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Voice Care for Coaches

By <http://www.abundancecenter.com>

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By Catherine Franz

Coaches rely heavily on their voice to service clients. If you also give teleclasses or workshops, voice maintenance needs to be one of their top self-care priorities. This information also applies to singers, speakers, or sales professionals.

During flu and cold season, vocal cords become highly sensitized and need as much care as a valuable instrument. Think of your voice, and we should, as an expensive, rare violin. If you were going to play the violin the next day -- same relation as having a speaking engagement or a full day of coaching -- you wouldn't expose that violin to a night in a smoke filled room, lay cigars or pour alcohol all over it and expect it not to suffer from the abuse the next day.

Antibiotics don't help viral infections or laryngitis -- a common result from a viral infection caused from a cold or flu. Recently, I suffered got the flu and suffered from a severe case of laryngitis. I had to cancel a teleclass, lose a week of work, and almost a paid speaking engagement. The more I self-treated through media knowledge or recommendations, the worse the laryngitis got.

It took over 20 days before I improved and then two weeks later, it returned. After great frustration, I

finally visited my ear, nose, and throat specialist, only to learn that everything I was trying was actually contributing the extended suffering. Let me pass along some of my learning so you don't need to go through this. Like me, some of it will surprise you.

Food and Beverages

Warm or hot beverages work best. Cold beverages with ice produces the voice center to spasm generating coughing that results in laryngitis. Stick to drinking room temperature water.

Black Currant Pastilles, which are glycerin-containing lozenges for adults, keeps the throat moist. Pastilles are perfect to take before, during, and after flying or traveling from one temperature extreme to another, say New York to Florida in winter. It is good to have these on hand since they are difficult to find. Many professional singers use Black Currant Pastilles 24 hours before their performance.

Avoid anything with mint or menthol.

Throat Coat® Tea, designed specifically for voice professionals, is rated higher than Pastilles. The tea contains licorice root, which is widely used to enhance throat and upper respiratory tract health. Any beverage that affects your stomachs acid level, like caffeine, will also affect your vocal cords. Caffeine is a mild diuretic and dries the throat and vocal cords. Coffee, including decaf, due to its natural oils causes acidic results that cause vocal damage. This includes chocolate. If you suffer from acid reflux disease, you need to take extra care of your voice since it cause permanent damage. Sodas also cause acid reflux and damages vocal cords.

With a cold or flu, we usually drink orange juice. This acidic beverage actually lengthens laryngitis. So does the amount of lemon you use in water. A tiny bit of lemon in warm water with a small amount of honey is a great elixir that actually smoothes the vocal cords.

Dairy increases throat mucus for some people. If after

you drink milk, you feel even a little mucus in your throat, you probably have a very mild milk allergy. This will affect your vocal health and can lengthen laryngitis. Nuts have the same allergy affect.

Common Causes of Voice Strain

It's common knowledge that shouting, screaming, and excessive talking strains voice cords. But, did you know that whispering, coughing, loud sneezing, crying, laughing, and throat clearing could do the same damage?

Emotional or environmental stress also causes voice strain. Especially major changes like separation/divorce, new job, kids going off to college, grieving, not enough sleep, moving, and even hormonal changes in adolescents or maturing adults. If you add any of

these with the need for a quality voice, you will need to take extra care in order not to bruise or damage your throat center or vocal cords.

Voice Maintenance

When experiencing laryngitis, limit unnecessary talking, and pause frequently to swallow and remoisten your throat, even during speaking engagements. Relaxation techniques, like yoga always help, yet be conscious aware of your posture and breathing during speaking can save or further bruise voice projection especially if your voice is weak from a cold.

One of my favorite exercises that I do every morning or while driving to a speaking engagement is a vowel review. Stretch your neck comfortably upwards and recite the vowels — a, e, i, o, u. Let your vowel trail off after each one especially the "u." If experiencing laryngitis avoid whispering. Whispering actually stresses vocal cords reducing recovery significantly. If you smoke or visit smoke-filled rooms, triple your maintenance plan, smoke is very damaging.

