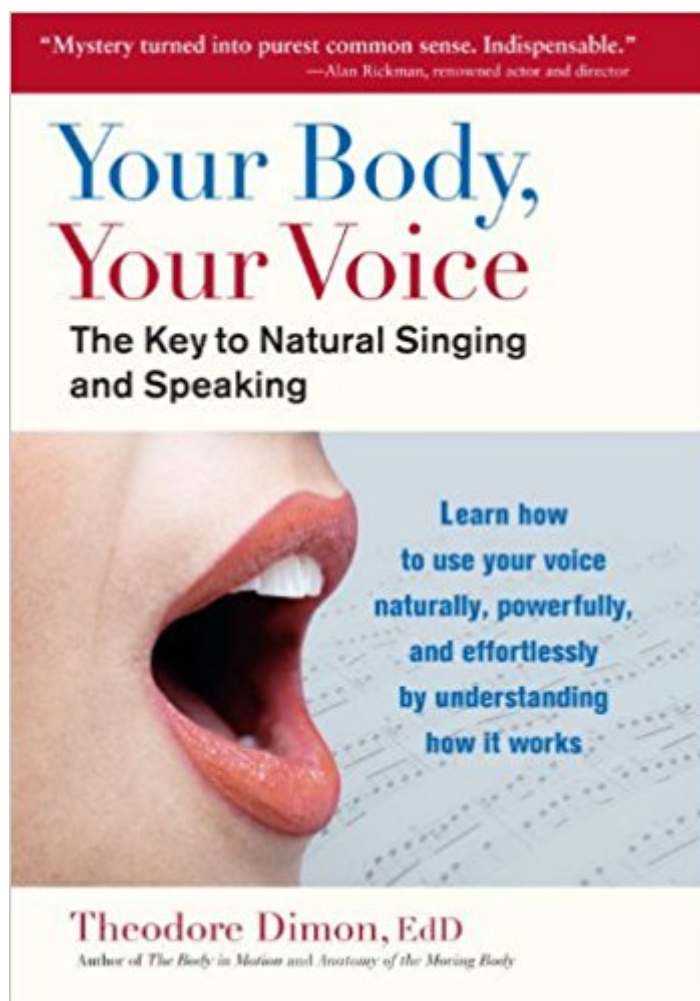


The book was found

Your Body, Your Voice: The Key To Natural Singing And Speaking



Synopsis

In this innovative book, Theodore Dimon, EdD, shows how each part of the vocal organ (breathing, larynx, throat, and so on) works as part of a larger musculoskeletal system that is often interfered with, and how identifying this larger system and understanding in a practical way how it works allows a person to train and improve the voice, whether speaking or singing. Traditional vocal training methods, says Dimon, cannot be effective without restoring the functioning of the musculature that supports the voice. Enhanced with over 50 detailed full-color illustrations, the book discusses the fallacy of traditional breathing exercises and explains that the key to efficient breathing lies in the expansive support of the trunk and rib cage. Investigating the elements needed to produce a strong supported tone, Dimon describes the importance of voice "placement," or directing the sound to a part of the body in order to produce a fully rounded, resonant tone. He identifies harmful patterns of speech and singing, and offers helpful methods for reestablishing the natural function of the vocal mechanism. Individual chapters cover elements of the whispered "ah," producing a pure sung tone, vocal registers, the suspensory muscles of the larynx, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Mystery turned into purest common sense. Indispensible." — Alan Rickman, renowned actor and theater director
"Theodore Dimon's *Your Body, Your Voice* is a godsend in tackling and elucidating the technical mysteries of voice production. The result is a factual, logical,

objective, and practical perspective that exposes many fallacies existing today under the name of "vocal technique." Anyone who is genuinely serious about singing will find extraordinarily simple and liberating truths about how the body can embody the voice in the most spontaneous and natural manner. •Malcolm Walker, professor of voice at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris

The director of the Dimon Institute in New York City, Theodore Dimon, EdD, teaches and lectures internationally. A founding director of the American Society for the Alexander Technique, he lives in New York City.

Phenomenal resource if you want to understand what a voice coach means when s/he uses terms like focus, support, intention, and passagio. I was a little disappointed that vibrato was not covered, but when you are singing with the fundamentals covered, the vibrato can be controlled quite well. There were a few questionable recommendations, according to my (operatic) coach, but some of them might be applicable to different styles of singing. Get a good voice teacher, but if you are a retired anatomy & physiology teacher, you will want this book to refer back to, for a nuts-and-bolts explanation.

A lot of good information about how you should be using your body to have a great voice. But only about less than 10% of the document gives practical tip to get to this step.

