

HYPNOSIS MASTERS



SERIES

*Yes! Even You Can Have An Irresistibly
Persuasive Hypnotic Voice No Matter
How "Terrible" You Think It Might Be
Right Now!*



Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

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Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

Welcome

Welcome To The Hypnosis Masters Series

In this series you will be getting interviews and special seminars from some of the worlds best Masters of Hypnosis. Each Master Hypnotist is a specialist in one particular field and will be revealing his or her hypnosis secrets for you.

Meet This Month's Master: Laura Spicer



Laura has been working in the corporate world with groups and individuals, helping them with their voices and communication abilities for the last 15 years. She is the director of Spicer Ameldian Associates Ltd. which was set up to serve the corporate community. She has become well known for her unique style and the speed at which she is able to help people become more effective, confident and skillful speakers.

Laura always says there is no correct voice, only the appropriate one to convey the intended message. So unlike many other voice coaches, Laura is not looking to create an actor's voice - more to develop the flexibility to express the many different moods and feelings behind the words. When Laura's clients tell you their project is exciting you will hear it, see it and feel it thoroughly.

In addition to her voice training and partly responsible for the speed at which she is able to facilitate vocal changes is her training in Neuro Linguistic Programming. Laura is an experienced Master Practitioner, Trainer and High Performance Coach and she works from 2 clinics - one in London's famous Harley Street and one in Richmond, Surrey.

In these 2 clinics she sees clients to assist them with changes for the happier, healthier, more effective and confident. Her clients come to her for help with a wide range of problems. Finding more confidence, clearing Public Speaking phobias and curing stammers are just some of the many examples of reasons why people book in to see Laura. You can find out more about Laura here:

www.Laura-Spicer.com

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Introduction

Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com, my name is Igor Ledochowski and what you're about to hear is a very special interview with Master Hypnotist Laura Spicer, from LauraSpicer.com, which was recorded for us as a Private Hypnosis Club as part of our interviews with hypnosis masters series.

As you will hear Laura is a master hypnotist who can show anyone how to develop a powerful and persuasive hypnotic voice, no matter how flawed that voice might appear to be. Anyone that wants to become a genuine master of hypnosis must master this crucial aspect of their abilities. With Laura's help that will be an easy thing.

Listen on to the end of the interview to discover how to get your hands on over four hours of seminars and interviews revealing her fascinating insights.

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## Interview

**Igor:** First of all Laura welcome on board and I'm really excited to talk to you today.

**Laura:** Thank you Igor, I'm excited to talk to you too.

**Igor:** That's great. Everyone who's listening to this I want to introduce you to Laura in terms of her expertise. Laura is both a very highly competent NLP and master hypnotist, so she has that whole aspect of her skillset really nicely refined, but the other side of Laura's talent and the thing I want to explore today which is of particular value to us as hypnotists.

It's something we speak about a lot - everyone nods and says how important this is, but very few people will actually show you how to do anything about this.

This is what we're hoping to correct today with the help of Laura. Laura is a voice coach. She has expertise in how to help people develop powerful voices, voices with good range, voices that influence and voices that persuade. If there's one thing you take away from all your NLP skills it's not the language, it's the voice. It's how you use the voice, when you use the voice and so on.

This is why I'm pleased that Laura has agreed to be with us because she understands both worlds. Laura, thank you once again, for all the wonderful insights you'll be sharing with us and for helping make the hypnotic world a little bit more knowledgeable about something we all should be taking as bread and butter.

**Laura:** I'm very pleased to be doing that. I can't tell you how often I have listened to people who obviously have good skills in terms of the content of what they say but they need a little bit of help with the voice and there just isn't much out there, so I'm really happy today to be able to get out to lots of people.

**Igor:** You've got an interesting background. You came to hypnosis later on in your career, you started earlier on as actually a voice coach, so you've actually worked a lot with the voice and with people who want to develop their voice.

➤ **Could you tell us a little bit about how you got involved with that side of things and how that influenced your understanding of how the voice works?**

**Laura:** Yes, with pleasure. It was an accident. It was one of those things where the universe just came, took control and pointed me in a particular direction.

I had young children, I wanted to work and contribute to household funds and I was looking around for a job that I could do from home so that I could be available to my children and at the same time earning money.

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Although I had worked with voice in my younger years, gone in for competitions and poetry reading with a qualification by the London Academy of Dramatic Arts in public speaking, that had just been for fun but I hadn't really done anything with it or ever thought of it as a career.

I met a woman who was a speech therapist. She had been a speech therapist in the National Health Service (NHS), but had decided there wasn't enough money in it to continue being in the NHS and had moved into the business community with her skills.

She created a course for business men and women to sound more impactful, more powerful and more authoritative generally, to create more of the impression they wanted to create. She needed somebody to run her office, she was quite happy for me to run her office from my home and she liked my voice.

**Igor:** Which is a good thing for a voice coach, right?

**Laura:** Yes, it's a really important thing for a voice coach to have somebody who answers her phones sounding good. That's quite a hard thing to find by the way, I don't have anybody working for me who I would have represent me in that particular way.

Anyway, she hired me and I happily worked for her and found the whole thing really fascinating. Hearing the feedback from clients, meeting the business people, hearing how much value they had gotten from getting their voices trained and helped.

By the way, I want to say something right up front here; these are not my or my mentor's skills. We're not about having an actor's voice. The idea is that your voice conveys the message in the way you want to convey it. As Richard Bandler says, *'The meaning of the communication is the feedback we get'*.

Therefore, if a business person stands up and says I want you all to get really excited about my project here it's just not going to work.

**Igor:** The funny thing is there are people who do that and I've worked in a similar situation as an executive coach. There are some very smart people who do very simple mistakes like mumbling, whatever it is and it's surprising how much value you can add just by a little nugget here or a little nugget there to make them suddenly realize they have more power than they ever realized.

**Laura:** Absolutely. As long as we're clear about that, this isn't about having an actor's voice or necessarily a beautiful voice. My work is all about being able to have control over having the most appropriate voice for whatever message it is you want to convey.

At the time I was just working in her office. After a while I realized that sitting in my living room doing this part-time job that I was being part-time wages for, I was giving more and more time to it. I was contributing a lot. I was starting to

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write more of the courses. I was liaison with all of her clients and I suddenly thought, I'm not making enough money here for what I'm putting in and I quit to go get a different job.

She came to me and she said don't quit, come and apprentice to me, I'll train you to do the voice coaching and then we can pay you more. That sounded good and started to get me interested.

For about a year and a half I shadowed her. I went around with her. I did bits of the course and she taught me things which carried on. Amazingly, unpredictably and horribly she suddenly died, which was absolutely horrendous because she'd been my mentor, my friend and my teacher.

But even more crucial was the fact that she had a number of bookings and nobody who was available to do them, so I had to go out and do a number of trainings on my own at that point, without my mentor, helper and coach to oversee it, so I just had to go out there and find out what was going to happen.

I started to get better and better feedback. I started to hone my skills and in a way I think I learned in the best possible way, which is I just found out what worked, what helped, what people liked and what I had that was useful out there in the community.

**Igor:** Allow me pause you for a second, because I think you just came across a very important principle, something that has come out as a big theme in these interview series.

That is that the path to mastery isn't just finding an expert, following them and doing what they do that's absolutely part of it and that really helps but it's not until you decide to go your own path, you take the risk, you stand in front, you get the result and fail and learn again or succeed and celebrate - but you've got to find your own path.

All a mentor or guide can ever do is help shake your experiences to make sure that you get a better quality of them and when the time comes for you to stand on your own two feet that you stand on solid feet and you can work out the balance as you go along.

**Laura:** I couldn't agree with you more. What Richard Bandler says, and I think it's really valid for all of us to take on-board is it's no good learning to be a bad copy of Richard Bandler or anybody else. If you're just going to copy somebody else and want to be them, then you can only be a worse version.

Everybody has got to be who they are but at their best and that's another thing that I work with a lot in my voice coaching. It's not about having a voice that isn't your natural voice. The thing is this; we're all multifaceted and we all have many different sides to our character, many different moods and states.

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It's about being able to convey you at your very best - but you, it's about being more you, that's what my voice coaching is about.

**Igor:** I think that's where the power really comes from, because the power of an individual is inside of them, it's not by trying to not be them, it's by drawing more of what's inside of them out rather than by trying to layer over what's already there.

That's where the real depth of someone is, that's where you have real congruency, where you have real surprises very often, right?

**Laura:** That's absolutely true. None of us are going to be loved by every single person and that's a good thing. So, the clients that I work with choose to work with me and not some other voice coach, they choose to work with me because I have a unique skillset and I am a unique individual and that is true for everyone. We're all totally unique and that's wonderful.

**Igor:** We should revel in that.

**Laura:** Revel in it and learn to express that with pride, generosity and enjoyment.

**Igor:** Let me ask you something Laura; we could spend literally all day just talking about your background of voice and your philosophy in it.

➤ **Can you tell us a little more about how you got into hypnosis and the transition that the hypnosis and the voice blending together, how that all sort of began to happen?**

**Laura:** Sure. As I was doing my voice coaching I was also bringing up my family and I was very concerned about my son. He was about five at the time and he absolutely hated school, he wasn't happy at all, and every day it was a struggle to get him to want to go to school.

I'd run out of ideas as to what to do to help him. I was reading a magazine and in the magazine there was a picture of somebody who looked like an old rock and roll star. He was balding and had a ponytail. He had one hand where the fingernails were painted black and he was wearing a yellow leather jacket.

I read the article next to this picture and actually the two things didn't fit together in my mind at the time because this old rock and roller was saying some of the wisest things I'd ever heard, and of course, this was Richard Bandler.

I thought wow; this guy might really be able to help me help my son. I'd like to my son to be able to see him.

When I inquired I discovered that he charged a lot and I just couldn't afford it at the time. Then I found out I could go on a course to learn from him, so I thought well if I go on the course maybe I could talk to him and he could give me some one to one advice as to how to deal with my son.



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Originally, I went on a practitioner course solely with the aim of learning how to help my son. I never expected it to be particularly valuable to me. I've got to tell you, that for the first three days of the practitioner course, I hated it, I hated the trainers and everything about it I thought it was awful.

Suddenly on day three I remembered going home on the underground in London and I burst out laughing out loud because for the first time I could actually hear my own internal dialogue and it was saying I've changed my mind. I could hear the ambiguity and I knew that my mind had been changed in every possible way so I started to get really excited.

**Igor:** That's fantastic.

**Laura:** Yes, it was fantastic. My husband said, the next morning, I woke up with a great big grin on my face for the first time. I wasn't very good at waking up in the morning and I usually woke up grumpy, but the next day I woke up smiling.

I think I've woken up smiling every since. So, for me it was a huge revelation to go on the NLP course. I enjoyed it hugely and learned loads of stuff. By the way, I didn't even realize what I'd learned on the NLP course until about nine months after the practitioner course.

Every day I would discover that I knew things I didn't even know I knew. I'd be in situations, somebody would say something and I'd respond, and then I'd think oh my goodness, I didn't know I knew that. It was just great. The whole thing was great. But, during that time as well, I started to think about the fact that they'd said a lot in the course about how important it was to have an effective voice and good tonality.

**Igor:** Right, that's the standard fare in NLP circuits.

**Laura:** Standard fare. Now I know that. In those days I didn't know it was standard fare but I was hearing it on the course and I was hearing everybody doing their hypnosis on the course, they were learning the language patterns and the skills, but actually apart from going through something about where their voice was resonating.

So they were told not to speak through their nose so much and to get it down into their chest quite a bit, but really that was about it. I wouldn't even count that as the tip of the iceberg. I was listening to all the people on the course and thinking I could help those people in 15 minutes. I could turn around what they can do.

I asked around and people said they were interested but it just wasn't formalized then, so I went away, continued learning NLP and there's a whole story there but that's for some other time. So, I grew my NLP skills and I continued to grow my voice training skills and then eventually I started specifically as well as everything else, training people who do NLP and hypnosis to use their voice more effectively for NLP and hypnosis.

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**Igor:** Let me ask you this; I mean this is quite an important point you're bringing out here. In the hypnotic and NLP community everyone pays lip service to how important tonality is.

There are even exercises, you know, express something like tiny or huge and all these sorts of things, but then they spend five minutes doing that, and 50 hours doing all these crazy language patterns, whereas, maybe they should spend a bit more time on their tonality because that's where the experience comes from.

It's a backdrop to the words which creates the meaning for the words to sit inside. It could be the words of wisdom from Solomon in the Temple or from a beggar in the streets selling second-hand DVDs or something; the context will make a huge difference in how the impact comes and the voice is so important.

I'm really glad that you figured out early on that the voice is such an important element of what we do, would actually focus specifically on hypnotists and NLP practitioners and so on to develop that.

The question that I have and I'm sure a lot of people listening will have as well is this.

- **What is it specifically that voice coaching has to offer us as hypnotists?**
- **Can you give us some easy examples of what it is a voice coach can do for hypnotists to help instantly do better, just straight off the top - you leave the course and say okay I'll remember these five things and I'm already doing better with my voice?**

**Laura:** It's so immediate Igor, you can't imagine. I guess as we work together over this interview and then I think we've got some follow-up things we're going to be doing together for your listeners, you will see that in the time that we spend together, particularly on the seminars we're going to do together, you will be able to turn around what you can do and make it amazingly more effective.

Just think about it; if you're telling somebody to relax but you don't sound relaxing, they have to work really hard. When you can use your voice artfully - it doesn't even matter, you could be reading your shopping list and put them in a trance if you're using your voice properly. You could be saying anything and get them to respond in a particular way just by changing not just what perhaps is called the tonality, but the quality of your voice.

- ✓ You can make your voice softer.
- ✓ You can make it more compelling.
- ✓ You can motivate somebody with a voice.
- ✓ You can relax somebody with a voice.
- ✓ You can excite somebody with a voice.
- ✓ You can make something sound magical or mysterious with a voice.

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It's an amazing tool the voice, and most people think they're stuck with the voice they have. Oh this is just my voice. But, I guess as NLP'ers and hypnotists you and your listeners know that just because that's what you've always done doesn't mean that's all there is.

Remember that your voice is a part of your body and most people know if they want to have stronger arm muscles they can go to a gym, they can get a personal coach and he will show them the exercises to grow those arm muscles. And, provided they do the practice the arm muscles will grow.

It's not like oh I was born with weak arms, you can strengthen them and it's absolutely the same with a voice. Its part of your body as well as expressing what's in your heart and your mind and everything else, but it is part of your body and you can work with it very physiologically and get it to be way more flexible and under control.

**Igor:** I like the little demonstration you added there with the different states, because in the space of 20 seconds you cycled us through seven different states and this is our bread and butter as hypnotists. You get an induction and you go, look at that exciting future out in front of you; that's not going to get someone really jazzed up saying look at that exciting future, right out there in front of you!

You're bringing that to life and literally, what I really admire about what you just did then, and I can't do it anywhere as close to the way you're doing it, is you switched from one state to the other literally, on each word and that is something that I think if any hypnotists could do they would instantly double or triple their effectiveness just on that point alone.

**Laura:** I couldn't agree with you more. They would double or triple their effectiveness and the time that it takes to get people to move through the states that they want to move them through and it speeds things up hugely as well.

**Igor:** I can totally see that. I know you have a lot in terms of how to use the voice and how to train it, I like your metaphor of people aren't born with weak arms, the develop strength as they use them, so as you use your voice correctly that becomes stronger as well.

I think perhaps it might be a very useful way to start if you can tell us a little about how sound itself works and that relates to voices, it might help people understand a little bit more about their sound making apparatus and then we can look at how we might actually start strengthening it so that it has more power, softness or whatever it is that someone needs to convey.

**Laura:** I would call that more flexibility, which is really important with voice. Sound is very important. I think it's a bit of an unexplored area, in general.

I noticed a few weeks ago that there was an article in the newspaper that said they've discovered that prostate cancer can most effectively be treated by passing sound waves through the prostate gland.

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I once had a bad knee and the physiotherapist came with a sonic machine putting very high tones and low tones through my knee, and it healed my knee.

We also know that there's ultrasound where we can look right inside a person's body. We can see a baby inside a womb using ultrasound. Sound is an incredible tool and they've looked into it to some extent but I think there's still a load more to do.

Another thing we know is that sound pollution is actually more damaging to a body than air pollution and yet, how often do you hear about them tackling the problems of sound pollution?

Sound has a truly profound effect on us as human beings and the reason for that is because it's vibration. Sound is a vibration. It doesn't just go in through your ears it goes in through your skin and into your bones, into your nerve endings, into your cells and vibrates them.

So, when you're being vibrated this has a very profound effect on every level of a human being. It can be a good affect or a detrimental effect and it's exactly the same with a voice.

Another thing to say before I go a little deeper into that is they did some research and I guess that some of your listeners and I bet you have come across this research where they say that in a communication the way our perception is divided up is 55% we take from the body language, 38% from the voice tone and 7% from the content.

**Igor:** Of course, the classic Mehrabian and Birdwhistell study that everyone likes the quote.

**Laura:** Well yes and there's something in that. I mean we know if I say to you yes, it means something very different then if I say yes, but I think there's a little bit more to be said about this.

First of all, right now nobody is getting any information at all about my body language and neither would they if they were on the phone with me, so there are many circumstances there days when people aren't getting the input from what they can see, so that's the first thing, in which case that 55% goes out the window straight off.

There are many times when we're only getting auditory input over the telephone, podcasts or whatever.

**Igor:** Laura, I'm sorry to interrupt you there, I just want you to tell a quick story that really emphasizes your point.

Many years ago I used to be a lawyer and I remember I was doing a very complex IPO floatation of a company that involved five different nations and God knows what else.

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The short version of the story is this; we talked to the exchange in Germany where the company was going to be floated about a technical issue and asked them can we do this? The people on the other line said yes. There was this tiny little fraction of a hesitation. I kind of put the phone on mute, turned to the senior associate and said they can't do this, there's something wrong and I don't know what it is.

He said but they just said yes? I said okay, I'll ask them again. We asked them very specifically on that point. Can we do X, Y and Z tomorrow doing this and this and it'll work this way? Again, the answer was - yes. Again, I listened and I thought there's something not right about this. Of course the senior says well they've said yes, we asked them specifically, that's fine we'll carry on with it.

The next day this is still bugging me so I call up the exchange just to double check everything is fine, so lo and behold what did they say actually we've just talked to our supervisor and no we can't do this and this was three hours before we're supposed to launch.

Sometimes it is really the tiniest sliver of a change in a voice that can give you such important information. Normally, we would rely on body language or something like that but if you're also using tonality as your sounding board, your mirror to look at, you will catch a lot of things that other people will normally miss.

**Laura:** You're absolutely right. If you've read the book *Blink*, I think it says a lot about just that instant knowing.

That's the other thing about voice, which is that it's often processed unconsciously and you perhaps didn't know exactly what it was that gave you that feeling that things weren't all totally 100% hunky-dory, but something just let you know that that yes didn't actually mean yes.

Just going back to that 7%, 55% and 38% even when that is the case when I stand up in front of a group, if I were wearing my jeans, a sweatshirt, my hair was in a mess and I wasn't in makeup, they would make one kind of judgment. If I was in front of the same group in a smart suit with my hair pinned up, good makeup and good shoes they'd have another kind of judgment about me.

Now, once they've made that initial judgment everything that I then say is going to be filtered through that initial judgment. People make judgments very quickly.

When your client walks into your consulting room, you shake hands with them and say good morning come in, how can I help you - whatever it is that you say when you start a session - they are immediately going to be making judgments about whether or not you can help them.

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I learned in my hypnosis training that what you want when you're hypnotizing somebody is for them to agree with you.

So, there are certain things that we sometimes say like you've come here today for a reason, you're sitting here wondering perhaps what's going to happen - because you want them inside to be saying yes- yes- yes, so that they trust you, so they're processing unconsciously some of the way they're making judgments about us.

The voice is such a thing that is so unconsciously processed that to me it makes it even more powerful. If I speak to you in a light voice and just talk to you like that you're going to process me quite differently. If you think about starting this conversation again Igor, if you were to introduce me again and I was to say hi, I'm really excited about talking to you too and talking about voice.

It's not that there's anything wrong with my voice but you are going to start listening to me quite differently. Is that right?

**Igor:** Absolutely. Also, my mental picture of you totally changes. Your dress changes, your face changes, your expression changes and your whole personality changes just based on your tone of voice.

**Laura:** I know it's so weird. It just makes it such a powerful tool that you can change the way somebody filters everything that you say to them just by changing your voice.

Once you get artful with it that means you can have them filtering you the way that is going to be in their best interest. To me it's such a fascinating subject and clearly it's my passion, I'm really fascinated with it. I think there's so much you can learn to do with a voice and everybody can learn to do it.

**Igor:** Thank you for that explanation, because that really gives us some dramatic examples of why the voice is so important.

It's all well and good citing a study and this that and the other, but for me personally, just hearing you for example cycling through those states on your own or doing that nice little bit with switching your voice to a more girly or softer voice and just talking like that for awhile, it changes our whole experience, even though we've already had a certain perception of you to start with.

