

The Resonant Voice – Level One – Lesson Four

Hello and Welcome to Lesson Four!

In this lesson we go into deep detail about the spine. My teacher, Catherine Fitzmaurice, once told me (upon completion of my first Voice Teacher certification) that, if she could teach two things, she would teach the spine and the Heart Chakra. Why the spine? So many reasons.

The spine is the center for movement and breath. It is our center line. We have a structural (skeletal) spine, a digestive “spine”, and an energetic spine (spinal cord and also the energetic chakra system). Our body is arranged around these midline points. Being able to move with awareness from our structural spine allows freedom, ease, presence, and amazing strength. Most of the work that the external muscles are doing in an attempt to hold up the body is meant to do by the true core muscles and ligaments – and the large majority of those are directly connected to the skeletal spine.

As we dive into this examination of the spine, remember to experience the new information through movement. Meaning: don’t just take in the words I am saying with your brain! Move in response to the information! Roll on the ground! Roll over from your back to your belly!

In the video, I am telling you one thing about the spine but how does it FEEL in your own body? We aren’t interested so much in what you are “supposed” to feel but what you actually experience.

Then I teach you an exercise meant to help you find more freedom and range in your jaw and tongue. Why? Because the jaw and tongue are major gateways for speech. The jaw often carries excess tension. It is the last place we stop ourselves

in speaking our mind. This tension can show up when speaking and can result in an unwillingness to share your thoughts, be misinterpreted as apathy or aggression, or create less articulate speech (ie. Mumbling).

Jaw tension can also cause headaches so bad they feel like a migraine! These false migraines can clear up by releasing jaw tension.

And the tongue – well, the tongue is also a big player when it comes to articulation. Many times the tongue and jaw behave as though they think they have to work as one unit. But they don't! And getting them to be able to work interdependently is a worthy goal for any speaker.

I also walk you through an assignment for continued practice with Restructuring. That's what it's all about at this point – repetition and practice. If this bit gets boring, don't worry. Repetition is often boring. Just remind yourself that repetition is the key to mastering anything and keep at it! Remember: the difference between a master and a beginner is that the master has failed more times than the beginner has tried!

Journaling/Mindfulness Homework –

This lesson I've asked you to become even more aware of how you use your body. What is restructuring like now? Can you feel the support of your spine holding you up? Are you able to let the external muscles (chest, jaw, belly, throat, ribs) be more free as a result? If not, what areas of the body do you notice going tight?

Take note of what you find. Remember that this course is really a big science experiment: you are the scientist and you are the experiment. When you have a

discovery about what area of your body is holding tension, note it and tell me in class or share it on the Facebook group! I can give you specific exercises to transform that tension into potential energy for presence, vocal range, resonance, and meaning.

Have you been bringing the restructuring into daily life? When did you do that? What response do you notice from people around you? How does it feel, to speak with such commitment?

Looking forward to hearing your progress!

Melissa