

# It's The Way You Say It

## Companion PDF

01.

### Practice Passage

(From *The Snake Has All the Lines*, Jean Kerr)

I never bring reading material aboard a plane because I am convinced that if I'm not right there, alert every minute, keeping my eye on things, heaven knows what might happen. When it comes to selecting a seat I am torn between the wish to sit well back in the tail (surely the safest place to be when we crash) and the feeling that it is my civic duty to take a place next to the window where I can keep a constant watch over the engines. You have no idea how heedless and selfish some passengers are—reading magazines and munching sandwiches all the while that I, alone, am keeping that plane aloft by tugging upward on the arms of my chair and concentrating intensely, sometimes for hours. And when it becomes absolutely clear that something is amiss, who has to ask that simple, straightforward question that will clarify things? I do. Honestly, I don't think these people care whether they live or die.

02.

Begin by looking at this sentence: "I would never do that." Pick a word (almost any word) to be a stressed word. This means it would be a little higher, a little louder, and maybe even a little longer than the other syllables. Let's say you pick "never," for example. You would have a pattern like this:

I would      **nev**      er do that.  
                 / \

Start practicing your sentence at midrange so you can go up on the stressed syllable. Now do the sentence with the first syllable higher (this will take some surprising effort):

I  
  \  
    would never do that.

03.

The word "not" needed to have elevated pitch and would receive primary stress and "Up" would have secondary stress. "With it" would be said at a lower pitch than the rest of the sentence.

NOT  
up

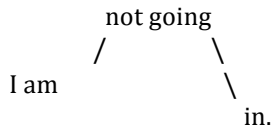
I am going to put  
with it.

04.

Question: *Are you working today?*

You: (speaking aloud) "I am not going in."

Example:



05.

Q: *Is Pete going to have to do your job?*

You: He won't like that.

Q: *Are you trying to bug him?*

You: I wouldn't say it that way.

Q: *Well then, what would you say?*

You: I simply don't care if he has to do it.

06.

Make up your own list of words (beginning with vowels) that are useful to you for practice. Here is May's list: *actually, accounts, ever, every, often, HR, annual, invite, irritate, inquire, other, another, action, encourage, initial, evaluate, our, I, eager, over, only, on, an, in, any, over, up, ask, and entire.*

07.

Say these words following another spoken word so you can just glide into the vowel with the air from the previous word. For example, "This\_actually, those\_accidents, when\_ever, count\_every." Let the air from the first word glide right into the vowel beginning the next word.

08.

*Our lives\_are like\_islands\_in the sea, or like trees\_in the forest, which commingle their roots\_in the darkness\_underground.*

09.

work: *I have been reading all the reports coming from that department/ even those from the outlying branches/ and it seems to me that the situation is stagnant/ that we're on some kind of plateau.* The / marks indicate that a quick breath is appropriate and useful

at this point.

10.

Here is a bit of excellent language that depends upon appropriate phrasing for its impact. You are going to break up the sentence into its component ideas. I am removing punctuation to encourage you to think about the sound of the material without the graphic cues. In the example below, it should feel natural to you to say the opening words,

“Four-score-and-seven-years-ago,” as a phrase. At the end of the phrase is where you can grab a quick breath. Drawing upon your own sense of meaning, put in a slash (/) in the material below where you think a breath should occur. Use a double slash (//) for a longer pause for emphasis. (I’ll put my version on the next page.) Read this aloud, record, and listen to find if you have clearly articulated all of Mr. Lincoln’s words, especially those at the end of a phrase. You will find that this attention to phrasing will be the answer to a lot of your “fading” problems.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal now we are engaged in a great civil war testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure we are met on a great battle-field of that war we have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this but in a larger sense we cannot dedicate we cannot consecrate we cannot hallow this ground the brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract the world will little note nor long remember what we say here but it can never forget what they did here it is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced it is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.

11.

If I were I sitting beside you, I would probably mark the Lincoln passage this way, but I might do it differently tomorrow. I may look at it with a different sense of interpretation that would be reflected in my phrasing.

Four score and seven years ago / our fathers brought forth on this continent / a new nation / conceived in Liberty / and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. // Now we are engaged in a great civil war / testing whether that nation / or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. // We are met on a great battle-field of that war. // We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives / that that nation might live. // It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. // But / in a larger sense / we cannot dedicate / we cannot consecrate / we cannot hallow this ground. // The brave men / living and dead who struggled here / have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. // The world will little note / nor long remember what we say here / but it can never forget what they did here. // It is for us the living / rather / to be dedicated here to the unfinished work / which they who fought here / have thus far so nobly advanced. // It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us // that from these honored dead we take increased devotion / to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion // that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain // that this nation / under God / shall have a new birth of freedom // and that government of the people / by the people / for the people / shall not perish from the earth.