That's what we want to get along to our clients or subjects. When we say certain things we can either mix the meaning on purpose, we can reinforce it and our work becomes a lot easier when our suggestions are supported by our tonality. It becomes more - as the NLP community would call it - much more congruent doesn't it?

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**Laura:** Absolutely. There's one other thing I'd like to say about sound itself, which is that when you're talking to somebody you are bathing them in your sound. You are vibrating their cells and it is your responsibility as a speaker to do a good job of that.

There's no voice which is a wrong or a right voice, there's only an appropriate voice for the purpose. Therefore, when you bathe somebody in the appropriate voice with the thing you're saying and I'm sure all your listeners have some training in the sort of things to say, then your job is going to be 100% instead of just a part communication and mixed message, which isn't very useful I've got to say.

**Igor:** I have to admit I have listened to; its part of what I do where I'll scout out other hypnotists and see what they're doing. I've had a similar experience to you where I hear something which should be a glorious induction and I'm sitting wriggling in my chair saying this is amazing the way they've created these frames, patterns, ideas and so on, but then it's ruined by this voice that I just cannot stand listening to.

I have to literally listen to these things in five minute increments to get the ideas out of them because the whole experience is shattered by the timing, the pace - I don't know what it is but something just doesn't quite hit right and it's something which is very easy to fix if I'm understanding you correctly.

I know we'll be exploring that much more in the seminar portion, but something people don't realize is that the problems people have, the things they do "wrong" aren't really necessarily wrong they're just very easy to fix to let their true intention and their true meaning come forward.

They may fix it with relatively easy things once people know what to listen for and what their choices are, wouldn't you say?

**Laura:** Yes and what their strengths are, because everybody has some strengths and I'll give you an example of that. My natural strength is to sound confident and certain about what I'm saying. I've always done that.

That's both an advantage and a disadvantage.

When I'm selling my business to somebody it's going to be an advantage. I sound like somebody who knows what I'm talking about and I've got to say these days, I definitely do. There was a time when I knew far less about what I was talking about and yet, people still believed me because I sound very confident and definite.

I'm not any more confident than the next person. I have my days when I feel really unconfident but I can always sound confident, it's my default, the way I sound.

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However, sometimes that's a disadvantage because I noticed some years ago that I was somebody who didn't get helped very much. I'd be doing things and people would just assume that I was competent, that I could do it and they wouldn't offer help. Then, I'd see other people around me getting all sorts of help when I needed some help with certain things. I had to learn how to change the way I came across to get people to know when I needed help.

I'll give you a really funny example of this. I used to like to drink cappuccinos with no chocolate on top and I don't know about all of your listeners in the different countries, but in England they automatically put chocolate on top of cappuccinos in most restaurants and cafes.

I would order my cappuccino and I'd say can I have a cappuccino with no chocolate? The cappuccino would come with chocolate on it. Every time I would say to them I asked for a cappuccino with no chocolate they would say I'm so sorry it's automatic, I just put the chocolate.

I was thinking; what can I do? I kept getting more and more authoritative about this. Can I have a cappuccino with no chocolate? The cappuccino would come back with chocolate and I couldn't work out what to do.

One day I was sitting in a café with my daughter, who by the way is also a master practitioner of NLP and hypnosis as well, do me a favor Jasmine, could you please order my cappuccino and see if you could get the waitress to bring it without chocolate on the first time?

She looked at the server and said can I have a cappuccino with no chocolate? The cappuccino came back with no chocolate. I thought that was so interesting.

She'd used a rising inflection which had opened up the server's brain, made her question it herself and it had gone in, in such a way that she didn't just go through her default pattern routine and sling the chocolate on my cappuccino.

From then on I knew how to get my cappuccino chocolate free, so it was a great discovery. I learned that as well, I learned how to ask for help in a way that sounded like I needed it.

**Igor:** I just want to pull out an interesting point in what you were talking about. That on its own just demonstrates again the power of the voice, because you were introducing more certainty which means they were running their default program because your voice was about certainty and authority so the default program is run what we always run.

Whereas, your daughter was doing is she was introducing uncertainty with a questioning tonality and it's uncertainty that makes the server uncertain. What do we do when we're uncertain? We start thinking. We say oh, I better remember not to do that because she asked me not to do that.



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On a conscious level they just remember the instructions for no chocolate whereas at a subconscious level they're saying pay attention here, we're not in normal territory anymore and that makes a big difference.

**Laura:** Yes exactly. When you learn what your strengths are, you've already got those. I think it's an important place to start when I'm working with somebody on their voices, because there's another thing here Igor, which is nobody can hear their voice on the inside the same way it sounds on the outside.

People often say to me, they say oh I heard my voice on a recording, a podcast, or an answer phone message or voicemail and it was awful, and most people come to me saying they hate their voices.

In fact really it's just that their voice doesn't sound the way that they thought it sounded. I can't hear my voice, I didn't even particularly like my voice, but then I got a lot of feedback which said we like your voice. With voice as with so many other things the feedback is very important because you're going to hear it from somebody else.

One of the things we start working with a voice is to find out what are you doing already that works beautifully. Those are going to be your vocal strengths. Your listeners could even start to think right now after this interview; what is it that they do that is absolutely already sorted? Where do they get their fantastic results?

- ✓ Are they good at putting people into trance?
- ✓ Are they really good at eliciting and finding out what's going on?
- ✓ Are they good at developing rapport?

What is it you're already very good at, because whatever it is you're already getting great feedback from that's going to give us some indication of what your strengths are?

**Igor:** Can I just pause you again to emphasize something? There might be people out there listening saying but I have a terrible voice, I know because I always get bad reactions.

What they're not realizing is, just the same way as your daughter could be doubtful in her tonality and, as a result got the result she wanted in a specific situation, you might have spent your life with a certain tonality, a certain kind of voice, a strength shall we say that didn't get you the results you wanted, but it's still getting you a consistent set of results. It's still a strength it's just a question of how, when and where do you apply it?

**Laura:** Totally right Igor, thank you. You said it very well.

**Igor:** What's coming to my mind right now is we've talked a lot about the importance of the voice, we've demonstrated I think in a lot of ways how the voice can actually be very influential and I'm sure the people listening always have some

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pretty good ideas of things they can do right now to go out there, start playing with the voice and having different effects.

Going back to the more technical side of things we've looked at what sound is and how it kind of relates to voices.

- In terms of us as human beings, **what is it that actually shapes our voice?**
  - a. **Why do I sound the way I do?**
  - b. **Why do you sound the way you do?**
  - c. **Why does anyone sound the way they do?**
  - d. **Can you give us a little bit of insight to that?**

**Laura:** Sure I can and that's actually a really good question, particularly in relation to you Igor. You sound like you're from South Africa and I don't really understand where you got your voice from because I know you're not South African, you're Austrian aren't you Igor?

**Igor:** Yes, I am.

**Laura:** You have a lot of these inflections and intonation patterns of the South African. Anyway, it's a lovely voice. We start off, first of all of course, there's your physiology.

Everybody is born with certain length vocal chords, a certain build and that's the nature bit of your voice. Everybody is born with the physiology they have which is going to affect the sound that comes out.

**Igor:** Just to emphasize that as a point, one of the reasons why men tend to have deeper voices than women is just because their necks tend to be longer and that gives sound longer time to travel and, apparently with sound waves that's what creates that lower slower sound wave and why kids tend to have smaller voices because their sound doesn't travel as far.

That's the purely physiological element, right.

**Laura:** Yes. I mean sometimes actually children's voices travel really far. Just think about children playing in a playground. You can hear it for miles. It's not so much about traveling so far, but if you think about a guitar or a stringed instrument, the bigger thicker strings are going to be lower and the more tightly strung strings are going to be higher.

Vocal chords are something like that. That side of it isn't so important. Whatever the physiology it is that we start with the next thing that has great influences is the nurture.

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Babies are fantastic mimics. Listening, by the way, is the first sense that develops in the womb. People play music to their pregnant tummies because the baby inside the tummy can actually hear the music, can feel the vibrations of the music and will respond. That's why it's really good to play certain music and not other music.

A lot of people use classical music which is often a good thing. But, it wouldn't be a good thing to play scary music to a pregnant woman's tummy, because that would upset the baby in a way that felt uncomfortable to it. So, by the time a baby is born the baby already knows the sound of its mother's voice so it can distinguish its mother's voice from other people. A baby already knows when its other is near, because it knows her voice.

If there have been other people around during the pregnancy those voices will already be recognizable, a father's voice or a sibling's voice. Again, babies are fantastic mimics so they grow up and they copy what they hear.

Actually, I once met a guy who had a voice that didn't fit with what I was seeing. He actually sounded like he was in a wheelchair and there was some disability in his body but there wasn't. I couldn't work out what was going on there until I found out that his father was in a wheelchair and had a very bad case of asthma.

**Igor:** That's interesting.

**Laura:** So he just copied his father's breathing patterns and sound.

Everybody copies their family, so where they start off in life that's where they learn the first way to use the tones and tunes. Then, if they then go to school they probably also incorporate the sounds that they're hearing at school so they can fit in with the community.

This is something that children learn very young, how to fit in with the people around, how to have rapport and how to make friends. A lot of that is done through mimicking and matching the sounds, the tones and the tunes of the people around them.

There's another important thing to say here Igor which is, **before babies learn what the words mean they know what the tones and tunes mean.** A baby when it's born can't focus its eyes straight away but it still knows if it's being soothed by its mother, played with or whether somebody is stressed around them. Before they know anything else they're responding to the sound.

So, we are programmed at a very deep level to respond to tones and tunes, it's very deep and very unconscious. Later on they do learn what the words mean and they overlay their thinking with the meaning of the words themselves, but underneath all that they're processing and responding to the tones and tunes.

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**Igor:** This is one of the reasons why the voice can be such a powerful tool, because purely on the level of tonality we're plugging into some of the most basic functioning and the very first layers of the brain, of the meaning making mechanisms that exists, and we can do that totally outside of their awareness.

We can talk about how terrible a product is, how you really don't want to have it, how whatever you do it's going to make you feel stressed and uncomfortable. Of course our tonality, as you can hear already, is telling a totally different story.

You can give people the facts about something whilst also telling them what experience and how to relate those facts at the same time and all that is happening outside of consciousness because it's how we've developed this habit to the point where we don't even pay attention to it anymore.

**Laura:** That's absolutely true. I was born in South Africa. I didn't stay there very long, my parents brought me back to England when I was one year old, but until I was one I was carried around on the back of a black nanny, very happy, comfortable and snuggled up on her back as she went to the market, bought the food, talked to her friends or made the beds, whatever it is, while I was on her back.

Years and years later I went back to visit South Africa and I was staying in a place where, in the morning, we came outside and sat on a bench outside while the maids came in and cleaned the rooms. They must've been speaking the same language in the same way as my nanny, because I suddenly fell asleep.

This was first thing in the morning, I was wide awake and ready to go and do a day when suddenly for no reason I could discern in that moment, it took me a while to realize what had happened, I got really tired and fell asleep and this was like 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

**Igor:** That's the South African method of hypnosis.

**Laura:** Well, the African method of hypnosis. It was wonderful. I suddenly realized that hearing that voice talking in the background was what made me feel safe and comfortable and made me want to go to sleep.

That just is a really good example of how from a very young age we're processing and connecting up certain sounds with certain feelings. It makes another important point too, which is that wouldn't have been the same experience for you Igor, or for somebody who didn't grow up on the back of a nanny.

Not only does it have a strong effect on us but it's very subjective. As well as having the flexibility we also have to have sensory acuity to be reading feedback because there isn't a right way to do anything with a voice, you have to constantly be watching the person you're working with to see how it affects.

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So, an important thing to realize is not only is it key to use your voice in a way that is going to convey your message the way you want to convey it but also to keep your sensory acuity working so that you can get feedback from your client, because you never know what's happened in their past that maybe is an anchor for them. That can be a good anchor or a not so good anchor.

Therefore, you'll be using your voice more effectively and powerfully when you learn how to use it, but also keeping all your sensory acuity skills so that you're constantly adjusting and working with your voice to have the effect you want it to have.

**Igor:** That's actually a very important point on things like what's *the voice*, the most powerful voice in the world. It doesn't exist. There are definitely voices that more people will respond to favorably than other's but really what you're looking for is that interaction element.

Sometimes you can put on what sounds like a terrible tonality to others but for this person it's exactly what they need so you do it and that's the genuine power of flexibility, right.

**Laura:** Yes. I'm sure there are some people that didn't think Obama's inauguration speech was powerful and there are probably even one or two people out there who think Gordon Brown has a great communication style. I can't imagine who they are but there may be one or two.

**Igor:** Moving beyond the political commentary, coming back to the idea of the voice then, I think we've got a good idea now of where each person's voice comes from, basically their history, their physiology, their posture and so on to some extent.

- **What is it that typically we say goes wrong with a voice, or if not necessarily wrong, why would people not have the impact they normally would want to have?**
- **What are the top three or four things we can focus on that in fixing them will instantly double or triple our communication power?**

**Laura:** Once you learn to match up your voice with the way it's being received that's really important. The first question you asked was what typically goes wrong and actually the answer to that is stuff, which is one of those vague words.

For example, I get a lot of people who have been brought up in households where it's not okay to make a lot of noise so they have very quiet voices and don't know how to adjust the volume properly.

Or, people who have been brought up in very noisy households and either have very loud voices and don't know how to make them quiet or have very quiet voice in response to all that noise they didn't like.

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That's actually another thing that is worth pointing out. Everybody has different abilities in terms of how their ears work. Some people have better hearing than others.

All the time again, you're going to be monitoring the response of the people who are listening to you as best you can. I know that's different when you're talking to lots and lots of people at once, if you're speaking to 100 people you can't monitor every single person's specific response but certainly if there are or two clients sitting in front of you, you can and must monitor their response.

You may have to adjust things like the volume and not just the volume, but the pace and all the other aspects of voice.

Some of the things that go wrong which can easily be fixed are things like volume, pace, quality of voice - some people have a quality of voice which to many people would sound very unpleasant, just like I don't know whether you like having massages Igor, but some people like to have massages that are very gentle and some like a very strong deep tissue massage.

Again, in the same way, the thing that goes wrong more than anything with the voice is a lack of flexibility. This is the key thing. Once your voice is more flexible and you have control over the pitch, the pace, the volume, the quality and the inflections - all these different aspects of voice - then it's your job to work out which ones work best in different situations.

**Igor:** You do that going back to your original comment which is by gathering feedback, noticing how people are responding and then switching. Then, if you go one way and then switch the other way, you notice which one gives you more of the kind of response you want, then that tells you what is a good voice for that person at that time given the objective that you have.

**Laura:** Absolutely. I have a clinic where I see clients for change work as well as voice work— the first thing I do when we are meeting each other and spending that first five or ten minutes talking through what they've come to see me for is I'm trying a few subtly different styles of speech and monitoring the feedback. That way, by the time I'm doing the hypnosis I already know the responses I'm going to get from them according to how I use my voice.

**Igor:** I can see that being very powerful and just to emphasize something which is— in case you're listening thinking it's all well and good but— I can't hear tones, I can't even recognize music properly, I have all these challenges getting feedback - that doesn't really matter in many ways.

If you think about someone like Milton Erickson, he was tone deaf and he still had an exquisite sense of what people needed because you can still pay attention to pace if you can't pay attention to pitch. You can still pay attention to volume.

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So, whilst one thing might be taken away this table has five or six different legs on it and it will stand even if one of the legs is broken, right.

**Laura:** Yes, it absolutely will, although I would say that anybody who tells me they're tone deaf, I don't believe them it's just that they haven't trained themselves.

My mom was tone deaf but she married my father who is a musician and learned to sing in tune. She may not be the greatest singer but she is able now to know which is up and which is down. It's just one of those things you can learn, maybe you haven't learned it and maybe to start off with you can start with the things that are easier for you, but everything is within your reach.

**Igor:** I think that's the important thing that comes out of this, which is everyone can learn and everyone can make their voice into a powerful tool and that's really what this is all about isn't it?

**Laura:** It absolutely is, yes. Everybody without exception can do more with their voice. I can do more with my voice I'm still learning; there's still more to learn. How wonderful it is that life is a place where we can just keep learning more and more.

Certainly, in terms of the voice, there's an endless amount to learn. You can get better and better. I love what Richard Bandler said to me early on in my training.

*He said 'If you compare yourself with other people you'll probably find somebody who can do what you're doing better. The chances of you being the best in the world are fairly slim and being the best in the world at lots of things very slim indeed. But, if you compare yourself with you yesterday and you're doing better today, then you know you're going in the right direction'.*

This is so true with a voice. If by working with me for an hour you can go away and do twice as well as you did yesterday that's fantastic. It doesn't mean we're finished. We can go on and do more, but it's going in the right direction. You can improve and get better and better results.

**Igor:** I really like that it's a very positive attitude, a very positive frame to take.

Seeing as we're coming close to the end of this initial interview I thought it might be useful if you could sum up what we've been talking about, this idea that you can do a lot with your voice very easily.

- **Can you give us some quick tips where if someone thinks they have a terrible voice what they can do in the next five to ten minutes or the next week?**

A couple things they can focus on, which will start that process you're talking about which will mean that tomorrow they'll already be speaking a little bit better than today, then the day after will be better still and a year from now they

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might not even recognize themselves, some simple little guidelines they can stick to.

**Laura:** Sure. First of all, it's about listening.

1. One of the first really useful things that a person can do is to find other voices that they really like the sound of- on TV, on the Internet or the radio.

Listen to voices that you really like and notice what those voices are doing. Are they exciting voices? Are they motivating voices? Are they soothing voices? Find voices that convey different moods to you and listen to them really well. Then mimic them as best you can.

2. Very importantly start listening to your own voice.

This to me is very strange because I do it naturally, but when you speak are you listening to your voice, like from the outside? I know you can't actually hear your voice the same as it sounds on the outside but you can kind of listen to your voice with your ears.

When you're speaking listen to your voice, find other voices that you find interesting, attractive or different and just mimic them back. Also, you'll notice that if you change the shape of your face a little you'll get different sounds out.

For example, French people tend to have more pout in their face because when you speak with a French accent you need to have a pout to make it sound French. So, you can start to think about how to change the shape of your mouth and how to use your jaw differently. Pick out voices you like and listen to them a lot. That's the first really good tip.

Listen to your own voice a lot too and try adjusting it and getting feedback from other people. That's one very good place to start.

Let me ask you something Igor. If you were going to run a running race would you do it warming up your muscles first?

**Igor:** Absolutely. I'd make sure everything was nice and warm so when the race begins I'm in perfect condition to actually run it without doing myself an injury or that sort of thing.

**Laura:** Exactly.

3. Very few people remember to warm up their voice and that's a really good thing to do.

I know we're going to be doing voice warm ups on the sessions we have after this one but just as a start, just starting off the day when you're in the shower of singing—high notes and the low notes— even if you're not a very good singer,



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just warming up your voice by singing, speaking first thing in the morning and using as much pitch range as you can use is a very good plan.

Do it gently because obviously we want to preserve your voice and I want to avoid strain, but just singing in the shower is a great thing to do.

**Igor:** Of course, showers have been designed and built with singing in mind. If you're not singing to your shower it's not receiving the love it was designed to get so you're doing your shower a disservice.

**Laura:** Absolutely. Everything sounds better in the shower too, because you get the echo. Sing in the shower and have a few good yawns and stretches at the beginning of the day because that opens up your voice very nicely.

Those are three good tips. Forget any ideas of having a horrendous voice it just doesn't exist. Find out where your voice is doing the job you want it to do.

Listen; sometimes I have clients who come to see me, they stay too long and I need them to leave so the next client can come in. That's when I start to make my voice less and less pleasant to listen to so they'll go away.

So there's no such thing as a horrible voice, just start to notice where your voice is working for you?

**Igor:** I like that.

**Laura:** Those are the tips I would offer right now.

**Igor:** I think those are great tips actually. They're simple, they're easy to do, and I can see people getting a lot of range from them, if nothing else it's the equivalent of doing press ups and sit ups, they're basic exercises but that's where the core strength comes from.

**Laura:** Absolutely.

**Igor:** I know you, of course, do as part of your profession a lot of voice coaching, particularly for NLP people, hypnotists and so on, you even work over the telephone or over the Internet now.

### ➤ Can you tell me a little bit about how that works?

- a. What's your training philosophy about developing hypnotic voice?
- b. What do you do with people?

**Laura:** Yes, I do. It's only recently that I've started doing telephone sessions but I think these days it's more useful because we really are now communicating with people all over the world and so there's no reason why I can't do a voice coaching session over the phone.

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Even though your voice is slightly distorted by the phone line and probably listening to this recording you're not hearing it exactly as if you were standing in the room with me, nevertheless there's an awful lot that can be done.

So yes, I do voice coaching over the phone these days as well as in person. I also go out to give input on other people's courses and do voice coaching, which is that side of my business.

I don't know if you know this Igor but I have a DVD, which is Voice Power for NLP Practitioners and Hypnotists. That's a recording of a live seminar I gave to hypnotists and NLP'ers, so it's got a lot of really good exercises on it.

You can find that on my website which I know you gave the address of at the beginning and we'll do so again, that's something else. Then there's telephone and person to person coaching as well.