I purchased this book this weekend, and read it in one sitting. Once I finished, I realized that this was the book that brought into ONE package all of the training and voice pedagogy that I have studied through separate authors. The writer brings an intensive training in physiology and the actual function of the vocal instrument and its place within a larger body mechanism. He eschews breath training methods that engender tensions and imbalance in the total system. At several points in the text I wanted to shout "hooray!" Any teacher of voice should have this book in their library for training singers. There is no "magic vocal exercise" in this book, but you can select your training tools based on the particular function that you are trying to achieve. I look forward with great anticipation to his next book "Anatomy of the Voice". This is a MUST own, MUST read book.

Yes, you can drive a car without understanding how anything under the hood works, but you will never become a race-car driver. Everyone taking singing lessons should read this book. If you are

paying for lessons, this book is likely to improve your results.

I am a singer and this book is very useful.

A great resource for the studio. I like the Alexander approach and some of the discussions are engaging. The illustrations are in color.

This is a good source for learning to release the voice for doing its work as if it were play.

Update: I have had a chance to more thoroughly read this book, and have updated my review and added an outline of key points. First of all, I was flabbergasted when I read this book. I was tipped off about this book by a new friend, Dr. Karin Wettig, author of, "Singing like Callas and Caruso: Belcanto Voice and Body Training." So I thought I would check it out. I thought this book might be pretty good, but I was completely unprepared for what I found. This is a surprising, excellent book. I found it to be well-reasoned and thoroughly researched. Here are what I found to be the key points.

CHAPTER ONE: The Organizing Principle of the Voice* How have we impeded vocal function?* Two keys to muscle coordination: a) Head-trunk support; b) Antagonistic action* Proper muscle counter-pulls lengthen muscles* Modern training misses the biggest point--understanding the total muscle system

CHAPTER TWO: Breathing* It's a mistake to focus on in-breath* Movement of ribs and diaphragm comes first* We don't get air in--it's the result.* Trunk support is basis for smooth breathing

CHAPTER THREE: The Larynx* Arytenoids can close in two different ways* We will use the whisper position as a trick* Three sets of muscles play together* There should only be minimal air pressure

CHAPTER FOUR: The Suspensory Muscles of the Larynx* The key to good larynx suspension is good lengthening of the trunk

CHAPTER FIVE: The Problem of Support* Singing uses controlled, easy air flow* Trunk lengthening and widening is key to support* Efficiency means less air flow

CHAPTER SIX: Vocal Registers* Vocalis tenses to maintain fold thickness* Vocalis relaxes to become thinner, so CT can stretch it.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Singer's Throat* High register puts special demands on larynx suspension* It all comes back to head/trunk coordination

CHAPTER EIGHT: Placement* Placement is achieved by what we sense

CHAPTER NINE: Preventing the Basic Pattern of Vocal Misuse* Think about using minimal effort to vocalize* Find optimal muscle arrangement* Don't then change it to sing* Must become aware of muscle interplay

CHAPTER TEN: The Five Elements of Effortless Vocal Production* In most adults, breathing is dysfunctional* Bad habits begin as soon as we even think of vocalizing* Bad habits of

using tension and pushing of air are ingrained in us* Need to correct five things: Restore natural function of voice by reestablishing correct muscular work Not taking a special breath. Concert about breathing activates bad habits Exhalation without collapsing and shortening Maintaining suspension of larynx with supported tone, open throat Block old habits from activating* We can use "whispered ah" (no vibration) to start* We thus get vocal fold closure, without activating bad habit.CHAPTER ELEVEN: Elements of Support and Sound Production* Need to develop vocal "lightness"* Can lift facial muscles by brightening muscles around eyes, and raising cheeks.* Yawning and humming is good for open throat.* Practice controlled exhalation of breath--e.g., hissing* Focus on exhalation, not inhalation.* Try to achieve normal breathing rhythm--not labored.* Avoid taking special breath or gasping* Use nose inhalation.* Key preparation for vocalizing: Use whispered ah & think of communicating.* This is not a breath exercise, but mental focus to stop bad habitCHAPTER TWELVE: Producing a Pure Sung Tone* Oftentimes, we shorten and gasp-in as start of singing* Even the whispered "ah" won't stop the bad habits from returning* We must transition from whispered "ah" to actual vocalizing* Just the thought of vocalizing triggers the habit* We must be vigilant to spot the tendency to increase tension* One must first experiment with vocalizing effortlessly* Use position of mechanical advantage to become sensitive to lengthening and broadening* Finally, make sound, but indirectly, so as not to awaken the bad habits* For example, going from high to low, or using "ma" during the "ah."* Ultimately, no extra effort should be expended in vocalizing* Always be aware of your body and vigilant to stop old habit of tension* Producing pure tone comes firstCHAPTER THIRTEEN: The Voice and Its Total Design* Must understand voice in context of entire system, with antagonistic muscles working

