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# Seven Destructive HABITS

All Performers Must Avoid



BY DOT TODMAN





Seven Destructive  
**HABITS**  
All Performers Must Avoid



**2nd Edition**

BY

**DOT TODMAN**

DOT'S VOICE STUDIOS PRODUCTION

*SEVEN DESTRUCTIVE HABITS ALL PERFORMERS MUST AVOID*  
by Dot Todman

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will help you discover how  
naturally powerful and magnetic  
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# INTRODUCTION

After several years of teaching hundreds of students, earning degrees in Theatre Arts Ed, Music, Psychology Ed, looking deeply at the psychology of the singer, and observing my own vocal journey as a professional singer, I've discovered that there are seven destructive habits that all performers can find themselves stuck in at any given time. These habits go well beyond vocal ability, and indicate an imbalance in the performer's instrument. (I explain more about what your instrument is and how to balance it in my book, *Finding Your Core Voice*.)

Most of us who try to improve our voice are focused on trying to “fix” it. We work from outside of ourselves, focusing on things such as our pitch, tone, range, and rhythm, when these are merely the results of a much deeper function - **how we use our instrument and how we relate to it**. You can know the best vocal exercises in the world, but if you do not know how to create the right kind of conditions within yourself to utilize them, they are worth nothing. For example, if you're fearful about singing high notes, or have a belief that you can't sing them, and you are given vocal exercises that require you to sing high notes, you will likely tense your neck and jaw creating more issues that will prevent you from doing the drill successfully.

I am therefore suggesting to you that you don't need to be fixed by outside forces, programs, or vocal tricks. Instead, **look at what you are doing internally to create the results you are getting and know that you already have all the components within you in order to discover your core voice - the real authentic powerful voice within you**. Now, it is possible these "components" are not working in your favor at the moment, but that doesn't mean that they aren't inside of you—ready to be activated and support you as a dynamic singer or speaker.

The most exciting part about this information, is that once you learn where your weakness is, you can transform it into a strength through the use of my CORE Vocal Power® method. I'm sharing information that everybody experiences, but until now - nobody has figured out how it all fits together and how this information can serve you as a performer.

Because most singers still believe their instrument is only their voice, they only learn how to utilize a small part of it. My point is, if you do find that you are stuck in one of the following seven habits, you are probably quite unhappy with the singing results you are getting despite how refined your vocal technique may be, because learning vocal technique without the right kind of awareness behind it will lead to failure. As your Vocal Empowerment Coach, it is my job to move you out of the area(s) you are stuck in and help you turn those weaknesses into strengths.

Each chapter in this book will illustrate and describe the seven destructive habits. **I will be referring to the habits as "states" or stages and I'll share my insights with you about these stages.** It is my hope that you'll discover a deeper understanding and clarity of your own experience as a singer. Knowledge is power. I trust that this information will help you gain the courage to balance your whole instrument (MIND, SOUL, BODY) and grow into your empowered CORE voice.





reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just learned in the introduction, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

If you're stuck in one of the seven destructive habits, it simply means you are \_\_\_\_\_ in your instrument.



“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’  
Actually, who are you not to be?”

—Marianne Williamson



## chapter one

# THE SEVEN DESTRUCTIVE HABITS

*“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”*

—Albert Einstein

Most singers shriek when I tell them not to focus on what they’re doing wrong when they sing, but to celebrate what they’re doing right. It’s programmed within most of us to want to know what we’re doing wrong because the human brain is wired to notice these things, creating a need in us to fix ourselves. The paradox is the more we focus on what we’re doing wrong, we magnify it and create more of it. According to the Law of Attraction, whatever is going on in our minds is what we attract—be it good, bad, or indifferent.

For example, if in your mind you think “I’m pitchy,” while you sing, the odds are good you’re going to sing pitchy. This is why I do not usually fix pitch issues by telling singers they hit a wrong note, because then that’s all they think about while they continue to sing. There are better ways to address pitch when you can see the root of the problem - or cause, not simply the effect. Many vocal

coaches don't always find the success they would like to see in their students because they are too focused on pointing out what a student is doing wrong which creates an imbalance in the student's mind.

