

Transcript for Toolbox | Vocal Tonality (Episode 236)

Full show notes found here:

<https://theartofcharm.com/podcast-episodes/episode-236-aoc-toolbox-vocal-tonality/>

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm; I'm Jordan Harbinger. The Art of Charm brings together the best coaches in the industry to teach you guys how to crush it in life, love, and at work. Imagine having a mix of experienced mentors teaching you their expertise, packing decades of research, testing, and tough lessons into a concise curriculum. We've created one of the premiere men's lifestyle programs available anywhere, and it's free. This is the show we wish we had a decade ago. This show is about you, and we're here to help you become the best man you can be in every area of your life. Make sure to stay up to date with everything going on here and get some killer free eBooks as well as drills and exercises that'll help you become more charismatic and confident by signing up for the newsletter at theartofcharm.com.

If you're new to the show but you want to know more about what we teach here at The Art of Charm, listen to the Toolbox at theartofcharm.com/podcast/toolbox. That's where you'll get the fundamentals of dating and attraction such as body language, eye contact, vocal tonality, all that stuff that's more important than you might think. We've got boot camps running every single month here in California. Details at theartofcharm.com and I'm looking forward to meeting all of you guys here at The Art of Charm. Enjoy.

Hey guys, welcome back. This is a toolbox episode that's been requested about a million times, vocal tonality. "How do I talk? How should I sound when I talk? How loud should I be when I talk? What kind of tonality I should have when I talk?" and as broadcasters, AJ and I have experience working on our voice, editing our voice, hearing it from other people's perspectives because it's on the radio, it's coming through the podcast, it's coming through -- other people are quoting us, things like that.

So, we've learned a lot about how we sound. It starts out awkward but it helps you in the long run. Just like the video work we do in our programs and our boot camps, when you see yourself on camera and you go, "That was horrible but I needed it," vocal tonality can really be something that people struggle with and unfortunately, most people have no idea when there's is crap.

AJ: Yeah, and we're going to give you some tips and tricks later on in the show here to help you with your tonality but honestly one of the easiest ways to figure it out is to record yourself. Record a phone conversation between you and a friend and you'll be able to see very quickly if you speak authoritatively, dominantly, or if you tend to be submissive.

JORDAN: And we can get into all that here in a bit. I think this Nietzsche or Nietzsche as a lot of people say -- Nietzsche quote, "We often refuse to accept an idea merely because of the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us." Now he was probably talking about the wording and other things along with but that but we're going to steal it and use it for what we mean, which is, a lot of times people simply won't follow your lead if they question it, if you question yourself, that shows up in your vocal tonality. And a lot of things that you think about yourself relative to other people, which is like your social value, your level of confidence, trustworthiness, all those things, are sub communicated, by accident, in your vocal tonality. So it's very, very tough, and it's very easy for somebody who's trained, to read it, as well.

AJ: And honestly we have so many guys asking us, "What do you say? What do you say? What do you say," and get so focused on the words. We ourselves can get so focused on the words but at The Art of Charm what we pride ourselves on is that we look at the holistic approach. We look at our body language, what that's communicating, and how we're saying those words is just as important as the words themselves.

A lot of times we can say things exactly using the same words that you are but have more meaning behind them, in our passion, in our tonality. So it's very important that we realize that tonality does play a key role in motivating people to help you, motivating people to get in a relationship with you, and also in your workplace, in terms of being able to move up and be successful. You need to have people following your lead and willing to recognize you as a leader. And a lot of times in those moments where we aren't being leaders, it's our tonality that's failing us.

JORDAN:

Absolutely. And a lot of people are going, "What is vocal tonality?" Obviously, it's a mix of different things but really important is the pitch, the rate of speech, and the volume of your voice. There's a lot more to it than that, pausing, cadence, all those things come into play. But AJ, as you mentioned, it's important because it bypasses your logical brain and speaks directly to that emotional brain. You can't argue with your own emotions. It's very, very difficult. That's why crazy people be crazy. Because they can't argue with their emotions.

