

**CREATING A  
VOICE THAT  
LASTS A  
LIFETIME**

*Debunking The  
Aging Voice Myth*

**Joni Wilson**  
America's Premier Voice Trainer

# **Creating A Voice That Lasts A Lifetime**

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**4 Times Best Selling Author**

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## Author Notes:



**Virtual Voice Coach**  
Home of  
*Joni Wilson's*  
**The 3-Dimensional Voice®  
Training System**  
**The Gold Standard Of Voice Training!**

## Thank You!

First, I would like to say *Thank-You* for letting me share this important e-book with you! I have put together some of the most up-to-date facts, myths, tips, and information associated with aging and vocal abuse that I have compiled and shared with thousands of voice users and abusers all over the world.

Until recently the "**Aging-Voice-Syndrome**" was considered a fact of life that we all had to face in our "Golden Years." Contrary to the general consensus that a weak voice is a "given," in my 25+ years of teaching, I found that students who came to me with weak, wobbly voices were able to once again, regain control of their speaking and singing voices. By changing their life-long voice habits and miss-guided beliefs about what their voices could and could not do, and applying the right vocal exercises, a younger-sounding, energetic voice became their reward.

I always held my beliefs that the "old-voice-sound" was fixable and over the years I have been blessed to share in the restoration of vocal power, over and over again.

For those of you who need a strong, powerful voice to share your message, this e-book will be the first chapter of your new belief. I am honored to be your *Voice Trainer* and to introduce you to this most amazing part of you body:

# YOUR VOICE!



## **My Story**

**After losing my voice at the peak of my career, and not understanding why, I have personally dedicated the past 25 years to finding the best, new, techniques to strengthen the speaking and singing voice. When it comes to Voice Training, one thing is very clear, and that is; when you learn how to use your voice correctly, no matter what the experts tell you, *it IS possible to keep the voice healthy and active for life.***

### **Soooo. . . What Exactly Is A Voice?**

The day it finally dawned on me that the human voice was an incredibly powerful ball of pure energy spewing out of the mouth and enveloping everything within its range of sound, is the day I stopped being angry and disappointed in its inadequacies. Up until that time I had always believed that it was, *“My voice and it just wasn’t doing what I wanted it to do.”* Period.

I kept punishing my voice for disappointing me by tightening, forcing and strangling it. In my ignorance of the truth, I believed I could make it perform by pushing it harder and forcing it to be louder so people would listen to what I had to say.

The frustrating part of all that pushing and shoving, was that my voice would simply say, “Enough is enough Joni!” and completely shut me off. I always ended up with NO Voice.

I was the one who was reaping the wrath of my own vengeance, not my voice. It would simply take a mini-vacation away from me while I was forced to cancel engagements because I had no voice. How stupid could I be! Why it took me so long to get it I'll never know. My greatest excuse was the lack of information and worse than that, the abundance of miss-information.

## **Welcome to "The Studio Womb"**

The voice has always been the focal point of my work and my joy in life and it wasn't until I began to teach voice that I realized I was not alone in my frustrations over it.

That small nugget of enlightenment opened the door to vocal discoveries that let me peek at the human voice in all of its glory without my angers and judgments standing in the way. With an unsteady gait, I stepped through that door to enlightenment and begin my life-long journey into the fascinating world of the human voice.

My studio is like the womb: small with low ceilings and it feels like a very safe place to be. To begin to release that pent-up ball of vocal energy, you must be in a safe place to let it out, even if it's your car with all the windows rolled up. To be effective, the vocal energy must be free to express itself. The amount of voice power we are all holding back is enormous.

**(I have seen vocal miracles occur in very shy, soft-spoken people of all ages when they are given the right to let their voices be heard.)**

Freeing that vocal energy has amazing powers. No matter how tired a person may be from their stress-filled day, or how pressed a student may feel from the rigors of homework and academic pressure, by the time the hour we spent together was over, they are ready to take on the world again. Vocal sound is not only energizing, it's healing. So many of my students come in drained and leave feeling healthy and alive again.

## **What is this Energy and Where Does it Come From?**

Vocal energy is not only powerful, it's accessible to everyone, but there is a catch; to use it correctly, skills are a must and understanding how the voice actually works is vital. I'm sharing this e-book to give you, the reader, some important vocal skills you will need to be successful in business and life. This e-book also shows you how to use the voice to create the perfect vocal image to deliver your message. All of the wisdom and understanding you will gain here will help you to remove the blocks and free up that mighty vocal energy that screams to be heard and best of all, will last you throughout your life.

The principle behind creating a pleasing voice, is to get people to hear what you say and do what you tell them to do. You will learn how to harvest your vocal energy the way you would harvest any treasure planted in your garden. It all starts with a seed of desire to change your vocal patterns and habits.

That seed must then be nurtured by the knowledge of how the voice works. You must water it by studying the text and doing the exercises. (The exercises are easy and fun to do so don't get nervous.) When it's time to pick that "ripe to perfection" voice from the garden, you will then wash off the residue of mistaken beliefs about the human voice and place it on a shiny new plate for everyone to enjoy.



## **What a feast for your listeners' ears when you do open your mouth to speak and sing!**

I wrote my first voice book; (The 3-Dimensional Voice) in 2001. That was before the dawn of electronic books, viral video, video conferencing, out of control texting and worldwide cell phone mania, and, before the world of business and public speaking had shifted to the Internet. Now companies hold their meetings and information conferencing on a big video screen right in their offices, even though one attendee may be in New York and the others in Japan.

Throughout all of these up-scaling and electronic-techno wonders, the one *constant* that has NOT CHANGED, is the need for business professionals, speakers, presenters, teachers and consultants; (to name a few), now more than ever need to have a powerful voice that is easy to understand, loud enough to hear what is being said and strong enough to last throughout an entire 3 day event.

Presenters and speakers can no longer hide behind a microphone and depend on audio only to do the job for them. Employers now want to see what you look like and then decide if you're the one they want to hire as a speaker or presenter. No matter how impressive your credentials may be and how many books you may have written, if your voice and presentation skills are not professional, those who hire the talent will pass-you-by, sorry!

Today, a shaky, unsure, weak voice is unacceptable, no matter what your age or gender. The world "playing-field" is not as forgiving as it once was.