Over time, some singers become very damaged by this kind of criticism, which is usually intended by the coach to be constructive. However, the singer develops a terrible defensive habit and becomes an expert at being quick to point out what they're doing wrong. They become convinced that it feels safer, or more in control, to point out their own mistakes before someone else can. As a result, the amount of energy that the singer spends in monitoring and nitpicking their own vocal flaws only creates more inability on the part of the singer. This mind-set of honing in on what you are doing wrong takes away from the natural flow of your performance and results in a vicious cycle of self intimidation and defeat.

The best way, I've discovered, to help singers overcome their vocal flaws is simply to identify the source of the problem. The source of all vocal issues stem from an imbalance in your whole instrument. Once you understand the root of your vocal challenge, it will be easier for you to remedy it. In other words, *core vocal power* occurs naturally once the whole instrument is in balance, and by learning the seven states of singers you can begin to identify the root of your vocal flaws.

CORE Vocal Power® is a method for mastering this balance. One advantage of using this vocal approach is that it is dynamic in nature and caters to the individual. Because everyone is different and thinks differently about their voice, the process of finding your

*core voice* will be a singular journey. Remember, nobody knows you better than you, therefore, the more self-awareness you have the better off you will be. Let's get started and learn about the seven common extreme modes that singers commonly fall into.



Although everyone's vocal journey will be different, there are two key themes throughout each of the seven states that is the same for everyone and they are: the importance of being present, and letting go of the idea of perfection. These are illusions. Trust me. You do not control your voice into empowered perfection. The secret is to align and allow it in the present moment.

Each of the seven states of singers fall into one of the three components of the instrument. Here is a brief overview of the seven states and their corresponding component:

#### **Mind Dominant Singers:**

- ❶ The Perfectionist (Left Brain)
- ❷ The Asleep (Right Brain)

#### **Soul Dominant Singers:**

- ❸ The Overly-Conscious (Left Brain)
- ❹ The Oblivious (Right Brain)

#### **Body Dominant Singers:**

- ❺ The Action Oriented (Left Brain)
- ❻ The Hider (Left Brain)
- ❼ The Awkward (Right Brain)

Notice how each of the above states corresponds to one side of the brain. Remember, part of having **imbalances** in the voice also means that your mind has shifted to either the **extreme** right brain or the **extreme** left brain.

The information in the next three chapters is designed to help you discover which of the seven states you identify with most. Once you understand the cause of your vocal imbalance, you will be able to apply the CORE Vocal Power® method and watch how your weaknesses become strengths!

*“It’s the awareness... of how you  
are stuck, that makes you recover.”*

—Fritz Perls

Please keep in mind that during your vocal journey you can easily shift from one state into another. This is normal. The seven states are extreme examples in order to help you easily understand and identify the differences between them. With a clear understanding you can better assess the root of your personal singing tendencies.

There are no “good” or “bad” states, so go easy on yourself if you find yourself in one. It’s also possible that you could be a combination of two or more states. This is also normal. I encourage you to be honest with yourself and embrace whatever state you identify with, right now, in your vocal journey.





reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just learned about the seven states, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

The more we focus on what we're doing wrong, we \_\_\_\_\_ it.

When a singer becomes \_\_\_\_\_ from too much criticism, they spend more energy focusing on their vocal flaws, which takes away from the natural flow of their performance.

The best way to overcome your vocal flaws is to identify the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_. The source always comes from an \_\_\_\_\_ in your whole instrument.



## chapter two

# MIND DOMINANT SINGERS

Mind singers can have the hardest time getting out of their own way. Their heightened mental activity will overshadow their soulful vocal expression, leaving them sounding either too mechanical or too boring, or both.