So in that way it's like body language for your words in that it sub communicates a lot about you and that it's read by others even when you don't intend to communicate that sentiment that you're communicating. And there's that study that everyone quotes and it's like, "The words are 8 percent and body language is 60 percent and vocal tonality is 30 percent." Now that study has been butchered and mishled up all over the place and even we've used it. And there's a pie chart that's probably inaccurate floating around on the Internet somewhere.

But to be honest, it really does embody the idea that the vocal tonality is much more important than the content, the words, the intellectual content of what you're saying. And on a more practical level, if you're interacting with people during the day and at night and trying to meet new people, if they can't hear you, you can't engage them. So, if you can't be heard, you can't engage. That's a problem. And of course, now we've got dominant versus submissive vocal tonality.

AJ:

Right, a lot of the guys ask right off the bat, "Well I want to be more successful. What do I need to do with my tonality?" And really there's two different types of tonality in your voice that come across, dominant and submissive. Dominant is the most confident, obviously. It leads to people following your lead and actually listening to you and engaging your audience. A lot of people get this confused. They think of dominant as screaming, yelling, being a douchebag, being the fake alpha that a lot of guys ascribe to but really dominance doesn't have anything to do with volume, necessarily. It's more in your pitch. It's speaking in a lower pitch and also it's your cadence.

When we tend to not know what we want to say or feel unconfident in certain situations, our pitch rises and we talk fast. So a lot of what we work on in class with the guys, especially in the banter phase at the beginning where we want to truly engage -- we're walking over to someone to engage them for the first time -- is slowing down. And even on the podcast, if you guys go back to the original episodes, you'll notice that we ourselves have corrected this and become more dominant in our speech pattern. By simply slowing down and using pauses confidently, we can convey words in a much more meaningful way. So that means a lack of hesitation.

Now what do I mean by hesitation? That's the, "Uhs," the, "Ums," the, "Likes." And we, ourselves, have practiced quite a bit, cutting these out. And as Jordan will tell you in editing these episodes at the very beginning, it probably took three times as long as it does now, simply because we were using a lot of those filler words. But filler equals hesitation and hesitation leads other people to one, lose your train of thought completely, or two, feel like you don't truthfully know what you're talking about. Now, the opposite of that coin, submissive, is at it sounds. It's weak, it's insecure, it's less engaging. And obviously when we're meeting strangers or when we're communicating at work, we want to be engaging. Engagement is what's ultimately going to get what we want out of our words.

So, that may be a variety in your pitch but typically it ends high. When you think of a question, when you ask a question, you end it on a high note. And the perfect example for you guys at home to think about this is these are two scenarios that we've all encountered. We've been in class and the high school teacher asks us a question that we know the answer to. Your hand shoots up and you're ready to blurt out that answer with such a firm tonality, with confidence, without hesitation. That's dominant in essence.

The opposite of that is those moments in high school where maybe you were daydreaming, you were doodling, you zoned out, or maybe truthfully you didn't know the answer but you got called on. Remember how you started to stumble over your words and your pitch was kind of wandering and probably ended up on a high note even if you weren't asking a question? Sort of like, "I hope that's right. Please? May that be right so I don't get made fun of or called out for it?" When you talk in that tonality, what you're conveying is ultimately insecurity and in that moment you probably were insecure. You didn't know the answer.

JORDAN: The problem with sounding weak is that doesn't necessarily mean you're weak but it does come from that subconscious communication and you can't just turn it off without practice, which is a problem.

JUSTIN: And in our role as men, as leaders, and women's role to follow leaders, they're going to feel most comfortable when we're leading. And we need to lead through our tonality. So whether it's getting a phone number, whether it's setting up a date, whether it's asking your boss for a promotion or a raise, in those moments, those are crucial that you have dominant tonality in your voice.

JORDAN: Absolutely. Speaking slow, utilizing pauses, adding passion to your tonality when communicating are all important.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: How do we have good tonality?

