

## "What do I actually do?!"

Since mimicry is in vogue I have noticed a lot of people confused about how exactly to use it to practice. It can feel like "well I hear things just fine and I can listen to a coach or resource but I don't know WHAT to do exactly?" Part of this is because we are used to using visual and textural perception to learn things. Because of this most people when beginning reach for visual or textural feedback to try and feel like they are working with something real. However the physical changes in our body involved in our voices are too subtle for us to control directly- they happen subconsciously- and any metaphor about placing sound in the body is just that- a metaphor. Both of these will lead us astray to get stuck not being able to change our voices even though we "feel the sound moving out of the chest" or "an app told me my voice is feminine" or "the pitch tracker said I'm in the right range" because the actual direct way to work with the voice is by listening and making noise.

A lot of us never learned how to work with sound directly. Your voice can feel ephemeral, fickle & unreal because it's made of air. But it isn't unreal it's very real you just need to learn how to work with it. So part of the foundation is learning how to actually hear & then how to change our voice based on what we hear. The other reason is we sound different to ourselves than we sound to others. To overcome this we need to learn to train our ability to hear & imagine sounds in our head accurately to close this gap. Here is "what to actually do" when voice training with mimicry:

Listen to a piece of reference audio that is changing a vocal quality you want to learn to control

Imagine the sound of that reference in your mind (this will prepare the body to speak and induce those physical changes you are currently trying to force yourself but can't possibly control in a subtle enough way, **DON'T SKIP THIS**)

Try to make your best attempt to mimic the sound with your voice (even if it's just making a noise)

Record each attempt

IMMEDIATELY play it back (auditory memory is very fragile so much so that you forget sounds right away after you hear them, you will need recordings or live input monitoring with a mic and headphones to be able to practice, you will eventually be able to evaluate your voice in the moment without relying so much on recordings or input monitoring but even then it will be useful to use them)

When listening to the sound ask yourself WHAT changed? (pitch, size, weight etc. (use your own words or metaphors if you don't have a term yet for something))

Try to change the target quality rather than anything else, attempting repeatedly if the wrong quality is changed

### **If you cant tell what changed:**

either: listen to labeled reference examples of a change in the quality you are working on as well as changes in other vocal qualities, if your clip doesn't sound like the target quality compare it to other clips until you figure out which quality(s) is changing

or solicit feedback from a coach, server or online forum to begin labeling and differentiating what you can hear

**Once you can always change the target quality instead of other qualities by itself:**

Repeat changing it to various degrees attempting a similar sound to the target in other voices (reference clips)

Try to be able to tell if you are making the same change as the target references and then specifically if you are moving closer or further from the target

If you can't tell then go back to listening to the references, recording yourself and sending clips until you feel confident that you know when you are moving closer or further from the target

When you record yourself making a sound close to or at the target use the sound of your voice in that recording as your new target

Repeat this until you can always create the target sound at will with the specific small toy example (single vowel, word etc)

From there we move more complex in examples until you can produce the quality shift in full speech

With this method resources become a lot easier to use because they are simply "something to listen to with labeled changes in vocal qualities" that you merely use to train your ear. I will make a follow up if there is interest about how to take this into the next step.

Confused about how to use this? Want to know where you are in this process? Any other questions? Comment below, dm me and join my server in my bio for free group lessons with me & 2 other coaches.