together*****I cannot figure out how the author achieved the quality and depth of understanding in an area that is seemingly out of his expertise. I do see one thing, however. Perhaps one clue is the 8Ãfâ Ã Â pages of world-class references studied for this book.Two things really astonish me about this book: First of all, unless you are totally asleep, you will soon notice the clarity of the writing. Dr.Dimon either has a genius editor, or has perfected the skill of writing to a fine art (I'm pretty sure it's the latter.). The writing actually reminds me of a great presenter who makes a clear point, then repeats the key facts to make sure the listener gets it. Whilst reading this book, I reflected that it's almost like the author has a doctorate in education or something--Oh yea, I forgot--he does.I have done a lot of reviews, and it is extremely rare to see this quality of writing. Here's what really stands out: The author takes incredibly complex concepts (resonance, formants, etc) and boils them to the clear essence of the point--no fluff.There's no shortage of smart people in the world, but CAPABLE + GREAT WRITER =

FEW. Secondly, kudos for David Brown for outstanding illustrations. They really add to, and support the themes of the book. I marveled at the clarity of the illustrations. In fact, I even shouted to my wife while she was watching the news: "Hey honey, come look at this picture of the larynx--it's really incredible!" And: "Forget the news--look at this picture of the arytenoids sitting on the cricoid cartilage--it's really good!" (That's figure 3-2, my personal favorite.) Most books--even modern ones, simply rehash old figures from decades-old textbooks. Not so here. Now, to the content. It seems to me that the book has one big overarching theme. In my words: Singing problems are part of an integrated whole--not a standalone issue. The author emphasizes this repeatedly, which is good for us with short-attention spans: "We must understand the larger system and how each part is supported by it." "The voice functions in the context of a larger upright system" "The proper working of this system, not specific vocal training, is the key to accessing the full potential of the human vocal instrument." There are excellent sections, with extensive illustrations, that explain the design of the human voice. This includes explanations especially on breathing and posture. For readers familiar with the "Alexander Technique," you will recognize some familiar themes: As soon as we try to practice something, we inevitably start doing the same, wrong habit again. As soon as our body realizes, "Aha, you are about to sing," it starts tensing and constricting--the very last thing we need. That's just what Alexander discovered many years ago. Most of the chapters are spent explaining this larger system, and why tension is wreaking havoc on our attempts to sing. Dr. Dimon has some helpful suggestions on how to "trick" your body to not elicit the usual habit of shortening and constricting, which preclude effortless singing. He suggests a whispering technique that achieves focal fold approximation, while the bad habits stay dormant. (I still need to try this, so I can't swear it works.) He also discusses the yawning and humming tactics. One section is alone worth the price of admission. The section on the "open throat" explains the tendency to constrict our throat when singing higher notes. The muscles that raise the pitch (desired) are associated with the swallowing muscles (undesired.) I have never seen it so clearly explained before. Dr. Dimon suggests five principles to restoring tension-free vocalizing: 1) Coordinate muscular working 2) Avoiding focus on air-intake 3) Exhale under control 4) Maintain suspension of larynx 5) Vocalize without triggering unwanted habits. The author goes through each of these problems, and presents a plan to solve all five. There is much to ponder in these sections. I will be studying them more. I also want to point out a truly excellent section--Chapter 8, Voice "placement." The author explains why it is reasonable to work backwards, focusing on sensations, when we are trying to get a pleasing output sound. We try to "awaken the cause" of the pretty sounds, since no person can directly control all the individual muscles. I just remembered another great section (hmm, that sounds familiar.) It's the section on

abdominal support--"The Fiction and Reality of Support," page 49. I have always wondered why pushing in on my abdominal muscles seems to help me sing. I'm pretty sure it really does help me sing stronger in my upper register. Why so? Does it somehow make the air flow smoother or stronger? Or does it magically make my throat open up? This was never clear to me, and no one could ever explain this--until now, that is. The author explains that our seemingly helpful abdominal pressure is actually just correcting another problem that shouldn't have been there in the first place. When the muscles of the entire body are coordinated properly, vocalizing is effortless. Honestly, I don't think I found even one mistake in this book. I'm pretty picky about these things, and I usually find them. This says a lot about the capability of the author, editor and publisher. Even the quality of the book exterior is excellent. I am looking forward to reading this book for a second time. I know I have missed a lot. Everything in this book plays together well. Just like a well coordinated system.

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