**Now after all that, here is the good news I bring to you!!!!!!!**

## *There's No Need or Reason for Your Voice to Age, Period!*

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In this e-book you will learn how to give yourself a "voice-lift" to keep your voice strong and youthful for the rest of your life. (I repeat . . .), in my 25 plus years of teaching voice, I can honestly say there is no reason for the voice to age or deteriorate except for ***bad voice technique***.

You will learn how to avoid "nodules" (vocal cord calluses that cause a raspy, breathy sound), and how to avoid vocal loss at any age. (Yes, kids have voice problems, too.) You will also learn how hormones affect your voice. This is an important lesson— especially for women.

As a bonus, this e-book contains exercises to introduce you to my amazing 3-Dimensional Voice® Technique.

(At [3-dimensionalvoice.com](http://3-dimensionalvoice.com), I also have video training for those who want to create that perfect voice to deliver their message.)

### **Get ready to learn:**

- How to Give Yourself a Voice-lift and a Young Sounding Voice
- Why Vocal-Exercises Keep the Voice Healthy at Any Age
- An Introduction to my Amazing 3-Dimensional Voice® Technique

## The Voice and Aging

There is no denying that; as we age, our voices will go through changes. The most dramatic voice changes are the ones we go through during childhood and adolescence. The larynx and vocal cords do not fully mature until late teenage years. Hormone-related changes during adolescence are noticeable with boys, but somehow the 3 voice changes that girls go through; at 11, 14 and 18 are completely ignored by teachers, choir directors and even parents. The rapid changes in the size of our vocal cords and surrounding muscles cause characteristic pitch breaks and embarrassing voice cracking.

Once again, the male voice is revered as it changes from high pitch to low, but who notices the female voice that goes from little girl to young woman? (See Note)

### **JONI'S NOTE:**

I cannot write about **voice aging** without this "urgent call" to Parents, Grandparents and Great-grand parents of kids in choir, theater, sports (cheerleading), and, or any stage or class activities that create "over-use" of the young voice. Please, find a good voice coach, teacher, instructor who understands that to use the voice correctly takes the entire body and not just the voice (voice-box/vocal cords) for sound and the lungs for breathing. Vocal damage can last a lifetime.

*I will go into symptoms of voice abuse later in this e-book.*

## Time Marches On . . .



After the teenage voice changes, several decades of relatively stable voice performance follow, until once again, our bodies are invaded by the hormones and miss-information that keep insisting on telling us that we are aging. The undeniable fact is; noticeable changes can occur as we move into our later years. As our bodies gather years, we *do* lose muscle mass, our mucous membranes; (voice cords) *do* thin and we *do* lose some of the fine-tuned coordination we took for granted a few years back. But the good news is that our voices do NOT have to go along with the program. Keep that thought in mind as we continue . . .

With all this body changing, it's not surprising that changes occur can in the larynx (Voice-box), as well, and this can cause changes in our voice. (Your doctor may call these changes vocal cord atrophy or bowing, presbyphonia, or presbylaryngis, etc, etc. and prescribe steroids and a various list of drugs who's side effect are often worse than a scratchy throat and a husky voice.

### **Some of the voice changes listed as age-related are:**

- Higher pitch voice in men
- Lower pitch voice in women
- Reduced volume and projection of the voice (Thin/weak voice)
- Reduced vocal endurance (tired voice)
- Difficulty being heard in noisy situations (Soft/weak voice)
- Tremor or shakiness in the voice (unstable nervous voice)

**Important fact:** These symptoms are amplified by the reduced hearing ability that commonly occurs as we age

## What Can Be Done About Age-Related Voice Changes?

Most of the time, hoarseness and vocal difficulties are NOT age related. From babies to seniors, 68% of all human beings have vocal problem at some time in their lives. The biggest culprit for vocal hoarseness and vocal-blowout is improper/misuse of the voice, and unless a person has taken some form of voice training, most people are totally unaware that it takes the entire body to make the voice work properly, not just the throat area.

**FYI: Here are a few of my favorite "voce-myths" followed by the facts. Some may be familiar, and some might just surprise you:**

**Myth #1: Your voice begins and ends in your throat.**

**Fact:** Nothing could be further from the truth. To create a powerful, professional speaking voice that will carry to the back of the room and last for hours, you must learn to use your entire body to power your voice.

**Myth #2: Your weak voice is caused by age or illness and your voice will weaken as you age.**

**Fact:** Not so. A weak voice is caused mainly by vocal abuse, poor technique, and mistaken beliefs about how the voice works. For a person to gain control over their voice, it's vital that they understand how the voice operates and how to get the most out of it without damaging the vocal cords. With good vocal technique, a person's voice can actually improve with age. (I have proven that fact over and over by helping people find the voice they thought was gone.)

**Myth: Vocal technique is the same for men and women.**

**Fact:** Not true. The female voice is unique, complex, and very different from its male counterpart. Due to the difference in size and strength of the vocal anatomy, most of the vocal problems women face are completely unknown to men.

**Myth: When women try to speak loudly, they become hoarse and eventually lose their voice completely.**

**Fact:** Although many a successful career has been stopped dead in its tracks by the fear of an uncontrolled vocal blowout at the worst possible time, there is no reason for any one man or woman to go through life in fear of losing their voice. With a bit of understanding and some simple vocal techniques they can take back control of their voice and best of all, learn to trust it to be there when they need it.

**Myth: Voice training is only for singers, actors, and those in the news media.**

**Fact:** Wrong! If you use your voice in your career, whatever it may be, you need to learn how to use it effectively. When you consider that over half of all business relationships begin and often end with a phone call, if you want to advance in a competitive business atmosphere, you will need an effective and personable speaking voice.

**Myth: Most voice problems are caused by colds and vocal strain.**

**Fact:** That's a tricky one because voice problems can be caused by both physical and mental stress. The body's reaction to verbal and mental abuse can severely damage the vocal cords. Some women tighten, restrict, and swallow the words they don't feel safe expressing, which can set up a mental-emotional-physical chain reaction in the body that can put a chokehold on their voices. Men on the other hand can damage their higher pitch voices by trying to speak with a deeper tone. They make the mistake of adding weight to the voice not resonance.

