

**DR LOUISE MAHLER**  
presence, influence and vocal intelligence

# Vocal Intelligence **WORKBOOK**

## Short notes

Learn the secrets of being a  
more influential communicator  
and persuasive presenter



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# Who is Dr Louise Mahler

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Master Practitioner NLP

Dr. Louise Mahler is the originator of Vocal Intelligence, a specialised understanding of the mind-body-voice connection. Louise developed the concept and strategies behind Vocal Intelligence in her ground breaking, award winning PhD research. As is a translator between the creative world of the performance arts and the world of business, Louise has identified a 'missing' piece in organisational and personal development: voice as a thermometer of change.

Louise began her journey into the voice in her years as an international opera soloist. After performing as a soloist with the Vienna State Opera, Louise moved into the corporate realm, where she quickly rose through the ranks of management. Sensing that there was more to her journey and that there was a way for her to combine her knowledge about voice from the arts and her experiences in the corporate world, Louise embarked on a multidisciplinary PhD to research her passion. The results are in the remarkable depth of her topic, Vocal Intelligence.

Today Louise is a highly sought after keynote speaker, corporate trainer, and executive coach. Her signature style is fun and candid, full of high doses of humour, reflection, energy and passion. Participants can't help but get involved in Louise's workshops and presentations; conservative corporate audiences find themselves doing things they never thought they would and come out bigger people through the experience.

Participants across the world find Louise's work transformative in the way they relate to others, and how they relate to and feel within themselves. She has unlocked the minds, bodies and voices of hundreds of Australians and then gone on to develop them as leaders, speakers, teachers or every day people with passion and humour. Her sessions will change your life.



**EXECUTIVE COACHING**

**EXECUTIVE MENTORING**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKING**

**ONLINE TRAINING**

**WORKSHOPS RETREATS**

# 10 Vocal Intelligence Principles

- 1.** Each person is born with a perfect vocal instrument
- 2.** It gives you an enormous range and flexibility of sound possibility
- 3.** All people can sing
- 4.** There are no bad sounds
- 5.** There are unhealthy sounds
- 6.** Voice is released, not taught
- 7.** We can release it at any age
- 8.** Vocal dynamics echo psychodynamics
- 9.** The mind is reflected in voice through the body
- 10.** There is no personal change without vocal change and, likewise, there is no vocal change without personal change