Sometimes mind dominant singers may sing every note completely out of tune, or pitch-perfect, but because of their tendencies to control, or space out, the audience is left at the end of their performance feeling like they missed out on what could have been something special- had their been a soul-connection. Ironically, mind dominant singers are usually the most forgettable singers on the market.

### **Main Issue:**

Lack of Clarity

### **Question to Ponder:**

Do I feel safe being present?

There are two extremes of mind dominant singers: *The Perfectionist* and *The Asleep*. Let's take a look at these two extremes in detail.



# 1

## The Perfectionist [extreme left brain]

You are in the perfectionist state, if you get caught up in “vocal technique” for fear of looking bad, or making a mistake. It’s hard for you to remain present because you’re constantly analyzing your voice while you sing.

You also have a distinct lack of ease surrounding your energy. The thought of looking extremely foolish, like some of the highlighted contestants on American Idol, (see “Oblivious Singers”) haunts you in your sleep. You may also view your voice from the outside-in, believing that in order to be a successful performer you must master each note “perfectly.”

The idea of what constitutes a “perfect singer” is debatable. However, you don’t usually trust your vocal ability and are often the kind of singer who “over practices” and then gets frustrated with yourself when you don’t meet your own expectations.



### **THE PERFECTIONIST**

This singer's analytical eyes are in anticipation, slightly raised up, as she listens to and micromanages herself while she sings.

You may believe that if you're hard enough on yourself, you will eventually succeed. Furthermore, you prefer to catch yourself making mistakes, more than letting somebody else discover them. In short, you're your own worst enemy.

During this state, singing in a recording studio might be preferred over performing live, as you will be able to edit or "fix" the flaws you feel are evident in your voice. However, listening back to your voice will still feel very uncomfortable for you, and if you have any say in

the matter, you'll most likely add so many effects to your voice that it won't even end up sounding like you!

Although live performances might be difficult during this state, you can excel in musical theatre or in situations where you play a character while you sing. You often find it easier to hide behind another persona, or sing in character, rather than experience your own vulnerability.

Those of you who relate to this state will frequently feel very vulnerable. In spite of this, you are usually willing to put yourselves on the line, which is good; however, your excessive negative inner-dialogue and compulsive, controlling mind will get you into trouble frequently.

Ironically, out of all the seven states, *The Perfectionist* will suffer the most with pitch issues.



# 2

## The Asleep [extreme right brain]

You are the singer who completely zones out while you sing or perform. You don't really pay attention to anything because it's too hard for you to maintain focus and concentrate on what you're singing about.

However, in spite of zoning out, you are still aware of what you're doing and oftentimes do it well; yet, you are prone to bore easily and multi-task while singing. Others may jokingly label you as A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder) and you notice that you have a pattern of not always finishing what you start.

If you're a songwriter, you might have many song ideas or melodies bouncing around inside of your head, but you've made little effort to fully write them out. Or maybe you're a good brainstormer and can generate a lot of interesting ideas, but again, have a difficult time getting them on paper for the world to see. The good news is: you're a genius waiting to take off if you could just buckle down and be disciplined about your craft.

Those of you in this state often sound great when you sing, but your audience can sense your lack of focus, which may result in their minds also wandering during your performance. It can become challenging for the audience to know what you're singing about, so they begin to zone out as well.

This symptom of zoning out gets even worse if you're singing a ballad. When slipping into this state, you can go from being interesting to boring in a matter of seconds, especially when performing live.



#### **THE ASLEEP**

This singer is distracted, while she listens to the music and not invested in the message of the song.

Also, even if your song is upbeat, such as techno, or music that has a lot of “space” in it, you’ll probably be able to make a decent studio recording but beware, it’s always possible that these recordings with a lot of space in them, may come out sounding dead or empty.

Anyone who fits into this group may struggle with being good actors or theatrical performers because they lack the mental focus and

clarity needed to succeed in that field. The good news is, with the help of the CORE Vocal Power® method, you can learn how to shift easily from being zoned out to being in the zone!