Knowledge is power especially when it comes to your voice. The more you know about your voice and how it works, the more control you will have over this often mystifying instrument called: **The Human Voice.**

### **The #1, Important, Fact About the Voice Is:**

**If someone asked me what is the most important fact that people who uses their voices need to know, I would make sure that they knew, with out a doubt, that the human voice is the most amazing "*God created instrument on the planet.*"**

Next, I would make sure that they knew and treated their voices like fine-tuned, precision instruments. And last, but not least, I would make sure that they understood the voice was purely mechanical and operated on the **Cause and Effect Princilpal of: "If you do *this . . . you will get that!*"** In other word, if you know the mechanical parts of your voice and how they interact, you will know how to play your voice with skill and confidence.



## Nine Truths To Set Your Voice Free

With all this new "voice" knowledge under the belt, we can now get busy creating a voice (or voices) that will serve us well and last a lifetime. But first, here are the nine "truths" to set your voice free in no order.

1. The voice has no brain of its own. It only believes what YOU believe. Change your belief about your voice and your voice will change accordingly.
2. A big chunk of your emotional stress accumulates in the jaw causing TMJ (Temporomandibular joint dysfunction) and other tight jaw problems. Often a tight jaw is the root cause of a tight, constricted voice. A relaxed jaw is vital for strong voice projection.
3. Whether speaking or singing, you and you alone are the master of your vocal instrument. Take the time and learn how to play it correctly and your voice will be a delight to all of the ears it reaches, including your own!
4. No matter what size your mouth is, for your words to be heard in the back of the room, the mouth must be OPEN!
5. With good voice technique used correctly, your voice will NOT age. That one is worth repeating, so say it with me; **one more time; out loud, "My voice will not age."**
6. Many business colleagues never meet face to face. They know each other only by the sound of their voices. A warm, friendly telephone voice is worth the time it takes to fashion it.

7. If anyone tells you, “Resting your voice will solve all of your vocal problems.” Don’t believe them! Vocal problems are caused by overuse and abuse of the vocal cords, due to incorrect vocal technique. You can rest them all day, but if you do not learn how to use them correctly, the problems will quickly return.
8. The human body has not one, but two diaphragms to power the voice: One to compress the air and one to pump it.
9. Vocal nodules (calluses) on the vocal cords are caused by one thing and one thing only—bad voice technique. Surgery will not cure bad technique.

## **Six Major Health Problems That Can Affect Your Voice**

By now, you should know that your body IS your voice and you cannot isolate that small throat area and place all of your expectations there. What you eat, how you think, how you keep your body’s immune system in good working order, any medications you are taking, family health patterns, pre-set beliefs, sleeping habits, and patterned ill-nesses such as cold and flue season, summer allergies etc. all effect your voice. As a matter of fact, you might consider your voice and throat area as the canary in the coal mine. More often than not it is the warning bell that something, not too physically pleasant, is coming your way.

Aside from the major traumas, here are six everyday health problems that can pop up unexpectedly and put a lid on anyone's well-planned itinerary. Let’s start with the one we all know best . . .

### **Colds and Flu (Seasonal)**

According to Medline Plus, which collects information from government and health agencies, each year in the United States alone, more than one billion colds launch their debilitating assault on an entire population. From the time the TV adds begin in late summer, bombarding us with reminders that cold and flu season is about to descend upon us as a collective unit, our subconscious health patterns begin to suspect everyone who comes within a three foot radius as being “the one” who will give us the gift of infirmity this year.



This predator has no age preferences, no gender preferences, and no status preference. In other words, it shows no mercy to any of us.

We become so paranoid as the date of our big presentation, our audition, our job interview or our opening night performance draws near, that we wash our hands to the point of removing the first layer of skin along with all those phantom germs. Yet, despite our precautionary interference, it still hits us like a ton of bricks on our big day.

Most of which we spend trying to figure out just who and what gave us this atrocity: “It must have been that kid on the plane that kept sneezing on me, or maybe the guy in the next cubicle who sniffs and snorts all day.”

Most of us have so much pre-programmed, out-of-date information about this malady, the oh so common cold, that we will never figure out who to point the blaming finger at, no matter how methodically we reconstruct our every move over the past week.

Knowledge is still the best defense against this relentless aggressor. With that in mind, here are some of the uncommon myths surrounding this very common cold for you to consider before wasting another minute pondering the great “Who done it”.

**Myth 1: “Going outside on a cold, windy day with my hair wet will give me a cold.”**

Not so! Scientists at the University of Virginia School of Medicine dropped cold virus directly into the noses of volunteers, then set half in a warm toasty room and the rest in a cold drafty hallway in their underwear. They found the warm people got just as sick as the cold people, hence sitting in a draft does not give you cold, just cold feet.

**Myth 2: Once you catch the bug you will become immune for the rest of the season.**

Not true. The normal adult will get two to four colds a season and children will get twice that number. Interestingly, the older we are, the less colds we seem to get. The experts believe that we have an accumulative immunity that builds up over the years.

**Myth 3: Being run-down and tired will give you a cold.**

Wrong again! Those researchers in Virginia report that in their studies, healthy, rested people have no more protection against colds than those with weakened immune systems. Why people sometimes become infected but do not develop cold symptoms is a mystery.

Healthy people with normal immune systems are highly susceptible to the cold virus infection once the virus enters the nose. Some researchers believe that due to the body's chemistry, people with active immune systems may be more prone to developing cold symptoms than people with less active immune systems! That's a scary thought.

**Myth 4: If there is a cold going around your office, you are sure to get it.**

No. Colds do not spread that easily at work. It takes direct contact with the virus to do the dirty deed. Children are great spreaders because the most direct route from their nose to yours is through the hands. It's that basic thing that kids do, picking at the nose and rubbing the eyes with their hands that spread the virus. So, during cold and flu season,

avoid touching your nose and your eyes if there is a chance you have touched anyone who is experiencing symptoms. All drugstores carry good antibacterial wipes so it might be wise to carry some in your purse. After my recent experience, and now that I know I can get it again, I will be carrying wipes

**Myth 5: Kissing someone with a cold will give you their cold.**

Hard to believe but the answer to that one is also No. Again, according to those experts in Virginia, the lining of the mouth is NOT friendly to the cold virus. If the noses swap fluid, there is a possibility of transferring the virus. Cold suffers are infectious for a few days before the wheezes and the sneezes begin. Your beloved may not even know they have a cold, so before you go nose to nose, check out that canary in his coal mine (the throat).