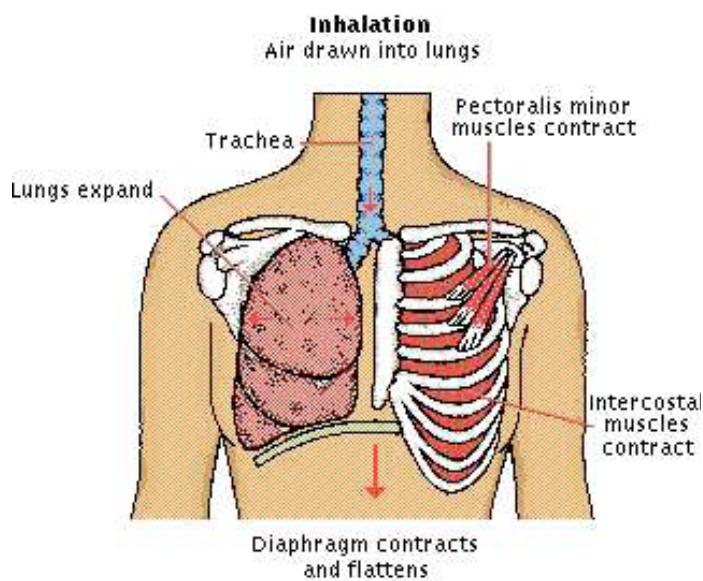
# Natural Breathing

## Natural vs habitual patterns

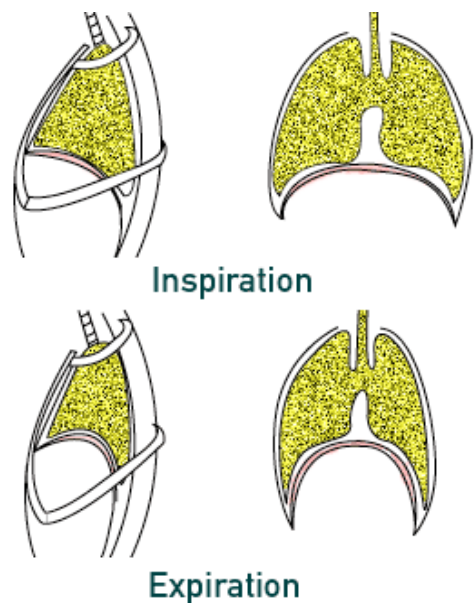
Throughout a person's growing process, many factors superimpose idiosyncrasies into speech and articulation patterns which interfere with the free functioning of the vocal cords and with free breathing. Therefore, what we perceive as natural is, in fact, usually habitual.

## Position of the lungs and diaphragm

The parts hang suspended within the thorax attached by the root to the heart and trachea. Basically the outline fits inside the thoracic cage - the base following the conformation of the dome of the diaphragm



Microsoft Illustration



# Louise's Signature Breath Exercise (Kapalbhati)

Breathe Out



Drop

1. Stomach goes in
2. No (little) chest movement
3. You 'get breathed' as opposed to 'taking' a breath
4. No (little) chest movement
5. The stomach 'drops' out - fast

## Why this exercise?

- To work with a breath exercise that is useful for stressful situations
- To actively combat nerves
- To set up the vocal process
- Massage organs of the body
- Scramble the brain from old breathing patterns
- Be pro-active about breath

## Notes and things to watch

- No chest movement
- Lots of movement in stomach area
- No head movement
- Keep face relaxed

In yoga, the Kapalbhati is a forceful exhalation while contracting your abdominal muscles, purging the system of all negatively - physical or mental disturbance. Inhalation takes place as passive recoil. It is said to overcome stress, negativity, depression, stimulate digestion, circulation, heart, burn toxins, purify blood, prevent disease.

Practice under the supervision of a teacher if you suffer from heart disease, high blood pressure or hernia.



# Rest Position

Having a rest position reminds me of 'bar' in the game of 'chasey' played by children. It is the position you go to that has several benefits:

- It looks like the role from the audience's perspective
- In the business position, it means you can breath and speak

There are different rest positions for different situations and roles

## Classic business rest position

- Feet apart and parallel
- Knees bent
- Pelvis under [flat lower back]
- Upper back released
- Head on straight

## Add

- Nodding
- Blinking



# Basic Vocal Anatomy

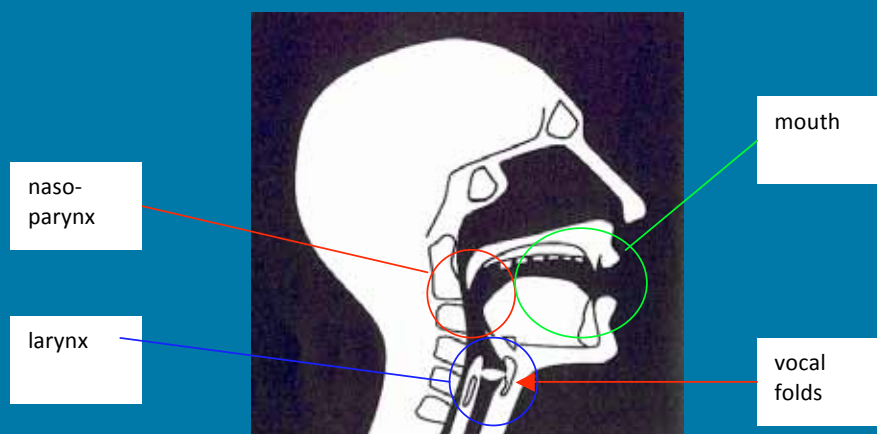
The larynx, or voice box, is an organ in the neck that plays a crucial role in speech and breathing. The larynx is the point at which the aero-digestive tract splits into two separate pathways: the inspired air travels through the trachea, or windpipe, into the lungs, and the food enters the oesophagus and passes into the stomach. Because of its location, the larynx has three important functions: control of the airflow during breathing, protection of the airway, production of sound for speech.

