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***Voice &
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by Judy Apps

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About the Author

Judy Apps is an international voice specialist, coach, author and inspirational conference speaker. She has spent many years unravelling the secrets of how great leaders inspire and for 20 years has coached people from all walks of life – from leaders in major international corporations to executives, politicians, media people and all who want to understand the voice better and communicate with more influence. Judy is a Professional Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation and a fully qualified NLP Trainer and member of the NLP University Global Trainers' and Consultants' Network. Her popular 'Voice of Influence' open programmes in London include workshops on coaching, voice and influence, leadership and communication, and NLP.

Judy is the author of two books: *Voice of Influence – How to get people to love to listen to you*, a fascinating mind-body approach to finding your authentic voice and expressing yourself with integrity, presence and passion; and *Butterflies and Sweaty Palms – 25 Sure-Fire Ways to Speak and Present with Confidence* – invaluable reading for anyone who's ever faced the fear of public speaking.

Judy is passionate about voice, knowing that by changing your voice you grow in confidence and miracles begin to happen in your life. She combines a thorough vocal knowledge with a whole mind-body approach that's fascinating and highly effective. Her energy and humour are infectious, and her dynamic techniques and highly intuitive way of connecting with people's inner potential have enabled hundreds of people to achieve great leaps in their speaking, charisma and, above all, personal confidence.

Dedication

To those who speak with a voice of truth – we surely need more of them!

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Introduction

Your voice is so much part of who you are! You can't leave home without it, and every time you open your mouth it's *your* voice that comes out. You're probably already well aware of this fact because you picked up this book. What if you opened your mouth and people hung on your every word? What if people understood you better – and even appreciated you when you spoke? If you like these ideas, read on!

I've worked with literally hundreds of people in one-to-one consultations and in workshops, and had the pleasure of witnessing again and again the positive life changes that come when you successfully develop your voice. Some people come to me in such fear and trepidation, they can scarcely walk through the door; others consult me to prepare for important international presentations or media interviews. In each case, voice improvement is accompanied by a new inner confidence. They *find their voice* in every sense. That will happen for you too.

When your voice is strong and expressive, doors open for you. Most professions welcome people who sound good and can speak well. People form remarkably fixed and strong opinions based on your voice. I'm sure that you've heard remarks from time to time like, 'she sounds intelligent' or 'he sounds friendly'. Promotion often depends on your voice. Relationships blossom or founder on it.

But you also probably know several people who are unaware of just how much their voices are liabilities. You'd like to spend more time with them, but their voices! Maybe you find a certain man negative when his moaning tone is really what puts you off. Or you find that woman too sharp because of her clipped tones. Or the sheer decibels and shrieking pitch of certain people have you running for cover!

Research and personal experience confirms that body language has a strong impact. Your voice is equally powerful and maybe even more so. The tone of a voice affects others physically with its vibrations. A loud unpleasant voice can feel like an assault on your very person. But equally, the impact can be below the level of consciousness, influencing your view of a person without your realising why.

When you discover how to speak well, you find that people treat you differently, and that you attract different connections. Finding your voice is a journey that takes you beyond the world of sound. As you read through these chapters or work with a voice coach, you find that the ability to speak your mind authentically builds your confidence and allows you to know yourself better. In finding your unique voice, you discover your way of being in the

world. You realise that you have something to say. What starts as a quest for a good voice, becomes the discovery of the person you were born to be. You become more at ease in your own skin, and more able to connect successfully with other people. This is a great recipe for success.

So, dip into this book; have a look around. Playing with the instrument that is your voice is a fun thing to do, and the results are sure to be awe inspiring. You can start at any place in the book . . . or if you prefer, just turn the page.

About This Book

This book explores how to use your voice more effectively and influentially in every context. Plenty of books on public speaking exist, but they concentrate mostly on tips for creating presentations. This book gives you the practical help to use your voice powerfully in intimate one-to-one conversations, presentations before enormous audiences and everything in between.

The basics of a great voice are the same whether you wish to connect well with one other person or are booked to speak to an audience of thousands. What I want for you is the ability to use your voice freely and authentically with interest and variety, so that it serves you well on all occasions.

This book is for anyone who wishes to improve their voice – you don't need any previous know-how. You already have all you need, and that's your vocal instrument. That said, if you're an actor or professional speaker you can still find plenty of useful nuggets here to enhance your performance and bring added range and subtlety to your sound.

The journey to acquiring a great voice includes many helpful techniques, but you mainly need to think about *getting out of your own way* to enable your natural full and powerful voice to ring out.