### Mind Dominant Summary

Interestingly, singers and speakers commonly fall into the category of mind dominant because it falls in line with how most of the world operates.

The world-view places importance on looking good on the outside and feeling shame for making mistakes. The fear and shame caused by a potential mistake, compels them into a defensive, disempowered place. The state of Mind Dominance emerges because our visually and intellectually overly-stimulating world, give us short attention spans, long bouts of brain fog or lack of presence during a song. The constant mental battle between a controlling perfectionist and being overwhelmed by small details often results in “checking-out” mentally. Once the battle is over and Mind balance returns, these singers become free to explore and enjoy deeper aspects of their instrument.







reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just learned about the mind dominant singers, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

Mind Singers operate mostly from their \_\_\_\_\_, but this part of their instrument is more likely to get thrown out of balance.

**Perfectionist Singers** constantly \_\_\_\_\_ their voice. They are afraid to be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Asleep Singers** are often labeled as \_\_\_\_\_. They are usually unfocused \_\_\_\_\_, who just haven't learned the skill of finishing what they start. The good news is they're not micromanaging and being \_\_\_\_\_ out is on the pathway to being in the \_\_\_\_\_.



## chapter three

# SOUL DOMINANT SINGERS

People who are in the soul dominant state are expressive individuals, who are often quick to react based on how they're feeling. Feelings rule their life; they either repress their feelings or let them explode outward. Instead of focusing on story-telling through music, soul dominant singers primarily view singing as an outlet for expressing their emotions. They find they're able to move energy through their heart, which can either lead them to feeling overly vulnerable in the process or somewhat self-indulgent.

An interesting quirk of this state is that their sensitivity toward other people's energy makes them pick up on the behavior of those around them. For example, if someone is speaking with an accent, the soul dominant singer will most likely unintentionally pick up the accent. Their voice often changes, depending on who they are with and it may randomly malfunction for no particular reason at inconvenient times.

**Main Issue:**

Feeling Safe in Expression

**Question to Ponder:**

Do I feel safe being heard?

There are two extremes of soul dominant singers: *The Overly-Conscious* and *The Oblivious*. Let's take a look at these two extremes in detail.

A large blue circle containing the white number 3, serving as a section marker.

# 3

## The Overly-Conscious [extreme left brain]

Your voice can sound like it's muffled, or that it hasn't expressed itself fully. Your listeners can tell that you're holding back because you may only use 30%-50% of your vocal capacity.

Occasionally, when you finally get the nerve to sing in front of others, you may not even be heard. You most likely have a great voice but your problem is letting your authentic feelings show while you sing. As a result, your voice becomes a mini-version of what it really is. It's most likely that when you're alone, you sound amazing

(at least it feels that way in the car or shower), but when you get in front of other people to sing, a totally different sound emerges that is weaker or may feel “childlike” to you. This is because you have created rules about what it means to be “safe” while singing.

You don’t enjoy singing live because it feels emotionally uncomfortable—maybe even like torture. You feel way too vulnerable. Often, whether you’re singing or not, you’re likely to minimize your own presence, and give your energy to others. You can appear to be an introvert, yet inwardly, you strongly crave external approval.



### **THE OVERLY-CONSCIOUS**

This woman sounds great and feels safe singing alone in the bathtub, but when performing in front of others, this is when she feels most naked and her walls go up.

When overly-conscious singers finally let go of their shyness, they often become incredible studio singers because they're naturally in touch with their heart and soul. Once they set it free, we're all in for a treat!

Until the voice is fully realized, this group of singers won't be satisfied with their vocal expression, which is a blessing in disguise because it's that dissatisfaction that eventually compels them to come out of their shell. As a vocal empowerment coach, this is my favorite group of singers to observe as they evolve into empowered artists.