**Myth 6: You should feed a cold and starve a fever.**

No one knows where that one came from. There is no scientific evidence that eating a lot will cure a cold. But if it makes you feel better have a big bowl of chicken soup.

## **Cold, Hard Facts**

There are over 100 different cold viruses and of those varieties the Rhinoviruses are the most prolific and cause at least one-half of the colds we all get. It's important to know that this virus requires living cells to reproduce it-self. It can only get to you when your hands touch your eyes or your nose, not your mouth. From the time the cold virus enters your nose, it takes 8-12 hours to incubate and 36 to 72 hours for your symptoms to show up. So, if you're on deadline, limit your contact with any known cold sufferers, especially during the first three days of their illness.

Wash your hands after contact with anybody with a cold or after touching anything they may have touched. Most importantly, keep your fingers out of your eyes and especially your nose. If that pesky virus cannot get up your nose, you are SAFE! And as for your precious pet, the good news is cold viruses live only in the noses and eyes of humans; you can neither give it to, nor catch it from, your fuzzy little darling.

The other good news is, that the voice CAN actually function in spite of a cold, as long as you are not bed-ridden, coughing, or throwing-up.

The voice is produced in the vocal cords and throat area, and nasal congestion from a cold or flu attack is produced in the nose and sinus area. These two are not even close to each other.



### **Watch Your Medications**

It is extremely important that you are aware of the decongestion medications you are taking. If they dry up the mucous in your nose, as decongestants are supposed to do, they will also dry up your vocal cords because your cords are mucous membranes and need that mucous to lubricate them. The lack of mucous is what causes your scratchy throat, not the cold. Steaming the mucous membranes of the nose and throat with a few drops of eucalyptus oil—any health food store has it—will work wonders. If you don't have a steamer, simply boil a pan of water on the stove, drop in a few drops of the oil, place a towel over your head and breathe in the healing steam all the way down to the bottom of the lungs.

### **Acid Reflex (Heartburn)**

Ever since Ashley Simpson got caught Lip-synching on Saturday Night Live and blamed an attack of acid reflux for taking her voice away, singers have been using that excuse for canceling concerts and for voice loss in general. Laryngitis is no longer the favorite cop-out for no voice and in the past two years I have had a rush of students being diagnosed with this rather new malady. Actually, it's not that new, it just used to be called plain old heartburn. We would usually get it on Thanksgiving or Christmas after a big spicy meal. We didn't rush to the doctor; we simply took a few Roloids and waited for it to pass. Because it has a new name, it also has a new assortment of designer drugs to "fix" the problem. The only trouble is, most of those drugs have drying effects on the vocal cords, which further antagonizes the voice. Many of those diagnoses were just quick fix Band-Aids and not correct because the irritation in the voice was caused by vocal strain, not stomach acid.

I'm not saying that stomach acid is not real, and yes, it does burn the underside of the vocal cords but in my experience, the drugs did not "fix" the vocal problem, so many of the voice professionals who were diagnosed with acid reflux were frustrated and confused by the time they got to me. I'm happy to say, good voice technique rules and within a few lessons the problem was gone and so was the acid reflux. I'm also not saying, don't seek help if you need it, I'm only offering an alternative suggestion when the drugs don't work.

If you are prone to stomach acid, try a mild antacid that will not have an adverse effect on your voice. Also, sipping a warm mild tea is very soothing for those over-worked cords (Throat Coat by Traditional Medicinals is my favorite throat soothing tea). Avoid foods that upset the delicate tummy such as anything with caffeine, chocolate (sorry ladies) and any acidulous fruit. One thing that I have stumbled upon over my years of always hunting for ways to keep the cold and flu bugs "at bay" is the surprising effect that organic apple cider vinegar has on both the voice and the lungs. One tablespoon full of vinegar in a half 8 oz. glass of water can calm down a hacking cough and wheezing in the lungs. Try it and yes, you will get used to the taste even if you are not a vinegar fan.

## **TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint)**

Your voice is an acoustic instrument and to give you it's optimum level of performance, it needs a big acoustic hole to come out of. To put it simply, if you want your voice heard—open up your mouth! I say those words over and over to my male clients whose main complaint is that people do not listen to what they have to say. When someone comes to me asking for more power and volume in their voice, one of the biggest obstacles standing in the way—like a sentry guarding the family jewels is—*the all mighty and powerful jaw*. The jaw has a definite mind of its own and like an unruly child, it decides when, and when not to open up, regardless of your instructions. Many people have a built-in fear that what is coming out of their mouths is either going to embarrass them or adds no value—so they keep their jaw on red alert to snap shut at the first sign of indifference to their words of wisdom. With a quick, never mind, they simply shut down and remove them-selves from the conversation.

### **What Is TMJ?**

According to the TMJ Association, TMJ refers to a group of medical and dental conditions that affect the temporomandibular joint tissues in the area where the lower jaw connects to the skull. The symptoms are: Tight jaw, tension headaches, sounds of clicking and popping when yawning or opening the jaw, and an intense fear that once that jaw snaps out of place, it will never go back into alignment again That is one of the big reasons why so many speakers, singers and actors are afraid to open their mouths no matter how many times they are told to do so. As to exactly what causes TMJ, there are many contributing factors, from old sports wounds, auto accidents, braces and any dental work that effects your jaw alignment, to even cradling the telephone between the ear and shoulder, plus habitual crunching on hard ice.

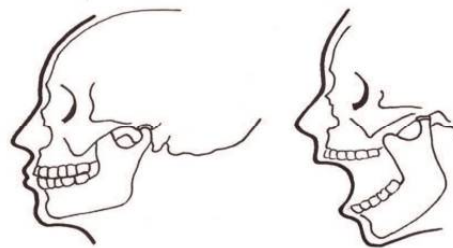
TMJ is diagnosed more in men then women, The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) of the National Institute of Health reports that over ten million people in the US have some symptoms of TMJ and a large majority of those people are men. Men carry the tensions of the day squarely in their neck and jaw area and many men that I have worked with, at some time in their lives have experienced mild to severe jaw problems. Even a simple yawn gets stifled for fear of that dreaded jaw lock. The words "tight jawed" are often used to describe a stern, no-nonsense kind of man and years of tightening the jaw can cause TMJ. This irritating problem is no respecter of age; I have as many younger students who won't open their mouths because of TMJ as I have older students.