I include audio tracks so that you can hear exactly what I'm describing and understand what you're aiming for as you practise the exercises.

Conventions Used in This Book

You'll recognise the terms in this book; I don't use any medical or other jargon to put you off. I use *italic* text for titles of films and books and for when I get excited and want to emphasise something for your attention. The key concepts in a list and the headings for numbered steps are in **bold**. Web and email addresses are in monospace. And that's about it!

What You're Not to Read

The great thing about *For Dummies* books is that you don't have to wade through loads of uninteresting information to get to what you need. By using the Table of Contents, you can easily turn to the pages that are going to be most useful to you and take it from there.

After years of working with clients, I can't resist giving you background information or related stories of interest from time to time; these fascinating but not-essential items are marked so that you can skip them whenever you want. They include:

- ✔ **Text in sidebars:** The sidebars are shaded boxes that appear here and there. They often contain historical information, background or personal stories.
- ✔ **The Copyright page:** Unless you're determined to read from cover to cover, you can skip this page of legal language and reprint information!

Foolish Assumptions

I've yet to meet you personally, so I've made a few assumptions about you in writing this book. I'm assuming:

- ✔ That you have a voice!
- ✔ That you genuinely want to do something about improving your voice and speaking skills.
- ✔ That you're willing to have a go.
- ✔ That you'll approach the exercises with a light heart in a spirit of curiosity and experimentation.
- ✔ That you're willing to be pleasantly surprised by your efforts.

I wonder if that's foolish . . . I'm thinking not!

How This Book is Organised

I organised *Voice and Speaking Skills For Dummies* in six parts. Each part covers a range of subjects to help you find out about voice, with exercises for you to practise. Each part is divided into chapters, which contain all the

information you need to build your skill to a high level. The Table of Contents gives you all the headings to find your way around. The Index is also helpful if you don't see a particular topic in the Table of Contents.

Part I: Introducing the Human Voice

In this part I lay the foundations for exploring voice and speaking skills. You find out about voice coaching, explore the characteristics of successful voices and discover what to listen out for in your own voice and others' voices. You get the opportunity to really listen to your own voice and decide how you want to develop.

Part II: Beginning with Voice Basics

Here you embark upon the all-important foundation of a good voice – how to breathe well while staying open and relaxed. You discover how your whole body has a part to play in producing the sound. With these skills, you can practise freeing your voice and improving its sound. Get ready to have fun playing with vowels and consonants that bring your language alive. You also discover how to speak with clarity so that nobody *ever* misunderstands you again. Here's your opportunity to get good at tongue twisters as well if you wish!

Part III: Playing Your Instrument Well

Now the fun starts! You're able to turn your volume up and down, surprise people with a loud voice, seduce them with a soft voice – and everything in between. Discover how to sustain a slow authoritative pace or energise your listeners with a faster pace. I introduce you to *resonance*, the professional speaker's dream secret for sounding confident, excited, firm, statesmanlike or passionate. As you gain control of your instrument, you discover that you're beginning to move beyond technique to sound authentic and at ease.

Part IV: Beating the Voice Gremlins

In this part, I name and shame the gremlins that have beset your voice in the past! You discover how to overcome whatever blocks you from speaking well, including fear and other emotions, and you expose your various subterfuges. I guide you through the tricky topic of accents and show you how you can have your cake and eat it – in other words, keep your accent but have others listen and clearly understand you. I offer help for stuttering and hesitation, including information on the latest thinking around tackling the stop reflex and becoming fluent.

Part V: Engaging with a Broader Public

This section is the one to consult if you have to give a presentation or speech, so you can both engage your audience and enter the state of mind where you're at your best. I show you how to lead and influence with your voice and how to walk your talk – or rather talk your walk! If you use your voice a lot in your work, this part is for you. You find reassuring advice on keeping your voice in good condition as well as useful material on how to use your voice effectively in different professions.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

These short fun chapters are a famous part of every *Dummies* book. Here you find top tips for sounding as if you mean business, inspirational ideas for increasing your charisma, and invaluable hints for looking after your voice. I also share my ten favourite examples – at the moment! – of great voices for you to enjoy. See whether you agree with my selection.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout the book you find the following icons to guide you to the important bits and focus your attention:



This icon offers you the opportunity to try certain techniques and ways of speaking and get them 'in the muscle'. Voice work is highly practical. You'll get the most out of it by 'having a go' at exercises with a curious but not too serious frame of mind. You don't have to get things right first time!



The icon highlights particular speakers or speeches that you can find on the Internet. Listen to a particular voice or type of voice and then spend time reflecting on the sound you hear and noticing the response it attracts.