# 4

## The Oblivious [extreme right brain]

You get so caught up in the emotion of the song, that you frequently disconnect from your audience. Your focus and tendency is to just express yourself and jam out. In the worst case scenario, you are like those contestants on American Idol who sing their hearts out and then are dumbfounded when Simon Cowell says, "You're horrendous and should certainly keep your day job."

Because you don't know how great or challenged your voice is, you don't know what to do with a compliment when you do get one.

You haven't spent the time getting acquainted with your entire instrument. Therefore, you don't have a sense of your own voice or your the power of your vibration as you sing.

Your ideas about singing are based almost purely on feeling rather than a balance of mind, soul, and body awareness. We might find you singing along with your favorite singers and imitating their voice, all the while, completely rejecting your own. You may be frustrated because you feel like you have not "found your voice" yet. However,



#### **THE OBLIVIOUS**

This singer is unaware of his surroundings, and purely focused on expressing his emotion. His eyes are closed, shutting out his audience and his facial expressions are overly dramatic.

if you're in this group and were born with an amazing voice, you can find great success in a singing career as your instrument evolves.

You are most likely better at recording in the studio, than performing live, due to your tendencies of becoming self-absorbed and disconnected from your audience. If you're the lead singer of a band, while others watch you, they feel like they are not a part of the experience. However, on the flip side, you might be extremely entertaining if you're lucky enough to be born with natural charisma.

People who land in this state usually are lucky enough to be connected to their vocal passion and power. They can tune into and embody the energy of a song, but at times, not really experience the notes the way a perfectionist singer would. For them, it's all about the feeling, which can work for or against this kind of singer.

### Soul Dominant Summary

The soul dominant singer is the state typically visited by those singers who are about to blossom into their full potential. Their natural abilities of being in touch with their feelings while at the same time being present with the song are their best assets. However, having the patience to do it in a balanced, self-accepting way takes practice—even for the best of us!





reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just learned about the soul dominant singers, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

Soul Singers operate mostly from their \_\_\_\_\_, but this part of their instrument is most likely to get thrown out of balance.

**Overly Conscious Singers** sound great in the \_\_\_\_\_ but when they get in front of people, their voice feels like it shrinks to a smaller version of who they really are. In this stage, singing live feels like \_\_\_\_\_ and you're likely to \_\_\_\_\_ your presence. This kind of singer seems like an \_\_\_\_\_, but craves external \_\_\_\_\_.

**Oblivious Singers** are so focused on expressing \_\_\_\_\_ that oftentimes they ignore the other parts of their instrument to the extent of being overly \_\_\_\_\_ and self-absorbed. When we witness these singers, it feels like we are watching someone have an \_\_\_\_\_ but may not feel a part of it, unless the singer has natural \_\_\_\_\_.



## chapter four

# BODY DOMINANT SINGERS

Being body dominant, simply put, means that the singer is overly-focused on their body. Accordingly, they usually have the most memorable stage presence than either of the previous two groups. Generally, they're very particular about what they wear, their body shape, their style and overall appearance to the extent that it overshadows their vocal ability and freedom on stage.

### **Main Issue:**

Physical Freedom

### **Question to Ponder:**

Do I feel safe being seen?

There are **three** different ways to experience the body dominant state: *The Action Oriented*, *The Hider*, and *The Disconnected*. Let's take a look at these three extremes in detail.



# 5

## The Action Oriented [left brain, extrovert]

You are most likely an extrovert with an acceptable voice. Your main struggle is that you fixate on your body, which can upstage your overall presentation. For example, you place a high priority on choreography and thus neglect your song interpretation. You mistakenly believe that the “show” is in what you do on stage, rather than how you sound on stage.

Oftentimes you experience nervous energy during a performance, like a shaky knee, wiggly leg, or arm that’s noticeable to your audience. The origin of this excess energy (not a tic as will be discussed later) stems from your obsession with having complete control over your body. You may even find yourself in this state if you are a dancer who is still finding a comfort level with your voice.