**Igor:** What I'm interested in is...

- **How does your approach differ if I come in as a hypnotist and you want to develop my hypnotic voice versus if I came in as just an average person or a business person wanting to be a better public speaker or just better all around friends?**

- a. How does your work focusing on hypnotic voice change somewhat?

You do have that special expertise you have the insight, you're a hypnotist and a voice coach so you know the things a hypnotist needs a little more of to be able to lean more in that direction, if you understand what I mean.

**Laura:** I absolutely do. I'm always going to be listening to the voices that come to see me and talk to me in the first place. When a hypnotist comes to me it may be that they're already good at certain aspects of their job and then we're going to focus on the other aspects.

It's not generic. When I'm training somebody there's no two trainings alike. If I'm training in a group then I'm going to be covering all the basics for hypnotists; how you can put somebody more effectively into a trance, how you can get more rapport with somebody using your voice, how you can motivate somebody and how you can excite somebody all these different things that are going to be really useful to a hypnotist are what I'm going to be focusing on.

However, if I'm working one to one then I'm just going to be focusing on what that individual wants more of or less of.

**Igor:** That makes a lot of sense to me. For those of you coming onto the seminar portion, Laura has very graciously agreed to run me through a couple of sample voice coaching sessions so you'll see what she's like in action with a hypnotist and improving those things.

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I personally am looking forward to that Laura I think it's going to be a lot of fun in the next session.

**Laura:** Great. I'm really interested that you say you'll see what Laura is going to do - actually you'll hear it.

**Igor:** Right. I'm too visual, so that's my word and I'm sticking to it.

**Laura:** You'll probably see it in your mind and that will be good too.

**Igor:** Believe me I will be seeing it. Before we finish up there's one more thing that you offer people as well. You have a special website [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com).

➤ **Could you tell us a little bit about the interviews people can find on that?**

**Laura:** That's my exciting new project I'm so thrilled about this I can't tell you Igor. I have managed to get 12 of the best NLP trainers to offer to come along on audio classes and teach new skills.

On [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) you can subscribe to it just like you do to this group. It's very inexpensive. Subscribe to all 12 and you'll be able to hear 12 of the top people in the NLP community giving you some new skills that you haven't learned on courses and you'll be able to ask them your questions.

The way that works is you send them in ahead of time. If you have a question for Richard Bandler, for example, you can send in your question ahead of time, I will ask Richard on your behalf on this teleclass. Then he will answer your questions and give you some new skills.

I'm so excited about this I can't tell you. It's a long story how I was able to do it but I'm so excited about that, so for anyone listening go check out the website, it's [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com). Check it out and you'll see what I'm doing and the thing I'm most excited about.

What I'm going to be doing is the first teleclass is going to happen before your listeners get to hear this, but if they subscribe to the teleclasses they will have it as a download. That's going to be me talking about how I help people become more fluent if they're stuttering and stammering, because that's something I specialize in Igor.

I'm getting fantastic results getting people to speak fluently if they were stammering and I'll be talking about that on my teleclass. Even if you're joining after that teleclass has occurred you'll be able to get that as a download.

**Igor:** Fantastic, it sounds like it's going to be a lot of fun and a lot of interesting things going on there. Quite a star cast line up there.

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Unfortunately, we've run out of time for this particular interview, but Laura I want to say just once again thank you for being so generous with all the tips and tricks and insights on the power of the voice. I'm happy that someone is finally standing up and showing hypnotists how to do this.

For everyone who is listening to this of course we'll be going into the seminar portion next where we'll really be going into the nuts and bolts of the real principles, you'll be hearing the exercises in action on range and pitch and all that sort of stuff.

I honestly don't know what's to come yet. Why? Because Laura is going to take me through it as she does every other client so you really get a good taste of what it's like to be in that situation and learn as a hypnotist would to build your voice. I'm excited to do that, Laura once again, thank you for agreeing to do that for us.

**Laura:** It's my pleasure.

**Igor:** Until that session my name is Igor Ledochowski from [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). This has been an interview with Laura Spicer from [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com) and we look forward to hearing you in the next session.

**Laura:** Thanks Igor it's been a real pleasure.

# Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

## Seminar 1 – Part 1

**Igor:** Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with Master Hypnotist Laura Spicer from [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com). Laura's specialty is voice coaching for hypnotists for NLP enthusiasts. Her whole thing is getting us to have powerful, flexible, and useful voices.

Welcome back, Laura.

**Laura:** Thank you. Hi Igor, how are you doing?

**Igor:** I'm doing very well thank you, and I'm very excited because we are on the first seminar session of our interviews and today you've prepared something very special for us, haven't you?

**Laura:** Well, actually I haven't prepared it at all I'm waiting to see what happens.

What we're going to do today, Igor, is a bit of work on your voice. Until you tell me what you want from your voice and what you would like to achieve, I don't know what we're going to do, so let me ask you that question.

You've lived with your voice all your life.

### ➤ What do you think your strengths already are?

**Igor:** Well, in terms of strengths I think I have a nice resonance in terms of a voice. I've worked quite hard on developing that, especially given the way I've been teaching and things now.

I believe my diction and vocabulary will be good so there that's mix of things going on there. Within a certain range it's quite expressive so I can create certainty with a voice, clarity with a voice, and depending on my own mood or state of mind, then different emotions can come through that as well.

I'd say those tend to be my strengths.

**Laura:** That's fantastic. Now, an obvious and very NLP-like question—

### ➤ How do you know?

**Igor:** In part it's to do with people's reaction, partly when I'm teaching life and getting feedback just from watching and observing people. In part from doing hypnotherapy which of course, my voice changes because I switch on it at very different rate and rhythm. My voice sounds differently then, and again I get a different reaction there.

Also, as part of the work that I do now I've been listening to myself a lot, in terms of videotape presentations as I edit them or even these interviews when I

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edit them, then I hear my voice a lot and I get feedback in terms of what I think is good.

If there's something that I've said or presented my voice in a different way that I think is particularly good I'll pay attention to and see if I can re-create that. If there's something that comes across not quite right I'll replay it until I can figure out what I don't like about it. Then, I see if I can change it to something which would intuitively feel better, more in keeping with whatever message I'm trying to present.

**Laura:** That's fantastic. Just because there are other people listening, that's a pretty vigilant person talking so that's somebody who's done a lot of ... you've done a lot of work on your voice. You're paying a lot of attention through every medium.

You told me about the feedback you get from clients and from students when you're teaching. You also told me about watching and listening to yourself back on video or audio and then adjusting, so you've already done heaps of work.

My guess is that lots of your listeners will not already have done that level of work. Would you agree?

**Igor:** I totally agree with you and this is one of the reasons I'm so excited to be talking with you today, because I think the voice is a very important thing.

We've talked about this before in the interview part of the seminar, but a lot of people, they just have this lip service. They say oh, train your voice and then a lot of people will ask how? I'll happily tell people what I do, but very few people actually understand the full impact, the importance of it.

So, it's my hope that when they listen to this interview they'll have two things. They will be one actually inspired to actually start paying more attention to their own voices and starting to coach themselves to bring it up and hopefully, they'll find someone like yourself, Laura, who will help them take it to the next level as well because I think we all can learn.

I'm really looking forward to today because I'm going to get a free voice coaching session and I'm very happy about that. I know how important the voice is, so I really appreciate this because it is something, which isn't emphasized very much but I think has more legs, has more influence than most of things that people spend their time really studying and rehearsing and getting good at.

**Laura:** I absolutely agree with everything you say and I hope that having listened to the previous interview with you, Igor, that your listeners already will have an idea that it's really important.

Not just important like one of these things where it's important to get proper nutrition, but something that they can be feeling right now is something that will

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make a big difference to what they're able to achieve. I'm hoping that they got that from the previous interview, so I hope that we've already got your listeners on-board. That's the first thing.

**Igor:** If they haven't done that already, they will have now. I whole heartedly endorse everything Laura just said, really. Listen to Laura she knows what she's talking about and this is really an important thing.

**Laura:** Thanks, Igor. It's important because it means you can be so much more effective, and that's a never-ending learning thing, of course. I'm still learning and still working on my voice, I'm a voice coach and I've been working on it for many years.

All these learnings, I think, with hypnosis, NLP, and all the aspects of NLP and hypnosis it's continuous improvement isn't it, Igor, it's not we ever get to the point where we're so masterful that we can stop.

**Igor:** Well, I think if you ever think you've come to the end of a field and you've worked it all out you're either a fool or greatly unfortunate because first if all I don't think there's such a thing as having learned everything there is about a field anyway.

Even if there was, then you're very unfortunate because there's nothing left them. There's no more excitement left in that field so you may as well pack your bags and do something else.

**Laura:** I can tell you that I was staying with Richard Bandler a few weeks ago, the guy who co-created NLP, and he is constantly learning, finding out and getting excited about new things. So, even the creator of NLP would certainly I think agree with that the fact that there's always more to learn and that's a great thing. We wouldn't want it to be any other way.

**Igor:** Amen to that.

**Laura:** What I want to do today as we're working is to remember that there are people listening in who haven't done as much work as you have already and so to keep coming back to what other people can do, which you may already have done.

Just to recap on what you just said, you've listened and watched yourself on recordings. You've monitored the feedback from clients and students. You've noticed the things which are working really well and done your best to do more of those. And, the things which you thought weren't working so well, you've adjusted and worked on until you're happier with the results based on feedback. Is that correct?

**Igor:** That's right. Something that popped into my mind which I also do, which I think is valuable and I would strongly recommend people do this, especially when you're hypnotists.

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I record a lot of inductions, partly because these are part of the bonuses people get on the Private Hypnosis Club they're on here right now, of course, and I'll listen to them as well.

I test every one of my inductions to make sure that it flows well, that it has the right level of all the bits and pieces in it, and it gives me again another bit of feedback. I'll hear something or do something, and if something in the induction jars me or doesn't quite work out right, I'll redo the induction or that segment and I'll remember that for next time.

The same goes for listening to other people's things. I listen to a lot of hypnotists out there because I enjoy going into trance, it's a fun thing to do, but there will be different voices and there will be elements of each voice that I like.

There will also be voices I don't like. I can across one hypnotist recently who I won't mention whose content, whose ideas are really good. His inductions are brilliant, but he's got a voice that's so terrible I can't go through his program; I can do it. So, these are other sources I've paid attention to in terms of what I can emulate to improve my own voice.

**Laura:** Absolutely.

I agree with everything you've said. I've watched video, DVD a few weeks ago of a brilliant guy, a professor talking about some interesting scientific thing that I was interested in, and I had to pause the DVD every five minutes because he was speaking so quickly; I don't know I just felt like I'd been attacked.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** I had to keep stopping and getting my center back so that I could listen because I couldn't take in what he was saying. Now, with hypnosis, I've heard quite a few people say well it doesn't really matter if you can't process it consciously, and I understand that but I don't totally agree with it. Let's just say the jury's out on that one.

I've heard hypnotists, for example, who speak too quietly and they say it doesn't matter because the person's unconscious will hear it. I'm not sure of that, Igor.

**Igor:** I have to agree with you on that.

**Laura:** Yes. I think it's probably a good idea just to be on the safe side to make sure that this can be heard, that it is audible, and that it's not so quick that the listener has to miss great big chunks of it. I'm sure it goes in and I'm sure it does go in at some level, but whether or not it's as effective, I wouldn't like to say.



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So, this DVD that I was listening to, I certainly couldn't process it consciously and actually if you ask me now what it was about, I couldn't really tell you, so I didn't even get it in a way that I can recall it. Even if it went in, I can't use it.

**Igor:** It's kind of like the whole sleep learning thing people experimented with back in the 70s and 80s; it simply doesn't work as a learning tool. Even if the unconscious mind does absorb the ideas in terms of what their content is of those tapes, which you listen to at nighttime shall we say, whilst your asleep. If you have no access to information then there's no memory of it.

In other words, if you have no access to that information, you can't use it and you haven't learnt anything. There's a lot of stuff in terms of the research when it comes to auditory stuff in terms of priming and subconscious priming studies and things like that, which basically bear the same thing out, that when there's a threshold of auditory levels, if you like, which the brain can process.

If it goes below that threshold, and it's different for each person, of course, nothing happens. There's no effect. There's no impact on the other person. Typically, for sounds that threshold is high enough that when the person actually listens specifically for those words and those things that people are saying, they can actually hear it consciously.

But, it's quieter than another sound which is maybe another voice in another ear which then draws attention away from the quieter sound. It's not that they're not hearing it or can't hear it, it's that they're choosing to put their attention somewhere else; hence, the impact happens unconsciously.

That's a very different story to actually presenting something that they're trying to listen to, but even when their attention is fully on it, they can't quite make out what is being said and that's a very different kettle of fish.

**Laura:** Yes, it's a very different kettle of fish and actually, just as an aside to this voice coaching, because as you know I'm also a hypnotist and NLP practitioner.

When I work with clients I always give them conscious tools as well as working with them at an unconscious level so that they can always access something and have the power and control to help themselves when I'm not there. I'm not about making people reliant on me and that's true in this scenario as well.

What I want to achieve by the end of this 90 minutes with you, Igor, is that you go away with something that you can work with, that you don't have to necessarily come back and get feedback from me because I wouldn't be there tomorrow.

It's very important to get your own control panel if you like so that you begin to know even more about how you can use your voice to be even more effective.

Does that make sense?

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**Igor:** That makes great sense and I'm really looking forward to it. How shall we begin?

**Laura:** Actually, we have begun. So, the next question having told me what you think your strengths are, what are the areas that you think you could improve on? Let me just say, before you answer that question that one of the things about voice is it's a very subjective experience and sometimes I use the analogy of a massage.

When you go have a massage, some people like a strong, deep tissue massage, whereas, others like a much more gentle approach. Now, your listeners are going to have first of all, different abilities in terms of their hearing.

If you're speaking to a whole audience, for example, there's going to be people there with very good hearing and some with not so good hearing. We need to get a result which works from most people most of the time at the very least.

Given that and given that today you and I are working one-to-one, and sometimes I say to people it's really great to work in a group because then you get a lot of different people's feedback.

Today, you're just going to get my feedback and yes, it's educated, experienced feedback, but it's only one person. So, whatever I give you feedback about your voice on is just my opinion, Igor, and actually it is no more valuable than anybody else's.

I will give you my opinion, but first and foremost I'd like to know what yours is in terms of what you think you could improve.

**Igor:** I've been thinking about it a little bit since we talked about doing these interviews and we decided that I'm going to get a freebie, so I'm going to get the best value out of this I can.

There are a couple of things which I think would interest me which would be very useful and I think would be very useful for everyone in general, as well as for me in particular.

1. Number one is the idea of developing different rhythms.

It's something I've been focusing more and more on in my own personal work in terms of developing my voice, and it's something that I think is very important in hypnosis, being able to develop certain kind of hypnotic rhythms.

Erickson is obviously famous for having these low, drawly rhythms that he created which is very insistent that pulls people in and is almost musical. Having, shall we say, a couple of staple rhythms which would be useful for different types of conversations, like one for the one we're having right now, one for a more hypnotic interaction, and so on.

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I think playing with those different rhythms and having fluency, so I can shift gears into rhythms in the same way as I shift gears into different tonalities would be very useful.

**Laura:** Okay.

**Igor:** The next one is this.

2. The second thing I was thinking of is in terms of flexibility again, not so much in the rhythms now but more towards the sounds and actually expressing qualities with those sounds.

I'll give you an example of what I mean.

A very good friend of mine is a great storyteller. In fact, he was one of the first people to be interviewed in his series, Robin Manuel. He tells amazing stories.

3. Something that we admire about him is within the story he can change voices.

I don't mean necessarily to do cartoon voices, dialects or elements of that I guess as well, but you can tell when there's different characters in the stories speaking.

There's something that he does that he switches somehow, he switches tonality slightly reference points slightly, rhythm slightly, so you can play out a whole dialogue and you'll know exactly who's talking. I find that fascinating.

I think it's a really wonderful skill he has there, and that kind of realities to the general skill of being able to I think emote, putting certain emotions or certain meanings into words like the classic one is the word relax. You don't say relax! You say relax, which I think I've got that one pretty much down. But having that range in other words, which are less obvious in terms of how they can be expressed would be very useful to him.

Those are the three things that spring to my mind.

**Laura:** Okay, so hang on. Three things- we've got the different rhythms, we've got the different characters and the different sounds expressing qualities. What was the third one?

**Igor:** That was the third one.

The different characters would be in my mind be one, so being able to switch voices as I'm telling a story to be able to present the different characters would be one.

**Laura:** Okay.

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**Igor:** The other one would be to bring a wider vocabulary alive so that orange sounds more orange or more relaxing in terms of pace depending on what the quality of the context I'm trying to imbued with.

**Laura:** Those are three great things. You've also highlighted something else which is a very useful thing to remember, which is not something we're going to be doing on this call because it's not the kind of thing we can do, but it's definitely something worth your listeners and all of us doing, and that is to listen to other people who are doing cool things with their voices.

You'd be surprised how many people don't use their auditory sense enough. They don't notice what's going on with other people's voices.

You mentioned Robin Manuel, is that right?

**Igor:** That's right, yes.

**Laura:** Yes, so you like what he does with his voice when he's telling stories. Just knowing what he sounds like is a very useful thing for you because the way we learn our voice anyway is through mimicking.

Some people would say you can't make a sound until you've made it and then you can hear it. Some people say you can't hear a sound until you've made it. Some people say you can't make a sound until you've heard it. The fact is it's very complicated.

**Igor:** Sounds like the chicken and the egg thing.

**Laura:** Yes, chicken and egg. It doesn't matter, because as long as we're doing both then we're covering all the posts.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** I would definitely recommend to everybody listening, listen to different people doing hypnotic trances from the point of view of what you like about their voice so that you can hear the things that really feel good to you and then allow yourself to mimic them.

You're never going to sound the same as somebody else, and that's a good thing. We don't want bad copies of other people here, we want you to be you, but at the same time as soon as you've listened to somebody that you really like, just taking on some of that, having that in your mind as you speak will affect the way that the sound comes out.

We're talking about different rhythm. We're talking about being flexible in terms of expressing different qualities and states and we're talking about being able to vary the voices as you tell stories. Is that right?

**Igor:** Those are the three fundamentals I think would be both fun and pretty mental to get into.

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**Laura:** Yes okay, so we're going to do those. Let me ask you a question before we start.

Listening to my voice this morning, what do you know about me today?

Because, your voice expresses everything that's going on inside, everything about your state and I can hear my state in voice this morning, so I'm wondering what you can hear.

**Igor:** In your voice that's interesting, because I haven't been paying attention to it of course, consciously too much I've been thinking more about the things we're talking about.

**Laura:** Oops.

**Igor:** To one degree I say you are definitely not asleep. You've been awake for a while so your brain is in gear. You're very sure in terms of you're in very familiar territory so you know where you're going with things so you've got clarity, I guess, is the word I'm trying to express.

You have switched into being more in charge, rather than me running the interview and having a chat, you've taken more control of the direction of the conversation because again this is something that you are very familiar with.

**Laura:** Okay, so you can't hear that I had an incredibly stressful morning.

**Igor:** Not now.

**Laura:** Now that I've told you that; actually, I'm really good at shifting my state, but I can hear a croak in the back of my voice and I know that that is because I had trouble with my Internet connection this morning and I knew that we were going to be to making this recording, Igor.

I mean, I'm a good hypnotists and NLP'er so I'm very good at controlling my state, but my insides were jumping around this morning because I thought I'm not going to be able to get on line and I can hear that in my voice so, I need to clear my throat.

One of the things that happens with stress is it takes less than a three-hundredth of a second for adrenaline to reach your vocal tract. Did you know that?

**Igor:** No. That is very fast.

**Laura:** Yes. It's immediate. It's as good as immediate. So, when we are stressed it does, in fact, tighten your vocal cords and make things less flexible.

One of the things that I think we will have to cover, either in this session or in the next session that we're going to do together for your listeners, is a warm-up

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routine because I purposely didn't do a warm up routine today because I wanted you to get the raw data and I didn't want to hide it.

One of the things about a voice is that people make judgments on the sound of your voice like you just did.

I said what can you hear and you immediately told me some things, which probably were at least semi-unconscious before I asked you about them, but once you had to think about it, you could come up with it sounded like I was in control and you could hear that I've been up for a while and my brain was in gear.

I want to tell you that those things actually in this case are true, but they're not always. We make assumptions and judgments about what we hear. We just assume them to be true and because they function at least semi-unconsciously, they're very powerful.

Therefore, you can sound as if you're completely certain and confident even when you're not. But, there's something that you need to get in place which is that congruence of the state and physiology together. We are going to deal with the rhythms, being more flexible and the different characters.

Before we do that, I think we need to get basic so that we've got a good foundation to work on, because those three things that you've mentioned are quite advanced actually, Igor. For some people, that's going to be something that is fabulously useful but maybe they just need a few basics first.

**Igor:** I agree.

**Laura:** Let me just ask you this. In terms of states when you are working with clients, when you are doing these recordings, when you are working one-to-one or teaching a group, give me five basic states that you need to be able to convey. You've already mentioned relax.

**Igor:** Relaxation I think and all the associations around that like comfort and all those sorts of things is a very key and important one.

