

Charlotte Molas
Radka Píro

A BOOK ABOUT COMMUNICATION & UNDERSTANDING

WHAT?



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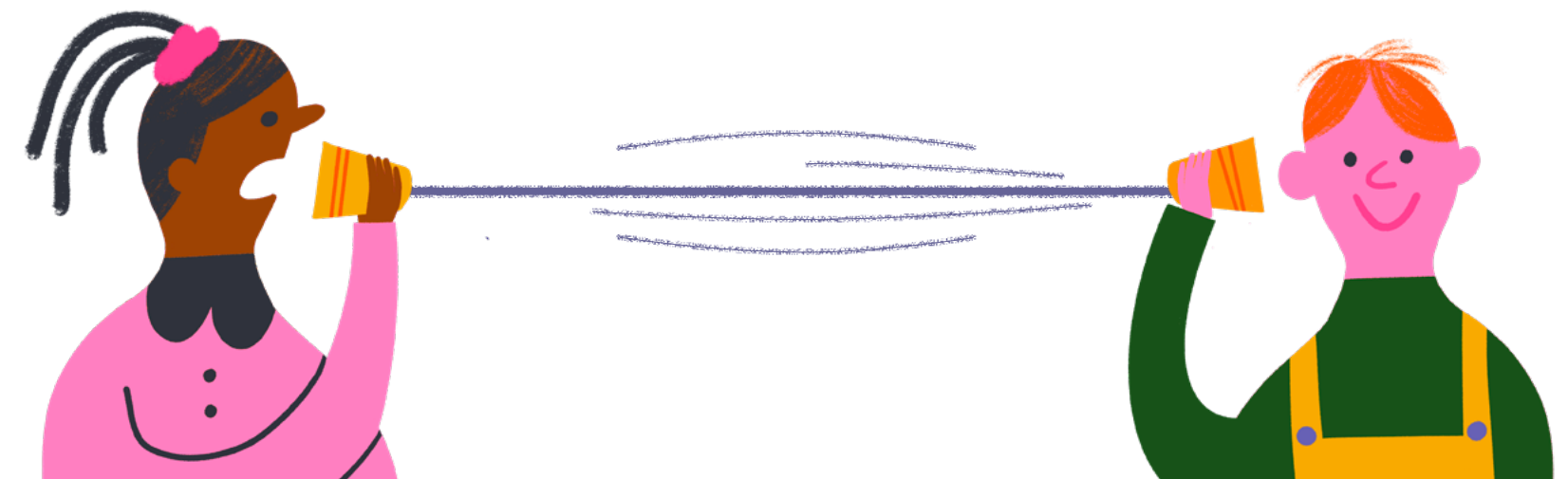