Also, if you are a visual learner, you may have tendencies toward this state because, people who learn visually are typically more

sensitive to the body language of others and of the appearance of things around them.



**THE ACTION ORIENTED**

It is clear that this fellow is placing more attention on his body movements than on his voice.

Anyone who is in this state is generally a fun performer to watch, because you never know what he's going to do next. On stage they burst with energy and have great presence; however, their weakness is that their body upstages their voice. Once they find a balance between the voice and body, they'll be on their way to vocal mastery.



# 6

## The Hider [left brain, introvert]

You are the exact opposite of the action oriented singer. You love to sing and also usually have a decent voice, but you are introverted and horrified of anyone watching you. You're just not comfortable in your body and therefore you are afraid to lose control of it. This usually results in doing absolutely nothing while you sing, or appearing very stiff—practically frozen like.

Usually, you lack confidence in how you look and so you sing from outside of yourself, focused on how you're appearing to others. As a result, your energy usually defaults into a nervous disarray of confusion on stage. This disarray may not always be visually obvious, but it's still felt in your vocal expression by the listener.

Listeners won't usually know how to interpret this energy, so they may just begin to feel uncomfortable watching you, even though you're not really doing anything horribly offensive.

Most of us aren't always fond of watching ourselves on video, but you take this reaction to a whole new level. For example, if you were even asked to look at yourself in a mirror while you sing, you would refuse altogether, cringing at the thought. You've somehow concluded that you're not worthy of being watched and oftentimes, give up on performing altogether. The root of this kind of self-doubt usually stems from something much deeper within.

Surprisingly, I've seen many singers suddenly flip from being an introverted body singer to an extroverted body singer. I've even seen it happen to a singer while they were in mid-performance.



### **THE HIDER**

This singer does not want people to really see him. So he chooses to control what they do see. He's hiding behind his shades, hat and props, hoping they will help to cover his inner discomfort.

When a singer experiences this kind of dramatic shift, it can be common for body tics to manifest. A twitchy knee, a sporadic arm fling, and a bouncy foot are all signs of this. What's happening is that the body is finally coming out of its shell-seeking zone. Part of the mind is horrified and wants to maintain control, while the other part is thrilled and wants to be free. These mixed signals from the mind to the body result in random body tics.

Out of the seven states of singers, those who find themselves in this area usually make the best recording artists. Once they're behind that microphone in a safe environment, they'll find the capacity within themselves to produce a great sound and are often times known as one-take wonders.



## The Awkward [extreme right brain]

If you are in this state, then you're most likely not grounded and are somewhat flighty. You frequently have a good voice but unlike the left brained singers, who are obsessed with their bodies, you're not in touch with your body at all.

You struggle with feeling uncoordinated and disconnected while on stage, particularly if you've been given choreography. You'd prefer to just sing standing with limited movement or make up your own movement on the fly.

Since you might not be in touch with your body, you can frequently appear clumsy on stage to the point of tripping and falling. You can also have visual quirks that aren't tics, but just unsettled energy that results from not being in the body. It can take you longer to learn choreography, but once you learn it, it will be with you forever.

Despite your apparent challenge, you tend to have good stage presence. You're just not accessing your full potential because you are not connected to your body and making good use of its presence. You can make a decent recording artist, but would become phenomenal at it if you would fully embody and own your energy.



#### **THE AWKWARD**

This young lady appears awkward, because although she's concerned with her appearance, she's simply not "in" her body.

Like the left brained introverts (*The Hiders*), singers who fall into this state don't know how to fully own their energy and what they're actually projecting during a song or performance. However, the big difference between the two is that *The Awkward* singers don't have the same level of awareness as *The Hiders*.

## Body Dominant Summary

More than the average singer, the body dominant singers who work through their issues, will likely become incredible dancers and possess the most stage presence because they've mastered how to be comfortable in their own skin. Once they're grounded, they can finally let their musical gift flow.