This icon indicates exercises that have an accompanying audio track where you can hear me demonstrating how to approach them. Appendix B lists the audio tracks.



Anecdotes are examples of real-life experiences that I include to help you understand better. The stories are all based on real people with names changed to protect the innocent. Occasionally, I've combined the stories of more than one client to make a point clearer.



This icon reminds you to watch out for points that you're sure to find especially valuable. Note these bits with special care.



This icon indicates handy practical tips that help you get the best out of the vocal exercises and voice work in general.

Where to Go from Here

Jump into any part of the book you wish. I wrote it so that you can start at any point and then dip in and out as suits you. If you don't know where to start, Part I gets you going with an overview of all the voice essentials, and then you can broaden out from there. See what grabs your interest. Rely on the Table of Contents to guide you around.

Voice change happens most easily if you don't make heavy weather of it. So try out any of the suggestions in this book in a spirit of curiosity and play and you'll get the most out of it, just as people do in my workshops. Enjoy the book and have fun with your voice!

Part I

Introducing the Human Voice

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

You find out what a huge difference your voice makes to your impact when you speak to people, and you realise why so many prominent figures have decided to work on their voice. You explore the many different exciting possibilities of voice, and discover what voice coaching can do for you. I lay the groundwork for developing your voice to become an excellent speaker, and you get to know your own voice to be ready for an exciting voyage of discovery.

Chapter 1

Having a Great Voice

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering what your voice has to offer
 - ▶ Finding out about voice coaching
 - ▶ Identifying the qualities of the best voices
-

When you imagine a great voice, what springs to mind? A beautifully touching scene in a romantic film? A charismatic leader addressing an enraptured audience? A business leader skilfully persuading the board? A parent reading a bed-time story to a child? What a difference having an inspiring voice makes in all these scenarios!

Maybe you picked up this book because you don't like your voice. Many people feel this way for different reasons. Perhaps you dislike your accent or your tone, your lack of volume or the fact that speaking causes you physical problems. Maybe you're curious because currently you take your voice for granted and assume that you're stuck with what you've got, even if you don't particularly like the way you sound. Maybe you know in your heart of hearts that you can speak confidently and effectively – if you just had some advice from a seasoned professional?

Well, you've come to the right place! Your voice matters. It has a big impact on other people. Each time you open your mouth, you can have a profound influence on your success in personal relationships and in your career. Developing your voice is one of the most useful things you can do to improve your prospects in many different arenas. And you *can* change your voice.



In this chapter, you discover what a radical difference developing your voice makes – in terms of your impact, relationships, job opportunities and more. You find out what voice characteristics constitute a great voice and look at how you can acquire those characteristics for yourself.

Your voice as your calling card

Your voice tells people a lot about you – more even than how you look or what you wear. People hear your voice and make immediate assumptions and snap judgements about you.

Do any of the following statements sound familiar?

- ✓ 'He doesn't sound like leadership material to me.'
- ✓ 'I'm sure that she liked it – she sounded really pleased.'

✓ 'He despises me; you can just hear it in the way he talks to me.'

✓ 'She doesn't sound authoritative enough to convince people.'

Are people coming to the right conclusions about you when they hear you? If not, it's enormously worthwhile to do something about it. Although many activities in this book are, on the surface, about technique, most have a deeper purpose – bringing your sound and your meaning together in order to have the greatest impact possible.

Trumpeting the Voice

Everyone has a voice, and your voice is your golden opportunity. Your voice is the strongest communication tool you have – *if* it's working for you as you intend.



When I say *voice*, I'm talking actual sounds, not the words you may say. Think about voices you've heard. Just the sheer tone of a voice can irritate you to death, melt your whole being or make your soul soar – you don't even need to understand the speaker's language to feel his or her meaning in your very depths!



The effect of a voice can be devastating. The post office worker who took the fateful warning call before the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 can still clearly remember the voice of the man at the other end of the phone almost four decades later. 'The way he spoke it was as if he had a grudge against me personally,' he says. 'There was hatred.'

On the other hand, ask someone to describe the person they love, and many times you hear, 'I just love to listen to him,' or 'She has the most beautiful voice.' Something about the voice reaches the innermost recesses of your being and works its magic.

I often refer to the voice as an instrument, but really, having a voice is more like having a whole orchestra, the possibilities are so varied. So if your voice sounds permanently like a strident cornet or a squeaky flute, you're missing out on the other instruments of your voice orchestra – all those other possibilities of expression that can affect people in different ways.