

Quick Guide: Using your Voice

Do you stop listening to what someone is saying because their voice, or their way of speaking, turns you off or distracts you from their message? Have you considered what you sound like to other people? Is your voice clear, enthusiastic and with a pleasant tone? If not, here are the top ten tips to help you develop a speaking voice that people will want to listen to:

1. **If you are on the telephone**, speak as if you were face to face. This will help you to come across as being animated and alive. Use your hands when you speak (yes, even on the telephone!) and use facial expressions. Behave as if you can see the other person and they can see you.
2. **Be cheerful and interested** in the other person and in what you are saying. Never let outside influences come over to the other person in your voice.
3. **Be natural**. The best way to convey pleasantness is to be pleasant. People want to talk to people, not robots. However, be careful that your style doesn't clash with their mood – establish rapport and get on the other person's wavelength.
4. **Use your magic smile** – smiling is infectious! Smile even when you are on the telephone. It is impossible to sound miserable or dejected if you are smiling!
5. **Use a pleasant tone of voice**; one that conveys warmth. The best way to do this is to think positively about the situation and the other person.
6. **Be enthusiastic!** Show that you are enjoying talking to the other person. Again, sound and look alive!
7. **Speak up**. If the other person struggles to hear or to understand, they will stop listening, so ensure clarity and vocal variety to avoid misunderstanding and monotony.
8. **Keep it clear, keep it simple**. Be careful of using words which can be interpreted differently by the listener, for example 'funny', 'resources', 'later', 'soon'. Be specific as this avoids confusion.
9. **Beware of jargon**. Many companies and industries develop their own language which is meaningless to other people. Keep other people listening by using words they are familiar with.
10. **Make sure your tone is varied and positive**. How you communicate will make the world of difference between exasperating someone and making them feel as if they just cannot stop listening!

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