JUSTIN: It's that loud but calm demeanor. So the volume is not overpowering. We're not just using volume only to get someone's attention, we're also using a calm demeanor by not changing the cadence, the rhythm of the voice essentially, or the tonality, needlessly. If you listen to our show and you watch the audio waves, you're not going to see too many peaks and valleys. It's going to be pretty even keel because we're talking about topics that we know a lot about and we're passionate about them.

And I can tell you that if you look at the things in life you're most passionate about, whether it's comics or video games or sports, and you have a conversation with your friends, odds are, you're talking in a dominant tonality in those situations. When we really start to get tripped up is when we're talking to women or higher ups at work. People who hold a position of power that we perceive. And in those moments, we lack security in ourselves and maybe in our thoughts and end up raising our tonality needlessly.

I know from personal experience, that was one of my downfalls in my lab position in biology. I put so much emphasis on my higher ups and my boss especially because he was a world renowned scientist, that I didn't speak with any sort of confidence in my voice. Even though I was presenting the same results as other people, my voice lacked the confidence that was really compelling and engaging him. I remember at times even noticing him nodding out in some of my lab meetings --

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

AJ: -- because of it. So, it is really important. This is not only for obviously, getting the girl, but this is important for communicating and engaging in a way that is meaningful in life.

JORDAN: Absolutely. Appropriate volume conveys confidence and dominance but it's not the same thing as energy and animation. A lot of guys are like, "I'm going to the bar and be spazzy and weird," and I know that's a mean way in the U.K. but in the U.S. it's fine. You're just going to be super goofy. And that's fine if that's your personality but if you're turning into some into coked out clown when you go out, that's not the same thing as having appropriate volume to convey what you want to convey. A lot of people are too soft. They get tuned out. If you've got a TV in a sports bar and you can't quite hear it, you've got to strain to hear it, it doesn't make it easy, and people are lazy, especially if you have no value. You approach a girl for the first time, maybe you don't have the social value setup that you would want, she's not necessarily going to struggle to hear you, she might be polite in the beginning but then she's just going to give up, especially if you're in a loud environment. That is not going to help you engage. Again, if they can't hear you, you can't engage them. Now on the other hand, if you're too loud, you get tuned out because you're trying hard and you're being needy and that shows a lack of confidence. And everybody's seen that obnoxious guy or girl who is laughing loud and being loud in the bar or the restaurant. And everyone thinks it's annoying because it's so clear that that person just wants attention.

AJ: Exactly.

JORDAN: It grates on you and you're the most annoying person in the whole venue. It's obnoxious.

AJ: Now let's talk about developing the perfect tonality because I know, Jordan, you spend a lot of time working on this developing the radio voice.

JORDAN: Yeah there's something that I call -- there's no technical term for it as far as I know, but there's something that I call the necklace of tension. Essentially it's your neck, your traps, which are the muscles between your neck and your shoulders, and your shoulders, and a little bit of your upper back which is essentially the same thing as your traps, your trapezius. You've

got to relax this, you've got to force your shoulders to relax, it can be tough. Even things like meditation will help with this. A lot of people carry their stress in their shoulders, they carry their stress in their traps and their neck. That's a problem for a lot of us that work at computers and things like that all day. The problem is that that negatively affects your vocal tonality. So you've really got to force that to relax. That will help you move your voice into your chest and this will allow you to stay really, really loud but also very, very relaxed. Because as we know, one of core concepts at The Art of Charm is that the mind follows the body. So you'll stay relaxed but you will be powerful. So it's possible to be really, really loud without shouting, without grating on your throat -- shouting, essentially, is trying hard, which is needy. And if you've ever come back from a bar or a club and you felt like your throat was on fire the next day, it's probably because your voice was in the wrong place.

AJ: Yeah, and using your chest allows more air to pass over your vocal chords which is going to give you the volume necessary to speak. A lot of times we hold our chest with nervous tension and we don't allow our chest to give us that air, so we strain our throat. That's ultimately why you're going to be sipping on honey tea at night.

JORDAN: Absolutely. A lot of guys -- the way that we used to teach this in our programs is breathing from your balls. Essentially using diaphragm. You can find your diaphragm by coughing. That's the muscle that goes crazy when you cough, that forces that air out explosively. That's why they do they the hernia test and have you cough is because your diaphragm will push downwards and if you double over in extreme pain when that happens and there's a finger in there, it means you have a hernia. That's really a very obvious way to find your diaphragm.