## Re-Training Your Stubborn Jaw.

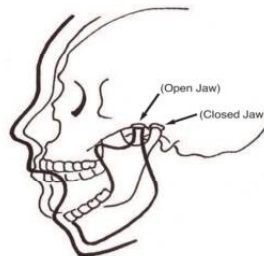
In my years of working with voices, I have found that having a good understanding of how the jaw works and then applying very specific exercises will help to release the stress and teach that oh so tight jaw, how to relax. First, we have to let the jaw know exactly what we want it to do. After years of stifling our yawns and talking through our teeth, it has become a bit confused as to its actual purpose, which is as follows:

1. To open the mouth for food to go in and sound to come out
2. To yawn for air to exit
3. To chew

All parts of the jaw work together to achieve these three goals. When any of the parts stubbornly refuses to cooperate with the others, the whole system must compensate for the culprit. This throws the entire process out of balance and pulls that jaw right out of alignment. Our job is to teach it how to re-align itself so all those jaw parts can do their job. But before we begin this jaw training session, please study the following illustration of your Jaw and get to know all of its working parts!



TMJ  
(Temporal-Mandibular Joint)



The Jaw Hinge Side View

## Here Is An Exercise To Loosen-up Your Tight Jaw

### Retraining the Jaw Exercise

Place your fingertips on both sides of the jaw at the ear lobe level. Find the indented place that houses the mandible joint. Now, drop the jaw in a big yawning position. The ideal jaw drops straight down and back. Do not allow your chin or your jaw to be pulled out of that dropped relaxed position or you will feel the jaw “pop” out of its ball joint socket. When the chin juts or protrudes out, the ball joint (mandible) by the ear lobe, will come right out of its socket. This action causes the larynx to rise up in swallow position, and the vocal cords to close over the windpipe, causing major voice problems.

When you understand how important a little thing like dropping the jaw is to your vocal health, and what complex problems can come about by simply letting that jaw push forward, you will be happy to take time to correct the small problems before they become big nightmares.

### **Another Helpful Jaw Awareness Exercise**

Watch how people around you open and shut their jaws when they speak. Notice those with robust voices and hearty laughs, just open the mouth and “let 'er rip,” while those who keep the jaw tense and tight, have tense and tight sounding voices. Buy yourself a small round shaving mirror with a stand. Set it on a table or desk in front of you and look at the mouth area only. Now, drop your jaw down into a full, wide yawn, hold it for 3 seconds, and *slowly* close your jaw. Do this several times watching closely the up and down action of the jaw.

**Now, ask yourself these four questions:**

- 1. Does the jaw move forward instead of dropping down?**
- 2. Does the jaw move from side to side as it open and closes?**
- 3. Do you stop before a full yawn for fear of jaw lock?**
- 4. Does your jaw do the “jaw dance” to the music of popping and snapping?**

While watching the jaw action in the mirror, slowly speak the phrase, ‘Drop the Jaw.’ As the jaw is gently dropped down on the AH vowel on the words dr—AH—p, and j—AH —w, be sure to stay in the yawn position. Also, be very aware of how you close your jaw. Do not let it pull to the right or the left. Now say, “Mow the Lawn.” Dropping the jaw on the “O” and “AH.”

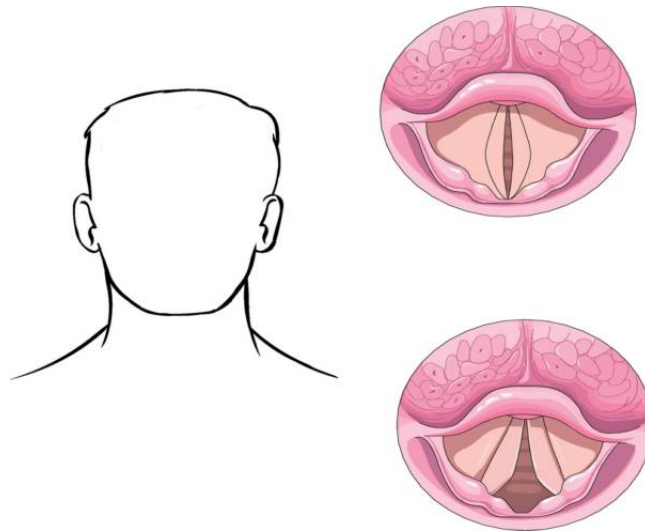
The object of this exercise is to become aware of exactly how you drop your own jaw, then to correct the alignment of the jaw by slowly and gently training the jaw to move up and down, not side to side. My own jaw had a tendency to pull to the right side when I closed my mouth because my mouth is very crooked, as I have found most peoples mouths to be. This constant pulling to the right not only interfered with my singing *and* my speaking voice; it also made my jaw very tired by the end of a long teaching day.

I faithfully practiced the mirror exercise ten minutes a day for a month and corrected that right side pulling of my jaw. Having that crooked, tight jaw also caused me to grind my teeth at night, often waking up the next morning with a very sore jaw. Being fitted with a night guard by my dentist solved this problem. It was one of the kindest things I ever did for my jaw. And as my jaw tension became less, my voice increased in strength and endurance. Correcting jaw problems early on eliminates a lot of vocal tensions that could show up later in life. What you do now will last a lifetime, if you do it right and keep it up. Please be patient and remember, old habits die-hard!

## Nodules And Polyps

“Julie Andrews may never sing again following throat surgery.” The headline was in every paper and TV news program in the country. Mary Poppins had no voice, no more Maria from The Sound of Music. What could possibly silence that beautiful voice we had all grown up with and sung “Doe Re Mi” with a hundred times? A callus on the vocal cords commonly known as a nodules or node was the culprit.

At the age of sixty, Julie was on Broadway singing the lead role in Victor Victoria, a musical in which she played a woman, posing as a man. During the run of the show, Julie was constantly plagued with vocal problems no “spoonful of sugar” could fix. She finally had to quit the show and undergo surgery on her ailing vocal cords. During the procedure, the surgery was botched and she ended up voice less and suing her surgeons for malpractice.



