



Course Title: The Right to Speak: Finding and Freeing Your Natural Voice

Course Code: COM 63

Instructor: Ted DesMaisons

Course Summary:

Savvy business leaders, skillful teammates, and awesome parents all know the same truth that theatre pros have practiced for centuries: effective vocal connection makes the difference between being ignored and being deeply heard.

The good news: you were born with a ready presence and an open voice. It's in your DNA, a birthright gift for your survival. The challenge: you've almost certainly developed habits, stresses, and tensions that inhibit your fundamental ability to communicate.

In this course, you'll identify and dissolve such restrictions by applying the same safe, playful, and practical exercises that renowned British voice and presence coach Patsy Rodenburg has used successfully with Oscar winners, Olympic gold medalists, and global business leaders. You'll learn to inhabit "Second Circle," a physical and attitudinal way of being that promotes grounded confidence, ready connection, and easy charisma. With that presence in place, you'll begin to coordinate the body, breath, and voice so your communication gains its natural clarity and power.

Students can expect to:

- recognize and embody a "Second Circle" presence that enables and encourages skillful, authentic connection;
- identify and call forth the natural voice;
- speak challenging words with audible clarity; and
- better sense and discern the "right" moment for acting or speaking up

We will use multiple modes to strengthen your learning, including:

Mindfulness practices which strengthen the presence "muscle," giving us the ability to connect with others and communicate more powerfully.

Vocal warm-ups that gently and cumulatively undo old habits and welcome more natural expression.

Home practice that brings that presence to daily life: when you're eating, driving, arguing—whenever!

Shared inquiry which uses safe, small and large discussions to draw wisdom from the whole group.

Playful exercises that let you *experience* the skills we're exploring—and laugh in the process.

Please note: this work opens a sense of possibility and freedom very quickly—and continues to deliver insights and growth over the long haul.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
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Grade Options and Requirements:

Though this course is not graded, students are strongly encouraged to commit to at least twenty minutes of daily practice at home for the duration of the course. You will also be invited to complete one chapter of reading per week. Both commitments strengthen the group learning.

- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Students must participate in at least 5 of 6 course sessions.
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

****Please Note:** If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose the Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Tentative Course Sequence:

We will move through each of these modules at whatever pace suits the group. The lessons build cumulatively and many of the modules will get strengthened and solidified through regular warm-ups and other exercises.

Lesson	Topic
Module One	Anything is Possible: Neuroplasticity and Relationship to Failure
Module Two	Get Present: Stepping into “Second Circle”
Module Three	Aligning the Body for Natural Speech
Module Four	Finding the Full-Powered Breath
Module Five	Warming the Vocal Cords
Module Six	Exploring the Range of Expression
Module Seven	Adding in Articulation and Projection

Course Materials and Reference List:

- *Playful Mindfulness: a joyful journey to everyday confidence, calm, and connection*, by Ted DesMaisons
- “Monster Baby Podcast: A Curious Romp Through the Worlds of Mindfulness and Improvisation,” with co-hosts Ted DesMaisons and Lisa Rowland (<http://www.monsterbabypodcast.com>)