



your voice  
is  
**you**



*did you ever stop to think  
that when you are speaking over  
the telephone . . .*

*your voice is you*

When you are speaking face to face with someone your smile, your grooming, your own charm combine to present your own *self* . . . all help to create a good impression. When you talk over the telephone, however, everything depends . . . on your *voice*.

*Let's make it a pleasant one!*

This little booklet contains some helpful information on developing a good telephone voice.

By following its suggestions you can easily develop your own "Voice With A Smile." You can make your *voice* reflect your *self*.



## first of all ...

### **Speak distinctly**

To be understood it is necessary, of course, to speak distinctly. You do this if you pronounce your words carefully, giving proper formation to each sound in every word.

Just try this: Open your mouth slightly—and now, hardly moving your jaw, or tongue, speak a few sentences.

*You've* heard people talk like that and probably had trouble understanding them. They seem to have stiff jaws, lazy lips, sleepy tongues! Their words sound mumbled, shut in, or "swallowed," instead of being nicely formed and directed outward to the listener. "Miss Mousy," "Miss Dreary" and "Miss Myla Minit" are this type. They are giving only a portion of their personalities to their listeners. Their friends could not be blamed for thinking that they do not care enough about them to speak clearly and distinctly.

Incidentally, in face to face conversation, your facial expression will be much more interesting to others if your lips are mobile.

Many of us do get a bit careless and let our talking muscles get stiff. Like any other muscles they need limbering up to be really useful. Many of us exercise to keep stylishly trim . . . why not take a few exercises that will make your voice stylishly clear? You'll find some suggestions later on. Just *thinking* about your speech helps a lot. Reading



aloud at home and observing how other people speak are good ways of becoming speech conscious.

## take your time



Over the telephone, it's important to speak *unhurriedly*, as well as distinctly. Remember, your listener cannot have the help of watching you, seeing your gestures and the changing expressions of your face. You save yourself and others a lot of time when you make yourself understood the first time.

Telephone speech should be neither too fast nor too slow. If too fast, words are jumbled, parts of words are lost to the ear, and bad-sounding forms creep in—"wadjado," for "what did you do," for example. If too slow, the words sound disconnected, and lose meaning and interest for the listener.

Ordinarily, the very act of speaking clearly helps prevent your talking too fast. You *cannot* be "Miss Garbled," you see, because your tongue, used correctly to form your words, acts as a sort of metronome placing your words at proper intervals.



## Speak directly into the mouthpiece

Your voice is carried most clearly by the telephone when you speak directly into the transmitter, with

your lips close to the mouthpiece. For best telephone results this is just as important as keeping the receiver to your ear. Here is a simple test that you can make: Take your first two fingers and pass them through *sideways* in the space between your lips and the transmitter of your telephone. If your fingers *just* squeeze through you are speaking directly into the telephone and your voice is being transmitted as close to its natural tone as possible.

It is not necessary to shout or even talk loud if you are speaking into the telephone properly. In fact, talking too loud may actually cause a blurred sound and make it difficult for the listener to hear and understand.

**make your voice** *interesting*

The "voice with a smile" is being heard more and more in all lines of business and social activity. If you are frequently in telephone touch with other people, you will find it helpful to study the difference between a voice having a "personal interest tone" (which is another name for the "voice with a smile") and one lacking that expression of interest. More common than "Miss Shriill," "Miss Myla Minit," "Miss Breathless," etc., is "Miss Mechanical." Her voice comes to you, as Shakespeare put it,





“flat, stale, weary and unprofitable.” This is unfortunate, especially for those people who otherwise have fine personalities. “Miss Mechanicals” appear everywhere in our society, but with just a little work she would disappear completely. The difference between “Miss Mechanical” and “Miss Voice with a Smile” is suggested in these contrasting sets of words:

<b>the voice having personal interest tone</b>	<b>the voice lacking personal interest tone</b>
+ PLEASANT	— EXPRESSIONLESS
+ FRIENDLY	— MECHANICAL
+ CORDIAL	— INDIFFERENT
+ CHEERFUL	— IMPATIENT
+ INTERESTED	— INATTENTIVE
+ HELPFUL	— REPELLING
+ <i>Plus Personality</i>	— <i>Minus Personality</i>

### ***your mouth is like***

### *a musical instrument*



To sound any particular note on a musical instrument requires a special position or action, such as pressing a violin string at exactly the right point and drawing the bow correctly. So, too, there is a special position or action of the lips, tongue or jaw for every sound used in speech. The lips sometimes close or take a slightly parted or rounded shape; the jaw moves up or down; the tongue moves into many positions.



These speech workers have a way of shirking on their jobs, however, unless we give them special attention. To insist on right mouth action for any sound is to make sure that that sound is formed rightly and uttered clearly.