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A BOOK ABOUT COMMUNICATION
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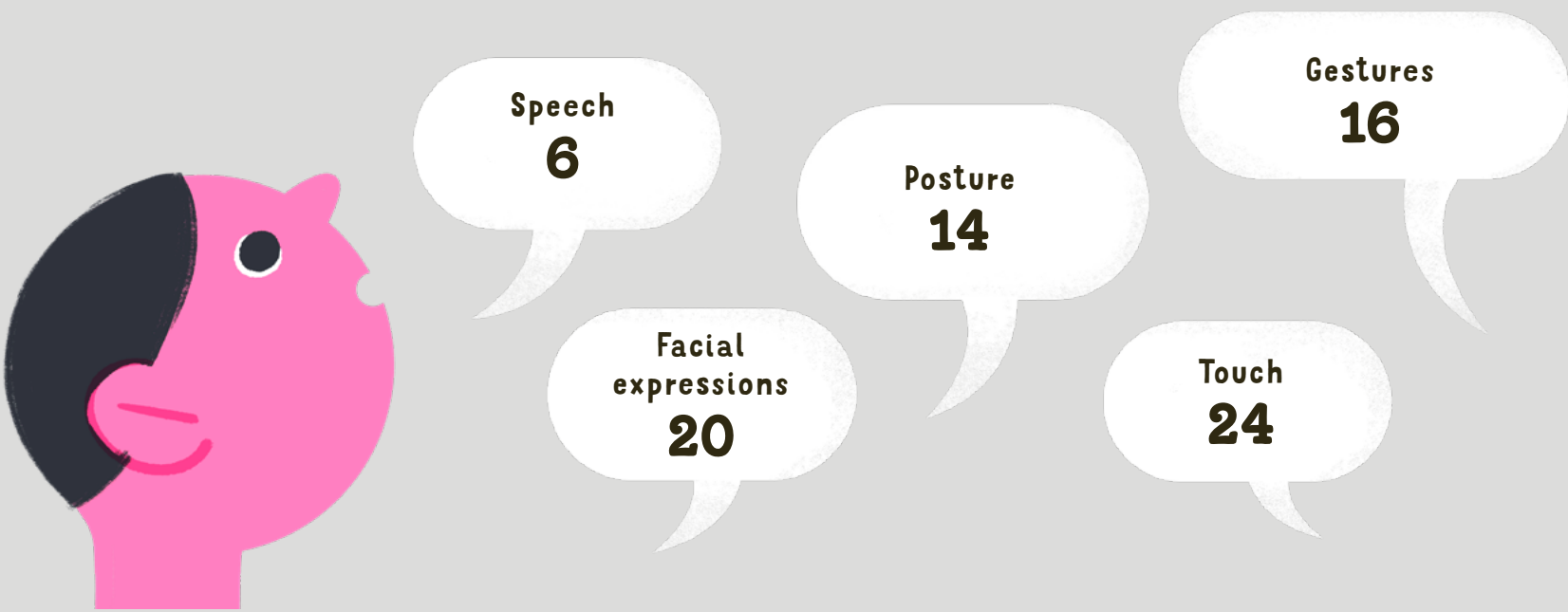


What is communication?

How we communicate with others is called interpersonal communication. You may think this happens naturally, and in a certain sense it does, but the ability to understand each other is

always influenced and limited by our abilities and skills. That's why it's useful to think about how we communicate and try to improve our abilities. So let's start!

In what ways do we communicate with others?



We humans have also developed methods that even allow us to exchange messages over distances and pass information to future generations. What are they?



Finally, there are also a few things that we need to take into account when we're in contact with others, so that we can communicate effectively and understand each other more easily.



Interpersonal communication is inextricably linked with everything in our lives. Poor or unclear communication can lead to disaster. But there have also been countless situations where effective communication has spread hope and saved lives and this will always be true. Therefore, we'll learn about some episodes in history when communication ended in both success and failure.

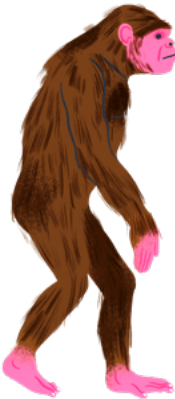
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Nowadays, we're also able to communicate with the aid of a variety of technologies.



Communication and us

How did we get from there ...



... to here?



One of the reasons is our ability to communicate and work together. Of course, some of us prefer peace and quiet now and then, but as a species, we are communicative creatures. And this is most probably why human intelligence has become so highly developed.



The way we communicate influences the people around us and they in turn influence us.

We are constantly mirroring the behaviour of others and most of the time we're not even aware of it.



We humans are equipped with a wonderful thing called **mirror neurons**. These are the cells in our brain that allow us to copy the behaviour of others. This is incredibly useful, because we learn and strengthen relationships through the process of imitating.

How we learn to communicate

From the moment we're born – and even before – we humans are able to communicate. When we're in the womb, we mostly communicate with our mother through touch. Once we are born, we come into contact with other people.

The best way of developing our communication skills is through play.



SPEECH



RELATIONS



LEARNING



0 years

Make noises and cry to show they don't like something.

Are able to maintain eye contact. A parent's touch and voice calms them best.

Their sight is not yet fully developed, so they react more to sounds and touch.

1 year



Begin to say their first words.

Copy their parents' behaviour and use simple gestures.

Are able to name frequently used things.



2 years

Can speak in short sentences of a few words.