The next one I would say would be safety or security, trust. Again, there's a conglomeration of ideas that basically they can feel safe, that good things are going to happen, that nothing bad is going to happen and they'll come out well on the other side. All those things as a general idea and state I think is also very important.

**Laura:** Next question I have for you is this.

- **What about when you are teaching groups of people, because of course, you want them to be able to relax, be comfortable and feel safe and secure that you know what you're doing, but what else?**

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**Igor:** Then, especially when it comes to more group sort of things, you want to energize the group so they have activity going on so there's more of a zing to it to get people motivated to do stuff, so I guess motivation would be one of those things.

Confidence so that they feel sure and again, confidence from you would be a mixture of clarity, understanding something and sureness in terms of I can do this, so a sense of belief within that. That would be another one which I think is important.

**Laura:** Okay, one more.

**Igor:** One more which would be important is...

**Laura:** I could give you one if you want.

**Igor:** Sure, go ahead.

**Laura:** Well for me, when I'm teaching, lecturing or giving a talk I want people to have fun.

**Igor:** Yes, that's very true. Fun is— even hypnotherapy, it would be rare that I would do any work with someone without trying to get them to laugh like a maniac because it's very difficult to hold onto problems when you're having a great time.

**Laura:** Of course, it's the best state for learning, at least that's what I learned. When people are smiling, laughing and having a good time, you can put so much more in because it makes them open up.

**Igor:** I agree.

**Laura:** Okay, so now we've got five really good states there.

- I haven't asked you to come outside that box yet, **what do you think you're conveying to me and the listener's with your voice this morning?**

**Igor:** On the one side there is a sense of certainty and familiar territory; this is something that I know of. Another one would be maybe a sense of curiosity because it is going into shall we say less familiar territory. I'm curious about that. I want to go there. There is an element of that.

I'm guessing there's going to be a certain sense of calmness in terms of going into an intellectual process rather than the fun, bouncing off the wall kind of fun; it's a more toned down curiosity and intellectual kind of process.

That's kind of the mood I'm in right now and whilst there's sort of fun things on the edges of it it's not quite as active as the most interested and curious side.

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**Laura:** That's really interesting to me. I'm going to give you some feedback and tell you how you come across to me. We haven't met face-to-face so this is a great opportunity to make some judgments on the sound of your voice.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** When you first got in touch with me and asked me to do the interview, I was inclined to do it. The first thing was because of your voice, I wanted to say yes and that's really important.

That is because to me, you have a lot of clarity so you sound like you know what you're talking about and you do sound like you're having fun, Igor. To me, it sounds like oh, I'm going to have some fun if I work with this guy and I wanted to do it.

Your voice is very energized and energizing. I mean, you must know the old maxim that certainly Richard Bandler teaches, Paul McKenna and many others; if you want someone go somewhere, you have to go there first.

**Igor:** Absolutely.

**Laura:** That's really important.

**Igor:** I am a religious devotee and I pray to the church of going first on a daily basis.

**Laura:** There you go. Then knowing what we're actually leading is the next thing because it isn't necessarily accurate. As you say, what you've got from me this morning was; well, you certainly didn't get the fact that I had been stressing about my Internet connection and that's a good thing.

**Igor:** Yes, it is.

**Laura:** Here are the good things that I'm getting from your voice. I'm getting energized. I'm getting fun. I'm getting very clear and I'm getting very concise, so things that already make me feel that I can be confident that I'm working with somebody who I'm going to have a good time with and that is the first and most thing that has come across to me from speaking to you at every time that we've spoken.

I want you to take that on board, Igor. It's really important.

**Igor:** Wonderful, thank you. Actually, that's a good thing to hear because it sounds like for me I guess the bar I have set for myself for what I would consider to be more fun or playful, whatever it is, is much higher than the impact that I'm having.

That's actually good for me to hear because I wasn't in a particularly crazy fun mood this morning but I am definitely curious and having fun doing these interviews because they're fascinating to me.



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**Laura:** Good. I don't know you well, but I would imagine that that's an easy state for you to get from somebody else, to feel like they're about to have fun, because that's a very natural quality in your voice already.

Now you can work on that and make it even more by working on the state, but that's what's coming across. You've got that one in the hold and that's a really great quality to have.

Let me ask you something else then. Let's just try something. I would like you now to switch just, and I'm not going to help you by going there first in this case, relax me for a minute.

**Igor:** Okay. With a formal induction or just by more gentle, normal conversations about something, so we could have a chat about almost anything and whilst we are, then you can experience that in any way that you would like to do that.

**Laura:** That's fantastic. That's all I need. You know what you did there, don't you? You slowed right down, you dropped the pitch of your voice to a much lower pitch, and you did something to your state, didn't you?

**Igor:** Absolutely, that's what drives the whole thing. At first, I had to give my side in terms of experience of it. I knew that I had to slow down and have a lower voice because that's a more calming, relaxing sort of thing.

The image I have in my mind is calming an animal that's just been spooked, so you have to approach it slowly and gently. As soon as I get that image in my mind I start putting myself in the context, how would I have to be and that helps me generate the state.

As I started feeling the state becoming more relaxed inside of me, it became easier to slow down further, find that rhythm and even talking about it now is developing it naturally.

**Laura:** Absolutely. This is the first important thing that I want your listeners to get, Igor, which is that as soon as you start aiming for the state, something happens to your voice in general. See, you didn't have to say to yourself, I must slow down and drop the tone of my voice. You just started going for the state really, didn't you?

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** Then, the voice followed.

**Igor:** Yes. Something interesting you just said there as well is the act of reaching. I know what it should feel like. I know what it should sound like and that wasn't there when I started. It wasn't like oh, that's not good enough, it's just like okay, a little bit more, a little bit more and suddenly a switch got flipped and I go here I am and now I'm in this stream of flow.

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**Laura:** Absolutely. So you can do that and being able to switch states is one of the most powerful things that you can learn to do for your voice. I would recommend to all your listeners that they get some kind of recording device and just goes through maybe five different states, listen back and hear what you do naturally because then you've already halfway there.

I can get you to sound even more relaxing, but you already went into such a lovely, slow-down, relaxing, deep resonant. Your voice is very resonant by the way, which is also fabulous which won't necessarily be true for other people listening.

Listen back to your voice, identify useful states and I think you identified some really main ones. For a hypnotist, being able to relax somebody is obviously ...

**Igor:** Let me pause you there for just a second, because I think you came up with a very important exercise which I'd like to emphasize for people listening, if they want to do this.

The idea of recording your own voice, specifically to track different states; if I could just add one thing which I'm sure you're already aware of as well, which would really help them. This goes back to a little bit of research in terms of neuroscience.

If you agree with someone, maybe a friend or another hypnotist to swap these recordings, where they at some point going to listen to yours as well, it actually engages more of your brain just the act of thinking or knowing the hat someone else is going to hear you.

If you're going to do this over the telephone is even better because someone actually is hearing you.

1. More of your brain lights up, which means it is actually first of all, easier to do the exercise, and
2. Secondly it's more realistic because the time you need to do this is when someone else is there as well.

Your brain activates differently when you anticipate that someone will be hearing the results of whatever you're doing at some point.

**Laura:** That's absolutely 100% right and I'd take that even further, which is to find more than one person because as I say, especially with a voice, it's going to have a different effect on different people.

What I do is I get feedback from people who do NLP or hypnosis but I also get feedback from people who don't because my clients are not hypnotists and NLP'ers. I would ask a friend of my son's to have a listen or my mom or somebody who actually has no idea about what I'm trying to do, so that they

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can just give me a clean piece of feedback which says this is the effect it had on me. I think that's invaluable.

The other thing which is also useful if you're ever going to be working teaching groups, so for any of your listeners who are trainers, is to get a few people at once to listen.

Here's a funny thing about the voice and I don't understand this from a scientific point of view, but I absolutely understand it from an experiential point of view and I've proven this time and time again. Your voice goes where you focus your attention.

For people who trains and teach NLP and hypnosis, if you have somebody on the stage and you've got them in a trance and you're talking some of the time to the audience and some of the time to your demonstration subject person on the stage, how does the person with their eyes closed know when you're talking to them?

I know you can do some, you can touch them, but often enough you don't and they still know. Certainly, when you watch somebody who's good at this, I'm thinking Richard Bandler right now; he's my great person to think of when I want to think about how it's done really well.

He can have six demonstration subjects sitting on chairs on the stage and an audience and everybody knows when he's talking to them. So, each of the six people knows when he's talking to them, the audience know when he's talking to them, and the people sitting on the stage know when he's talking to the audience.

When you put your attention fully on somebody else and you are 'communicating' your voice naturally normally, under normal circumstances, the sound waves will actually travel in that direction.

For some people, they need to work on that a bit more because it's not working very well and if I have somebody with me I can immediately know that. It's a bit different over the telephone, but that is definitely something to check.

When you're making you recording, you could try – I think this would be really useful thing to do – make the same recording again with a thought in mind that you're going to have three or six people listen to this recording at once because whatever you have in your mind in terms of the feedback and who's going to be listening to it, will actually affect the communication.

Right now, I have in my mind that I'm talking to you, Igor, but somewhere in the side of my mind, that's the best way I can describe it, I have an entire group of people who are also listening to this recording. So, it's a little bit wider than just working with you, which if I just switch now so that I only have you in mind and I feel that I'm just talking to you, Igor, I wonder if you can hear the difference in the way I'm speaking now.

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**Igor:** Absolutely, because it becomes more intimate at that point, less inclusive. In other words, to me it feels like there is more of a focus versus the other times it's more open like you're inviting other people who are listening to engage in the debate in some ways.

There's a slight nuance in shift and I can actually hear it because if you listen to this whole interview again, everyone that's listening to this, of course, you'll actually hear the shift.

When we first start talking we'll just chat to each other. Then you'll switch, you'll make a point for the listeners to be hearing, and then you'll switch back on to me and I can actually hear the distinctions or feel the distinctions as you make that mental shift.

**Laura:** That's incredible.

**Igor:** It is.

**Laura:** To me, I just think sound is so fascinating and what you can do with your voice once you start to pay attention to it is incredibly subtle. Once you start getting the distinctions, you realize that it's subtle but it has a profound effect.

**Igor:** If I can just add something to what you're saying there, because I think you've just given away a powerful principle. It's something that I do all the time as well, not just in these interviews where we're talking together because we can't see each other, of course, but I get to hallucinate you which is nice.

**Laura:** I hope you're hallucinating me really beautiful.

**Igor:** Oh, you are so foxy it's unreal!

**Laura:** Good.

**Igor:** The other thing that I've noticed is, and this has more to do with the kind of work I'm doing now, when I'm doing inductions for my group, for example, I actually have to imagine a specific person in front of me; otherwise, I cannot do the induction.

I have sat around for days thinking oh, we should go around the getting this induction done; I can't do it. Now, sometimes, I'm fortunate that someone comes in, I'll actually do a session with them and that will be their induction, I'll record it, and that makes life easier.

However, if I don't have that, I will have to put it inside my mind someone specific that I know and I'll go what does that person need to hear, and that generates the whole induction for me.

**Laura:** Well, I've got to same I am the same and I think that's really interesting because I'm a great believer in the power of the imagination. I have tried over and over again just to imagine that I'm doing an induction for somebody,

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recording it and actually many times I've just gone damn it and gone and gotten someone and said just sit there.

**Igor:** It's so much easier.

**Laura:** Yes, it really is. So, when you listeners are actually recording their voices, they might want to have somebody else there because it does make a difference.

**Igor:** It lights up their brain in a totally different way and we know this from neurological fact, the minute you think; it's a bit like social theory; the minute you know that somebody else is observing you, you will behave differently because different parts of your brain engage.

Sitting down with your own recorder is fine, and it's a great exercise, but if you sit down with a recorder and have someone on the telephone or someone else in the room or at the very least you know that they are going to be sending that file to someone else so you have that sort of time lag that's still a connection, then your brain will engage differently and it's really worthwhile doing that.

**Laura:** It really is because you're speaking voice is about communicating. This is about communicating, and communicating is about the effect that you have on the other person. It's all about the other person or people.

These are all useful tips and clues as to how you can work on your voice when I'm not there so that you can make some huge leaps and improvements just by being curious, really, yourself and trying some stuff out. These are useful clues for how to go about it.

**Igor:** For sure. If I could add something that you made me think of which we haven't discussed much, but I think would fit here nicely.

One of the reasons perhaps that some people have shall we say less appropriate voices or their voices don't get the impact that they want, I see this happening quite a bit actually, is when they're so interested in their ideas or the things they're talking about that they actually end up ignoring the person in front of them.

You can actually see it happening. They build this little world around them and they're talking about their beliefs, their things, their experience or their perception of something, but it's almost like their eyes have glazed over and they're talking at someone rather than with someone.

They've stopped seeing the other person and they've stopped noticing that whenever they say something that kind of like a little wave has to transfer over impact from the other person and then as a result of being impacted they can add another way or change the wave afterwards.

In other words, they stop observing the other person in a meaningful way. That could be a really powerful place in which to just do an instant switch. It's small;

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it just takes attention and awareness, but I can see that making a tremendous difference in people's voices.

**Laura:** Absolutely. When you're working with your voice and doing the recording as you say, one of the ways that you can work on it which is useful is to shift where your attention is and then when you listen back to the recording try and identify the places where you've done that.

First of all, go right inside your own head so that you're speaking out loud but actually you're in your fantasy. Then imagine one of other persons there and speak to that one other person.

Then, imagine an entire roomful of people, speak to them and find out that the difference in sound is, because the reason to do that is because you can use that when you're working with one person or a group.

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### Seminar 1 – Part 2

**Igor:** If I can add one more thing to that which you just reminded me that I do always is when I'm doing on induction– and this might sound a bit strange, but in the context we just talked about makes more sense– I will start with speaking to the person's face like I would do in a normal conversation.

As I continue speaking and it's kind of happening a little bit now, I start speaking to like maybe an inch behind their face, then two inches, three inches, until I'm actually speaking to what would feel like this big room right in the middle of someone if we had the ability to step inside another person and there's this vast cavern, and right in the middle of it would be that person.

I actually step inside that person whilst I'm talking to them in trance and doing suggestions. Then when I finish, I'll start shifting back out until eventually I'm back in a normal conversational thing, talking to someone who is sitting next to me rather than inside the person.

Does that kind of make sense?

**Laura:** It absolutely makes sense and I think that probably everybody who does good hypnosis does their own version of that. By the way, I think that's something only to be done when someone has given you permission or invited you in because it's very intrusive.

You see, your sound waves are bathing the other person and they are very directed, and I absolutely agree, when you're hypnotizing somebody and they've come to you and asked you to help them make a change, or you're teaching somebody and they've asked you to teach them, then it's your responsibility to do that as best as possible and you've had permission.

But, if you just did that to somebody in the street, I get very uncomfortable with these how quickly can I get this girl into bed using hypnotic technique things. Those are cases in point where you're actually entering into somebody's sphere in a way without really getting their permission ahead of time. You're going in and taking it.

**Igor:** As the old saying goes, hypnosis is anything but a casual relationship.

**Laura:** Yes.

**Igor:** It's something for people to really understand and pay attention to. For example, Milton Erickson was actually a good case in point. He ended up having very few close personal friends because he got too personal. He got too much inside people's spaces sometimes and that makes people a little bit like this is great for therapy but what do you do? That's all you have.

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It's good to have a range. It's sometimes important to actually be ignorant and be able to if not feign actually literally not see some things happening inside someone else because that gives them the freedom to not have to hide it whatever it is without being embarrassed of it as well.

You have to have that range of knowing when it's appropriate to be intimate and when it's actually quite good to be not intimate because that's exactly what that other person needs at that time.

**Laura:** Yes. One of the things that I can tell you that conventional therapists sometimes do, because I've had a good old listen to hear how really good therapists of all kinds use their voices, and of the things that I've discovered is that some really good therapists actually send their sound waves not quite as far as the client.

They pitch their voice so that it's actually coming to the center of the room, and the client has to come to the center of the room to meet the therapist halfway.

There's something very powerful about that, so what I would recommend is that you get somebody who's prepared to help you do this work, have them sit in different places in the room and then deliberately make the attempt to send your voice to different parts of the room.

Then ask them when they feel that your voice is really going inside them, when it's going inside their head, when it's going inside their body you can try their head, their heart, their stomach, and you can try leaving your voice outside of somebody.

You'll find that as extraordinary as it sounds you can do that in a way that is easy to know when you're on the receiving end of it.

**Igor:** The key thing for this is when people ask me well, how do you project? You don't have to form your mouth in a special way and get your tongue rolling or something.

**Laura:** No.

**Igor:** Just pay attention to where the person is, think about the place, put your mind ... here's an analogy from sports, the classic where "tension goes, energy flows."

If you ride bicycles you'll know that when you're riding down the road, there's a rock in the middle of the road and you look at the rock trying to think yourself I have to avoid that rock. Well, what are you going to do you're going to run over the rock because your attention is on that spot.

So literally, just put your attention on that spot and then your voice will naturally tend towards it, which is also why people get distracted because when their attention is not on the person, it's on the person behind them because they



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happen to be wearing a nice top, they have a watch that they admire or they remind them of their Uncle George.

People can hear it because they're not "with them" anymore; they're somewhere else with their thoughts.

**Laura:** Absolutely. I think that's very important, something well worth playing with and getting curious about. All of my work is about getting curious, playing with different things, finding out what works and the effect that it has.

Let me take you onto some of the things that you asked me to work on today because I know that in our next session we are going to be working at a smaller chunk level. We're going to be working with pace, with pause, with volume, inflections and all those different aspects of voice, whereas, today we're working at a more meta level.

Let's just talk a little bit about rhythm, Igor, so that you have a way of working with that.

➤ **Do you listen to music, Igor?**

**Igor:** I do and I like it.

**Laura:** What I want you to do right now is take a moment and our listeners will hear us go silent for a minute. I want you to take a moment in your mind now to come up with quite a sort of punchy, back-beat type of tune that you really like. I don't know, maybe some pop music, something like that, something with quite an upbeat-good beat. Take a minute now and think of that song in your mind.

Afterwards when you've done that and you've got it really playing in your mind, I want you just to come out and tell me ... let me think what I want you to tell me about what the weather is like. The content is not important here, but stop and get that tune going in your mind.

**Laura:** **How are you doing?**

**Igor:** Okay. I've run through the refrain a few times just to get the feel for it and smiling. It's an eighties song but it's got a really captivating rhythm to it.

**Laura:** Good. Now, stop again.

➤ **Do you like classical music?**

**Igor:** I do actually, yes.

**Laura:** Stop for a moment and think about a really smooth, some kind of smooth music which kind of flows a lot more and doesn't have such a strong back beat, and then once you've got that going in your mind I want you to come back and talk to me again.

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**Igor:** Okay. I've been thinking about a classical piece. I don't know what the name of it is but it's very famous.

**Laura:** Good. You see, now your rhythm completely changed. When you hear somebody speaking rhythmically it is quite difficult to listen to them because there's no kind of rhythm. And, there are people who are actually very arrhythmic in the way that they speak and it's really quite uncomfortable to listen to them, would you agree?

**Igor:** Yes, I must say which can be useful I guess as a rapport breaker if you leave somewhere, but of course it has a time and a place.

**Laura:** Now funny enough, it's one of the requests that I get often which is people to say to me I want to be able to use different rhythms and the best way to use different rhythms is to have music or at least a passion playing in the back of your mind.

**Igor:** I like that.

**Laura:** If you talk to people who are musical, they always do and by the way, I always do.

Right now, I've got a really funky rap thing going on by a guy called Uncle Ricky.

Once upon a time not long ago, when people wore pajamas and lived life slow... which is going on in the back of my mind as we're talking. That's the rhythm I'm working with right now is a kind of upbeat rap rhythm.

When you started listening to that classical smooth piece, your rhythm totally changed. Now, if you want to do this most easily, put some music on in the background. For people who this isn't quite such a natural predisposition to be able to do this, choose three different pieces of music with very distinct rhythms and put them on the background as you talk.

Rhythm is something that you might think is auditory, but it's absolutely kinesthetic. Rhythm is a very kinesthetic thing, its right down at the base of your spine and reverberates through your body.

The best thing is to get used to the feeling, the kinesthetics of different rhythms and the way to do that is to have music playing in the background or a drum beat. You can do it in your mind. You can do it in actual fact.

**Igor:** If I can just pause you there for a second, Laura; something that you just mentioned. The whole exercise, I think is very powerful.

I've accidentally did that myself when I was training myself to be shall I say a more eloquent speaker, I would actually put on some of my favorite music and I would select it ... this was my criteria at the time, according to the mood.

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In other words, what is the feeling that I want people to have and I would speak along to it. In fact, some of my inductions that people get a hold of, I won't say which ones, but some of the inductions I'm actually listening to music for a particular state or particular kind of rhythm that I can't quite hold onto myself.

So I'm actually listening to that music with headphones on and then I'm doing an induction over the microphone, which of course, you can't hear the music because it's just in my ears at that point, but it allowed me to fall into that rhythm that I couldn't quite capture on my own and after a while became more natural for me to do.

**Laura:** Yes, absolutely. If you repeat the same rhythms, if you practice talking to certain tunes 10 or 20 times, you will have that anchored into your body and you'll be able to switch without having to have it on the outside.