### What Exactly Are Nodules And Polyps

Nodules are non-cancerous lesion on the vocal cords due to straining and pulling those cords way out of their natural position. Nodules are on both sides of the vocal cords, while a polyp is only on one side, but the symptoms are the same and often hard to diagnose. This is a common problem not only with older men, but also with young girls who strain to hit those “pop song” high notes. The symptoms read like a nightmare list for any singer, speaker, teacher, lawyer, and business executive, starting with a radical voice change and chronic hoarseness, and then moving on to...

- 1. Vocal fatigue**
- 2. Unreliable voice**
- 3. Delayed voice initiation**
- 4. Low, gravelly voice**
- 5. Low pitch**
- 6. Voice breaks**
- 7. Airy, breathy voice**
- 8. The inability to sing high, soft notes**
- 9. Increased physical effort needed to speak or sing**

- 10. Frequent throat clearing
- 11. Extra force needed to hit notes and
- 12. No voice at all

Over the years I have worked with frantic people of all ages, genders and professions, with some degree of nodules and polyps. Voice therapists sent many of those clients to me, often as a last resort before surgery. After Julie Andrews' botched surgery, which left her voiceless, nodule surgery became the last resort to solving the problem and was considered only after everything else had failed. I'm happy to say that not one of the clients I worked with went on to have the surgery.

Nodules are caused by one thing and one thing only, miss-use of the voice and bad voice technique. In the case of Julie Andrews, it was quite obvious. She was not a belter-type singer. She had a sweet soprano voice and to sing in that lower, heavy, belter's voice—not to mention the scenes that she had to sound like a man—yanked and pulled her vocal cords so dramatically, that she had a massive vocal "blowout." I truly believe that with the right information and proper vocal warm-ups and exercises, nodule surgery would not be necessary. The surgery is not a fix because if the voice is not trained to work correctly, the nodules will return again and again.

## Hello You Baby Boomers



As the baby-boomers move into their later years, it is important that every boomer be warned they are about to embark on the biggest hormonal "shift" in their voice since puberty. With less testosterone flowing through the male body, and less estrogen in the female body, the membranes covering the vocal cords decrease in thickness for one and increase for the other. This results in a higher vocal pitch (tone) in the male and a lower tone in the female.

All of these hormonal events working together can cause the male voice to sound older and more feminine and for the female voice, the decline of estrogen causes the voice to sound lower and more masculine. They call that a "whisky voice" because the woman who has it sounds like she spends her spare time in a smoke-filled Pub drinking whisky shots all day.

## **So, here is the good news: It can easily be reversed!**

So many men/women facing this dilemma simply bow out of life, believing that age has finally caught up with them and they can no longer function as a young, vibrant sounding people in an age discriminating society. No matter how many face lifts, Botox injections or human growth pills people take to keep that youthful look, once again, you can't hide a voice that is not functioning up-to-par! "Who wants to listen to a croaking old person?" I've heard that one voiced loudly, many times in my classes, usually coming from vibrant, seasoned seniors who still have twenty to thirty-plus good years ahead of them. They have given up on their dreams because of a false belief that the voice ages—and that's that!

## **Exposing The Age Myth**

In my years of teaching—both singing and speaking—to people of all ages, genders and backgrounds, I can honestly say that when used correctly, the voice does not have to age! When I make that statement in my classes I am immediately challenged with questions regarding older residents in the "retirement community" whose voices sound wobbly, high pitched, strained and weak.

**Consider this:** Have you ever done an imitation of a very old person speaking? To do this you have to tighten your jaw, grind your teeth together and shake your head to make your voice sound old and wobbly. In other words, in order to sound old, you have to tighten and constrict the vary muscles that you use to create your vocal sounds. Those high pitched, wobbly voices you hear when visiting your grandparents at the retirement community are caused by years of abusing the voice with incorrect vocal technique, smoking—they *were* the smoking generation—medications, drugs—prescription or not, inhaling toxic chemicals, yelling excessively at sports events (or at your kids), and misuse of the voice day after day, year after year. When you do all that, some of your vocal parts are bound to wear down and burnout. And with excessive abuse, the vocal cords will burnout long before you reach old age. To prove this point, I have personally helped students sixteen years of age with strained and abused voices that shake and wobble more than my seventy-year-old students.

**FACT:** With the right vocal technique and loving care of the body, the voice gets stronger with age, not weaker. Yes, the vocal cords are delicate mucous membranes, but if you treat them with the respect they deserve, they *will* last you a lifetime.

When it comes to age and the voice, wisdom, understanding and correct action will always win over stereotypes and incorrect medical prognosis. It has taken many years for the voice to come to the attention of researchers, but now even they are beginning to believe that used properly, the voice does not have to deteriorate with age.

## Giving Yourself A “Voice-Lift” For Life

More good news! A youthful voice is possible for us all. Of all the over-fifty folks I have worked with, there has never been one whose voice remained caught in that hormonally trapped older person, high pitched, low pitched, weak voice mode. So let's put the zing back into our voices by giving ourselves a good voice-lift.



Because there are no levers to pull and no buttons to push that will automatically change your voice, please keep in mind that although each part of your vocal mechanism is very good at what it does, it does not have a brain. You are the brains of this outfit, and what you think is what you will get. So to begin this process you must think LIFT. Lift your heart, lift your shoulders, lift your face, lift your attitude and lift your spirits, but do not lift your chin. That will pull your larynx out of position.

### Joni's Top Ten List of Things to Do To Keep the Voice Strong and Healthy.

#### Number Ten

Never believe anyone who says the voice will weaken, as you grow older. Your voice mechanism has no individual brain; it only believes what you believe. To change the sound of your voice, start by changing your beliefs about it. Believe it is strong, powerful and made to last a lifetime if used properly!

#### Number Nine

Include the voice in your daily exercise. Do your abdominal diaphragm breathing exercise everyday. Remember that the voice is a wind instrument, if your breath is strong; **your voice will be strong**

## **Number Eight**

Drink plenty of water each day to keep the vocal cords hydrated. A constant dry throat causes dryness at the edge of the vocal cords. When relaxing, practice breathing through your nose instead of your mouth, this allows the air you breath in to become warm and moist before it reaches your dry vocal cords, this is especially helpful speaking or singing in cold weather.

## **Number Seven**

If you must take prescription drugs, always ask your doctor what side effects they could have on your voice. Any diuretic or decongestant is going to dry up the mucous that coats the vocal cords. If you know that, you can drink warm tea and suck on lemon drops to keep the voice from drying out and cracking when you are speaking. Avoid any throat medication or throat lozenges that contain menthol. The coolness of the menthol shrinks your precious vocal cords. (Sugarless lemon drops will do just fine for the weight conscious.)