12.

It looks like this: *John where Charles had had had had had had had had had had the teacher's approval.*

13.

Here's the context you need. Imagine an English teacher giving her students (John and Charles) the following test sentence. They were to pick the appropriate verb form: *Mary couldn't remember much about her visit because she (had had/ had) a cold at that time.* With this contextual information, try reading our sentence aloud with the vocal cues supplied by punctuation. "John, where Charles had had 'had,' had had 'had had'; 'had

had' had had the teacher's approval."

14.

This term is used to identify an intonation pattern that is stereotyped and repeated often enough to call attention to itself. It can be wearisome and childlike. A repeating pattern might sound something like this:

didn't      anything      last      did  
/      \      /      \      /      \      /      \  
I      say      about the      time he      it.

15 a.

See what you notice about the following sentences. Read them aloud:

He used his farm to *produce produce*.

It was time to *present the present*.

When are you going to *record the record*?

15 b.

If we were to indicate this primary stress on paper, we would put a mark like this " in front of it: "*Mars*.

16.

### and Secondary Stress

"*This is the 'way / I 'want you to "talk*. The " in front of *this* and *talk* directs you to put more emphasis on that syllable, and the ' indicates that *way* and *want* would receive somewhat less stress.

Say the practice sentence, *This is the way I want you to talk*, and use the stress pattern indicated above. We want to hear a slight difference between the primary and secondary levels of emphasis. You might want to ask some external ears if you are successful in following these markings.

Now try the follow sentences:

She be'came a "bank president.

I 'think I'll "go to "school to'morrow.

My 'sister "Mary wants a 'blue "Honda.

I "ordered 'lemon 'cream "pie.

Notice how we indicate meaning just with our choice of stress:

'She is a 'smart "girl. (This is a statement of fact.)

'She is a "smart 'girl. (But she acts silly.)

"She is a "smart 'girl. (But her sister is not.)

'She is a "smart "girl. (She is really smart.)  
'She "is a 'smart "girl. (No matter what you say  
to the contrary.)

17.

I will mark emphasis on the first three lines below. You finish  
the piece.

Our "deepest fear is "not that we are in'adequate.  
Our "deepest fear is that we are "powerful be"yond  
"measure. It is our "light, not our 'darkness, that  
"most 'frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,  
talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to  
be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does  
not serve the world. There's nothing enlightened  
about shrinking so that other people won't feel  
insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as  
children do. We were born to make manifest the  
glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some  
of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light  
shine, we unconsciously give other people permission  
to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear,  
our presence automatically liberates others.  
(This passage by Marianne Williamson is frequently misidentified  
as the 1994 inaugural speech of Nelson Mandela.  
But it's still a great speech.)

18.

By the "time you swear you're "his,  
'shivering and 'sighing  
And he "vows his 'passion is  
"Infinite, un"dying—  
"Lady, make a 'note of this:  
"One of you is 'lying.

19.

Read the following sentences aloud, putting  
a slight pause in the sentence as marked. Then change  
the sentences to mean something different by relocating the  
pauses and stress pattern. In the first example, is this a man  
who is eating a shark, or a shark that likes to snack on people?

A man / eating shark. A man eating shark.  
The blind man / picked up his hammer / and  
saw. The blind man picked up his hammer and  
saw.  
The waiter / always serves our food / and  
drinks in the dining room. The waiter always  
serves our food and drinks in the dining room.  
He sells pink ladies' / gloves. He sells pink  
ladies' gloves.

The architect / draws driveways / and walks  
in circles. The architect draws driveways and  
walks in circles.

The waiter / always serves our coffee / and rolls  
downstairs. The waiter always serves our coffee  
and rolls downstairs.

Let's eat / Mother. Let's eat Mother.

20.

*Many men.*

*I love you.*

*Lovely one.*

*How are you?* (Some people use glottal attack,  
with strong emphasis on "are"—you don't need  
to do that.)

*Deal me in.* (Don't use glottal attack on "in.")

*Do you feel okay?*

*Matter of fact.*

*Wind in the willows.* (Don't use glottal attack  
on "in." Think of it as "win-din.")

21.

*My name is unusual.*

*One alone to be my own.*

*We can whenever we want to.*

*My place will do for now.*

22.