If you're standing up and talking to a group or you've got a client in the room with you and you haven't got the headphones on, then you'll still be able to do it. But, you have to put it in there first and the way to put it in there is by having that background music or rhythm play.

**Igor:** I think that's a wonderful exercise. If nothing else, if you're not the kind of person that has a lot of music in your life, it's probably a wonderful thing for you to have anyway. It'll pep you up and do all kinds of positive things too.

**Laura:** We know that music and state go very closely hand-in-hand. Find three or five different pieces of music which represent totally different states for you and practice talking while they're going on in the background.

**Igor:** Can I just add something to what you're saying, because this made me think of an interesting exercise I haven't done yet but I'm going to do now, which is to go and research the different sounds like African drumming, Native American rattles and so on, which people have used to induce trance over the ages and do the same exercise without, because I think that will give us a much wider of range of trance states to create with people because each rhythm will create their own versions.

I think that's going to be a very interesting exercise. Thank you for making me think of it.

**Laura:** Absolutely. I want to add just one other thing to that. When you're doing this practice, it's a good idea to do some of it sitting and some of it walking around so that you learn to walk with the rhythm, because that helps to get it into your body even more.

If you want to look for sounds that have been trancing people out for eons, I believe that the Michael Harner School for Shamanic Studies has some tapes of different shamanic instruments. I think they've got the bow, the drum, the rattle, and various other things, so if you look that up online you might find some really good tunes.

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I'm also in the process of researching the healing power of sound, and what sounds, actually affect different organs.

**Igor:** It's a fascinating field, I can see.

**Laura:** Yes. Come back to me in a year or two and I'll be able to tell you how you can heal somebody's liver just by playing certain tunes through to them, but give me a little while on that one.

**Igor:** No problem at all I look forward to that interview.

**Laura:** Now, let's just go into this idea of expressing different qualities and states.

**Igor:** Okay.

**Laura:** You've talked to me about say relaxation, energizing, motivating and giving somebody that feeling of I can do this.

**Igor:** Right, exactly.

**Laura:** Those are three very distinct qualities. Relaxing, motivating and I can do this. Now, first of all, I want to find out what happens when you just do it, because now you've set the intent that's relaxing, energizing, and certainty. What I want you to do is to count up to 20 but as you count, I want you to shift what's in your mind in terms of the state. Think about something relaxing ...

**Igor:** So, the count from one to six roughly is relaxing. From six to 12 is roughly going to be more motivating or energizing. Then from 12 to 20 or so will be kind of motivating. Is that roughly what you mean?

**Laura:** Let's try that and let me hear if I can hear when you make the change.

**Igor:** Sure.

**Laura:** It can be around six, seven or eight. It can be around 12, 13 or 14; I want to be able to hear the change.

**Igor:** Okay, let me just get my head into that that's an interesting exercise— one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

**Laura:** Round of applause that was great, Igor, and it was very apparent when you made your changes. I'd say that the difference between relaxation and the other two was more noticeable because the other two in a way are more similar.

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** I think we could create more of a distinction between motivating and certainty.

**Igor:** Okay.

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**Laura:** At this stage, I really don't want to give you the minutae. The next time we work together I'm going to be talking at a much smaller chant level to do the same job, but at this point just let's see if we can get that distinction so, you're going to count this time up to 14 and somewhere in the middle I want you to make as big a distinction as possible between energizing and motivating somebody and that certainty, I can do this.

**Igor:** Okay, let's give that a go.

**Laura:** Give it a go.

**Igor:** One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

**Laura:** It was so apparent, Igor, could you feel it?

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** Around number six.

**Igor:** Exactly. What I noticed though, is that it took me almost two numbers to mentally adjust, to really get into the rhythm, and then I felt it clicking into place more fully. It's almost like there was a transition period. I couldn't quite put a hard shift from one to the other yet; I guess it's a practiced thing.

It got easier once I got past the six or the seven, which was a halfway in between thing. I felt the distinction a little more and it became clearer for me, anyway.

**Laura:** Now that you've done it once, I want to do it once more, but this time you're only going to count up to six and I want that shift to happen somewhere between one and six. We're going to go from energizing and motivating to I can do this, but somewhere just in that short period of time. Ready?

**Igor:** Sure. One, two, three, four, five, and six...

**Laura:** Fantastic. Now we're going to cut it down to four.

**Igor:** Let's make it real easy, right.

**Laura:** Real easy, that's right. This is just in a few seconds making the shift from it was a little fluffy, I couldn't quite tell the difference, to it being clearer and clearer. Here we go. We're going from really motivating to absolute certainty in the count of four.

**Igor:** Okay. One, two, three, four.

**Laura:** There you go. Now, you went from where I could hardly tell the difference between motivating and certainty to being able to make it absolutely distinct in four seconds. That was easy, wasn't it?

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**Igor:** Actually, that was a really good exercise and it really makes my mind pay attention to the boundaries between the two much more clearly. I find it very useful. I'm going to be doing a lot of counting in the next few days.

**Laura:** You can read something from a book. You can say a sentence. You can talk about the weather or you can count. It doesn't matter what you're doing because as you say, what it forced you to do was to pay attention to the distinction and listening to your own voice so that you were actually working with it until you got it the way you want.

Now that you've done it, of course, doing it again and again is going to make you be able to do it better, more efficiently, more naturally and instantly, but that's a really good exercise to practice if you want to practice learning how to shift your voice very quickly from one state to another.

You just do it, refine it, refine it and refine it until it becomes something that your body learns.

**Igor:** Yes. I think that's exactly the experience I had.

1. First of all, when the numbers get cut down, that actually is an important part of it, because it put me under more pressure and forced me to create a clearer distinction between the two emotions.
2. Secondly, I really did feel it, especially that last time in the four-count, the switch going from motivating to certainty. I felt something in me switching.

**Laura:** That was really good! That was really good when you went from motivating to certainty and there it was for all your listeners to hear yet again, is now you're making that distinction very clearly.

Some of that is happening at a conscious level. Some of it is happening at an unconscious level and Igor, that's my job is to get it so that it becomes something you can do easily.

**Igor:** Perfect.

**Laura:** Just think you could pick a whole load of other states to play with and do the same thing. If you want to be able to make a very clear distinction in your voice between two states, pick six pairs of states that you want to be able to flip from one to the other and do that same exercise.

I've got to tell you that it's going to be much more effective if you know there's somebody listening.

**Igor:** Yes.

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**Laura:** You can do it by yourself, but again if you can get a friend, a colleague, a partner or actually for people listening who've got children, they make fantastic feedback loops because children are so responsive to state. If you're reading stories to them you can be secretly practicing the shifts of states very well because they will surely get it if you do it well.

**Igor:** Of course, they're also very sensitive to it, so if you're using this without thinking about it, if you come home stressed from work, very often children will pick up on your stress or your disapproval of something whilst your words might be saying "I believe in you", your tone might be saying "life is horrible" and that gets conveyed as well.

It's a very important skill in life to have, especially if you have kids so you don't contaminate their minds with what's happening in your own life, right.

**Laura:** Yes, very true. The worst thing about that for children, by the way, and I think maybe for people, is that because they pick up the discrepancy they just don't know what to believe. You're telling them one thing but you're conveying something else.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** If you want to elicit a state of confusion and insecurity, that's a really good way to do it and of course there are times when you do, but it should be deliberate.

**Igor:** Exactly. If you're going to do it, you've got to have a reason and a purpose and overall it should be a force for good. This is where we actually end up saying well we have control of this, it's our responsibility to use our voices well that we actually end up not contaminating our environment.

Something in the exercise you gave me, which I think for me, was particularly useful and I've never thought of it this way before but actually helped tremendously.

1. One having you listen definitely is important.
2. Two, having as you said the pairs of states.

The contrast between going from one state to the other is much easier to get a state of what state you're going for than if you just said okay Igor, just give me certainty, just count to 10 with certainty.

I have nothing to compare it to and it's a lot harder to know that I switched into it than something else, whereas, if I have two similar states or very different states like relaxation and motivation, was really easy for me because in my mind they're so different that making the switch from one to the other made me aware of in my whole body of what I was looking for.

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Once I was looking for it and found it I knew it was there and hence the whole switching became a lot easier. So, having that contrast is really important. I think it's a very ingenious little exercise you've created there.

**Laura:** I want to tell you that another important component part of that exercise is to pick content which has nothing to do with the state.

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** I'll tell you why. Because, when you are hypnotizing somebody, what is a very useful thing to be able to do is to take them through states while the content isn't necessarily reflecting that so that you can do it covertly.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** In hypnosis, when you're helping somebody to change where they are, you might want to be saying to them something like yes, and I understand that in the past this was something that ... and this is where you go, but in the meantime you've already gotten them into the new state, changing states and taking people through states is something that your voice is made to do for you.

It's just so useful, because I think that my hypnosis skills are okay, I'm a good hypnotist, but actually where I get the most amazing results is because I am doing things with my voice behind the words.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** It makes what I'm capable of twice, three, four times as good as it otherwise would be.

**Igor:** I want to emphasize that point because I think it's very, very important. It's one of the secret ingredients to a lot of the different patterns or techniques out there.

For example, let's say you're doing some kind of regression work, re-imprint or change personal history, whatever version of the same idea you come up with. It's very easy to do a reframe on the situation without saying anything by switching your tone.

For example, you say and there are those kids looking at you ... pfff ... it's almost you're presenting the idea of it doesn't matter anymore, right.

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Igor:** Over there is that person with their gun to your head – ha! They're going yes it's not a big deal anymore, is it?

You're implying it through your voice which means you don't have to justify it, which means you don't engage the critical factor of all the reasons why it can't



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work out and so on. They just go yes; it isn't that big a deal anymore. I guess I'm over it now.

**Laura:** Absolutely.

**Igor:** I can see that being very powerful.

**Laura:** It is. The other thing about the power of that is that because it's happening at a kinesthetic level and an unconscious level for them, it just happens and you're making it easy for them to make the change inside, which is part of our job. If they have to struggle to go where you want them to go, then it might not be quite such a successful intervention.

I think practicing shifting states in that way is a useful exercise for us all to do and as I said before, there's always more to learn. There are always more states to work with and more combinations, so I'm going to let you do that in your own time.

There's one more thing I want to just work with, because I'm aware that we're now sort of getting quite near to our time limit, Igor, so let's work on the different characters.

**Igor:** Sure.

**Laura:** I think what you were talking about, storytelling and being able to work on having different voices not necessarily cartoon voices, but different ones.

Let me ask you, when you mentioned your girlfriend earlier.

➤ **Can you think of something you can share – not something too private –that she sometimes says to you?**

**Igor:** Let's have a think of something.

**Laura:** Or that she might say to you.

**Igor:** Yes, I'm trying to think about something she would normally be saying. She has a phrase which she likes – a beautiful disaster.

**Laura:** A beautiful disaster. Okay. If you think about that phrase in her voice, I want you to hear it in your head in her voice; reproduce it as close as you can.

**Igor:** It's a beautiful disaster.

**Laura:** My guess is that you don't sound anything like her, but you sound different to the way you normally do. Let's pick somebody else completely. Just choose somebody who you think is ... maybe Milton Erickson. You know his voice, don't you?

**Igor:** Yes, very intimately by now.

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**Laura:** Okay, that's great. Just pick a kind of Milton Erickson type of thing that you might say.

**Igor:** Just to use a simple phrase like your unconscious response.

**Laura:** What I want you to do is your unconscious response, and I want you to have Milton Erickson's voice in your head while you say it. Then straight after that again, we're working on doing one thing, then another and then I want you to immediately hear and see your girlfriend with her beautiful disaster, and I want you to say in a Milton type way, your unconscious response. It's a beautiful disaster.

Let's just hear the contrast there.

**Igor:** All right, let's try that.

**Laura:** At the moment.

**Igor:** This is quite a mental leap I'm making.

**Laura:** It is. Take a moment. What you want to do inside is first of all to see Milton Erickson in one place and see your girlfriend in another place in your mind.

**Igor:** I like that and then I'll be able to switch from one to the other.

**Laura:** So that you can see the two, they're just in two different places in the same room.

**Igor:** I'll do that.

**Igor:** And your unconscious mind responds with a beautiful disaster.

**Laura:** Okay. You see, the thing is that it's such a contrast.

What I would recommend for practicing changing characters is fairy stories.

Fairy stories are just the most wonderful thing to work with because they always have very sort of archetypal characters and for those people who haven't got children, get out the fairy story books and read them out loud.

You're going to have wicked witches. You're going to have beautiful little fairies. You're going to have women, beautiful princesses and cruel stepmothers.

It's not necessarily that you want to be talking as a cruel stepmother, but by forcing yourself to think about the different states again that these characters are in, as you read these stories and start to notice the distinctions that you make automatically when you get a strong picture in your mind and you set your intention to represent that state.

Because state and setting your intent will have a direct effect on your voice.

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**Igor:** I like that. I think that's a very interesting exercise, especially because archetypes do have to come with a set of expectations in terms of states of what that kind of person is like.

I can see between the fairy tales with the archetypes, trying to speak in different archetypes, and then comparing that with real world people you actually know and are trying to emulate their speech patterns, that can do a lot of things for creating range of developing different voice.

I'm definitely going to be playing with both of those things.

**Laura:** Yes. What I recommend is you pick out somebody from TV who you really like, a film star, another hypnotist or two who you admire and think are good, a few characters from a book, a friend or two who have qualities that you like, and then use content which doesn't matter.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** I think that's really important is use content which is fairly random, talk about the weather, count up to 50 or 100, whatever it is or take some expressions from them that are particular to their characters. Get the picture in your mind, see the two contrasting things and then work on it.

The more you do it, the easier it gets. For me now, I've got to say that if you ask me to read you a story it would be very easy for me to represent every character in a different voice and to be consistent because it's already locked into my body.

**Igor:** Right. In our next session, of course, we'll be reading *Little Red Riding Hood*, as a demonstration of that.

**Laura:** We will absolutely. I recommend you do that.

The other thing that we've worked on today, Igor, is getting the rhythms in place. For that as well as reading the fairy stories, what you might like to do is try three different pieces of music in the background as you do it, so then you're combing all those different skills.

One of the lovely things about working with voice is it doesn't take long it's quick. I mean you have what we've done today and you're already doing something that you weren't doing half an hour ago.

If you practice for five to ten minutes a day for the next five days you will have a skill locked into your body, which will be there for life. It's something that once your body gets it, it's got it and it doesn't go away.

**Igor:** That's wonderful, and I have to say, I'm really impressed with how quickly even those little exercises with the different states, how quickly that came through.

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A testament to your coaching and of course, luckily you do a lot of phone coaching which is exactly what we've been doing here, so that's definitely a good fun thing to do which I'll be experimenting with.

I quite like also putting it altogether, so you're suggesting that you put some music on which develops a general rhythm and you might pick up say a fairy tale book, to start reading the fairy tale,.

But then, when you get to the characters developing the different voice for those characters like the wicked witch will speak like a wicked witch and so on, to create that flexibility, and at the same time maintain a rhythm so you can still have a rhythm and the voice at the same time, because they're not the same thing, are they?

It's not that, although one character might speak very, very quickly and another character might speak much slower, they can both happen within the same rhythm; although one will be more a more spaced out version of the other, right?

**Laura:** Absolutely. You can do the practices together and you can do them apart. The thing is to do them. That's the key. To put your attention on what it is you want to achieve, set your goals, set your intent, because as soon as you do that something begins to happen inside and your voice will follow your intention in that way.

**Igor:** I think that's wonderful and I think they're going to be very useful exercises. I for one am definitely going to be doing those. So, the next time you guys hear me, I will be reading to you every fairy tale in the book and you won't even know it's me doing it.

**Laura:** Absolutely or you might even be doing a hypnotic trance without reading a fairy tale to them, but your voice will be expressing the archetypal states that come through.

**Igor:** Yes. I know we're coming towards the end of the interview today and first of all, I want to thank you so much for what you've given us already, but you did mention one other thing at the beginning, which would be very useful I think to finish up on which technically we've put it the wrong way around, the cart before the horse, but it's all good.

That's the idea of how to look after your voice, how to warm it up so that when you're going out then you really need it, it's there for you ready to roll and do all these things that we've been talking about.

**Laura:** Certainly, I'm aware that we didn't do a warm-up exercise and I'm thinking that what we'll do is we'll do the main warm-up exercise as we work on the smaller chunk aspects of the voice.

**Igor:** Okay.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** So, on the next interview, but what I want you to notice is that in the time that we've been talking, my croak has disappeared.

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** That is because I have warmed up my voice just by using it. What I'd like to convey for this session is that going into an important seminar to teach or working with a client, when you haven't really been speaking beforehand is like running a race without warming up your muscles.

Your voice is part of your body, so the best thing you can do at the start of the day before you're going to do a training or work with clients is actually some singing would be wonderful, but it doesn't matter if its singing, it can be speaking. Run through from low right all the way up to high and then all the way down to low again.

Try some loud talking and some quiet talking so that you just actually use those muscles, because it's in the use of those muscles that you're going to be warming up the voice.

Next time we talk, Igor, I'm going to show you some good things to do with your posture, with your body, with your chin, with the actual sounds that are coming out so that you have a good five-minute routine that does this very efficiently, but I think that's actually for next time.

**Igor:** Fantastic. I'm definitely looking forward to the second part of the interview.

Let's recap the exercises for everyone that we've been covering today so that we're nicely laid out in terms of developing your voice, a simple warm-up is basically use your voice, use it intelligently so you're not straining it.

I realize the two things you just have there, which one is going through a range from very low to very high, from very quiet to very loud so you have the different directions the voice can go in and just a couple minutes to warm it up, especially if you're going to need your voice.

Then, of course, my favorites were the three big exercises. The one rhythm, which is listen to music and speak in the same rhythm whilst you're listening to it or as you're thinking about it. Then, you can actually have your own mental music library to develop different rhythms for different occasions, I guess.

1. Then we've got the idea of developing states and the key there is number one, use random content.
2. Number two use this contrasting of states going from one to the other.
3. Number three, of course, have something to aim for, something to go for so you can adjust yourself as you go along.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** Yes, so you have somebody else who's going to be listening, and sometimes more than one person, which we talked about.

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** We talked about that.

**Igor:** The other thing is before you even start doing these exercises, now that you've listened to this session with Igor and me.

1. Start by identifying what your strengths are.

I think that's a really important place to start when you're working with your voice. What are you already good at; because once you know what you're already good at something happens inside where you can build on it.

A lot of people come and tell me that they hate the sound of their voice and that's the wrong state to start the work in, so whatever you're going to do of what you've heard us doing today, start off by finding out what your strengths are.

- ✓ Thinking through, what do you do really easy?
- ✓ Are you really good at relaxing somebody?
- ✓ Are you really good at exciting somebody?
- ✓ Are you really good at sounding confident?

You know, every state has a value somewhere, so whatever it is you're good at identify it, value it, and then work out from there what would be a natural extra thing to add in so that you can just keep adding and keep adding on a basis of strengths.

**Igor:** I think that's a very wise approach in general and if nothing else, today's session has shown how quickly you can make some pretty important improvements in making some very simple adjustments to squeeze so much more life out that voice.

I encourage everyone to do that either, with these exercises or of course, if you're interested in doing voice coaching directly with Laura, you can get in touch with Laura by going to her website on [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com).

I think that's pretty much a good place to finish up today's session, unless there's anything you want to add from your side, Laura.

**Laura:** I just want to add that you'll be getting lots more interesting stuff from me and other trainers. I'm going to be running a teleclass on how you can help people be more fluent, people who have stammers. I specialize in helping stammerers become more fluent. I get lots of emails and calls from other hypnotists who want to be able to do a better job at helping people become more fluent.

**Igor:** Perfect.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** I'm running a teleclass on [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) so if any of your listeners are interested in joining us for those teleclasses, then that's something else I'd like them to know about.

**Igor:** Great. So [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) where you can actually hear Laura talk about another specialty that she has, plus you'll see other bigwigs in the NLP and hypnosis field, and for Laura's own personal work, [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com) is the website.

Laura, thank you so much for being with us on this call and sharing these insights with us I've really had a blast. I've learned some very important things. I am motivated, as we say, to start getting my iPod out now and just going through a selection of classics and going what states can I project into the world today and I'm looking forward to doing that now.

**Laura:** That's great.

**Igor:** Thank you for that.

We've been talking to Laura Spicer from [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski from [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com) and we will see all of you on the final part of this interview seminar series with Laura where she'll be sharing some more voice power secrets and we get to look forward to do that on the next session.

Until then, take care for now.

**Laura:** Thanks, Igor.

**Igor:** Thank you, Laura. Bye-bye.

**Laura:** Thanks, bye.

# Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

## Seminar 2 – Part 1

**Igor:** Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with Master Hypnotist Laura Spicer from [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com).

First, welcome back again, Laura.

**Laura:** Hi, Igor.

**Igor:** Thanks for coming back again.

We're in the third and final sort of session of these interviews, which is the second part of the whole seminar element.

I believe you have a very special session planned for us today whereas the last one was looking at the big pictures, the big things, the states, changing voices, rhythms and stuff like that that you can use as hypnotists become more influential and more powerful in terms of their speaking voice.

