

Transcription of Vol. 1.7: Using Speech Sounds to Modulate Emotions

[Slide: 1] "Holistic Emotive Practices Vol. 1 Part 7: Using Speech Sounds to Modulate Emotions"

Hello and welcome to Volume 1, Part 7 of the series on Holistic Emotive Processes, HEP for short. In this talk I get to the heart of HEP: how to use speech sounds to modulate emotions.

[Slide: 2] "Four Step Process

1. Identify your current mood
2. Pick a sound or sounds that matches your mood
3. Determine a target mood
4. Choose sounds to reach your goal"

The process comes down to four basic steps. You must first recognize and categorize your current mood, using the terminology for emotional dimension established in earlier talks. Once you identify your mood you need to choose a sound or sounds that correspond to some aspect of that mood. Sometimes a single sound works, sometimes it's a pair of sounds together that capture the current mood. Once you have an initial sound you select a target mood, a feeling you would rather be having rather than the current one. Finally, you must pick a sequence of two or more sounds that will take you from the current mood to the target.

[Slide: 3] "Identification of Mood Based on Three Emotion Dimensions

Mood often consists of more than one dimension.

Depression is often unpleasant and low arousal.

Anger is often high arousal and unpleasant."

Often a mood will consist of more than one emotional component. We can have elements of unpleasantness and arousal when we are angry, or unpleasantness and lack of arousal during times of a depressed or sad mood.

[Slide: 4] "Choose the Sound or sounds that Best Matches Your Mood

One sound will not usually match the entire spectrum of your mood.

Pick a sound that matches the most salient or problematic aspect of your mood. "

In the case of a mood with more than one emotional dimension you may not find it possible to select sounds that correspond exactly to that state. In such cases you should choose sounds that match the most salient or problematic aspect of that mood. If you are angry and feel both a high level of arousal and also unpleasant, it may make the most sense to choose an "r" or /r/ as the initial sound. This way your HEP word can move away from the arousing element of your anger, and help you cool off.

[Slide: 5] “Cardinal Rule of HEP

A HEP word always starts with the speech sound(s) that expresses or releases the most salient/problematic aspect of your mood. For unpleasant mood use words beginning with /w/”

The most important rule of HEP can be stated simply: your HEP word must start with a sound or sounds that express an aspect of your current mood. If the word you use has no connection to your mood it cannot move your mood anywhere. Only by synchronizing with the current mood can you expect a HEP word to have a significant lasting effect on your mood. You may be able to induce another feeling by mindless repetition of words with no relationship to your current mood, but in HEP parlance the problematic mood has not been dealt with by doing this, only buried. You can expect it to resurface. If you hope to get past it, you must face the mood and deal squarely with it. You may not conquer the problem by a single HEP practice, but at least you begin the process of resolving the issue.

[Slide: 6] “Keep Target Mood Realistic

Choose a modest, obtainable goal. You can only work on one issue per word, but you can link words.”

When choosing a target mood you cannot always expect to bring yourself into a pleasant relaxed mood. Pleasant relaxed moods may be possible at times, but at other times you may simply need to get a grip on yourself control through using a “d” or /d/ sound or maybe clear your mind and release control with an /i/ sound or maybe work for an easy going control as expressed with the “l” or /l/ sound.

In addition to keeping a modest goal in mind you need to resign yourself to working on one issue per word. In some instances that might require stringing words together. The first word may only take you part way to your final goal. This can happen is more problematic cases.

[Slide: 7] “Choosing from an Existing Set vs. Creating Original Words

A known set of choices can facilitate the process but may be limiting. Original words require extra effort, but are unlimited.”

In theory any word can work as a HEP word. Our species has a large capacity for nuanced feeling. Language and the interface between feelings and thoughts allows an almost unlimited ability to come up with a new way of looking at the world and expressing how we feel about it. Whether a particular word can work for you in a way that modulates your emotions only you can decide.

Until you get comfortable with HEP you may find it practical to choose your HEP words from an existing list. This may limit what you can do with HEP, but it should facilitate the selection process and make learning how to use HEP less difficult. Once you establish a familiarity with how HEP works you may wish to create your own HEP words to suit your particular needs.