You want to breathe from there and not, like you said, in your throat. You can use pauses to measure your cadence and real people in. A half breath is a pause that can be used to get people to pay more attention to really focus on what you're doing and you should use pauses instead of filler words. So instead of

saying, "You should use pauses uh, instead of uh filler words," -- "You should use pauses instead of filler words." It sounds a lot better, you sound a lot more sure of yourself, like you're not afraid someone's going to cut in and jump in and start trampling all over you.

AJ: Right, the biggest thing is owning silence in a confident way and I know in other podcasts we talk about the term 'the vacuum,' but it's those people that are confident in silence, that own silence, that actually own the room. And if you feel the need to fill that silence or if you struggle to find words and find yourself filling silence with filler, you want to dial that back quite a bit and allow yourself to pause, even mentally. Sometimes when we get so ahead of ourselves, we trip up over our own thoughts and then we get scrambled mentally.

The pauses not only help your tonality but they also help you mentally to slow down in less analysis while actually interacting with people. It's important. We talk about the concept of being in the moment and if you can't allow your mind to be in the moment. And if you can't allow your mind to be in the moment, your mind is racing and now all of a sudden the words coming out of your mouth are racing, it's going to be very difficult to engage. We've all tuned that person out who's just talking a mile a minute and running over anything that you have to say. It's not engaging and it's certainly not going to win her heart.

JORDAN: Absolutely, it's a huge turn off when someone's constantly interrupting you and that has to do with how fast you're thinking and that's right, when people speak slowly and they embrace silence, which isn't necessarily good for talk radio if you're wondering why we're talking the way we are now. We don't do this when we converse with other people in person, it's a little bit slower. So you can really focus on that and people who are very much like you said, own silence, one of the words that people use to describe them is present. That's really common and that's one of the classic signs of being present is being able to be quiet and slowly talk. Now sometimes it gets

obnoxious and you're like, "Dude, spit it out, I want to smack you," if you're in a hurry and they're dragging on.

AJ: There's also the situation of over analysis, where we get so in our heads and for a lot of guys who come through the Art of Charm program, we talk about mediation and just slowing down your thoughts in general. Not just when you're in the bar environment but at home. Taking time for your mind to slow down, to unwind and unravel instead of constantly operating at 120 miles an hour. It's going to be very important and we find that a lot of times when we use filler words, we are lacking confidence. It goes hand in hand. So cutting out those filler words is going to speak in a more dominant tone which is endearing, which is confident.

JORDAN: Exactly, and you talked earlier on ending pitch. An upward tone, that question tone, it sounds like you're questioning yourself or at least what you're saying. That neutral statement tone is great, that downward commanding tone, again not a yelling type of situation but that downward tone is great. So if you can use this statement tone even on questions, and you don't have to do this all the time, but try to do so generally as a habit. It comes across as much more dominant.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: When I was doing trial stuff when I was an attorney, people were deciding cases based on how sure. We had a little look inside the jury room during some of our mock trials and one of the things that people were saying was, "Well that guy seemed much more sure of himself." So basically the attorney telling the case or the witness telling the case, if he sounded more sure of the details, those were hands down the cases that won in a lot of cases. And that's a problem because if your attorney is not really confident and not really sure of himself or the witness speaks in a way that's not very sure of themselves, because they're nervous on the stand, that can be interpreted as --

AJ: Dishonest.

JORDAN: -- maybe they're not sure, maybe they're being dishonest. So, basically bad vocal tonality is a crime. But also yeah, can put you in jail, which is quite serious. It can put you in jail or cost you a hell of a lot of money if you don't have it down and the people that are on your side advocating for you don't have this down. There's essentially three voices, right AJ? That match our interaction map.

