

**Practice 1.1 Approachable Voice**

Say the following sentence while bobbing your head to add rhythm to the pitch in your voice.

*As you consider what you have just read, what do you think might come next?*

**Practice 1.2 Credible Voice**

Say the following sentence while holding your head fairly still and narrowing the pitch of your voice. Be sure to drop the pitch at the end phrase.

*As you take out your books, turn to page 42.*

Two factors are important when thinking about becoming a more effective presenter. First is recognizing that each skill can be represented on a continuum. Knowing the range of the continuum is useful because it allows freedom in the implementation of each skill. The second important point is being aware of your range along the continuum for each skill. By recognizing your habitual range, you can deliberately increase the usefulness of a skill to be of greater influence on your audience. Increasing the range of verbal and nonverbal skills offers greater potential to be of influence with the rich diversity of participants attending your sessions.

Now that you have experienced the two extreme voice ranges, the next step is to explore when to use each one. Context determines which to use. When the intention is to seek information from participants or to have another person participate, it is most effective to use the approachable voice. When sending information, providing instructions, or managing behavior, it makes more sense to use the credible voice. In Practice 1.3, you will say the same message twice, first with an approachable voice and then with a credible voice. By doing this, you will experience both congruence and incongruence. Incongruence results from the mismatch between what is said and the nonverbal pattern used. Congruence is achieved when the verbal message and nonverbal pattern are matched, or rather, aligned.

**Practice 1.3 Matching Intention With Voice**

Congruence: say the following statement in an approachable voice.

*You're suggesting the westward movement was in part developed through manifest destiny?*

Incongruence: say the following statement in a credible voice.

*(Continued)*

**Verbal Message****Nonverbal Choreography**

Voice  
Stance  
Pause  
Gesture  
Breathing

**Example:**

Good morning, and thank you for the invitation to work with you today.

From center stage, stand still. And with a slight head tilt for approachability, using a credible voice and a palms-up gesture sweeping toward the group, say, “Good morning.” Shift to approachable voice and say, “Thank you.” Use a one-handed gesture (hand vertical), as you start to say, “Thank.” Move the gesture downward and then freeze the gesture as you say, “You.” Then use both hands to gesture to the group as you finish the statement.

## THE RIFF OF COMMUNICATION

Whether or not you ever played guitar, you are probably familiar with the concept of a riff in music. It is the repeating harmonic pattern in a song or melody. For our purposes, we consider the patterns found in the 7 Essential Abilities to have RIFFs, characteristics of range, intensity, and frequency. These are also important aspects of non-verbal communication. Range is the quality related to how far away from baseline a pattern is deployed. For instance, a gesture may extend only to the point where the elbow is next to the torso, or it may extend to where the elbow is 10 or 12 inches from the torso. The further from the baseline level next to the torso, the larger the range.

### RIFF

*Range*—how far off your normal baseline

*Intensity*—the sharpness and speed of the pattern when implemented

*Frequency*—how many times a pattern is used in a given time period

*Communication does not depend on syntax, or eloquence, or rhetoric, or articulation but on the emotional context in which the message is being heard. People can only hear you when they are moving toward you, and they are not likely to when your words are pursuing them. Even the choicest words lose their power when they are used to overpower. Attitudes are the real figures of speech.*

Edwin H. Friedman



### RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

It was about an hour into a two-day session focusing on ways to attract more men into the teaching profession. The presenter asked the group to surface their thinking as to reasons why men might not be choosing teaching as a profession. One participant, using a credible voice accompanied by a high breathing pattern, said, “Who the heck would want to become a teacher? There aren’t enough books for every student. There is no money for professional development. Class sizes are too large!” His nonverbals were easy to read. He was emotionally on high alert. Upon hearing this, the presenter made a deliberate and strategic move that began with one small step away from the location where she was standing when the comment was made. Using the same voice tone, pace of speech, breathing pattern, and emotional energy as the participant, she said, “As a committed educator, the lack of resources becomes frustrating.” She paused with a palm up gesture in the direction of the participant, who said, “Absolutely!” and he breathed. The presenter breathed calmly and in an approachable voice said, “And that is the reason we are asking these questions; we want to make teaching as fulfilling a profession as it can be.” While the presenter made this statement, the participant continued to breathe calmly and for the remainder of the day was an attentive, engaged, and positive contributor. He did not breathe high at any time during the rest of the day.



This dance was deliberate. The presenter recognized the downshift and matched the participant’s nonverbal patterns. Once the participant acknowledged that he was heard, the presenter shifted to an approachable pattern. Because they were in rapport, she was able to short-circuit the downshifting pathway and bring the participant into a more constructive state that led to the generation of ideas as opposed to a litany of complaints.

### Practice 2.3 Matching Language

Read the following statements and questions. Decide whether the statement is visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or digital. For each question, construct an answer or paraphrase. Suggested responses are in italics.

1. It seems to me the additional work you are asking us to do will really bog us down and force us to wrestle with time management as well as struggle with balancing everything we have to do in a work day. *For you, the additional work may pull you in different directions and put pressure on your time?*
2. It would be more useful for me to have a snapshot from each part of the program so I can see the whole picture at one time while still seeing the individual frames. *So clarity for you is being able to see individual pictures within a panorama?*
3. How does that theory model effective teaching and integrate best practices in a way that is coordinated and systematic? *Specifically, you want to know how to achieve effective teaching through best practices?*
4. If we are not careful, students could slip through the cracks and we would be unable to help them grasp the content standards in time. *As we grapple with this issue, in what ways might we catch the students who are falling?*
5. This new program is interesting although not compatible with the current paradigm. *In what ways do you consider it interesting?*
6. It appears we will gain some insight into student understanding with this new program. *As we focus on student understanding, how might the information brighten our views?*
7. We need to dialogue. *You're suggesting an additional conversation?*
8. I'm wrestling with it. *Does anything feel useful to you?*
9. Wow, this resonates with me. *Tell me specifically, what sounds useful to you?*
10. It is obvious that the new integrated, systematic model will optimize a balanced procedure. *Obvious in what three or four basic and specific ways?*
11. I'd like to share the interesting ideas that teachers typically experienced during the pilot program. *What new knowledge enhanced your experience?*
12. I'd like to highlight some of the insights that appeared during the pilot program. *Tell us what appeared to be the most vivid outcome for you.*

Eventually some groups can get annoyed with a participant (see Figure 7.5). You know the one who shows up periodically in the session you are attending—the one who incessantly asks questions, makes comments, or challenges the intellectual credibility of the presenter. The annoyed group is the group that finally goes auditory. A group that is annoyed often makes “tsk tsk” noises. Participants in this group may fully turn to their neighbor and make a sound, side-talk, roll their eyes, or shake their heads. The annoyed group wants the presenter to take control and shut the disrupter down so the session can continue, as it should. The way to deal with an annoyed group is for the presenter to delay the response. The delay might be the statement, “Hold that idea, and you and I can talk during the next break.” When the presenter does this well, the group will often shift in their seats, refocus their attention on the presenter, breathe deeply, and increase their attention, as evidenced by sitting up straighter in their seats. At this point, they are satisfied with the delay because they know the presenter knows they want to get back on track. The person who asked the question is satisfied because she often looks forward to talking with the presenter during the break. And yes, you do need to talk to the person during the break.

**Figure 7.5** An Annoyed Group