*Maybe my niece will want some.*

*Why would we follow him?*

*Would you want to do it?*

*None of us would want to.*

*Wait where we will find you.*

*Where is my mother?*

*We know you're in there.*

*What time is it?*

*Don't ask about it.*

*John always eats apples.*

*Ask if it's all right.*

*We haven't heard anything.*

*Don't expect him.*

*They reject about half the first semester.*

23.

*The early bird deserves to get the worm.*

*Freedom is what you do with what's been done*

to you.  
 No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.  
 Today is the tomorrow I was waiting for.

24.

Hmmm the-early-bird-deserves-to / get (Go up in pitch.)  
 \ the worm. (Go down below your chanted tone.)

25.

Freedom is / what \ you do with / what's \ been / done \ to you.

26.

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.  
 Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.  
 Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.  
 Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.  
 Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.  
 —Calvin Coolidge

26.5.

“I was only going to tell him that it was already gone.”

27 a.

<u>Casual Form</u>	<u>Correct Form</u>
wantin'	wanting
I'm wantin	I'm wanting
I'm wantin to go.	I'm wanting to go.

Repeat the correct form three times, and then go back and forth between the correct and incorrect versions.



Put your word together with other words that might naturally follow it in a sentence:

*wanting a drink*  
*wanting to go*  
*wanting some time*  
*wanting more time*

27 b.

Avoid stringing sentences together with conjunctions: "I went to see him and he said he didn't care so I told him the whole story, but ... blah, blah," and on and on. Here's a stronger version: "I went to see him. He said he didn't care. I told him the whole story."

28.

New supplier of office paper

-----  
/                    \  
Milpitas            Taiwain  
/                    \  
cost time           cost time

29.

You may want to use some notes to keep you comfortable and on course. I advise using three-by-five cards, with just a few ideas on each card, written in large print:

## LIKE THIS

Now you can just glance at your cues to get your prompt without putting your head down and staring at the paper. If you do use a typed sheet, a font size at around 20 should be comfortable.

30.

If this seems like an overwhelming task to you, just use the following check list to help guide your listening.

### Your Checklist

Check no more than three of the issues you noticed while listening (or that people have regularly told you are a problem for you). You'll use this information, along with the evaluations from others, to help determine where you really need to focus your efforts:

- \_\_\_\_\_ My vocabulary could be more professional.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use too many fillers (um, like, you know, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ I talk too much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I talk too little.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is too loud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is too soft.

- \_\_\_\_\_ My accent is difficult to understand.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I speak too fast.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I speak too slowly.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is too high.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is too low.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I don't articulate words clearly.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is raspy/creaky.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is monotone.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is too effusive (pitch changes too much).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice seems young/immature.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is challenging to listen to.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My speaking is staccato (syllables are punchy, choppy).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My tone of voice seems too flirty for a professional environment.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ My voice starts out strong but fades at the end of sentences.
- 222 It's the Way You Say It
- \_\_\_\_\_ My sentences end with a questioning tone, even when making a statement.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I don't sound confident while speaking.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I struggle to get the point across succinctly; I ramble.

31.

## Communication Evaluation

[*Insert your name here*] is asking for your opinion about his/her communication effectiveness. Please fill out this form honestly and constructively. Your responses will help guide the person who gave it to you (referred to as the subject) in determining which communication areas he/she is succeeding in and which could use more practice and improvement. The subject wants to make sure he/she is communicating effectively and accurately, and needs to know how he/she is actually coming across to others. (Often we don't know how we sound, and we need others to let us know.) Unless told otherwise, please treat this information as confidential. For each comment below, please answer "Yes," "No," or "Some." Feel free to comment as needed.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject could benefit from a more appropriate professional vocabulary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject uses too many fillers (um, like, you know, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject talks too much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject talks too little.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is too loud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is too soft.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's accent is difficult to understand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject speaks too fast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject speaks too slowly.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is too high.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is too low.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject doesn't articulate words clearly.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is raspy/creaky.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is monotone.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is too effusive (pitch changes too much).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice seems young/immature.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice is challenging to listen to.
- Please explain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's speaking is staccato (seems punchy or aggressive).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's tone of voice can seem too flirty for the professional environment.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's voice starts out strong but fades at the end of sentences.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject ends sentences with a questioning tone, even when making a statement.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject usually doesn't seem confident while speaking.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's body language doesn't usually fit with what's being said.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject doesn't make appropriate eye contact.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject often doesn't seem to be listening or interested in what others say.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject often seems distant or disrespectful to others.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject doesn't make a strong first impression.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject struggles to get the point across.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject undersells talents and skills.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Subject seems to struggle with small talk.