*and now* **some voice exercises**

Standing before a mirror, watch and listen to yourself while you say the vowel sounds in the way shown in the following list. Carefully note your mouth action while you say each vowel so that it sounds exactly right.

The movements of the jaw to produce the mouth positions shown below permit the tongue to take the necessary positions for the various sounds.

vowels sounded	as in	approximate position of mouth	
A	ah	father	Open
A	ay	ate	Half open
A	aw	call	Open, lips slightly rounded
A	a	hat	Half open
E	ee	he	Almost closed
E	e	met	Half open
I	eye	Kite	Open, then closing
I	i	it	Slightly open
O	o	hot	Open
O	oh	old	Open, lips rounded
U	oo	flute	Almost closed, lips rounded
U	uh	hut	Open
OI	aw-i	oil	Open, then closing



## practice makes perfect

To make the consonant sounds shown in the next list is even more important. There is much more movement required of the tongue and lips, and the teeth have a part. Unless spoken distinctly, consonant sounds may not be heard at all or may easily be mistaken for others.



breath consonants	voice consonants	nasal consonants	formed by
F	V		Lower lip against upper teeth.
P	B	M	Lips
	W		Lips extended in circular position
	WH (as in "when")		Lips extended in circular position
T	D	N	Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
	L		Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
TH (as in "three")	TH (as in "then")		Tip of tongue back of upper teeth
S (and soft C)	Z (as in "maze")		Tip of tongue away from gums or teeth.
SH	Z (as in "azure") Y (as in "yet")		Tip of tongue drawn back. Sides of tongue touching upper back teeth
CH	J (and soft G)		Tip of tongue against upper teeth ridge.
	R (as in "run")		Sides of tongue against upper back teeth
K (and hard C and Q)	G (hard)	NG	Back of tongue against soft palate.
X (as in "ax")	X (as in "exact")		Same as K followed by S, or G followed by Z.



Practice further by reading or talking aloud, also in front of the mirror, to see how well you can use the correct mouth action in ordinary conversation. Continue to listen to your own voice as you practice, so that you can detect any faults.



Probably the best "voice mirror" you have is your own hearing. Ask yourself frequently, "How do I sound?" And *be honest*. If you wish another check, try out your speech on someone whose judgment you value, and ask for frank criticism.

### now try these

Each of the sentences below has a good mixture of vowels and consonants. Read them aloud, slowly enough to give every sound its proper value and to be conscious of your mouth action. They will give all-around exercise to your vocal apparatus and at the same time some mighty useful ideas to carry about with you.

1. For distinct enunciation, every word, every syllable, every sound, must be given its proper form and value.
2. Think of the mouth chamber as a mold, in which the correct form must be given to every sound.
3. Will you please move your lips more noticeably?
4. The teeth should never be kept closed in speech.
5. As your voice is the most direct expression of your inmost self, you should be careful, through it, to do yourself full justice.
6. You may know what you are saying, but others will not, unless you make it clear to them.





7. Through practice, we can learn to speak more rapidly, but still with perfect distinctness.
8. Good speech is within the reach of everyone, through conscientious practice.
9. The courtesy of face-to-face conversation, where the smile plays such an important part, can be expressed, over the telephone, only through the tone of voice and a careful choice of words.

It's a good plan to add other practice sentences, selected from your reading or made up by yourself. And then there are always those old tongue-twisters—like “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers” and “She sells sea shells.” They are very good exercises for stiff or lazy speech organs.

### *and now* about the telephone itself . . .



There are 433 different parts in the telephone instrument—each developed through years of research by scientists in the Bell Telephone Laboratories.

Your telephone is, in fact, a precision instrument designed to carry your voice accurately . . .



down the street . . . across town . . . or if you wish around the world. It is a fine piece of reproduction equipment but the finest telephone in the world can only *reproduce*. What comes *out* of the telephone . . . depends on what is put *in*.

If you would have your telephone callers *hear* the same charm . . . they *see* when you are talking face-to-face . . . learn to develop . . .

*the voice with a smile*

Wherever you call... whenever you use the telephone... you'll find it helpful to follow a few simple rules like these:

1. Be sure of the number. If you're not sure, look it up in the directory.
2. Always answer *your* telephone promptly.
3. Give the party you are *calling* time to answer.
4. Speak clearly... not too softly or too loudly. Hold the transmitter about a half-inch away from your mouth.
5. If you have a party-line, share it courteously with your party-line neighbor. It's *not* courteous to listen in! And, of course, you don't interrupt unless you are making an emergency call.
6. When you have finished talking, hang the receiver up gently.

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If you ever have any questions about your telephone service, please let us know about them. We'll be glad to help. Just call your local telephone business office.

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**by Matthew Furman On-Line**

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