Creating Character Voices

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The basics of voice-acting -

Just doing funny voices won’t make you a pro
Every script has a character in it. It’s the actor’s job to bring life to the character and take the character’s words "off-the-page"
The voice-actor’s goal is to create compelling characters in interesting relationships.

Some simple voice-acting concepts and techniques you can use immediately -

**The PVR's** – PACING (speed and flow) – VOLUME (loudness) – RANGE (vocal placement)

**M.O.V.E.** - MOVEMENT ORCHESTRATES VOCAL EXPRESSION (physicalize the moment)

**A-B-C’s of Voice Acting** - AUDIENCE (1 person) - BACK-STORY (specific event to which you are responding) - CHARACTER (who you as the speaker?) - DESIRES (character wants, needs & intentions) - ENERGY (physicalization appropriate for the character’s attitude and emotion)

**Making choices** – commit to the choices you make to keep your character and voice consistent

Creating the character voice -

Characters must be real and believable.
Understand the story and the character’s role in it.
Exaggerate a normal attitude or characteristic to make the character interesting.
Explore different placements, attitudes, emotions and textures.
Use accents and dialects only if appropriate to the character.
The voice you create MUST be sustainable and duplicatable.

Finding your voices -

Vertical placement – the *sweep exercise* (low pitch to high pitch). You’ve got a voice at every pitch.
Horizontal placement – moving your voice to the front or back through muscle tension and physicalization.
Documenting character & voice placement – name character, appearance, walk, key word, emotion, attitude, dynamics, quirks, mouth work, laugh, etc.

Working with the script -

Look for hook lines, key words, and phrases that reveal things about the character.
Figure out what the character wants as a result of speaking the words.
Experiment with different ways to deliver the lines.

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I know I forgot our anniversary…uh, last week!
If I promise to never forget again . . . do I still have to sleep in the doghouse?

Whaddya mean, my ears make my butt look big?
Look at this… when I pull my ears down…my tail disappears!!
Documenting Your Character Voice

Character source (where did you get the idea?): ______________________________________

Character name: ____________________________________________  Age ____  Sex ___

Key phrase (to quickly return to the voice): ________________________________________

Appearance (hair, clothing, etc.): ________________________________________________

Physicalization (how does your character move in time and space?):

  Stance: _________________________  Walk:  _____________________________
  Quirks: _________________________  Laugh:  _____________________________
  Body: _________________________  Hands/arms: _________________________
  Mouth Work: _________________________  Dialect/Accent: _______________________

Placement (location of voice in your body):

  Vertical pitch: ____________________________________
  ___ Abdomen  ___ Chest  ___ Throat
  ___ Adenoid  ___ Nasal  ___ Face
  ___ Eyes  ___ Top of head

  Horizontal: ____________________________________
  ___ Front of face/body  ___ Centered  ___ Back of head/body

Phrasing/Pacing (the musicality of your character’s voice):

  Attitude (tone of voice): ______________________________________
  Emotion: ______________________________________
  Pace (fast/slow/varied): ______________________________________
  Volume (loud/soft/varied): ______________________________________

  Associated color, sound, or taste: ______________________________________

If your character was real, who or what might it be like? ______________________________

Other notes:

For information on *The Art of Voice Acting* book, workshops, free e-mail newsletter, and voice-over resources, visit www.voiceacting.com