Nine times out of ten, as they evolve, they spend a lot of time in front of the mirror, learning and perfecting movement that matches their spirit and voice. These moves become a natural part of their confident package and are an asset to their overall presentation as a performer.







reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just learned about the body dominant singers, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

Body Singers operate mostly from their \_\_\_\_\_, but it is this part of the instrument that most likely become off balance.

**Action Oriented Singers** are \_\_\_\_\_, who are obsessed with \_\_\_\_\_ and movement on stage over vocal expression. These singers usually have an \_\_\_\_\_ amount of energy, but are \_\_\_\_\_ to watch.

**Hider Singers** are \_\_\_\_\_, who are \_\_\_\_\_ of anyone watching them. They appear \_\_\_\_\_ when they sing and cringe at the idea of having to look at themselves in the mirror or on \_\_\_\_\_. Oftentimes as these singers come out of their shell, they can develop \_\_\_\_\_ if they bounce over to the action-oriented singer because of the mixed signals they are sending to the mind.

**Awkward Singers** are not \_\_\_\_\_ or in touch with their \_\_\_\_\_ at all. Therefore, they appear \_\_\_\_\_ on stage, yet somehow they still tend to have good stage \_\_\_\_\_.



chapter five

# THE END IS THE BEGINNING

*“What lies before us and what lies behind us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when we bring what is within out into the world, miracles happen.”*

—Henry David Thoreau

We are all unique human beings who may shift in and out of the seven challenging stages throughout our vocal journey. After reading through these states, you may have found current aspects of yourself in various categories. Perhaps, as you were reading this, you even remembered back to a time when you possessed those traits but have now moved on.

We’ve all made mistakes as singers. The question is: **Are you ready to move beyond them without self-punishment and turn your mistakes into strengths?**

As I’ve reviewed the seven states of singers in preparation for this book, I’ve recalled aspects of myself in each group and how they’ve manifested at different times along my own vocal journey. Deep

down I continued to trust that I was doing something right, stayed focused on surrendering to the process of vocal mastery, and continued loving myself—like that best friend I mentioned at the beginning of the book.

Perhaps, the **courage** to be persistent is our greatest asset. We don't always have to get it on the first try, but as long as we are persistent we can achieve anything, and once we evolve through the seven different states, we can access our *core voice* and become empowered singers.

If you only get one message from this book, I hope it's that you realize that anyone can find the inner-strength to close an old chapter that wasn't serving them well, and begin anew!

I outlined the seven states of singers to help you build personal understanding and awareness about yourself. Once you notice them, combine that knowledge with my CORE Vocal Power® method, which you can use to make the necessary adjustments and shift out of the imbalanced states.

Fundamentally, I believe that everyone has vocal potential, but many quit because they don't understand their instrument, and might mistake one of the seven states on their path as a weakness that can't be helped. Instead, we can see them as a necessary part of our journey to make us stronger singers, and choose to explore the possibility of having an empowered voice.

CORE Vocal Power® is a method of bringing the Mind, Soul and Body into harmony. This integrative system provides the “how to” for addressing the states of vocal empowerment using:

Exercises that address and center the **mind**

Exercises that address and heal the **soul**

Exercises that address and build the **voice**

I'm sure you realize by now, that singing is a process that involves all of you, not just the two muscular folds in your larynx! The great news, is that CORE Vocal Power® will teach you to acquire beneficial skills that go far beyond creating an amazing voice.

CORE Vocal Power® takes you on an inner journey, providing you with empowering principles. These will help you achieve more confidence, awareness, creativity, soul connection, and success in manifesting your vocal dreams from the inside (CORE)–out (Vocal Power)!



*“...because empowered singing is more than just hitting all of the right notes.”*

—Dot Todman, Vocal Empowerment Coach



reflection questions for you to consider

Based on what you just read, take a moment and see if you can complete all of the blanks in the following statements. You may refer to the back of this book for the answers.