AJ: Mm-hmm, so as we go through the interaction map, we talk about banter, which is attraction building attraction building curiosity in someone else. We then move into building the connection and then essentially going after what you want. So, it's important to realize that in the banter phase we are going to vary our pitch slightly but it's going to be dynamic still. So it's not in a situation where we're talking all at a high pitch or all at a low pitch or being insincere, but ultimately we're allowing passion to come through our words because we need to start engaging and the only way to do so is to add that emotional tonality. So that's what we're going to do with banter and it conveys that we're being playful.

A lot of times guys read the banter lines that you can find on the website, the little cheat sheet that we give you guys, and as they're reading the lines, they're like, "I don't see this working for me." They're probably reading it on a flat tonality entirely. So they don't allow any humor to come through in the words. But when we vary our tonality slightly, she can tell that we're not being sincere in our words. We're joking, which is ultimately what we're going for in the banter phase. That's how we're going to connect and hook.

Then we move into the rapport phase. We're going to start to slowly lower our pitch and become more calm. Now, this is when we want her to know that we are being genuine and we're actually connecting. She's pulling more out of us. If we allow our tonality to be scattered in this phase, again, some of the qualities that you're discussing about yourself might be seen as a joke and might not be taken seriously. So, it is important then

that we want to be more empathetic and slow things down a little bit more. And then obviously, as we move into going for what you want, leading, we need the real dominant tonality to come through and that's where we're going to lower our pitch, slow it down even more, and it's going to be very masculine. And allow those pauses to pull her even more. Think Al Green, Barry White.

JORDAN: That reminds me of those McDonald's commercials with Barry White, like, "Mm, quarter pounder with cheese," like really low. Why am I getting turned on by a quarter pounder with cheese? I can't even stomach that thing. So, essentially as you go down the interaction map from attraction through rapport and into seduction -- and guys, if you haven't heard about the interaction map, you need to check it out.

Go to theartofcharmpodcast.com/toolbox, that's where we're going to have an outline of this on the podcast and go into detail. Essentially as you go through the phases of interaction from attraction, rapport, and into intimacy or seduction, the voices drop in pitch and the resonance goes up. So the bass associated with masculinity, that goes up. It's going to be quieter and it's going to use more air over the vocal cords to get there. How do we find our seduction voice though?

AJ: So one, we talked about moving our voice lower. Low enough that it's actually in our balls, so to speak. We laugh about that. But imagine when you're eating this amazing steak and you just let out that, "Mmm." You feel it reverberate through your body. That's what we're going for. We're going for slightly drawn out, a little bit breathy, slowly articulating what we want and in a commanding way.

JORDAN: Yeah, definitely. You definitely don't want to do this in a questioning way. I can't really imagine it but it sounds really creepy.

AJ: You want me to do what with what?

JORDAN: Yeah, exactly. Now remember, you can use your voice and your body language in combination to control the focus of an interaction. So if you're in a high energy environment like a party or a club environment and you can do this during the day as well but an extreme example would be party or club environment. You can use this to control a group or maybe even more importantly, in a panic type of situation where everybody's chaotic, no one know what to do, if you stay calm and you use calm vocal tonality, people will follow your lead because of that confidence. So this could save your life or the lives of others. But in a more practical sense for what we're talking about, in a bar or a club, you can control the focus of the interaction.

So if somebody comes into your group, people that you're talking to -- women that you're talking to -- will look to you for cues on how to behave. So if someone's trying to rudely cut in, for example, you can raise your volume but you stay calm and don't engage that other person. The girl you're talking to is going to follow your lead even if she feels like, "Uh-oh, it's kind of rude, there's this pull from this other person," you can sort of out frame that or plow through that.

AJ: Right, by slightly increase your volume. Not your cadence and not trying to overpower him. We're just trying to continue to draw attention away from him and towards us.

JORDAN: Exactly so you're only going to want to use this if a guy is trying to be annoying and loud, not if he's being cool. Otherwise, you're just going to come across as a dick and also you should always want cool people to talk to you. But if somebody's trying to plow over you because they're trying to like, "Hey, I brought that girl here. I'm jealous now," you can outframe then. Primarily these techniques are useful in rapport and seduction in terms of controlling the conversation with your voice and body language.