Are able to use a wider variety of gestures and point to things. They notice when somebody else is crying.

Can answer simple questions and know the names of people close to them.

3 years



Are able to create longer and more complex sentences and can handle a simple conversation.

Imitate adults and friends and begin to engage in play with other children.

Can follow simple instructions and recognize colours.



5 years

Are able to tell a story and put their thoughts and opinions into words.

Know how to cooperate and want to please their loved ones.

Begin to recognize and write letters and numbers. They are able to write their name.




Speech

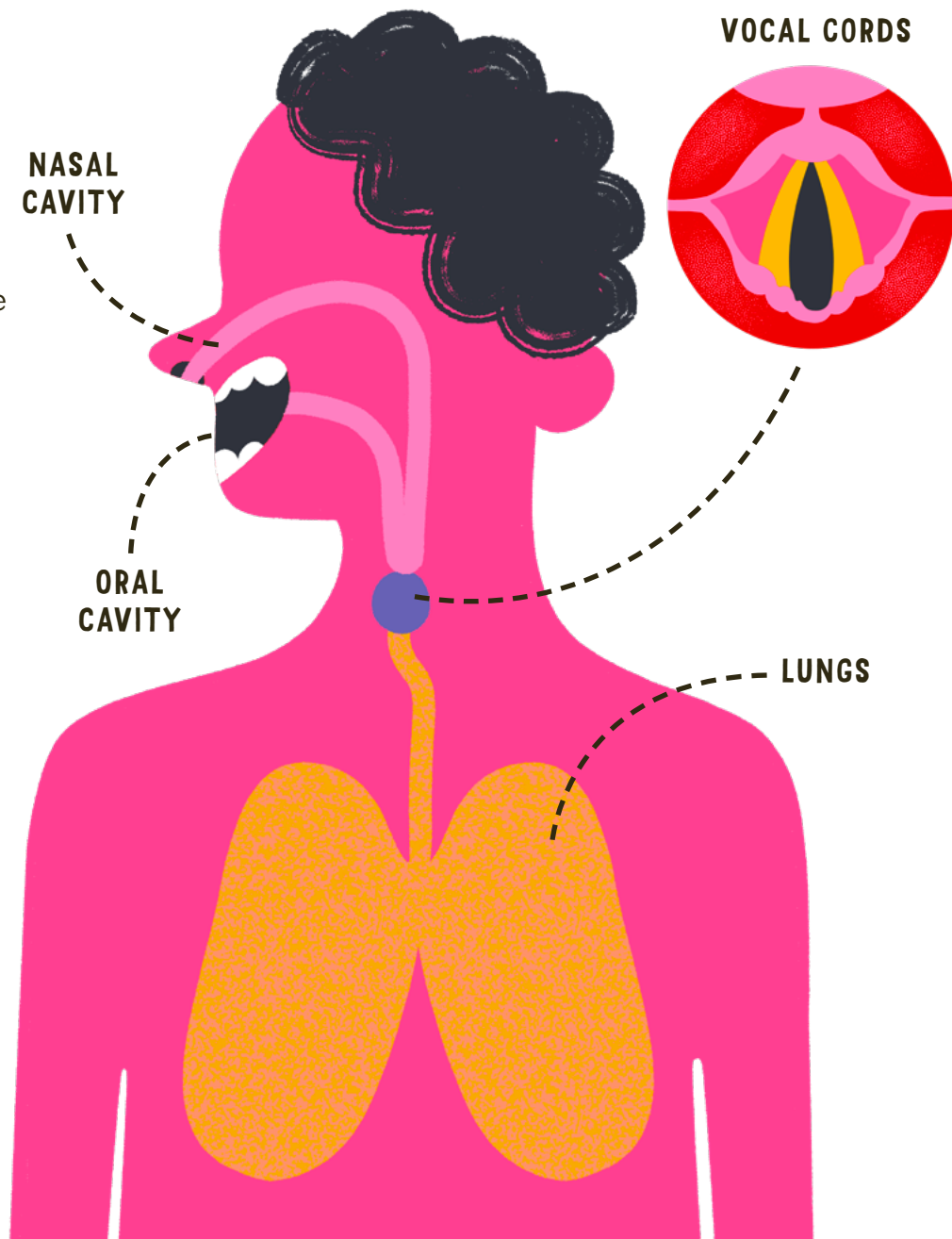
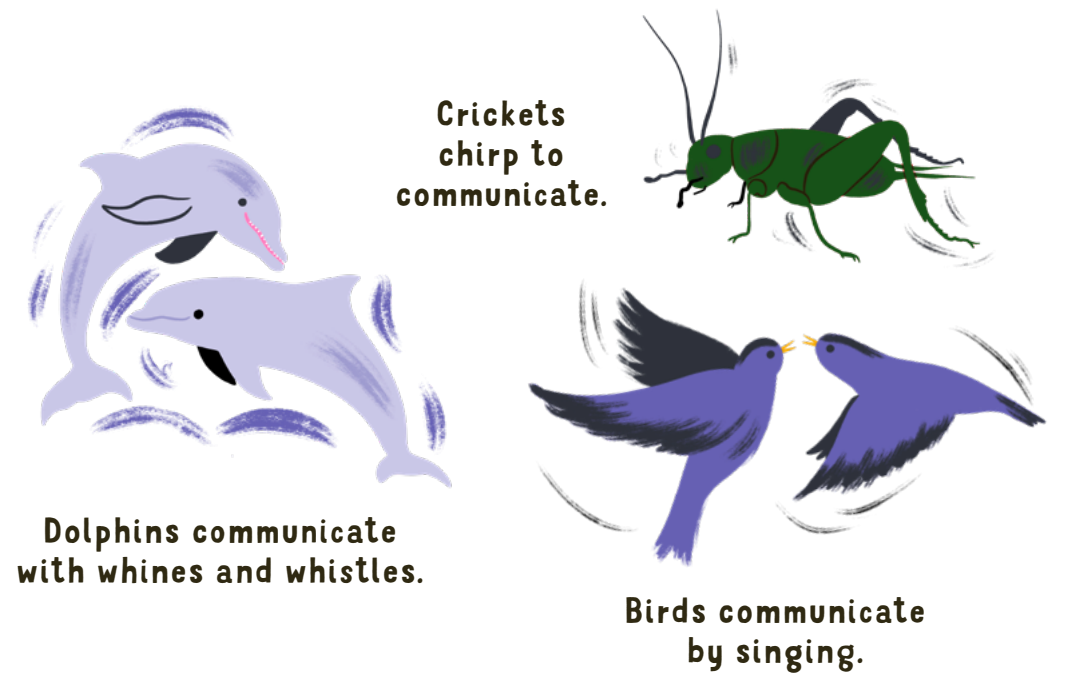
Humans are not the only creatures that use their voices to communicate. Far from it, animals are able to communicate in a wide variety of ways.