## **Number Six**

Watch your posture! As we grow older the weight of the world seems to be pulling us down—they call it a gravity thing. To pull it all back up, keep that area between your rib cage and your hip bones lifted, especially if you are one of those people who sits all day at a desk. When the midsection is collapsed, the diaphragm cannot do its work and the breath is not free. This not only causes your belly to “pooch out” but also restricts the air flowing through the vocal cords. When the breath is tight and shallow, the voice will be tight and shallow.

## **Number Five**

Be aware of the noise level wherever you are. If you find yourself at a “Rolling Stones Revival Concert,” do not, I repeat, do not try to out-shout those huge speakers. There is nothing you have to say that can’t wait till the end of the concert. If you’re afraid you’ll forget it, carry a notebook and write it down. Nothing you say would be worth damaging your voice.

## **Number Four**

Avoid constant clearing of your throat. Every time you scrape those cords together you cause damage to your voice. It would be like constantly scraping the scab off of a wound. If you continued to do that day after day, imagine what that wound would look like in a week. Clearing the throat day after day can do permanent damage to the voice.

## **Number Three**

Keep your voice light and lifted, especially if you feel depressed. Constant speaking from the bottom of the throat weighs the voice down and causes the vocal cords to thicken, and thick vocal cords create rough, scratchy, sounding voices. A youthful voice has that lift to it. Keep your spirits up. Think youthful and ageless, and the voice will follow your thought. Honest!

## Number Two

Take at least a half hour each day to completely relax your body and your voice—remember that your voice IS your body! Try a yoga class. Learn to meditate. Do the self-hypnosis session, or just take the time to sit in a quiet, beautiful spot and talk to no one. The voice holds all of our emotions in its hot little hands and throws them back to us when we talk. To take that few minutes each day and not talk at all—especially if you're a big talker—is the greatest gift you can give to your voice. Your voice can even be affected by your emotions when you're *not* talking, so along with don't talk, you can add, don't think.

## Drum Roll Please!

### The Number One Thing To Keep Your Voice Young and Healthy Is:

Don't smoke and don't drink alcohol in excess. Smoking destroys the voice, we all know that, and alcohol is a dehydrator and will dry up your vocal cords—a bit of social wine and chuggin' a social beer is fine but not if you are going to talk or sing at the same event!



If you know you are destroying your voice by smoking and your voice is your major asset in business, it just makes good sense to give it up! And as long as you are giving it up, please say “No” to all recreational drugs also, especially those you smoke. They will wreak havoc on your voice as well as on your body—which of course, is your voice.

This is not to say that you can't get down and party hearty every once in a while. After all, letting off steam is a great stress reliever, but not the night before the big presentation. Be wise and treat your voice and your body with the respect they deserve and they will serve you well! And while we are at it, please, please read the side effects of all prescription and over the counter medication that you take. The voice is connected to all parts of you body and what affects the body affects the voice.

## The Three "R's" Of Good Vocal Health: Rest, Relax, And Rejuvenate

According to NIDCD, (the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders) some 7.5 million people have diseases or disorders of the voice. That's a lot of people and hopefully after reading this, you will no longer be one of them. When it comes to vocal health, knowledge is power. Now that you have a better understanding of how your magnificent voice works, and are feeling vocally refreshed, you are ready to move on in your vocal journey. *(For those who want to move on to Part 2 please check out the video and audio voice lessons at [www.3dimensionalvoice.com](http://www.3dimensionalvoice.com)*



But before we leave this e-book, here are the three "R's" of vocal health for you to consider. The first "R" on the list is:

**1) Rest:** The voice, like all parts of the body, can only be pushed so far before it simply stops functioning. To keep it happy and healthy, you must give it adequate rest. Do not allow it to go past the point of *no* return or *no* voice.

**2) Relax:** Stress and tension are the two worst adversaries of your voice. Learning to relax the voice is especially important in today's business world where most people spend the day with a cell phone glued to their ear trying to be heard above traffic noises, loud music and the natural environmental clamor we live in. Try putting your cell phone down for an hour a day and *relax your voice*.

**3) Rejuvenate:** After your voice is rested and relaxed, you can rejuvenate it by breathing new life back into it. It doesn't take any fancy equipment, it won't cost you a cent, and it will help you de-stress and clear your head. The rewards are well worth your time because with practice, controlled deep breathing can also help lower your blood pressure and slow down your heart rate.

## **Twenty Important Facts About Your Voice!**

(As they appear in James Alburger's book "The Art of Voice Acting")

Now that we have finished this very basic overview of what the voice is, I'm going to include my favorite fact list to put into this aging-voice information "mix" for you to ponder.

Drill these twenty basic facts deeply into your brain until they become a permanent part of your voice-belief system. Here we go:

**Your vocal parts have no brain of their own, and only believe what you believe. That's Fact #1 and why it's vital to know what your brain believes.**

**Fact #2:** A powerful voice must be able to go in 3 directions at the same time:

- 1. Down for depth and power, First Dimension;**
- 2. Wide for fullness and emotion, Second Dimension;**
- 3. Out of the mouth for length and control, Third Dimension.**

(To get to know your 3-Dimensional Voice<sup>®</sup> read: *The 3-Dimensional Voice, Fun and Easy Method of Voice Improvement!* Available on amazon.com.)

**Fact #3:** No quick vocal fix is ever a substitute for good voice technique.

**Fact #4:** With good vocal technique and a healthy body, your voice only improves with age. Give yourself A daily voice lift. (Visit the Healthy Voice Shop at [www.VoiceGalleria.com](http://www.VoiceGalleria.com).)

**Fact #5:** Nodules on the vocal cords (calluses) are caused by one thing and one thing only, poor vocal technique. Surgery can-not cure poor voice technique.

**Fact #6:** Smoking is the worst thing you can do to your voice. (And Your Body!) Also second-hand smoke is a voice-killer.

**Fact #7:** Verbal abuse can cause severe vocal stress and damage to the vocal cords. Keep your relationships stress-free for the sake of your voice, your mental health—and the rest of your body.