But you can control an entire group like this. So if somebody gets emotionally reactive, like if he gets upset that you're still

talking to her, he's going to look like a fool because you're still staying calm, which is so key. But how do we practice this stuff? We've given a lot of great tips. When can guys start putting this into action? Are we just going to be like Stuart Smalley in the mirror in the morning, or what?

AJ: Well first and foremost, as I said, record your voice. That's really where Jordan and I learned the most about our voice and how to control things. And also how much we were using filler words to fill those empty pauses in our speech.

JORDAN: To uh, fill those pauses?

AJ: Exactly. Hopefully Jordan is cutting all of those out.

JORDAN: Yep.

AJ: It is really important to realize that a lot of times we can convey a lack of security in situations where we should be confident and secure. And it could be keeping you back from getting that date and maybe even a raise. So, that's number one. Record yourself conversationally with a friend and try to vary the topic through the conversation, maybe a topic you're confident about, maybe something you're learning about, and you'll see very quickly how your voice itself changes. A lot of times the voice that we hear in our head, obviously, is not the voice that's projected to the world. So it is important to dial it back and realize that, "Oh, if I listen to a recording, now I really understand what other people are seeing and hearing."

JORDAN: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. You can practice this in the shower, you can practice it in the car, talk to yourself if you need to, if you do those affirmations you can do that. And you're going to yawn when you start do this, but don't fight it, it helps stretch everything out and it helps prepare your body to project that resonance. When you start doing this, you are going to yawn, trust me. That's how you know you're doing it right. Like you said AJ, practice breathing deeply, practice lowering your voice into your chest -- put your hand on your sternum, which is right between your pec muscles on your chest and you

should feel that vibrating when you speak, less so right on your throat, which is where most people feel it when they speak. So the exercise that you gave, just so guys know how to record themselves sounding natural, is a great way to do this is to maybe record half of a phone conversation with someone you know and you can listen to that recording, pay attention to the filler words like, "Um, uh, like," is a real nasty one, and, "So," is also a filler word, consciously become aware of those and try to eliminate them. If you edit the audio -- this is extra credit -- if you edit the audio from that recording and you do it every week until you're satisfied with how you sound, it's going to be such a pain in the ass to edit out all of those filler words that you will eventually stop doing it because -- and I know this from editing the show. It's so annoying.

AJ: This is directly from experience.

JORDAN: Exactly. It's so annoying to clip all those things out that eventually you will break yourself of the habit. You will. There's no way around it. It's far too tedious and it's very effective to do that, especially if you have a ****load of filler words, you're going to really want to trim those out.

AJ: So, start a podcast.

JORDAN: Yeah, you can start a podcast and if no one listens to it, it doesn't matter because you're still editing out all those filler words. The good part is, if you start a podcast, there's a damn good chance that no one's going to listen to it anyway so go ahead and knock yourself out and don't be too embarrassed if the first few really stink. In conclusion, tonality speaks to that emotional brain. It's essentially the body language of the voice.

AJ: If you can't be heard you can't engage. If what you're trying to say does not actually hit their ears, you need to correct that. That is why volume definitely plays a role in your tonality. Loud but super calm with our volume. So by changing the cadence, slowing things down, and using pauses instead of filler words, we can become more dominant which conveys confidence.

JORDAN:

That's great. That's a great primer on vocal tonality. Of course we go over a little bit more when you come in and we can tailor it to you when you come here to The Art of Charm. But otherwise, this is a great start and I think guys can really take off with this stuff.

All right, show feedback and guest suggestions -- we rely on you guys to help keep our finger on the pulse. So if you know someone who's a good fit for the show, let us know at JordanH@theartofcharm.com. Boot camp details for our live programs also at theartofcharm.com and that's where you're going to find links to us on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media as well. If you're listening to this but you're not subscribed on iTunes or Stitcher or something like that, then that needs to change. Getting our shows delivered free to your phone or computer is the best way to make sure you don't miss a thing. You can do that by going to iTunes and searching for The Art of Charm podcast or by going to theartofcharm.com/itunes and clicking subscribe. That's really it.

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