But human speech is simply unique.

How speech is produced

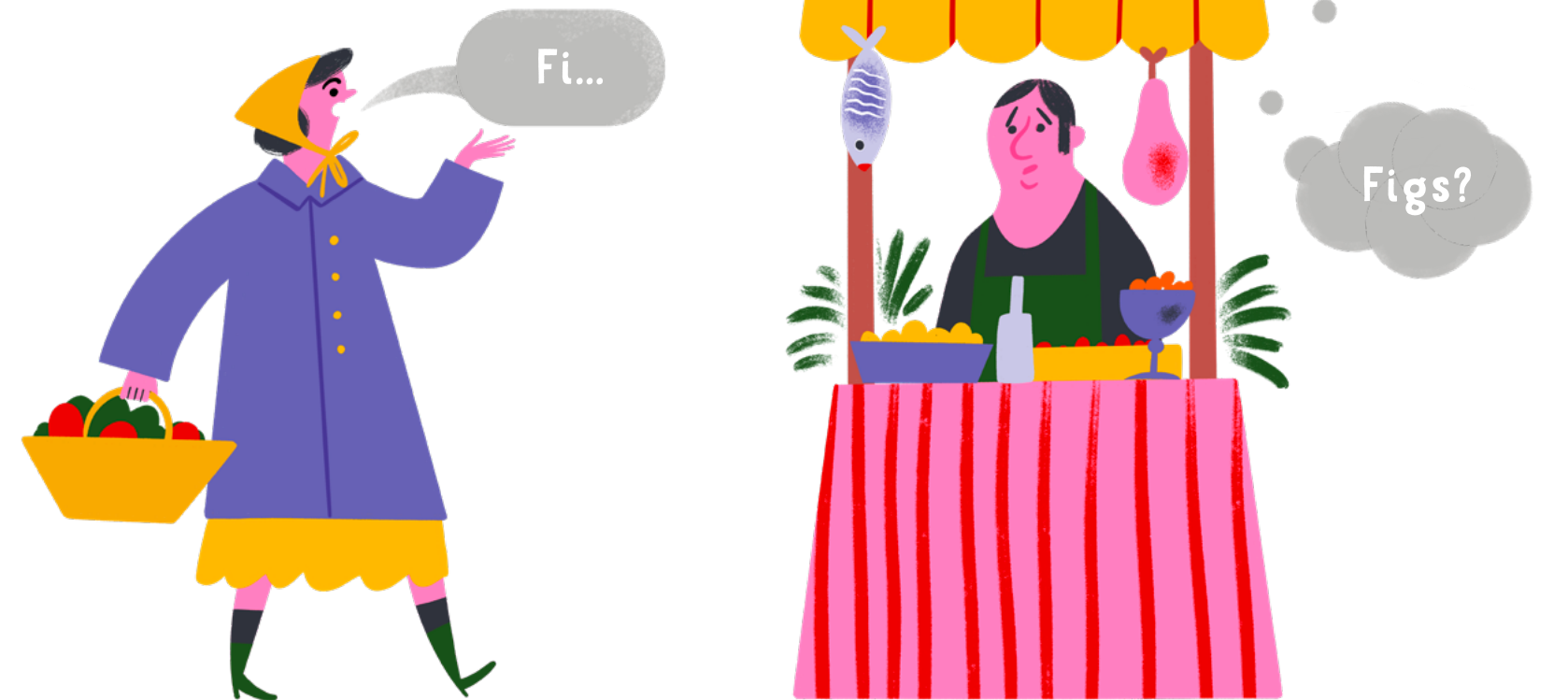
In the first step, air is pushed out of the lungs. The air passes through the windpipe and acts as the motor of our voice. The sound itself is produced by the vocal cords. As the muscles contract and relax, the opening between the vocal cords widens and narrows. When combined with the air flow, it creates the sound. Now we have to process and shape this sound to transform it into words. This is called **articulation** and we do it by means of our lips, tongue and the roof of our mouth.

-  This is where we breathe out.
-  This is where sound is created.
-  This is where individual sounds are articulated.