Today, you wanted to dive into the detail a bit more, if I understand you correctly, and look at some of the smaller chunks, the little details that can make a big difference in what we do.

Is that correct?

**Laura:** That is absolutely correct. The way I've been taught is to start with big chunks when I'm teaching and in fact when I'm doing anything, one of the things that I found when I'm working with people on the voice is that if you get to your state absolutely congruent and where you want it before you start, you are already halfway to having the voice that you want.

For me, that's the right way round, to start with a big chunk and then go into the minutia.

**Igor:** Perfect. Let's go to the minutia and see where they take us today, then.

- **What would you say are the most elements in terms of the details that people need to pay attention to get the biggest payoff in the shortest time as possible?**

**Laura:** Well, one of the lovely things about working with voice is, to me anyway, it's easy because there are only a limited number of aspects of the voice which make the big differences. So, if I just run you through the possible things that you can work on, then we can start working on each one of those.

**Igor:** Perfect.



## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** Let me just take you through the aspects of voice. First of all, there's your pitch range. Now your pitch range is how high and how low your voice goes and it's the differential between the highest and the lowest notes; it's that variety in the middle of that that counts.

The opposite of having wide pitch range is having a monotone delivery. I'm sure that you've heard some people who speak with a monotone delivery and as we were saying on the last call, Igor, there's a place for everything, just as there's an appropriate time for every possible kind of state.

I never talk about really negative states; some people think that anger or sadness or something like that are negative, and I say there's a place for those states and in the same way there's a place for monotone delivery, particularly when we're talking about hypnosis.

Sometimes when you're taking somebody into a trance, it's quite useful to have a very narrow pitch range and just kind of generally soothe them into a trance. Your pitch range, how wide it is and how narrow it is, is one very important aspect of the voice, and not just how wide and narrow it is but whether it's going up or whether it's coming down.

I call that your inflections.

**Igor:** Okay.

**Laura:** That's a subheading under pitch range, but it's absolutely key and we're definitely going to be talking a bit about that today and working with that, so pitch range and inflections.

**Igor:** Beautiful.

**Laura:** The next thing is your pace and how quickly or slowly you speak. One of the things about voice is that again, it's not that there is a right or a wrong pace. If you want to be interesting, the key in voice is variety. Therefore, having a varied use of pace is going to be useful to keep in somebody's interest.

If you're teaching or trying to give a presentation that is interesting and exciting, you're going to want a varied pace. But again, there are times when having a steady rhythm and steady pace is just the right thing to do, so that's another aspect.

**Igor:** Just so I can clarify in my own mind in terms of pace, when we talked about the idea of rhythm to a certain extent in the previous session that was an aspect of pace, is that right.

**Laura:** It is, yes.

**Igor:** Great.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** One of the things that I said to you yesterday, Igor, was that you have quite an excited, exciting way of speaking that's my first impression of you that it's going to be fun and part of that is because you speak pretty quick.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** You have been speaking pretty quickly, you don't always and that's a good thing. In fact, when you were doing your relaxing state yesterday you slowed your pace down which will be a very good way of helping somebody to go from excited and motivated down to more relaxed. So yes, pace is an aspect of voice and an important one.

The downside of a very fast pace and something that perhaps is worth highlighting for you, seeing as you want this as a coaching session, is that sometimes you do what I call elision.

Very occasionally, a word gets squashed and isn't quite as clear as it might be, and one of the things that I want to point out to you is that your surname is not a familiar sound to an English speaker and it took me about 10 goes to get it.

When you say this is Igor Ledochowski, your surname, you might want to slow that second name down just a bit when people don't know your name or haven't seen it written.

**Igor:** To give them a chance to absorb it mentally. I like that that's a good tip.

**Laura:** Exactly, yes, so that's pace.

The next one that is also part of pace as the subheading is pauses. Pauses are very powerful. I'm sure you know that as a hypnotist that sometimes leaving a space is a really good plan.

1. First of all, because it allows somebody time to process what you've just said.
2. Secondly and perhaps even more importantly, when you pause it adds gravitas or importance.

I once did a survey amongst charismatic speakers. I listened to a number of charismatic speakers to analyze what they're doing with their voices, to see whether they had anything in common and there was only one thing, and that was the use of pauses.

Charismatic speakers have all sorts of different trays, different vocal trays and styles but one of the things that all use is pauses, very artfully and very deliberately.

**Igor:** Okay.

**Laura:** That's definitely something to worth on.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Igor:** That makes a lot of sense, and I think the power of pausing seems like a small thing but is actually one of the big secrets that a lot of people don't appreciate fully.

**Laura:** Yes, it really is. When people are slightly stressed they are less inclined to pause. You have to feel very confident to pause and give people time to process what you've said. Again, being in a really confident, comfortable state is often very useful if you want to add gravitas and power to the way you're speaking.

**Igor:** Cool. So, we've got the idea of pitch range which has the inflection as part of our subheading.

- a. Then we've got the idea of pace which is the speed or the quickness or slowness of speech.
- b. Within that, we have the idea of elision which is a problem of speaking too quickly.
- c. And, of course, pausing, which is a great advantage especially when I come across more meaningful, more important, more serious and that sort of stuff.

**Laura:** Just to illustrate this and bring in the next aspect of voice which is volume, and again with volume there's no right or wrong volume. There's a whole spectrum of volume that we can use and still be audible. The variety is going to be what keeps it interesting, and the artful use of volume is key and we'll be talking about that a bit.

I want to tell you a quick story about something that happened when I was doing some corporate work. I was working with the chief executive of a very large PLC and a finance director. They couldn't work out why every time they presented their results to the city, the value of their shares went down and of course, that's not what they wanted.

**Igor:** Not a happy moment for a corporation.

**Laura:** No, not a happy moment. They came to me to say is it something that we're doing and I could hear straight away that it was something they were doing.

The chief executive had a very quiet voice. Now, because you can't hear your voice on the inside exactly the same as it's heard on the outside, inside his head he could hear his voice loud and clear but in fact, his voice wasn't getting out. It was very quiet, and the impression that that gave to the people who were listening to him was that he wasn't confident of his company.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** That's a really important note to take here because, when we listen to the way somebody delivers whatever it is they're delivering, the messages that come

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

across are often just about the way the person's feeling, so the state that they're in.

But, we often map across the judgment that we're making from judging this is just the person feeling nervous, tired or whatever it is, to this is how they feel about the content.

First of all, the reason you were speaking quietly was because it was loud in his head. The next thing was perhaps he wasn't a very confident presenter, but actually what people were doing as they heard it was mapping across that judgment and making the decision about him that he wasn't confident of the company. That's really important.

**Igor:** Of course, then they all go run away and sell their shares because if the CEO is having doubts, that's not a good time to be buying stuff.

**Laura:** Exactly. Now, just to add to that problem, the finance director, who is an incredibly intelligent man, he thought very fast and when he spoke this was a reflection of the fact that he thought very fast. He spoke very fast. He spoke as quickly as he was thinking.

However, whenever you're speaking, it's really important to remember that you're communicating. This isn't just about vomiting out what's inside your head and hoping that somebody else gets the message. It's about conveying the message that you are intending to convey.

So, when people were listening to this guy speaking very quickly, what it felt like to them was that he was trying to put something past them.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** If you hear me say that, and I've slowed down completely so that you get the importance of that, they felt it was trying to put something past them. Now, when you're hypnotizing somebody, sometimes that's exactly what you want to do.

You want to just say it so quickly that they don't have time to process that consciously. You just want to get that into their unconscious mind, and that may be a time that it's really useful to speak quite quickly and not to give them time to process consciously.

For all the things that we're talking about today, Igor, there are good sides to doing it every different way. The key is that we want to be artful communicators as hypnotists and NLP practitioners our communication needs to be artful.

**Igor:** The key to that is, understanding what the effects are of speeding up, slowing down, louder and quieter, lifting pitch, maintaining the same rhythm throughout, all these things and when you understand the impact that a particular way of doing something has.

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Even a range of soldiers in a particular line-up and say okay, this is the effect I want to have on people, so I will speed up a bit, I will go a little bit louder, but I will put pauses in here and over here I'll switch my inflection, I'll have more of a rollercoaster thing. Here I'll be a bit slower and that way you can project the right imagine tonally as well as with the words that you have so carefully chosen, right.

**Laura:** Absolutely. It's such a useful skill. You can choose the right words, but if you convey them in a way that doesn't convey the state, then regardless of how well you've chosen your words, it doesn't come across right.

Equally, on the other side, you could put somebody into a trance just telling them what you're going to buy for supper tonight if you have the right congruent state and you use the right tonality.

I can't emphasize strongly enough how important and how useful it is to be able to work with your voice. However, if you were thinking about it consciously all the time it would really make life hard.

**Igor:** I can't imagine that. You sit there thinking about now I'm supposed to slow down and you'll end up having this over-analysis and much like people who try and build rapport by being 100% precise in terms of where their hands are and featuring matching and all the rest of it that they become so hand-fisted that all the power of it just gets drained out, right.

**Laura:** Exactly. The idea of being an artful communicator and using your voice artfully and wonderfully is to learn about it and then let your unconscious deal with it.

It's great to do the practices of what we're working on today is important and I want you to work on it consciously but actually, when you're taking somebody into a trance or teaching somebody, then it's a good idea to just let your unconscious take care of it, because once you taught it what you want, then you can trust it to know.

**Igor:** It's like going to the gym working out and lifting heavy weights to create a stronger, healthier body, but once you finish the exercise in the gym you don't go carrying around a pack full of all those dumbbells, barbells and that sort of stuff; that's for the gym.

Once you leave the gym you get to enjoy your life and let things happen naturally. Your muscles are growing, so you'll naturally have better posture, you'll naturally be physically more able, so you don't need to bring along the whole gym anymore.

**Laura:** That's absolutely right. What might even be a closer analogy is if you learn how to pick up the weights so that you know to bend your knees and to do it in a particular way, when you are in your normal life and you quickly have to pick something heavy up, it should really be an automatic thing once you've taught your muscles how to do it.

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You won't have to stop and think now I must bend my knees because your knees will automatically bend. That's the idea of doing this voice work is to learn the stuff, practice it, take it fully on-board, then forget about and let your unconscious guide you.

**Igor:** Right. Rule of thumb is we'll do the exercises, we'll set a time aside to do the exercises, and when that time is over then you forget about it, get on with your daily life and the progression will be automatic, it will be natural because you're unconscious picks up the range that you're trying to get anyway.

**Laura:** It does. There's one other thing to add to that, which is that listening to yourself is a really good practice. One of the advantages of doing this voice work with me is that you are listening to yourself as you do the work; otherwise, you wouldn't be able to manipulate and change the way you're speaking.

Practicing listening to yourself is a really good thing to do. It amazes me, because perhaps for me it's a bit of a talent it happens automatically, but I'm always listening to my voice. It doesn't mean I don't ever make mistakes or get it wrong, but as soon as I have, I hear it.

There's a kind of red light comes on and go oops, I need to alter the way I say that so even in a trance when I've got somebody in a trance and of course I'm in a trance with them because I've gone there first, I will hear if I need to say something again and emphasize it more or slow it down or make it louder or quieter. There's a monitor going on at all times.

I'm often amazed at how many people do not listen to their own voice when they're speaking. It's important to do that when you are communicating.

**Igor:** For sure. It's part of the feedback loop, right.

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Igor:** It's how you know that something is happening. If you're ignorant in the first place you can't even begin to make an adjustment.

For me personally, the session we had yesterday really brought that out, just by the fact that you're aiming for something, just counting upwards and thinking of different states. Just by the fact there was any for a certain state and hearing my own voice coming out in a certain number and it wasn't quite where I wanted it to be yet, it kept me going down that line until suddenly it all clicked and it became easy.

So, I can totally see why you keep saying listen to your own voice, do the exercises, but then listen to your own voice again. It creates that balancing point, right.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

**Laura:** Absolutely. I hope that your listeners, as they're listening to this recording with us, Igor, will also start practicing more and more, listening to their own voice and getting that feedback loop working because it's absolutely key.

When people sing, they wouldn't be able to sing in tune if they weren't listening to their own voice. It's automatic when you sing and you're aiming for a particular note to be listening to that so you can adjust and then if you haven't quite hit the note you can slide into it.

If you listen to music after you've been doing these sessions with me, you'll hear singers doing that a lot of the time. They don't necessarily always hit exactly the note exactly the way they want it, but very quickly they will slide into it and it sounds just great. It sounds fine and it doesn't matter if you don't get it immediately perfect. You can always adjust as you go along.

**Igor:** In fact, I read a very interesting report recently that there is a thing that's called 'molting' in the music industry. When they record a song, they'll often record the same song five to seven times and then layer the different tracks on top of each other.

What happens is because each time they sing the song the singer will make a slight mistake here or there or somewhere else, and adding those little mistakes, those little nuances together in like a layer gives the voice such richness so it doesn't sound like some digital, heartless piece of sound it becomes richer and more human.

So those very mistakes, which are of course, correct because they're going back to the medium each time, those mistakes are what makes the voice more real, more human, more approachable or warmer, I guess. It's not a mistake to make a mistake it's just a good thing to keep an eye out for how far it goes before you correct it.

**Laura:** That's right. Or, even keep an ear out, which might work even better.

**Igor:** You can clearly see where I am standing in terms of my preference.

**Laura:** I can clearly see where you're standing, definitely. That's great. Actually, that's the next thing I want to come on to you, so thank you very much for that queue, because the next thing I want to talk about is your posture.

Now, although that isn't specifically an auditory skill, it makes a huge difference to how your voice sounds because your voice is part of your body after all. Yesterday, when we were doing the other recording we were certainly talking about your state and the sort of psychology of it all, but it's in your body, it's a part of your body and how you're using your body absolutely affects the sound.

So, tell me something Igor, as we're working now on listening and I can't see you; are you standing or sitting?

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**Igor:** I'm sitting.

**Laura:** Okay, me too. Let's both try standing up and hearing if that makes a difference. So, I'm going to stand up now.

**Igor:** Okay, give me a second.

**Laura:** Yes.

**Igor:** I'm standing as well now.

**Laura:** I'm standing up as well and one of the things that's changed it immediately made my voice hoarse, is that I've changed the position of my head so that I'm still facing the microphone but I'm standing up.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** Where you hold your chin, how your shoulders are placed, whether you're standing or sitting, whether your legs are crossed, whether there's any tension ... some people think that they can hide tension by having it in their toes or their buttocks even, but actually all of that makes a difference.

I'm going to sit down again now.

**Igor:** And, I'm going to follow suit.

**Laura:** Now, the way we're sitting is going to make a difference. If our spine is erect and supported that's going to make a difference or if we're hunched over it's going to make a difference.

One of things we can do a little work on is the posture and the difference that makes because it's often key. Maybe you've got your client sitting down and you're standing up. Maybe you're standing on a stage teaching and looking down at the audience.

These things are going to affect the richness of your voice. Plus, it's also going to affect how tired your voice gets and how quickly. If you're teaching all day, it's definitely something to bear in mind, so that's one thing.

The other thing about the muscles and your body is how much energy— this is another aspect of the voice— you're using to speak and where it's focused.

I'm going to give you a demonstration of somebody who isn't using very much energy with the muscles in their mouth and I want you to hear the difference when I lower the amount of actual energy that I'm using.

I know my volume went down, but even if I raise my volume, which is breath energy and keep the energy low in my mouth, you can hear the difference, can't you?



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**Igor:** Absolutely. It sounds like your mouth is slightly paralyzed like either you're on something or your slurring your speech ever so slightly. You can hear the looseness in your mouth, shall I put it that way.

**Laura:** Yes. The amount of energy that people use is varied. One of the reasons you sound excited and as if we're about to have some fun is that naturally one of your strengths, Igor, is that you have plenty muscle use in your mouth. You're using your jaw, you're using your tongue and you're using your breath a lot compared to some other people.

Does it make sense?

**Igor:** Right, that makes sense.

**Laura:** It doesn't surprise you.

**Igor:** No, it doesn't. Just to give you background in terms of myself, when I was very young I used to be very shy and mumble a lot. Then I spent probably a good 10 years doing something about that, and for me the big one was train the voice.

There's an old story about an orator in Rome named Cicero, who was probably one of the greatest public speaker definitely of his age; might be of all time. He was so persuasive, so influential that even Caesar said that he's not afraid of any other man in the empire except for Cicero, because Cicero could sway crowds.

There's a great story about it that when he was young, he was sent off by his parents. He was a sickly child, so he was sent off to one of the Greek islands to learn oratory, and the classic exercise he was given by his oratory teacher was to stick pebbles in his mouth and speak.

He was to go down to the beach and out shout the sea, so he had to present things in the middle of the ocean with the waves crashing around him to create more power in his voice.

That actually struck me, as a thing and I knew of course that no one was hearing me. Literally, it would be to the point where my father would send me out to get a sandwich during a lunch break or something and I'd be terrified to do it because I knew the sandwich man would ask me like five times to repeat myself. I thought this is it I'm going to change this.

I ended up getting a pillow and using that as a way of speaking through it, to literally shout through it and that developed a much more powerful voice. It pushes the air out more, so I'm glad you noticed it because there was of effort involved.

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**Laura:** It certainly paid dividends because you're very clear and you're using lots of energy in your mouth, I mean. You can use even more and you can use less and there are times; for example, if you were speaking to me like this and putting me in a trance it would be difficult to go into a very relaxed state because you're using loads of mouth energy, and that's fantastic for what we're doing now.

Yesterday, when I asked you to relax, you automatically started... you slowed down but you also used less energy in your jaw and your tongue which gave my unconscious the knowledge that it was time to start using my energy differently.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** The way you use your energy is absolutely key. One of the things that I want to talk about today is about rapport because it's a very powerful tool for creating rapport.

I know there's been a lot of talk about mirroring, matching and all of that but that's very obvious and sometimes it comes across incredibly patronizing. If your client crosses their leg then you cross yours and then they move to the left and you move to the left ...

**Igor:** You've just moved from matching to mimicking and mimicking is responded to typically with a slap across the face.

**Laura:** Absolutely. And, the other thing is that people notice what they see more than they notice what's going on in the voice.

**Igor:** That makes a lot of sense, which is one of the reasons why we have the whole voice creating an atmosphere that the unconscious mind responds to whilst the conscious mind is often unaware.

I remember back in language classes how many people literally cannot hear the difference between saying one word this way or saying the other word the other way. You're presenting the same things, and they will go I don't get it – it sounds exactly the same to me.

**Laura:** Yes. Sometimes what is necessary then is to help them get their mouth into the shape that's going to make the difference.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** I remember when I was being taught French and they wanted to teach me how to say that “eu” sound. At first I couldn't make it at all until they said you have to say “e” but in your mouth the shaping as if you're saying “oo” and when you say “eu” with the e-e-e sound but with your lips in the “oo” shape, out comes the right sound.

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Suddenly, I could make the sound, I could hear it, and it became very easy for me. Sometimes you just need to know the physiology of a sound.

**Igor:** It's funny you should say that, because that's something I also picked up. I remember there is a famous French film that came out when I was in school still learning French. You may have heard of it; Cyrano de Bergerac was the film that made Girard de Pardieu a famous star all over the world, as he was already famous in France.

I love that film because it had a rhythm and sound that was very powerful. Later I worked out part of the reason for that is that the dialogue is all entirely in rhyming couplets, which makes for a very powerful rhythm, but that's another side to the story.

What I ended up doing then, just for fun than anything else, is I would mimic the lead character. I would do the crazy strange gestures and the whole expansive things. My mouth would turn into this kind of extra "oo" sort of shape. I would literally create a caricature of that character just because I liked him so much, and my grades in terms of at least the oral speaking French, went through the roof.

It wasn't even intended. I was just doing it for fun because I liked the guy. So, my grades went through the roof because my pronunciation improved, the rhythm and pacing improved, and I can't put my hand on my heart on this, but I'm pretty sure that my retention of the vocabulary improved as well but that might just be a figment of my imagination.

**Laura:** Actually, one of the most effective ways to learn languages I believe is before you start changing the vocabulary and learning how to speak the language is to spend time in the state of somebody whose natural language is the one you're trying to learn and doing the accent in your own language.

**Igor:** I agree.

**Laura:** My French isn't that good by my accent is really good. To begin with, I can just go into a French accent now speaking to you even though I am speaking English. For me this is the best way to learn a language is first of all, to learn how they speak when they speak your own language because then you get the shapes of your mouth.

**Igor:** You start with the sounds, the rhythms and the gestures. I like your version as well, where for me it was usually get the gestures first because the gestures create a whole body, so it changes your breathing and your mindset.

If I speak Italian, you think I speak fast now you haven't heard me when I'm doing Italian or Spanish. It's a totally different mindset as well and I feel myself switching, so I totally agree. The last thing that you pay attention to is the thing that most schools try and focus on most, which is the grammar and the vocabulary. I think it's totally the horse before the cart type of scenario.

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**Laura:** Me too and remember again, if you go back to how babies learn language in the first place and how you get your voice in the first place, it's all about listening and watching the people around you, and learning the state, the shapes and the general tunes.

