, as
well as your correct tone focus. This is important since these two basic elements of correct voice technique are interdependent.

You have already, in fact, achieved this significant step of finding your right voice. If, that is, you have said "ummm-hmmm" in a spontaneous and sincere manner, lips closed, whenever the material applied to you..

Try it again now. Say "ummm-hmmm," using rising inflection with the lips closed. It is vital that this "ummm-hmmm" be spontaneous and sincere.

The sound you are producing should be your right voice-this is your natural pitch, enhanced by tone focus.

If you are doing exactly what I asked of you, you will feel a slight tingling or vibration around the nose and lips. This indicates correct tone focus, with oral-nasal resonance.

If your pitch is too low, which occurs in most cases of voice misuse, you will feel too much vibration in the lower throat, u and very little if any at all in the mask area.

Repeat the exercise, say "ummm-hmmm," to determine if you are doing it properly. Make a correction, if necessary, until you feel the tingling sensation about the lips and nose.

The beauty of this simple method is that it is one you can use all the time. You have countless occasions to say "ummm-hmmm," when you are genuinely agreeing with someone, or when you merely want to test the pitch level you are using. This can be done in the home, in the office, while reading the newspaper, when talking on the telephone, when ordering lunch.

This is the voice you will learn to use all the time. Specific exercises will be given for sustain this voice level and focus, and also for learning breath support. We'll look, too, at means of achieving good volume and appropriate rate of speech.

And then we'll discuss voice psychotherapy! Yes, voice images are often the most difficult "habits" of all to change.

But maybe you are not convinced of having found your (natural and physiological) "right" voice. Let's find out for certain if you have.

**TWO TESTS TO GET YOU ON YOUR WAY**

The "instant voice press" will almost always reveal your natural physiological voice. Standing, place your index finger just under your sternum (where your ribs come together). Now press gently with a staccato movement and make sound with the lips closed.

The sound you are producing is essentially the one you were born to make- the voice you were born to use.
Now say "umm-hmm" in that same voice.

Maybe you're still having trouble.

If this is so, you've built up a physical or mental resistance to changing your voice. Your may be posturing or holding yourself stiffly. So let's break that "body armor"!

Still standing, raise your hands above your head, as high as they will reach. Now say "right!" And say it again, only this time louder. "Right!" Say "hello!" in that same voice. Now say "umm-hmmm." This should be your natural voice, your right voice.

We'll get on with the business of learning to use it in a moment. But if you are already worried about employing this, your correct voice, in public or on the job, I should explain you need not be self-conscious.

In all likelihood, no one will be consciously aware that your voice is different, or even that it is better. That is because most of us react to deficient or unpleasant voices, in other words sounds that interfere with easy communication. Such voices call attention to themselves, negative attention that leaves the listener with a potentially adverse impression of the speaker.

Clear, dynamic, well-used voices, as we noted earlier, generate positive responses—not to the sound of the speaker, but to personal characteristics as well as to the content of the discussion. The properly produced voice, then, permits individuals to be perceived for their substance—physical, intellectual, and emotional.

That is the reason voice images play such a significant part in our lives. We are all greatly influenced by sound. Lovely sounds have a positive effect on our psyches. Unpleasant sounds have a negative effect. The voice, in its primitive sense, is no more than a sound.

Your natural, physiologic sound—your right voice—will bring about scant, if any, notice to itself. It will, instead, invite greater interest in who you are and what you have to say. And so, you see, there's no cause for self-consciousness as you learn to use your correct voice. Indeed, there's every reason to master voice usage.