

## **“Do You See What I’m Saying?”**

*by Joni Wilson*

**An excerpt from *The 3-Dimensional Business Voice***

**book two of the *Wilson Voice Series* (word count 693)**

**“Do you see what I’m saying?”** I used to get so annoyed when someone would say that to me. “That’s ridiculous!” I’d think to myself, “How can I *SEE* what your saying?” Of course that was before I learned how important body movements were in creating a full and resonant speaking voice. The visual body can tell a story all its own regardless of the audible words being spoken. They don’t call it “Body Language” for nothing!

Here is a perfect example of body language at work: The San Diego Chapter of the National Speakers Association offered a two camera video taping session for it’s members. Twenty-two speakers participated. Each one was given ten minutes of taping time to create a professional video demo. I was one of the twenty-two speakers participating that day. The session began at 9:30 AM, ended at 6:30 PM and *I WAS LAST!*

I sat there all day watching speaker after speaker step in front of the cameras and “shoot their best shot.” At the time I was in the midst of putting information together for this book so I paid particular attention to what did and did not vocally work for each speaker. Not as a critic mind you but as an observer. I was fascinated listening to all twenty-one voices, each one uniquely different from the others. Some were strong and authoritative, while others were soft and timid. It soon became obvious that the strong voices also had a tendency towards strong body movements.

Very early in my voice teaching career I learned how important the arms and hands were in adding power to the singing voice. This is also true of the speaking voice. Your voice is effected by any vibrational movements in your body. A strong fist pounding, even in the air, will cause the voice to vibrate. This vibrational movement in the body adds “punch” and volume to the spoken words. To test this out for yourself, try this simple exercise:

### **Vocal Vibration Exercise:**

Plant your two feet firmly on the floor. Make a fist with both hands and let both hands and arms drop to your sides as one unit. Now curl you arms at the elbows and shake you fists making sure they are stiff and ridged. (Don’t let them flop.) Can you feel the tension in you hands and arms as the entire body vibrates with your shaking fists? Good! Now add the vocal sound. A simple *Uhhhhhhhhh* will do nicely. Try it again, shaking the arms and fists while saying *Uhhhhhhhhh*. As you shake that body you will hear as well as feel the vibrations it brings to the voice. Now add even more movement to the sound by gently (or vigorously) bouncing on your heels and vibrating your entire body along with the arms and fists...*Uhhhhhhhhh*. Say, *Yahhhhhh* while shaking it all “out”. Try adding words like *Gooooooo*. (*Go*)...shaking that *oooooo*. Say *Fiiiiiii-ne* (fine) elongating the “*iiiiii*” while shaking your arms. Try other words. Some will vibrate better than others. Plosive consonants like D’s B’s L’s and G’s are great for shaking.

The purpose of this exercise is to show you how arm and hand movements can empower and increase the fullness of your vocal sound. This is a very effective technique when you want to make a strong point. Here are two sentences to test your shaking skill on. Tense your arms and shake your fist on the underlined consonants:

**“I Haaad a Hoorrible Daaay!”**

**“I want you all to Gooo Hooome to-daaay and dooo this Exercise.”**

All power words have a natural built in movement in them. Remember, the hands should always look natural while skilfully enhancing the meaning of your spoken words. Planned hand, arm and body movements can look fake and stiff if they do not go with the words you are speaking. Good natural hand, arm and body movement takes practice.

Here’s a tip:

**Always Practice in front of a mirror, then you can “*See what you are saying!*”** When you get good at shaking your whole body while making various sounds, you can join a gospel choir and sing your heart out. What fun!