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➤ **Control sibilance and popping consonants.**

- Without this, recording your vocal can be a nightmare because too much sibilance hurts the listener's ears! And fixing excessive 'S' sounds with de-SS'ers always limits the quality of sound. A related problem is the popping of P's, B's, WH's, SH's and other consonants. You must be able to control your consonants even while you clearly form them.
- How? Make 'S' sounds softer without a whistle effect. Control popping consonants by backing off your air pressure (wow, this sure is important, isn't it?). When a sensitive mic still picks up popping, there are some practical tips you can use:
 1. Quickly put two fingers right in front of your lips when you make the troublesome consonant sound. This will break the air stream going into the mic.
 2. 'Pull' the popping consonant: act like you're singing it backwards, again limiting the burst of air.
 3. Slightly aim the consonant off-mic. You must do this in such a way that your vocal resonance is still captured for the word.

➤ **Control dynamic expression.**

- Without it—you will over express and sound fake, under express and you will bore the listeners, or bring too many changing emotional levels to the song to sound authentic.
- How? Express the emotion of the lyric like a great actor delivering lines in a monolog that invite an emotional response to the message. Again, let the flow of the message in the lines of the song determine the dynamics you use. Also consider your genre; use expression that communicates most powerfully within your style.

- **Remember:**

When going for recording vocal magic, don't just go through the motions and sound the melody. Communicate every vocal track you record like it's the first time you ever said that to anyone. If you remember who you are as the deliverer of the song, who you're talking to and why you're having the conversation, boredom will find it hard to enter your vocal.

DEALING WITH FEAR

Nervousness, performance anxiety, insecurity, numbness—any of the ways fear manifests itself in a singer being recorded—is always terribly disabling and sabotaging for the voice. Here are things I've discovered through the years to help successfully conquer the monster:

- A wise production team (engineers, producer, vocal producer) will do their best to make you feel relaxed, able and confident. They will not work with you through intimidation or negativity.
- The fewer people in the studio, the better. No one should be in the studio that makes you feel distracted, unable or intimidated.
- Get your head right. Focus your thoughts away from yourself to the real task you have in the vocal booth: communicating TO someone else. Keep out voice freezing thoughts of competition, perfectionism, worry or excessive concern about technique. If you need some technique, let your vocal producer suggest a quick fix and just punch that in.
- What you wear can make a difference in how confident and relaxed you feel singing. Consider that when dressing for the studio.
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, and too much caffeine. Eat a good meal before the studio. What you eat and drink can not only affect your vocal control but also your mental focus.