

Mastering The Art of Self-Direction

Class Notes

vo2gogo.com
presents
Mastering The Art of Self-Direction
Created by David H. Lawrence XVII

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This is an Art and Commerce class.
It's all about the storytelling and the business.

Art
The skill of **storytelling** - how to voice commercials, animation and narration. It's where almost all other voice over classes stop.

Commerce
The **business** of the business. How to attract customers, how to show them your wares, how to fill their needs, and how to price and collect your fees.

Science
The **technology tools and digital skills** needed to create and execute above-receiver practice. The science is always changing.

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Here's the plan for class.

Introduction
Self-Direction. Why it's not an elective skill.

Lesson 01
Celebration, your space and mechanics of efficiency.

Lesson 02
The first take. Adjusting that first take - if needed.

Lesson 03
Subsequent takes, final checks and engineer-quality delivery.

3 Or More Things To Explore
Your homework and other actionable items.

Questions and Answers
Save your questions until the end, then fire away.

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Introduction
Self-direction. Why it's not an elective skill.

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Self-direction is not an elective skill.
Here are four reasons why you need to become expert at self-direction.

- + 90-95% of your auditions won't be in a studio with an engineer**
Since the mid-2000s, fewer and fewer auditions are cattle calls - almost all are self-recorded.
- + No one is around to adjust you, so you have to rely on yourself**
With no engineer or producer or director, you're the new sheriff in Auditiontown.
- + Spend less time on perfection, more time on shipping**
The more high-quality, self-directed auditions you can submit, the higher your chances of booking.
- + It's only going to get "worse" (or "better" - depending on your attitude)**
Agencies aren't building more studios, they are retraining them and the engineers that go with them.

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Lesson 01
Celebration, your space and the mechanics of efficiency.

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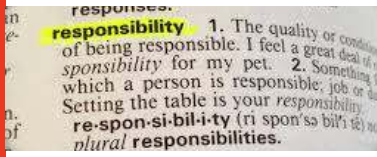
Start with celebrating your independence.
Here's a bunch of stuff you don't need to worry about when you're self-recording and self-directing.



No wardrobe No makeup No commute

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“ And that means it's all on you: you're now responsible for your choices, performance, recording and delivery. All you. ”



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Remove all environmental obstacles.
Don't make things more difficult for yourself - clean up your space.

Position your home studio properly
Basement? Walk-in closet? Space with irregular surfaces?

Don't compete with sleeping mates
Spouses, SO's, children, pets, guests. Work away from them.

Are appliances intruding every so often?
Shield yourself from HVAC, refrigerators, fans, and so on.

Insulate yourself from outside noises
Traffic, trains, planes, neighbors, pets, workers, etc.




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“ Auditions are always dry - no exception. No music, no effects, no processing (echo, reverb, etc.). EVER. ”

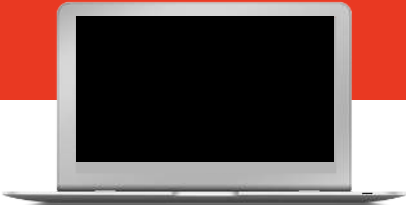


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Address your mic properly - Video Demo
Make sure you've positioned it properly - here's how.



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Hey there, it's David H. Lawrence XVII.
or
Hey there, it's David H. Lawrence XVII as Salesman #2.

Slatting

Quick and friendly.
And only with the information needed.

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Let your archetype do the talking.
Let your vivid imagination choose a powerful archetype – then let that archetype speak.



Choose your archetype.
Salesman? Clueless? Cheerleader? Slacker? You choose.


Mimic your archetype when speaking.
Match what's in your head with what comes out of your mouth.

Salesman #2: And...did you know that JD Power has ranked Honda number one in customer satisfaction for three years in a row?

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Lesson 02
The first take. Adjusting that first take – if needed.

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“ First take: try one without reading the breakdown. Let the words speak to you. ”



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Points to be aware of when voicing the first take. 16

5 things to remember as you create your first piece of VO art.

- The most important words**
The name of the product, the name of the company, and the positioning statement or slogan.
- The secret**
Revealing that secret solves the problem the listener may not know they have.
- Breathe**
Naturally, as needed, and inside sentences, not between them.
- Adjust for the stages**
What's the story's environment, and what's the production density?
- Smile**
Unless otherwise called for, start with a smile, and keep it on your face.

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Choose your physical vocal approach. 17

Which of these four volume levels is right for your character and storytelling?

- 01 Loud/boisterous**
Back away from the mic and raise your voice. Watch your levels.
- 02 Intimate/soft**
Move right up on the mic and lower your volume – but not your energy.
- 03 Friendly/normal**
Typical real everyday speech – tell us your story plainly and simply.
- 04 Odd characters**
Have fun with grunts and sighs and nonsense languages – build your own unique character.

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Lists, comparisons, setups and payoffs. 18

Build your case as you tell your story.

- Don't get fancy with a list's melody**
Don't call undue attention to the presentation.
- Treat lists as the benefit rundown**
Features are hell, benefits sell. Revel in the benefits.
- Setups: the problem**
Relate to the pain the listener is experiencing.
- Payoffs: the secret and solution revealed**
Reveal the secret as the ultimate solution to their problem.

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“ Always tell a story. Always sell the product. ”



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“ Pick the point, usually just before the slogan, to turn and ask for the sale. ”

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“ Handle pickups and edits smoothly – no need to berate yourself. ”



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Lesson 03

Subsequent takes, final checks and engineer-quality delivery.

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“ Your second take. Only if needed. ”

SECOND TAKE



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Self-direction of the overall performance.

You may not need to perform a second take, but just in case, check these 4 possibilities.

 **Compare**
Listen to what got recorded, versus what that perfect voice was in your head. Did it match?

 **Larger?**
If it wasn't quite as big as a story as it needed to be, place yourself on a larger stage. Raise the stakes.



 **Analyze**
See how close you came to the breakdown. Did your performance meet those needs?

 **Smaller?**
A wee bit over the top? Place yourself on a smaller stage-- but still, raise the stakes.

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Self-direction of content flow and sound.
Listen carefully to the "music" of your work.


- +** Sing-song pattern? Take us on a journey, don't read words well on a page.
- +** Clipped words or sentences? Give each element the life it deserves.
- +** Spaces between sentences? Can you say PAUSE? Take the air out.
- +** Pronunciation: make sure it's appropriately accurate and not too formal.

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Two final checkpoints: accents/dialects and standards.
Listen to your work, and re-take if necessary, if you feel like you can do better with either of these.



Accents and dialects
Are they believable? Are they accurate? More importantly, do they serve the story?



World-class examples
Ask yourself if you compare favorably with the best in the business.

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Track1.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track1\PackA
Track2.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track1\PackA
Track3.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track1\PackA
Track4.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track1\PackA
Track1.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track2\PackB
Track2.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track2\PackB
Track3.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track2\PackB
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Track3.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track3\PackC
Track4.m3u8	Donant	W:\Computer\Track3\PackC
Track11.mp2	Donant	W:\Computer\Track11\PackE
Track12.mp2	Donant	W:\Computer\Track11\PackE

"

Check one last time, before you send your MP3, that you have the right file in the right format.

"

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3 Or More Things To Explore

Your homework and other actionable items.

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3 or more things to explore.


Take what you've learned, explore and learn more, then put that all to work.

- +** Get your best work out in your first take. Make bolder choices faster.
- +** Let the words do the heavy lifting. Review copy for meaning and story.
- +** Play with your archetypes, and record the story from different perspectives.

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Questions

Fire away. Or send them to david@vo2gogo.com.

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