The framework of the larynx is made up of the thyroid cartilage. The anterior portion of the thyroid cartilage can be easily felt in thin necks as the “Adam’s apple”.

In the centre of the larynx lie the vocal folds (also known as the vocal cords). The vocal folds are one of the most important parts of the larynx, as they play a key role in all three functions mentioned above.

The vocal folds are made of muscles covered by a thin layer called mucosa. There is a right and left fold, forming a “V” when viewed from above. At the rear portion of each vocal fold is a small structure made of cartilage called the arytenoid. Many small muscles are attached to the arytenoids.

These muscles pull the arytenoids apart from each other during breathing, thereby opening the airway. During speech the arytenoids and therefore the vocal folds are brought close together. As the air passes by the vocal folds in this position, they open and close very quickly. The rapid pulsation of air passing through the vocal folds produces a sound that is then modified by the remainder of the vocal tract to produce speech.



# Emotional Intelligence

## Voice and the brain

The mind has historically led to few connections in vocal scientific research until recently. Although the connection seems obvious, experiments designed to connect emotion and voice failed to do so, but within the last decade there has been an attempt to re-unite them.

Vocal researchers, having assumed 'that vocalization during human speech and song was something that depends on different brain regions and pathways' [Davis, Pamela 1998, p. 15], recently found scientific evidence to support that notion. Adding to the scientific wisdom of a higher brain (cerebral cortex) responsible for control, we can now add a very primitive and unconscious part of our brain which controls our emotions and is responsible for the unconscious sounds that we make [Davis, Pamela 1998, p. 15].

This area, identified as the Periaqueductal Grey (PAG), is thought to be responsible for fight and flight responses and now accepted as the source of vocalisation in animals and human emotional utterances [Davis, Pamela 1998]. Also, on the basis of PAG recordings, Larson [1991] and Bandler et al [1996] proposed that the PAG may play a critical role in song and pitch variation in speech, doing this through its links to the sensory input from the respiratory system and the larynx [Davis, PJ, Zhang & Bandler 1993].

So, scientific research, as it stands, tells us that vocal tone is under both conscious and involuntary control and it is intriguing that different parts of the brain seem responsible for the same set of muscles and may work together or separately on those muscles at any time.

Depicting this phenomenon visually, the photos above show a patient with a small infraction of the area of the brain associated with conscious control of the facial muscles. On the left, the patient has been asked to smile and her response is to show her teeth on one side, unable to consciously manipulate the oral muscles on her right side [conscious control]. In the picture on the right she reacts genuinely to a joke, to which the complete face responds [unconscious reaction].

A similar duality of conscious and unconscious controls is also present for voice and Holstege [1996] used this illustration as an example of his hypothesis that there are at least two nervous systems - a voluntary motor system and an emotional motor system.

All of this certainly suggests that voice is a multilayered intricate web, not just linked to conscious learning alone, but to a significant level of unconscious activity and orientation.

Voluntary motor system

Emotional motor system



voice



Holstege & Ehling 1996, p. 154



# Gestures

## Time line

**Future:** grabbing the future up and out .....

**Past:** throwing the past behind.....

**Present:** you are in it (hands down) .....

**Lessons from the last:** in a suitcase at your side.....

## Learning preference

**Visual:** up high .....

**Auditory:** into the ears .....

**Kinaesthetic:** into the lower body .....

## Sizes

Large: ..... arms stretched long

Medium: ..... arms curved

Small: ..... arms tight

## Numbers

Up above shoulder