The person who I've heard who was a non-English speaker who spoke the most perfect English I have ever heard told me that the first thing she did was to come over to this country and spend three months not even attempting to understand what was being said, just learning the tunes, the shapes and, as you say, the way to use her body and to hear all the tonality behind the language before she even started learning how to speak it and it paid dividends.

**Igor:** I think that's also a very important part, going slightly off-topic in terms of hypnosis, the idea of modeling and becoming an excellent hypnotist. That reminds me a bit of how when I first started learning Ericksonian hypnosis I did exactly the same thing.

I watched hours of video tapes of Erickson, whatever I could get my hands on in five-minute clips or whatever and like many people who have done this before me, I'd sit there and adopt the same posture. I literally would be hunched over, my arm would be kind of in a crippled position on my lap and I'd carry out that weird sort of drawl effect, as best I could mimic it anyway, and developed my Erickson voice.

My Erickson voice sounded very bizarre especially, because I had kind of an English accent, but it didn't matter because once it went to that phase of trying to be like Erickson, then I learned how to drop that and keep the elements that were congruent with my own voice and my own personality.

Then eventually I developed my own style, which was still very Ericksonian in many ways but that initially training phrase really I think kick-started the whole process for me. I totally get this idea of you start with the sounds, the shapes and the posture first, which creates the foundation and scenery which then becomes very easy to fill in with the content.

**Laura:** Absolutely. As you say, you can do this for lots of other reasons but it very much works with a voice. So, if you check out the people whose voices you really like and just do your version or imitation of them, the thing that comes through will stand you in good stead.

You're not supposed to end up really sounding like them, but you take on some of their sound, which then enhances what you can do yourself. Fantastic!

**Igor:** The old classic, you start mimicking in order to get something but you're not doing it to stay in mimic, you're doing to develop something else and get away from that as soon as possible.

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**Laura:** Yes and remembering that that is how babies learn to speak. They mimic their parents. That's how you get the voice you've got now; you mimicked your parents and you got your physiology behind it also so it's going to sound different.

Babies don't have deep voices they have little high voices, but they're mimicking their parents and then, when you go to school in order to enter into rapport with your school friends and be one of the gang you also take on some of the characteristics, the verbal vocal characteristics of the people at school.

That combination starts to form your own sound so now you can be more deliberate about it, pick the people whose voices you like, listen to and imitate them a lot and then take on some of what they have to make it your own.

**Igor:** Perfect. Now that we're on the idea of making your own, what can I, or someone in this position now do to start creating their own voice or evolving their own voice.

### ➤ What are some good starting tips?

**Laura:** We've certainly already talked about finding out what your strengths are and where you've got good feedback in the past, because they're already in place.

What is invaluable for everybody to have, regardless of how fantastically you already speak or how dreadful you sound currently, the first thing that everybody needs is a good, quick vocal warm-up routine.

Let me take you through one of those, Igor.

**Igor:** That would be excellent.

**Laura:** As I've been thinking about what we're going to do because clearly there is a lot you could be doing.

I could take you through a routine that would take the next 45 minutes, but I think what would be more useful for everybody is to have something that takes only a few minutes to do that you can do just before you walk onto the stage to teach or just before you go into your clinic environment to work with clients; something that takes just three or four minutes and that will warm up all the muscles properly so that–

- a. You don't strain your voice, and
- b. It sounds its richest, because everybody has a richness and resonant voice, but it needs to be warmed up in order for that to express itself fully.

I'm going to take you through that, Igor.

**Igor:** That sounds awesome. I like that a lot.

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**Laura:** Excellent. You're going to need two hands for the first bit so I don't know whether you're holding anything but if you are, put it down.

**Igor:** No, not holding anything.

**Laura:** Good. If you're seated then sit up nice and tall but with a relaxed posture. We're looking for relaxation in the muscles. I want you to avoid that kind of stretchy thing of sitting up really tall like they used to make us do at school; this is just relaxed but upright.

If anybody who is listening is standing- actually, I have heard it said- and I would say this has a lot of truth in it that if you're talking for a long time it's much easier on your vocal mechanism to be standing. That's why it's good when you're teaching at least to do some of the teaching standing. It puts less of a strain on the breathing.

Remember that there is no voice without breath. The sound waves are carried on the out breath. The sound waves ride on the airwaves that's why they say in space nobody can hear you scream. There's no air in space, so even if you're making sound it can't travel.

Your sound travels out on your airwaves so that's why sitting up straight is a good plan because it allows your lungs to be able to expand fully and easily. Sitting up straight, the first thing I want you to do is to give your shoulders a massage. Do this for yourself now.

You can just put your hands back and just give your shoulders a good rub to help bring the blood circulation into them. A lot of people suffer from getting tension in their shoulders if they're having a stressful time. You have 33 muscles that feed into your vocal tract and a lot of them, in fact, they're all in the upper part of the chest and across your shoulders so having good, flexible relaxed shoulders is very good.

In fact, this one organization that I work for who actually sent in free of charge somebody to do head and neck massages for the people who are going to be giving important presentations because, when your shoulders and neck are suitable relaxed and warmed up, it's very helpful, so giving your shoulders a quick massage.

**Igor:** Now you tell me this. I wish you had told me this before, we could have sent over to Thailand and we could have had a much more pleasant conversation then.

**Laura:** I tell you what, if you're in Thailand there are plenty of massages to be had there; and I mean the neck and shoulder variety, Igor.

**Igor:** Well I would hope so as well. Okay, I've been massaging my shoulders and they feel loose. I've been doing a couple of like neck scrunches so I'm lifting my shoulders up to my ears as well, tensing and then releasing it.

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**Laura:** The next thing is once your shoulders are feeling nice and warm and loose, what I want you to do is exactly what you just imaged I would want you to do which is to bring your shoulders right up to your ears and then drop them.

As you bring them up take an in breath and then drop them with a sigh. That's it do that a couple of times, up and down, one more time, up and down; great.

**Igor:** Okay, good.

**Laura:** Now I want you to ... you could do that.

**Igor:** Done that, that's nice.

**Laura:** Okay, good. Now, push your shoulders down even further then they would normally be so you're really stretching your neck, pushing your shoulders down and hold them down for a few seconds and then relax them back up to comfortable. You will feel that when you've done that, your neck is a little bit longer.

**Igor:** I'm beginning to feel that now.

**Laura:** Good. Imagine that there's a string coming out the top of the crown of your head pulling you up a little bit longer towards the ceiling, so that you feel your neck stretch, but it should be stretching comfortably and in a relaxed way.

**Igor:** Got it.

**Laura:** So now that your neck is nice and relaxed, let's drop it forward, so you drop your chin down towards your chest and stretch the back of it a little so you feel the stretch at the back just a bit. Hold it there for a few seconds and then come back up to straight.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** Then, tip your head to one side so that your ear is over your shoulder, but again this is the no pain, know gain, right. This has got to be gentle and easy, your neck is something that you need to take care of.

You just feel the stretch just slightly on the long side of your neck as you drop your head towards one shoulder, then come back up to center and drop it over the other shoulder so that you can feel a little stretch and come back up.

**Igor:** Very nice.

**Laura:** Then again, I want you to reach back and just give the top of your shoulders and up the back of your neck a little massage so the blood is flowing and you feel nice and flexible there.

**Igor:** Lovely, yes.

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**Laura:** Good. In a moment we're going to be doing some breathing together because that's absolutely key. But, before we do that when you speak what happens is the air comes up over your vocal tract and that makes the –ah– sound.

But, in order to shape the words and have an easy as possible a time to get some clarity and precision, you have to use your jaw and your tongue and your lips to shape the sounds.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** I want you to find your jaw joints and the best way to do that is to put your thumbs just in front of your ears on your cheeks right back towards your ears, then open and close your mouth a couple of times and you'll feel where the joint is it's a ball and socket joint. Just see if you can find it with your fingers.

**Igor:** Yes, I've got it.

**Laura:** Got it, right back towards your ears.

**Igor:** Yes, it kind of gets tense then loosens as I open and close my mouth; there's a little bump that comes up.

**Laura:** What I want you to do is give that a good rub again to get the blood flowing in that area. So you give your jaw joint a good massage, gentle but strong, and then as you continue to hold your hands there to support your jaw, I want you to imagine that you're chewing a large piece of chewing gum and do a chewing motion.

It's important to get that chewing motion rather than a side-to-side motion. It's a kind of rounded shape and I want you to press on your jaw joint as you do it to support it. Now, if anybody is doing this and hear a big clunk I want them to stop immediately. If you hear little clicks that's okay, but big clunks are definitely off the map. We want just a nice, easy chewing.

Try to get as big a chewing motion as you can. The bigger you can chew without any clunks and preferably without any clicks the better. If you get a tiny odd little click that's okay that's just a clearing thing. Really chewing now, like a cow chewing the cud.

**Igor:** It's a strange motion but it's kind of nice. I can enjoy this, yes.

**Laura:** Yes. Then, I want you to have a really big yawn and a stretch, Igor. When you yawn it doesn't matter if it's artificial but have a big yawn because as you yawn and really let your mouth open wide that's it, there you go ...

**Igor:** Oh, that's kind of nice.

**Laura:** It's good, isn't it? When you open your mouth really wide and do a good yawn, what happens is the back of your tongue goes down the back of your throat to



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allow more oxygen in and it's the one movement that truly exercises the back of the tongue as well as oxygenating your system.

We're going to do that again. This time when you do it I want you also to have a really good stretch and just like you did before make a big noise as you come out of the yawn.

**Igor:** I like this it's getting me ready for bed, almost.

**Laura:** Well, actually we're going to energize you too in a minute.

**Igor:** Okay.

**Laura:** Relaxing and energized. The combination of being relaxed and energized is one of the best ways to get the best sound from yourself. That's great. Now, now that your jaw is open and relaxed, let's just count up to five but with a really silly, exaggerated open jaw movement. It's going to sound one, two, three, four, five.

**Igor:** Got it. One, two, three, four, five- that's about as wide as I can get my mouth.

**Laura:** Okay, that's great.

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### Seminar 2 – Part 2

**Laura:** Now we're going to energize the lips. First of all, give them a good rub to get the blood circulating in them so you just rub your lips with your hands. Ladies who wear lipstick, it's going to come off at this point so you'll need to replenish afterwards.

**Igor:** Okay.

**Laura:** Now we're going to do silly baby sounds so you know these sounds (like a horse blowing).

**Igor:** That's interesting.

**Laura:** Yes.

**Igor:** I can't quite do that one.

**Laura:** Now let me tell you, first of all, lick your lips and second of all, the more you relax your lips, the easier it gets. Take a second to relax your lips, lick them, and then see how close to my sound you can get (makes the sound).

**Igor:** (Makes the sound) - Nope, not quite.

**Laura:** Okay that's something to practice. I won't wait while you achieve that right now.

**Igor:** Fair enough.

**Laura:** When you're doing your warm-up routines when we're offline, that's something to aim for that so you can get that (horse sound) and the more you relax the easier it gets.

Again, you'll have to do the his offline because we're not quite getting you there right now, but do it with some sound as well so you get (making sound), as well as (making horse sound). You want to have one go?

**Igor:** I need to get the lip thing going a bit more. I'm not much of a trumpet player just now.

**Laura:** Just yet, but the more you practice, the better you get at it.

What that tells me is at the moment your lips are slightly tense. That's something to work on, Igor, for you. As I said to you earlier you have fantastic clarity, you may be achieving some of that by a little tension and it would be great to get that clarity and relaxation together.

**Igor:** Definitely.

**Laura:** That's an exercise worth working on for you.

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Now, what I want you to do to get the resonance working is to hum. (Humming sound here), and as you do it you should feel a buzz in your lips.

**Igor:** (Humming here).

**Laura:** Can you feel a buzz?

**Igor:** I can feel a buzz.

**Laura:** Fantastic. Actually, I don't know whether your ears are quite as tuned to it as mine are, but I can already hear that your resonance is starting to sound more resonant. That's great.

Now, we're going to get the muscles of your mouth working well, so we're going to say some silly words, but these words are all designed for different parts of your tongue.

Just before we start those, run your tongue around your gums inside your lips all the way around the outside, all the way around behind your teeth and then poke your tongue first into one cheek and then the other cheek so you're stretching each side of the tongue a little bit. Push your cheek out with your tongue and the other side. Fabulous.

Now, repeat after me (pe ti ca)

**Igor:** (Pe ti ca)

**Laura:** Great. Sink-sink- sink.

**Igor:** Sink-sink- sink.

**Laura:** Pink- pink- pink.

**Igor:** Pink- pink- pink.

**Laura:** Moo- moo- moo.

**Igor:** Moo- moo- moo.

**Laura:** Me-me – and really stretch your lips – me.

**Igor:** Me-me- me.

**Laura:** Ma...really open your mouth... ma- ma- ma.

**Igor:** Ma- ma- ma.

**Laura:** Me- ma- mo- moo.

**Igor:** Me- ma- mo- moo.

**Laura:** (Pe ti ca)

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**Igor:** (Pe ti ca)

**Laura:** Sink-sink- sink.

**Igor:** Sink-sink- sink.

**Laura:** Fantastic! Now, for a final bit of warm-up, I'm going to do something I'm going to have to be careful not to hit the microphone, so will you. I don't know if you read Tarzan when you were a child, but I certainly did. I loved Tarzan.

**Igor:** A fine thing.

**Laura:** When he had the victory of whatever it was he'd been victorious about he would beat his chest like a gorilla. What I want you to do is I want you to cup your hands and give your chest a good beat. Excellent.

Can you make a sound when you do it so it sounds like a gorilla?

**Igor:** Ahhhh...

**Laura:** Wonderful. Now, in your richest most resonant tones using your jaw, letting your mouth open and keeping your lips relaxed, keeping your spine upright and relaxed, you can say something like, "Now I've done my exercises and my muscles are warm."

**Igor:** Now I've done my exercises and my muscles are warm.

**Laura:** I don't know if you can hear it, Igor, but I can hear it and I know that your listeners will hear it – the resonance is double.

**Igor:** Wonderful.

**Laura:** It sounds wonderful; can you feel it?

**Igor:** I definitely can. I can feel a nice little buzzing from working, slapping my chest. My mouth feels a lot looser and lighter. It's actually a lot easier to speak right now. Yes, I definitely feel a general lightness in terms of the mouth and the neck and the chest area.

**Laura:** Excellent. Now we're going to move on to the last little bit of this warm-up routine, which is to get your breathing nice and low down in your body.

What I want you to do is to put your hands about where your diaphragm is, so just below, well for a woman it would be below the bra line, but just below your chest and on your diaphragm, maybe reaching down as far as your navel. With your hands there what I want you to do is to blow all the air out of your lungs.

Right to the end of your breath, gently, but all the way out until you have the very last breath out and then, when you've got all the air out just relax the muscles and the air will come back in.

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**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** Feel that? Let's do that once more. You breathe all the air out right to the end of your breathing.

Good man. Relax the muscles and let the air back in. Wonderful. Then just make a sound on that out breath as you squeeze the muscles again. Let's go ahhhh...right to the end of your breath.

**Igor:** Ahhhh ...

**Laura:** Lovely. Then in again, that's wonderful.

That's really the best warm-up routine you can do in a few moments that will warm up all the muscles and get you ready for a day of talking. If you want a lunch break, you can always do it again just to open up the resonance even more. I recommend that as a way to start any working day.

**Igor:** I like that. I actually do feel a lot lighter and a little more animated. There's a naturalness to it, so even if you don't do a lot of talking just from the pure de-stressing, it's actually a very pleasant feeling. It's a nice little warm-up. It was only about 10 minutes including instructions so it doesn't take very long at all.

**Laura:** In fact, if I wasn't speaking to you as you were doing it and you were just running it through you can definitely get a routine like that, down to about three or four minutes, that's very well spent.

**Igor:** For sure.

**Laura:** I recommend doing something like that. Okay, good.

Now, we we're talking about the different aspects of voice so there's the pace and pause. There's the volume and there's the inflection an emphasis. There are all sorts of different aspects to voice, but the lovely thing as I was saying is that there aren't that many. You can actually work on every single aspect of the voice in a short length of time to get them all working for you.

Let's just start off doing a little bit of work on inflections. Of all the different aspects of voice, getting your inflections right will make a huge difference to whether you sound authoritative, confident, unsure or as if you're asking a genuine question.

The inflections are, what let's the other person know when you finished speaking whether you've actually finished and you've made a definite statement or given a command or whether you're actually asking them to do something inside or outside.

When my voice comes up at the end, it sounds like something more has to come. That's correct, isn't it?

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**Igor:** Absolutely. It makes me feel like I should respond now. Maybe she's asking me something. I feel like I need to step in.

**Laura:** When my voice comes down, it has a completely different effect, doesn't it.

**Igor:** For sure. It feels more definite. It feels more like, I'm going to wait and let you carry on. You haven't passed the metaphorical ball over to me yet; it's still in your court.

**Laura:** That's right. Most people probably know that that is the case and by the way, that is true in every language that I've come across. It's certainly true in all the common languages.

I've had people say to me that's not true in German, but it is and I have absolutely been meticulous in my research here, that if your voice drops down it sounds like a command or a statement, and if it comes up it sounds like you're opening the way for something more to come, either from you or from the other person.

Where this is really important for a hypnotist is that we naturally make our voice come up when we're going to say something more. However, it's often important to drop your voice down because you actually want to give the command. I'll give you a simple, straightforward example for when you're introducing yourself.

Many people will say, for example, hi, my name is Laura Spicer and today I'm going to do X, Y, Z and I've heard you do this, Igor, so this is for you. Listen to how different it sounds when I say my name is Laura Spicer and I'm blah- blah- blah. I've heard you use that good dropping down inflection and it makes a huge difference.

Listen again. My name is Laura Spicer and today we're going to be working with your voice. Now, here's the other version. My name is Laura Spicer and today we're going to be working with your voice.

Which one sounds like I'm more authoritative, confident and I'm definitely going to take control?

**Igor:** Hands down the second one.

**Laura:** Now I'm going to say something else. Which one sounds like I'm more confident, and I'm going to take control? Every time, when you hear the rising inflection what happens is it opens up the listener. When you hear the falling inflection it means that the speaker knows what they're talking about when they're telling you.

Even though it seems incredibly basic to me when you're telling somebody to relax your voice has got to drop down. Now it's time to relax, so even if you're going to say and then do something else, so in a moment I want you to relax

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and close your eyes. It's much better if you say, in a moment you're going to relax and close your eyes, so that you hear each phrase separately.

**Igor:** I really like that because I think it's relatively common for people to try and finish their sentences nowadays by going down, especially when you emphasize that they have command, tone down and so on.

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Igor:** You can sit there and you can relax. We make an emphasis of this, but what I really like about what you just said and I haven't really thought about it as clearly as you just said it is that when people are mid-sentence and there's more to come, they'll often lift their tonality because it's a rollercoaster of the word, but that's the wrong time to pause.

They should either, bring the tonality down or pause or another word. It will be more like and you can relax whilst you're sitting there versus ...

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Igor:** ... and you can relax whilst you're sitting there.

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Igor:** It takes them in a very different place.

**Laura:** It really does. The way to think about it, to make it easy on yourself is to hear them as separate phrases so that you plan to drop your tonality at the end of each phrase rather than at the end of the full paragraph or sentence.

Even if you've got more to come, each of these commands is separate phrase and then it will be much easier to let your voice drop down with each instruction, with each command so that every time your voice comes down, the other person feels like relaxing more, got it?

**Igor:** I understand that. Now, the other interesting thing is that something like this will also automatically help you to embed your suggestions, because you're now playing with pitch that's going to be a particular pattern developing and each phrase tends to have the verb, the element, and then the doing part towards the end anyway.

You're going to have the consistent downward command inflection at the point when the actual "suggestion" is going to be there anyway. In doing so, you've got lots of different bases covered. You sound surer. You sound more authoritative. There is a rhythm going on that people can pick up on and, of course, there's the fact that you've now turned most of your suggestions into imbedded suggestions as well as regular suggestions all at the same time.

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**Laura:** Absolutely and it's much easier to mark out tonally what you want the person to do. I can't tell you how much easier it makes it on the listener if you are expressing this way through your voice.

As I said to your earlier, I could relax somebody just reading them my shopping list because if you go into the right state and use those downward inflections, your muscles are energized by also relaxed.

Then, whether I'm saying to you apples and oranges, let's get some olives and let's remember the bread and some butter. It doesn't matter what you're saying, as you're saying it from the right state and with your body all nicely tuned up and plenty of resonance, you'll get the state easy in your client or listeners, and it's very useful.

That's a good place to start.

**Igor:** I do really like that. It's very simple, yet has a big impact if you're doing this consistently.

I found myself, by the way, as I was doing that as we just did this, I'm finding myself now automatically listening to my own phrases more. For example, I notice my upward inflection on the more, thinking, do I want an upper inflection there which, of course, I do now because that was a question.

Or, do I want it to be a downward inflection, do I want to be surer, even though I'm still thinking about what it is I might be saying?

**Laura:** That's absolutely right. By the way, you're sounding much clearer, you have slightly slowed down and we're talking about relaxing so that's lovely.

Igor, I think even though I don't know you, I think that you've got a good ear because you're picking up what I'm saying very easy and that's wonderful. For your listeners who perhaps if they have any difficulty working out what's an upward or a downward inflection, which to you and me may sound strange but I can assure you a lot of people have trouble with this.