Most people move in and out of the \_\_\_\_\_ throughout their vocal journey. The purpose of learning about these states is to move \_\_\_\_\_ them without \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ and turn them into \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ is our greatest asset. CORE Vocal Power is a method of bringing the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_. It takes you on an inward vocal journey and helps you achieve more \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in manifesting your vocal dreams.





## **Dot Todman's Recommended Alternative Reading List:**

*My Stroke of Insight* by Jill Bolte Taylor, PhD

[www.mystrokeofinsight.com](http://www.mystrokeofinsight.com)

[Watch Ted Talk](#)

*The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne

[www.theseecret.tv](http://www.theseecret.tv)

*The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle

[www.eckharttolle.com](http://www.eckharttolle.com)

*You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay

[www.louisehay.com](http://www.louisehay.com)



For more information about **Dot Todman**  
and the CORE Vocal Power® method  
or to learn about private vocal sessions via Skype,  
please visit **[dotsvoicestudios.com](http://dotsvoicestudios.com)**  
or call (310) 497-6193.

Thank you.



the reflection question answer section



A

### **Questions from Page 1:**

If you're stuck in one of the seven states of singers, it simply means that part of your instrument is **unbalanced**.

### **Questions from Page 7:**

The more we focus on what we're doing wrong, we **magnify** it.

When a singer becomes **defensive** from too much criticism, they spend more energy focusing on their vocal flaws, which takes away from the natural flow of their performance.

The best way to overcome your vocal flaws is to identify the **source** of the **problem**. The source always comes from an **imbalance** in your whole instrument.

### **Questions from Page 15:**

Mind Singers operate mostly from their **mind**, but this part of their instrument is more likely to get thrown out of balance.

Perfectionist Singers constantly **micromanage** their voice. They are afraid to be **wrong**.

Asleep Singers are often labeled as **ADD**. They are usually unfocused **geniuses**, who just haven't learned the skill of finishing what they start. The good news is they're not micromanaging and being **zoned** out is on the pathway to being in the **zone**.

### Questions from Page 22:

Soul Singers operate mostly from their **soul**, but this part of their instrument is most likely to get thrown out of balance.

Overly Conscious Singers sound great in the **bathtub** but when they get in front of people, their voice feels like it shrinks to a smaller version of who they really are. In this stage, singing live feels like **torture** and you're likely to **minimize** your presence. This kind of singer seems like an **introvert**, but craves external **approval (validation)**.

Oblivious Singers are so focused on expressing **emotion** that oftentimes they ignore the other parts of their instrument to the extent of being overly **dramatic** and self-absorbed. When we witness these singers, it feels like we are watching someone have an **experience** but may not feel a part of it, unless the singer has natural **charisma**.

### Questions from Page 31:

Body Singers operate mostly from their **body**, but it is this part of the instrument that most likely become off balance.

Action Oriented Singers are **extroverts**, who are obsessed with **choreography** and movement on stage over vocal expression. These singers usually have an **excess** amount of energy, but are **fun** to watch.

Hider Singers are **introverts**, who are **horrified** of anyone watching them. They appear **stiff** when they sing and cringe at the idea of having to look at themselves in the mirror or on **video**. Oftentimes as these singers come out of their shell, they can develop **tics** if they bounce over to the action-oriented singer because of the mixed signals they are sending to the mind.

Awkward Singers are not **grounded** or in touch with their **body** at all. Therefore, they appear **disconnected** on stage, yet somehow they still tend to have good stage **presence**.

### Questions from Page 36:

Most people move in and out of the **states/stages** throughout their vocal journey. The purpose of learning about these states is to move **beyond** them without **self - punishment** and turn them into **strengths**.

The **courage** to be **persistent** is our greatest asset. CORE Vocal Power is a method of bringing the **mind, soul** and **body** into **balance**. It takes you on an inward vocal journey and helps you achieve more **confidence, awareness, creativity, soul connection** and **success** in manifesting your vocal dreams.