**Fact #8:** A weak voice is a symptom. To strengthen your voice, you must find the CAUSE!

**Fact #9:** Throughout a man's life, their hormones will have a major effect on their voice. A good understanding of that fact will eliminate years of frustration.

**Fact #10:** A good voice is within everyone's grasp if they will take the time to learn how to use the voice correctly.

**Fact #11:** Every person has five voices to sing with, not just one. (Chest & head +3 mixed)

**Fact #12:** Power breathing adds control and strength to a weak voice.

**Fact #13:** Stage fright is simply your body's over reaction to anxiety.

**Fact #14:** You have two diaphragms, not just one. You have one to pump your air and one to compress the air you pump.

**Fact #15:** Your vocal cords work like valves and need a strong supply of compressed air to perform their magic. Keep pumping and compressing that air.

**Fact #16:** No matter what size your mouth is, to be heard all the way to the back of the room it must be OPEN.

**Fact #17:** If your voice is your livelihood, and you work in a tense, negative environment, the minute you feel your voice reacting by raising the pitch and gripping the throat area, take a moment to yawn-sign it back to a relaxed position. Your voice cannot correct itself in that raised larynx position.

**Fact #18:** Men do not hear vocal tones in the same way women hear them. High-pitched sounds are actually painful to many male ears. Remember, its not personal ladies, so to be most effective in your communication with the men in your life, modulate the pitch of your voice when speaking to a man.

**Fact #19:** One voice does not fit all situations. Learn to be a voice actor and play with different voices. Vocal variety is the spice of life. (More about this in the Voice Actor's Shop at [www.VoiceGalleria.com](http://www.VoiceGalleria.com).)

**Fact #20:** Whether you are speaking or singing, you and you alone are the master of your vocal instrument. Take the time to learn how to play it correctly and your voice will be a delight to all of the ears it reaches, and a bonus to your success.



## In Conclusion

Congratulations, you are now well on your way to a powerful and pleasing voice for life. In this short but informative "peek" inside the working of your amazing voice, I hope I have "peaked" your curiosity to explore deeper into the wonders of your human voice.

If you want private training, there are some very accomplished Voice Coach/Teachers available to take your voice to the next level. As you begin searching for your perfect fit, always keep in mind that voice training, for speaking and singing, is a relative new field and there is no "one-size-fits-all" method. God, in his wisdom, does not give the total package to one person. We all have our own piece of the voice-puzzle that works for us and benefits our clients.

Classical voice training has always been the *norm*, but it trains a totally different section of your voice than is used for the pop or contemporary voice. Speaking voice training also has its own style, although the mechanics of the voice all work in tandem. Please do a bit of *soul-searching* before you pick the perfect person for your type of voice. If I can help you in any way my contact information is on the next page and I'd be delighted to help you. Have a Happy Voice Day!

**Visit Joni's new site at [Virtualvoicecoach.com](http://Virtualvoicecoach.com)**

**This e-book was offered as a promotional gift from James Alburger  
and Joni Wilson for visiting:**

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a cool one where our moto is:

**THE BURPS ON US!**

## About the Author

### MEET JONI WILSON

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### America's Premier Voice Trainer, Speaker and 4-Time Best-Selling Author

Joni Wilson is one of the world's foremost Voice Experts and Creator of the 3-Dimensional Voice® Training System, THE Cutting Edge Voice Method that is Changing the Lives of Speakers, Singers, and Entrepreneurs Worldwide.

In her 24 years of training voices, Joni has worked with executives from major corporations, business professionals and even two *American Idol* finalists. Her training combines acting, speaking and performance skills; of which she is a master of all three. Joni can captivate an audience of one, one hundred or one thousand with her amazing, never-ending knowledge of the Human Voice and her "Show-Biz" expertise. She studied stage acting at the prestigious **Pasadena Playhouse**, earned a professional Digital & Social Media Certification from **San Diego State University**, hosted a TV show, performed stand-up comedy at the **Comedy Store**, sang at numerous hotels in Las Vegas, Reno and Lake Tahoe, has written 10 books; (4 best-sellers), and was an opening act to **Elvis; the real one!**

From breakout sessions at the National Speakers Association live events, to hosting her own workshops and seminars, Joni's *Show-biz* background and her ability to create voice-actors out of ordinary people makes her *Voice-Training-Sessions* fun, informative and guaranteed to change her attendees opinion of their own voice and it's endless possibilities.

With today's worldwide media outreach, a single person with an idea, a new book, a product to sell or a skill to share can go from obscurity to viral in 48 hours. At no time in history has a "good voice" been more valuable than it is right now. "**Is Your Voice Ready for Prime-Time?**" is Joni's question to her audiences!

When training voices, Joni keeps learning, and loves introducing her clients to the latest, most up-to-date singing and speaking skills. In the past year she has added *Video and Recording Voice Training* and *Product Branding* to her list of available classes at her **Voice Studio 54** in San Diego, California.

Joni is available to speak to your company, group, or for one-on-one training.

**Visit Joni's On-line Lesson Site @ [VirtualVoiceCoach.com](http://VirtualVoiceCoach.com)  
or Call Voice Studio 54 @ 619-229-0726**



### Joni's Speaking Topics:

- How to Improve Your Speaking Voice . . . Instantly!  
(Joni's signature presentation: available as a 1 hour program, Half day, or Full day, Hands-on workshop)
- The Voice of Success: How to Make Your Presentation A Winner: Taming the Stage Fright Monster: Accent Adjustment and much more . . .
- Voice Acting 101 for Entrepreneurs & On-Line Marketers!  
How to Create the Perfect Voice to Deliver Your Message
- Warming-Up the Cold Calls:  
Creating an Awesome Phone Voice to Increase Your Sales
- Why Today's Woman is Not Yesterday's Wimp:  
Female Power Voice Techniques That Work!
- Finding Your Voice: How to Write, Publish, and Promote Your Book & Your Business for FREE!

Joni's presentations include PowerPoint slides, handout materials, and a link to a FREE Video Voice Lesson.

She is available for workshops, groups and one-on-one training. Joni brings to each event the wisdom of an expert and wit of a seasoned entertainer. (She might even add a song!)

**Joni Wilson is one of the world's foremost Voice Experts -- and is the creator of the 3-Dimensional Voice® Training System, THE Cutting Edge Voice Method that is changing the lives of Speakers, Singers and Entrepreneurs Worldwide.**

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