**Igor:** I can understand that.

**Laura:** Yes. If you want to work on really imbedding this in your body it's sometimes easy if you lift up your arms when you're coming up and drop them when you're coming down so that your arms, so that you can do it kinesthetically as well.

The practice for this, if anybody isn't totally sure about the sound they're making, is to go ahhhh as you lift up your arms and ahhhh as you drop your arms down.

If you do that five or six times and then add in the actual content, so you start off ahhhh and drop them down as you go ahhhh and do that four or five times. Then, I always using counting or the letters of the alphabet, so once you've got that then you can go one, two, three, four, five; six, seven, eight, nine, ten so



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that you really get used to the feeling and kinesthetics of making your inflections come up and go down.

Then, as a practice for anybody that needs to practice this more, the best thing to do is to choose out those lovely, juicy phrases that you use when you're hypnotizing somebody, which like we were just saying now I want you to relax completely or whatever it is, and you just make sure that you've got that inflection right.

And, as always with the voice, if you're in any doubt at all or even if you're not actually getting feedback from somebody else, ask them which feels more relaxing and you'll soon learn how to do it and get the result.

I can't emphasize strongly enough how important it is to get feedback when you're working with a voice, because you can't hear your voice on the inside the same as on the outside, so to get somebody else there and just try stuff out.

Which makes you feel more relaxed or which makes you feel more energized, try stuff out and get the responses and then imbed this in your physiology because that will stand you in good stead later on.

**Igor:** I can see that being particularly important in front of a person because now you don't just have the tonality elements, but you also have the performance elements.

It's something people don't realize sometimes, that when there's another human being in front of you, in other words, you're under pressure if even if it's self-generated pressure it's a different ball game and you want that, because that will prepare you for doing it in the live environment with a real client, so to speak.

**Laura:** Yes, and apart from the actual pressure it changes the way you think about something when you are thinking in terms of somebody else perceiving you.

I often say to clients when I am putting them into wonderful states and imagine that as I'm looking at you now I can see it coming out of you so that they actually do that third position and imagine in second position, actually looking back at themselves because it actually gets the state working more when they imagine that.

It's the same with a voice. If you imagine or preferably have somebody there, then you will find that you are able to do things even more strongly, so I recommend that.

Let's take this pitch thing a little bit further, because we've been talking about how you make your voice go up or down. A lot of people come to me and say that they know they sound monotonous and as I've said to you a few times already, Igor, there's a place for everything.

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There are times when a monotonous voice may be what you want. Mostly, it's more useful to be able to be expressive and, in order to, sound expressive and to really express and convey the content fully, it's great if your voice can stretch up a bit and down a bit around the middle point of it. In a way that's the same exercise we've been doing just now to get control over it.

Anybody that thinks they may have a narrow pitch range or a monotonous delivery, by doing those siren sounds is a great exercise. Let's just do that together, Igor. Let's start your lowest note, whatever that is for you, and let's just slide all the way up to our highest note. (Making sounds)

**Igor:** (Making sounds up the pitch scale)

**Laura:** That's right; and all the way down again. Let's just do that two or three times.

**Igor:** (Making sounds up the pitch scale)

**Laura:** Take a breath and do it again.

**Igor:** (Making sounds up the pitch scale)

**Laura:** Wonderful.

**Igor:** It's just as well that we're doing this virtually because having seeing the 1,000 or 2,000 people who are going to be listening to this afterwards, it would be very interesting to sit in an actual audience room and doing this in front of everyone live. So, I'm very glad we have the privacy of anonymity here to do the slightly wackier exercises.

**Laura:** I can tell you that when I'm training people person-to-person and especially in groups, sometimes they get a bit of a fright because these exercises make us look a little bit silly but mind you, I'll tell you what, I think sometimes it's a good thing to look silly in front of people.

**Igor:** For sure.

**Laura:** It just takes away all that stuff. I say to people did I forget to warn you when you came into my course that there were going to be moments when I was going to make you look utterly silly?

I tell you what, it makes people feel playful and when you feel playful, it helps to get a lot more out of your voice. Playful voices are usually much more fun. There were some things going on in the background here that we don't even need to discuss, but it definitely helps open the voice up to be a bit silly and playful.

**Igor:** For sure. I can see that.

**Laura:** That is how to stretch your pitch range.

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So, if you feel that you have a narrow pitch range you just stretch it and you do it a little more every day, go from low to high and high to low because it's a big like stretching an elastic band. Every time you stretch it you're exercising the full range of your vocal cords.

Do it gently. Do it with plenty of breath, so you avoid any strain on your voice, but doing that on a daily basis will give you a much wider pitch range.

**Igor:** Just to add something in terms of that pitch range, because the exercise might seem silly, everyone's listening there thinking oh, I'm not sure I can do that it's a bit of a silly exercise. I think that's part of the point because one of the reasons people cut out the extremes on their ranges is because usually there's an emotional thing that says oh, we can't go that far that's silly.

Therefore, by actually taking themselves to this point of emotional discomfort, not necessarily where you're panicking but where you're a little bit like oh, I'm not sure if I can go quite this high or quite this low, you're actually exercising your emotions at the same time.

By the time you've done this two to five months' time it accumulates and you'll have an emotional range as well as an auditory range that you can take as a hypnotist, which is a very powerful and important tool that's hard to teach. But, if you happen to have that sort of as a cap it's a great time to use exercises like this because it will instantly take you to that place and you can deal with it.

**Laura:** Yes, it really is. One of the problems that I have found that people have brought to me often is a narrow pitch range. It's often more in men than in women, and often because men are sometimes afraid of using the higher notes in case they don't sound macho.

**Igor:** Right.

**Laura:** You know what, I would rather it sound varied, flexible, and like I had lots of range then boring. Never mind macho; if you just stay in those bottom tones, it's going to be boring.

So, develop those higher tones, you don't have to use them a lot, but when you have the capacity to use them and it's a funny thing because this is true of volume as well. If you have the ability to speak loud even if you never do it, people perceive it as a strength.

People are much less inclined to argue with somebody if they feel they could be shouted down.

**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** I get a lot of people coming to me with quiet voices, complaining that people speak over them and I say to them well, let's develop the volume even if you

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never use it because some people don't like speaking in a loud voice, but I'm in the business of giving people more choices.

It doesn't mean you have to choose them, but when the choice is there people kind of feel it. They pick it up subliminally. They pick it up with their intuition and it makes them respond to you differently. If you could be loud, if you could be powerful and then you're choosing to be gentle that's really different from somebody that couldn't do it even if they wanted to.

**Igor:** I can attest to that because that's actually pretty much what happened to me when I was young, as I told you before, I had a very quiet voice. I used to mumble a lot. It was very rare that someone could actually understand me properly.

I did the sort of things we're talking about. Not necessarily the whole pitch thing, but in terms of volume, I literally would shout into my pillow, I'd get passages from books and read them out as loud as I could into bigger pillows each time so I wouldn't get told off by my parents.

The interesting thing is, by no means were the results immediate, but it came a point where I felt so comfortable speaking in an elevated volume like a loud volume or shouting at people that even when I was in my default thing which is a quiet, more sort of more intellectual sort of pace, I guess, if people pushed a little or started pushing the edges a little, it didn't faze me personally.

My emotions weren't affected because I'd think I can speak louder than that but I wouldn't even have to. I'd get to the point where maybe I'd say for one word, maybe one word would be emphasized a little more and I'd go back into a normal thing. Then somehow unconsciously, they would get the message that hang on a second, this person has much more range than I thought at first, I'm going to be polite here. It's going to be nice.

**Laura:** Absolutely. The first teleclass I'm going to be doing on [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) is one on how you can treat stammerers to help them to speak more fluently and more effectively, that's something I specialize in, Igor.

One of the things that I found a lot with people who stammer is that they haven't developed the ability to speak in a loud voice and what's happened is as a result of that, they put strain on their speaking muscles and that's part of the problem.

I often have to train people. I say to them, do you ever shout and they say oh no, but the fact that you can shout doesn't mean that you have to. So when you talk in a really loud voice you have to use more breath and just the fact that you can use more breath then gives your voice strength.

Then you can choose to pull back on that strength and speak very gently and very softly. But, the fact that you have that capacity is going to support not just the fact that other people are going to feel you could shout them down, but it's

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going to give you a voice of power and a confidence that otherwise isn't going to be there.

The exercise you just described is a good exercise and I recommend anybody who wants to work on their volume to do that very thing as you described.

Speak into a pillow if you want or just go out, stand in your garden and use different volumes so you learn how to temper the volume you're using. Then finally, when you've been working with your volume, get some feedback from somebody else and say is this too loud for you?

Best of all choose out six people because people have different capacities of hearing. So, for some people what sounds quiet will sound easier to understand, whereas, for some people with a quiet tone of voice they won't even be able to hear you at all, as you had when you were a child.

You need to get feedback from a few people to find out what's the most quiet you can go to still be heard by everybody. Then find out what actually sounds loud to other people.

Remember, at the beginning of this, I told you about the CEO, the chief executive and the finance director. I told you that the chief executive had a very quiet voice and when he presented his results to the city the shares used to go down because people thought he wasn't confident of his company.

He was somebody who had to learn how to have a louder voice. In his head it sounded really loud, but once he practiced raising his voice so that it was really quite loud to the listener, he was then able to come back to a fairly gentle voice but it never sounded unconfident again.

What happened was he was able to sound so quietly confident that by using downward inflections and being able to raise his voice, even though he chose not to, he sounded far more confident.

Just to complete that loop, the finance director who spoke very quickly, when he practiced sounding more measured, slowing down how fast he spoke, people stopped feeling like he was trying to put something past them. The chief executive sounded like he was confident of his company and immediately the shares went up.

It was the most wonderful, measurable piece of work because that was actually in financial terms, that by working on their voice; it took me half a day, Igor, and it turned around this enormous PLC. The shares started going up and they had much more investments.

**Igor:** Fantastic.

**Laura:** So, this is really worth investing in, practicing raising your volume and lowering it.

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There's one more thing that's worth thinking about with volume which is, it isn't only volume that makes your voice carry and sometimes people talk about how to project their voice.

An actor on a stage can whisper and be heard at the back of the theater, so yes it's a good idea to have the ability to be able to talk loudly and quietly and it's also important to be able to send your voice as far as you need to send it and as widely as you need to send it.

Projection isn't about volume. It's good to be able to monitor your volume, but it's also very useful to be able to change how you're focusing your voice.

Here's a little exercise to try. What I want you to do, Igor, is to count up to three as if we're having an intimate conversation.

### ➤ Can you do that for me?

**Igor:** One, two, three.

**Laura:** That's really sexy, actually. Well done. That's good.

**Igor:** Thank you.

**Laura:** Here's the next thing I want you to do, which is to count up to three as if you're speaking to maybe three people— me and two other people in the room.

**Igor:** One, two, three.

**Laura:** Now I want you to imagine that the doors are open and there's a crowd of people standing outside the room, maybe 20 or 30 people, and I want you to count up to three for all of us. It doesn't need to be loud, but I want you to have your attention in a much bigger area.

**Igor:** One, two, three.

**Laura:** Fantastic. Now, let's do it really big and imagine that you're standing up in front of a group of 250 people and you're going to count to three so that every one of them hears you do it.

**Igor:** One, two, three.

**Laura:** When you listen back to this, you're going to hear it even more than, as you were doing it yourself.

Where you put your attention really affects the sound of your voice, and I think we mentioned this earlier how you can have one person on a stage with their eyes closed and they're going to know whether you're talking to them or talking to the audience.

Do you remember we were saying that earlier on?

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**Igor:** Yes.

**Laura:** This is a really good thing to practice to some extent for you, Igor, but I know it's going to be very useful to some of the people listening to this, that you can send your voice where your attention is.

The practice is to practice as if you're speaking to one person very intimately, to three people, to 10 people and then to 100 people.

What I recommend you do is choose maybe a nice little poem or a little nursery rhyme or a paragraph of text and read it first of all as if it's one person, then three, then six, then 10 and then 100, so that you begin to again kinesthetically monitor what you're doing.

Very little of that is the volume. More of that is about where you're putting your attention. That's a worthwhile exercise. Even if you've only got one person who you're working with sometimes when you're working you want them to be thinking in terms of all the different aspects of their character or just one very specific focused part of themselves.

Once you've practiced that exercise you'll find you can do that much more efficiently.

**Igor:** For sure. I'm already thinking in terms of when I do any kind of regression work like a changed personal history or something along those lines. I often go to this default where I'll speak to them and I'll speak as though the other person is in the room as well. I'll treat the, shall we say, hallucinate part as being real, my voice changes, my whole mannerisms change and it really helps that interaction become more real for the client because it builds the world up for them.

I'm not just sort of pretending, for me, I can actually feel myself changing. My whole posture changes and I'll actually turn my head to do that as well, so I think it's a very valuable exercise.

**Laura:** Yes. If you're telling somebody to push the picture far away and you can do it with your voice as well, then it's going to be much easier for them to do that. Learning how to place your voice is a very valuable skill.

I've got one more that I want to do with you on this seminar, Igor, because it's a really important thing. I'll tell you a little story.

There's a DJ in England. His name is Noel Edmonds and when he was first DJ'ing on the radio he tells a story that I think is key for working with your voice.

When he first started, he was in charge of doing the breakfast show. He'd be talking to people over the radio as they were driving to work, getting energized and ready for the day ahead. He asked them to give him a seat, a high up stool

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which was high above the console he was working on so that as he spoke he sounded more energized.

When he changed his role and started doing the evening show, which was relaxing people at 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock at night, he asked them to bring him an armchair into the studio which was low down.

The position of your body has a direct effect on the way your voice sounds.

**Igor:** To just emphasize what you just said, I did the same thing when we did the previous exercise on volume, speaking to one person intimately. I actually found myself nodding my head slightly forward and intimate. I was picking my head up slightly for the two or three, had my posture relatively erect for the 30 or so, and felt my whole spine and everything else lifting up as I was actually looking over a crowd of 250 people.

My whole posture went up like— you know those pictures you have of the Neolithic man becoming homo-erectus where you have a bent spine and slowly they get more and more upright; it's a bit like that.

**Laura:** Absolutely. If you think about a wind instrument, if you bend it you get a really different sound coming out of it, and it's the same with your voice. The way your body is bent and straight is going to make all the difference in the sound.

Let's just try saying something which is up in our heads for a moment. You'll need to tip your chin back and let your voice come right up into your head. Let's say together something like he's a mean mumbling man.

**Igor:** He's a mean mumbling man.

**Laura:** Wonderful. Now tip your chin so that it's absolutely level and let's say I hope that you've enjoyed these classes.

**Igor:** I hope that you've enjoyed these classes.

**Laura:** Wonderful. Now, tip your chin down, let your voice drop right down, deep down inside and say, and found them really relaxing.

**Igor:** And found them really relaxing.

**Laura:** How wonderful is that?

Now you see, using all the places inside your body, all the resonance, you need some head resonance because it makes the sound carry. You need some central resonance because it's the most centered sound. You need some of those deep tones in order to have variety.

Just to finish off this time with you, Igor, **I want to emphasize that the most important thing about a voice is to have variety.**



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There is no wrong or right it's all about variation. Using pauses, using different volume, changing your pace, your pitch, using the downward inflections and using the upward inflections, all of these things together make for an interesting voice.

**Igor:** I can see that and actually I was going to say I wish we had more time together because first of all, I've learned a bunch of things here already.

Secondly, I think your point about having variety is very important. We've gone way beyond the days of boring people into trances. That is a valid technique; it has its place like everything else, but to be able to express the whole range especially when it comes to the states which we covered a bit in the previous session when we did exercises to specifically get states.

But even here, where we started being more flexible with our voices, which will make those other things easy to do I think as hypnotherapists or as hypnotists in general, states are one of the primary things we want to work with. So, we really want to have as much as possible that can get that side of things revved up and give us the range of experiences we want to be able to induce in people.

**Laura:** Absolutely. It's been a pleasure doing this with you. There is so much more. Is it okay if I just tell you a little bit about what I do so that people listening will know what they have access to if it would be useful?

**Igor:** Absolutely. They've got a good sense of it from just these sessions already, but if you can give us a more in-depth sense in terms of how your whole voice coaching thing goes, I think that would be very valuable to people.

**Laura:** One of the things that I'm doing more and more these days is coaching people over the telephone. If you happen to live in the country that I'm living in at the moment; at the moment it's London but sometimes I'm in Spain, sometimes I'm in America.

Then, by all means, check out my website and come along to one of my classes or email me and tell me where you are and I'll let you know if I'm going to be running any training courses in your area.

What I'm finding incredibly effective these days is working one-to-one with people over the telephone.

**Igor:** Kind of like we've been doing right now.

**Laura:** Yes. That way, I can actually give you all the tools that you personally need because everybody's different and today I've been gearing what we've been talking about, Igor, so that it has general applicability.

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When I'm working one-to-one with somebody, I can hear very quickly what their strengths are and the areas that it would really be very helpful to work on and in just a very few short hours, maybe two hours, I can turn around somebody's communication style so that you can be two to four times as effective as you were before.

I'm really glad to be able to let your listeners know that this is something that they can have access too. If they want to know any more about that, then email me at [laura@laura-spicer.com](mailto:laura@laura-spicer.com) and I'll be able to tell you more about that.

**Igor:** Just to emphasize everyone, you've heard what Laura can do already and whether it's Laura or someone else I personally would go with Laura because she's very good. But, do train your voice.

Even if you take the exercises that we've been doing over the course of the last two sessions and just play with those or if you actually want to hire someone and you really go to town on it; you're voice is your main instrument.

A pianist will have a piano. A fiddler will have his fiddle and they have it in a special case, they have special oils and they have special strings, because without the instrument they have no art. We as hypnotists have our voices. Without our voice, we have no art.

Take care of your voice and really build it; there's so much juice inside that.

**Laura:** Absolutely. I couldn't agree with you more. The only thing I would say about my work as opposed ... I think there's now a couple of people in the world, but you very rarely find people who really know what people who do hypnosis and NLP need to know for their voices.

So yes, go along to a voice coach I thoroughly recommend it. Even a singing voice coach will help you with your breathing, your enunciation and all the things that keep your voice in good shape.

I recommend you check out my website though because I'm going to be putting lots of good tips, tricks, podcasts, recordings and You Tube videos there, which just give you more idea on how you as a hypnotist or an NLP practitioner can get the most out of your voice, so that's something to bear in mind.

**Igor:** Great.

**Laura:** The other thing that I'm doing, which I definitely want your listeners to know about because I am so excited about it, it's not the same as what you do, Igor, but it's a kind of offshoot version of what you do, which is to get some of the top trainers in NLP to share some new skills in short teleclasses.

This is coming up and my people who subscribe to [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) also get to ask questions. So, if you want to ask Richard Bandler a question and ask him to teach something specific, John Lovell, if you want to ask Kate Benson

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about how to work with children or Alessandro Mora on how to work with sports people, if you want to ask them your questions then please go to [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com), click on the orange button and sign up now because I haven't got endless places on that.

There are a limited number of people that can come on that. Next year I think it's going to be a lot more expensive. I've managed to make it incredibly cheap for this year, so check it out now. If you like these classes with Igor you're also like [NlpTeleclass.com](http://NlpTeleclass.com) and I would love to have you on-board.

**Igor:** Laura, I want to thank you for all the insights you've shared with us. This has been a completely thorough grounding in the importance of voice and how to develop it.

There are some great tools and techniques, and you get great tips and tricks, and if people do nothing else and just follow those, they'll really improve and if they want to know more about your work the place to go everyone is [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com) and you'll find lots. You've heard Laura she's a fun and friendly person.

Laura, thank you so much, for coming on-board and sharing all these things so generously with us.

**Laura:** It's been my pleasure, Igor. It's been lovely to talk to you, and let's stay in touch.

**Igor:** For sure, absolutely.

I've been talking to Laura Spicer, the master hypnotist and voice coach from [Laura-Spicer.com](http://Laura-Spicer.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski with [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com).

**Laura:** Nicely done.

**Igor:** Thank you very much.

We'll see you all on the next set of interviews with a hypnosis master.

## Hypnosis Master – Laura Spicer

### End of Seminar

This is Igor Ledochowski. If you're interested in finding out more about our hypnosis training programs just go to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). We have over 30 different programs on all aspects of hypnosis and self hypnosis.

If you want to listen to Laura's seminar where she gives away her amazing hypnotic voice power secrets then go to [StreetHypnosis.com/laura](http://StreetHypnosis.com/laura).

### Meet Your Host

Each month's Interview with a Master will be hosted by Igor Ledochowski, a master hypnotist of international acclaim. He is regarded as one of the world's foremost experts and trainers in conversational or covert hypnosis.

Igor created the Private Hypnosis Club, the world's first community for master hypnotists.

He was the first ever hypnotist to release a full audio course on Conversational Hypnosis, the latest version of which is 'The Power Of Conversational Hypnosis' and is the No.1 best selling hypnosis course in the world.

Igor is also the creator of over 30 other advanced hypnosis programs. All his programs are available from:

[www.StreetHypnosis.com](http://www.StreetHypnosis.com)