If you lose your voice, you will require additional rest time over a 4–7 day period. This means limiting

your voice to 15 minutes a day. Looking on the bright side, listening skills will definitely improve. Keep phone calls brief; avoid all non-speech voice use, including throat clearing, coughing, and sneezing or any odd sound effects. Snoring also doubles strain.

Over-the-Counter

Even though they give brief relief, throat sprays and medicated lozenges dry the throat and extend recovery. If used for an emergency, you must follow with extreme care.

Herbs can also cause side effects. You will want to discuss their use with your doctor or herb practitioner. Herbs like barberry reduce inflammation and infection caused from respiratory infections, but can also cause an allergic reaction especially if already using another remedy. Herbs like eucalyptus, German chamomile, goldenrod, goldenseal, licorice, marshmallow, peppermint, saw palmetto, or slippery elm are remedies for vocal cord inflections. Adding garlic

and ginger to your foods also reduce cold symptoms including sore throat and don't need professional advice.

Support Team

If your voice is vital to your income, you will want to have an ear, nose, and throat physician familiar with your medical history and working with singers. With an ongoing relationship, it's easier for them to provide advice when out of the area.

Last year, while experiencing a mild case of laryngitis, I saw my doctor before I left for a speaking engagement but I didn't know to mention I was traveling to a high elevation. By the time I checked in at the hotel, I was in bad shape. An emergency call and I was armed with new instructions. The next morning I was fine. Did you know that most taxi companies will pick up and deliver called-in prescriptions usually at the same rate as a cab ride?

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What is Coaching?

By Kimberly Chastain

Recently, I have received several emails asking me about coaching and what it is exactly. So, I decided to answer some of those questions in this article.

First, of all let me start with what coaching is not. Coaching is not therapy or counseling. Therapy tends to focus on the past whereas coaching is often more future oriented. Also, coaches are not paid friends. You certainly have friends that are all ready giving you advice. Friends are often cautious in telling you what they really think and don't want to hurt your feelings. Coaches hold you accountable for the goals you set and an action plan to meet those goals.

So, what is coaching? For years executives and athletes have had coaches to help them reach peak performance. Now, other people are seeing the benefits of having a coach. Coaches are a listening ear, listening to your goals and dreams. Coaches help you put those dreams into actions. You will find coaches are very action oriented and want to help their clients reach their goals. Coaches also hold you accountable for steps you plan to take. Christian Coaches in particular focus from a Godly perspective. Where is God leading you at this time?

Why would someone hire a coach? People hire coaches for many different reasons. Some people need help with time management. Others want to find a better balance in their lives. Some may be looking at a career change and want to research the alternatives. Some people may say, "I'm not enjoying my life and want to have more fun, how can I better use my time?" Others may want spiritual guidance in their particular situation. The reasons people hire coaches are as varied as the individual person.

What should you look for in a coach? Most coaches offer an initial free phone session. You should see if the coach understands you and really listens to what you have to say. Does the coach ask you what your goals are or does the coach set goals for you? Remember this is about you and your agenda, not the coach's agenda. Often, you can tell in one phone session if the coach is a good fit for you. Most coaching sessions occur over the phone. So, your coach could be thousands of miles away or in your city. Location really does not matter. Some coaches also doing coaching completely over the internet. When you do set up an appointment with a coach, make sure you have a list of questions you would like to have answered.

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Voice Care for Coaches

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Moms, a free e-book. If you suffer from "I Can't Say `No" Syndrome, visit Kimberly's site today for the details on an exciting email course that's sure to set you free!

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What is Coaching?

The Responsibility Of Being A Sports Coach

I'm Not Looking for a Friend, I'm Looking for a Jedi Master

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What a Career Coach Can or Cannot Do For You

Expand Your Professional Coaching and Consulting Business

The Art of Kissing

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

101 tips to stay fit and live longer.

Baby's First Year –What Parent Needs To Know



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