



CLAIM YOUR VOICE
Speak with Power and Presence
THE DYNAMIC SPEAKER

December 6th: Speaking Styles Workshop

Context

Speaking styles are adapted from Laban Movement Analysis, a deep and multifaceted somatic methodology. Rudolph Laban was a choreographer and teacher, who was hired to optimize factory workers' movements, and found natural efficiencies. He adapted these efforts for movement and dance. They were later adapted for acting. Jonathan learned these efforts and action drives in 1993, and slowly adapted them as a way to teach both character acting and speaking styles, among other things.

Efforts

TEMPO: *an element of time.*

- The goal is to match up how fast your lips move with how fast your body moves. (Normally lips move far faster than the rest of the body.) Integrate the whole body, including mouth and eyes, so that the entire body moves at a chosen pace. A good starting point: match the tempo of one arm to match the movement of your lips.
- Experiment by moving and speaking simultaneously, using speeds from 1 (very slow) to 10 (very fast).
- 5-6 is roughly how fast most people speak normally, although your habitual pace might be a 3-4 (slower) or 7-8 (rather fast).
- Pause to transition between different tempos (e.g., switching between 3 and 8).
- Practice both sitting and standing/walking.

WEIGHT

- Access it by being strong (strong muscular engagement), or light and buoyant. Feel your muscles throughout both your mouth and your body as you speak.
- To access strong, feel the tension and extra effort as if you were moving through mud or even hardening cement. Engage your muscles isometrically throughout your body. Extremely strong is a 10; very light is a 1.
- To access light weight (1-4), imagine that you are filled with helium or walking on the moon. You still use muscular engagement, yet strive to have it feel "light" and effortless inside.
- Note that weight does not correlate with volume or tempo; see if you can be light or strong without being louder, or drawing upon other dynamics or efforts.
- Also try passive weight, where you collapse your body and are quite "heavy."



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SPACE/DIRECTNESS: Consider how we *move through* space.

- You can be either direct or indirect. On a scale of 1-10, 10 is very direct and 1 is very indirect.
- To be direct: focus your intentionality, energy and awareness by looking at and talking to one specific spot. This spot could be your camera, or an object in the room, or a person. Then, intentionally do a new movement, or look at a new person or spot.
 - Be deliberate in your speech, with clear enunciation. Use no fillers. Full directness is focused and intentional.
 - Try using *direct gesture*: It is a very intentional movement with clarity.
 - Extreme directness may feel like tunnel vision.
- Indirect:
 - Look around with less intentionality. Let your environment pull on your attention.
 - Allow yourself to be easily distracted. “Squirrel!”
 - Vocally: allow your vowels to change pitch. Using long, slow vowel sounds will help with this. You may have filler words as well when indirect.
- Not being “in space” (e.g., neither direct nor indirect) means that you are in your head, and likely disconnected from other people.

FLOW: We will work with this 4th effort next time.

ACTION DRIVES

Action drives combine 3 efforts, and put you into different *psychophysical states*.

- Us them to shift your habitual state.
- All of these efforts are natural, but all are NOT in our habit zone. Some people have never been aware of some efforts like time (fast or slow) or weight. We can use the efforts to step into a place of growth, and to develop our full range of expression.
- Going too far outside of your habitual state may not feel good at first. So, experiment and stretch!
- Notice any emotions that come up with different efforts or drives.
- These are great for character development as well.
- Consider “What impact do I want to have on the audience?” We are entraining the audience to our state when we are speaking.
- When practicing multiple drives, you can restore and reset your nervous system by ending the practice being light, direct and slow.



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Efforts

	1	5	10
Time/Tempo	very slow	average	very fast
Weight	very light	mid-range	very strong
Space/Directness	very indirect	somewhat direct	very direct
Flow	<i>very bound</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>very freeflow</i>

Action Drives

Type	Speed	Weight	Directness
Punching	Fast	Strong	Direct
Dabbing	Fast	Light	Direct
Gliding	Slow	Light	Direct
Pressing	Slow	Strong	Direct
Flicking	Fast	Light	Indirect
Slashing	Fast	Strong	Indirect
Floating	Slow	Light	Indirect
Wringing	Slow	Strong	Indirect

QUICK REVIEW:

- **TIME/TEMPO:** Start slowly, syncing hands and lips. Then, speed up: 4>6>8>10. Then slow down. Then do random tempo changes, with a pause to switch.
- **SPACE/DIRECT:** be clear and focused. Look in one spot, then look in another.
- **SPACE/INDIRECT:** Like being very distractible. *Flexible focus*. Gestures are not intentional. *Indirect* can feel more like speaking 'off the cuff'.
- **WEIGHT:** *Weight is how we move through space - light or strong*
 - **Strong:** is not *heavy*; it is a tensing of the muscles isometrically as if it takes far more effort to move through space.
 - **Lightness:** ease, clarity, looking around us.
 - **Passive weight ("heavy"):** Fully collapse into the earth. Release. Be floppy.



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ACTION DRIVES

The 8 Action Drives are combinations of first three efforts. Practice the extremes.

Combinations: Stand or sit for the practices. (Note: You can have a more fully embodied experience when standing so you can move more.)

Tip: When practicing, change one effort at a time. Continue through the eight styles in any order.

Tip: Public speaking is primarily DIRECT... so for speaking, we will use direct the top 4 combinations on the handout, with a secondary use for the other four. (For acting or characters, draw upon all 8.)

The notes below include descriptions per our class work and requests.

- 1) Flicking: fast, light, indirect. Like Tinkerbell.
- 2) Dabbing - light, fast, direct.
Use short movements; look and speak in one direction; be clear. Pause between movements.
- 3) Punching - fast, strong, direct. Think Tony Robbins.
Stay very direct – don't change directions with hands or body.
Enunciate well.
Can be a bit aggressive. There's a continuum, so try it not quite as intense as well.
- 4) Wringing – slow, strong, indirect. The energy of grief, like being wrung out and pulled apart. It can feel hard to focus.
- 5) Floating – slow, light, indirect.
Use long vowels; feel it in the whole body.
Change your pitch to show the slow indirectness. Let yourself float vocally and physically.
- 6) Slashing – fast, strong, indirect.
Move quickly and more aggressively with less intent, and jerk the hands.
Try both big movements as well as a very small version of it, where you try not to show it.
- 7) Pressing – slow, strong, direct.
Use long vowels and slow, strong gestures.
It's like being unstoppable: "I am a steam roller. Very motivational: "You can do this!"
- 8) Gliding - gentle: slow, light, direct.
As it's direct, be sure to look and move in the same direction.
It is very focused: glide slowly in one direction. Use whole body movements.
Do gliding or passive weight at the end of an efforts/speaking styles practice! Take a while to do this to reset.



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ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Play with all 3 efforts separately – time (tempo), weight (strong/light), and space (directness) – and also the 8 action drives. Schedule these into your calendar for each day.
 - a. Notice your experience - including the state, mood or emotion each puts you in. Which styles/drives feel foreign? Which styles feel comfortable in your body, and are part of your habits?
 - b. Use dynamics or efforts when speaking with others, and notice the reactions you receive.
2. When practicing, notice anything that is more habitual or comfortable for you (e.g., slower or faster tempo, lighter or stronger, etc.) – and which are more foreign or difficult.
3. Practice your text (or finds a new one) with different drives.