[Slide: 8] “Example from Hinduism/Buddhism

“Aum” (sometimes written as “Om”) /aum/ - must start somewhat relaxed and austere; the “practice of austerities” can be fulfilling”

Let’s take some time to look at some familiar words used in a religious context and see how they might affect emotions.

Probably the most familiar mantra is “aum,” which has three phonemes, the /a/, /u/ and /m/. Some sources only use two an /o/ and /m/. However, the Sanskrit sources that I trust the most use three. The /a/ combined with /u/ does sound like an /o/ and the feelings of the two versions are quite similar.

The feeling of this word starts out somewhat relaxed and austere with the short /a/. It becomes more austere or empty with the second phoneme, the /u/. Finally the /m/ brings in a pleasant, full feeling.

What can /aum/ do emotionally? It can take you from a somewhat relaxed and austere feeling and let you feel your emptiness filling up with pleasure. It is important to point out that /aum/ will do this only if you start with a mood that matches /a/. Remember the way HEP works. A HEP word must start with a sound that corresponds to your current mood. If you aren’t feeling somewhat relaxed and austere or empty, then /aum/ will not effectively modulate your mood. If you are tense and without austerity, /aum/ doesn’t make sense as a HEP word.

[Slide: 9] “Example from Christianity

“Amen”

/æmen/ - must begin somewhat relaxed with a clear mind, this yields pleasantness that provides a feeling of being in control”

Now let’s examine a word commonly found in Christian religious ceremonies, /æmen/. This starts with an /æ/ indicating a somewhat relaxed, cleared mind that is not trying to control things. This state leads to a pleasant feeling /m/. This in turn moves effortlessly, via the /e/ sound, into a feeling of being in firm control, as characterized by the /n/.

If your mood is somewhat relaxed and you mind cleared and not working for control, say as in a prayer, then the word can transform the mood into enjoyment and give you a feeling of being in control.

[Slide: 10] “Example from Islam

“Allah” /allâh/ - requires some relaxation and austerity and a desire to let things flow, this leads to a relaxed, somewhat fatigued state”

Time for one more. This one from Islam. The word /allâh/ start with a sound corresponding to a somewhat relaxed austere mood, the /a/. From this it moves into a feeling of easy mental control through the double /l/. The two “l”s give the feeling that you are letting things flow on their own accord. This might be restated as submitting to the will of a higher power, a central theme in Islam. The

words end with a relaxed feeling that gets terminated due to the /â/ followed by /h/. If you are somewhat relaxed and austere, /allâh/ lets you feel as though things are flowing smoothly but it doesn't let you relax too much and grow complacent.

[Slide: 11] "Comparing Religious Starting Points

Hinduism's /aum/ - relaxed, austere

Christianity's /æmn/ - relaxed, cleared mind

Islam's /allâh/ - relaxed, austere"

Reviewing the three religious words you see that the words from Hinduism and Islam both require a somewhat relaxed and austere beginning. These are both empty on the pleasure and arousal dimensions. In contrast the Christian term doesn't require austerity but needs instead a somewhat cleared mind.

[Slide: 12] "Comparing How the Religions Achieve Goals

Hinduism's /aum/ gains pleasantness through austerity

Christianity's /æmn/ gains control with pleasure

Islam's /allâh/ ends relaxation after letting things flow, or surrendering"

If you look at the goals of these three religious terms you see that they all differ. The Hindu goal is pleasure or maybe a fulfilled feeling. This does fit with a goal often cited for the repetition of /aum/, that is, to give a feeling of spiritual fulfillment.

The goal of "amen," that is, giving a feeling of strong control with pleasure, seems appropriate for a prayer in Christianity, if you think of the historical way that Christianity has exercised control over other competing thought systems.

The goal of "allah" might be stated as attaining a subdued relaxed state through letting thing flow. "Allah" lets things flow to feel comfortable but doesn't let you stay relaxed.

[Slide: 13] "Photos by Brian McPherson"

That is all for this session. Join me next time when I review how you can use HEP in a silent fashion to increase its power.

Thanks for listening.