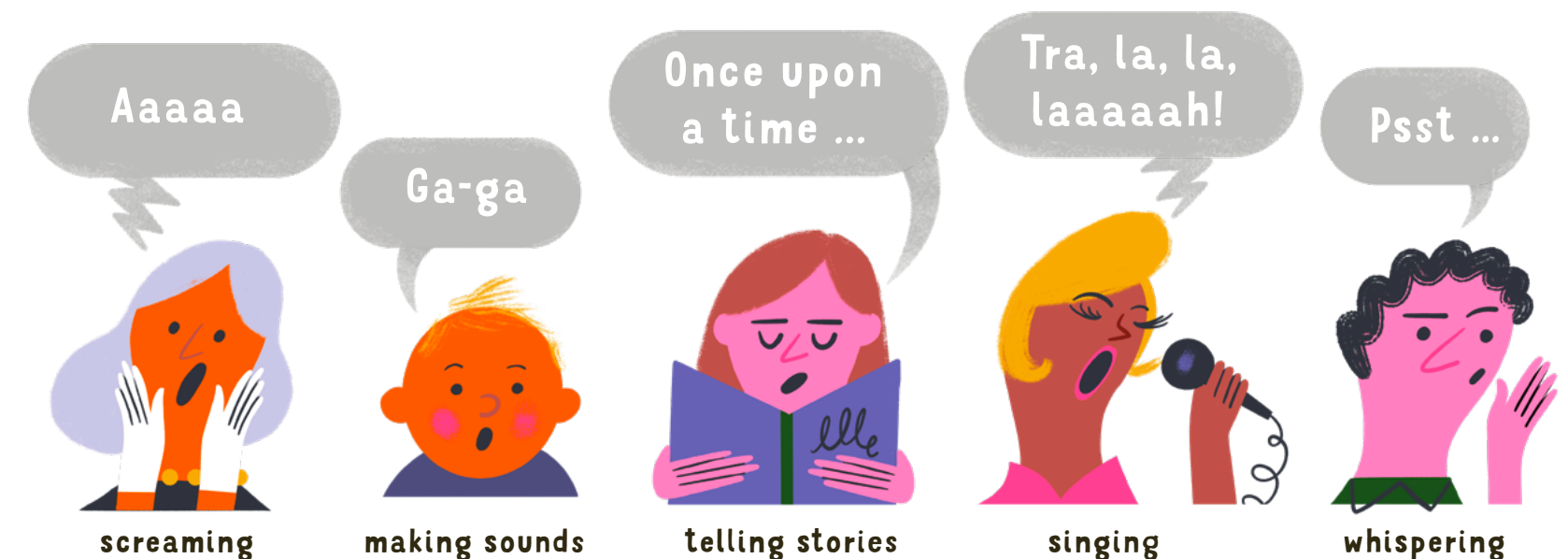


How do we understand one another?

In order to communicate, we need to be able to understand one other. And our brain is perfectly equipped for this purpose. As soon as we hear the beginning of a word, our brain offers us many different possible meanings. As the word continues, it rejects those that don't make sense until it is left with the speaker's intended meaning. And it does all this in a fraction of a second!

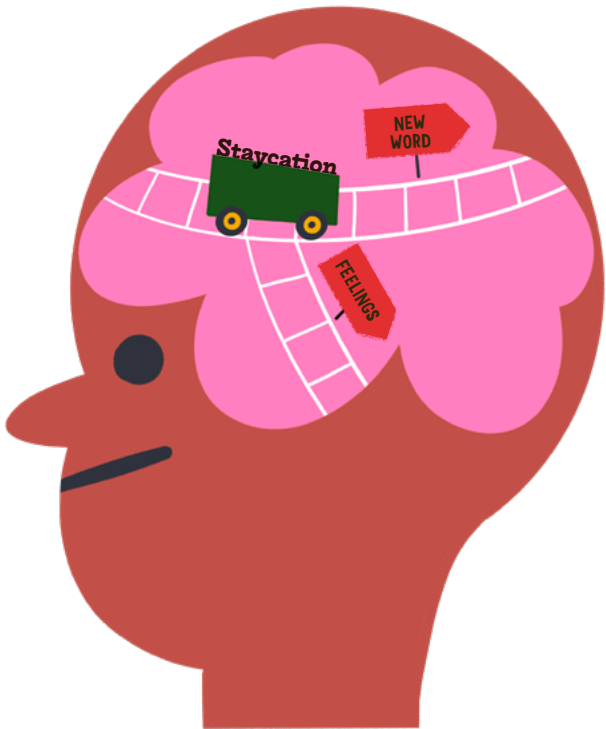


What do we use our voice for?



How do new words appear?

The language we speak is constantly changing. It evolves as people use it. Unattractive words die out and new ones keep appearing.



Foreign languages

There are over 7,000 different languages in the world. When we learn a new language, we also learn about the culture of the country that speaks it, thereby gaining a better understanding of the world. In the beginning, there were far fewer languages. But as people wandered the world and settled in new places, their language developed. So, over the course of time, we ended up with a lot of language variations.

Our voice



Famous speakers

Our use of language gives us great power. Words can please or hurt people, they can change a person's mind, or even shape history. The art of speaking is called **rhetoric**. This is how speech was used by people whose words and rhetorical skills we still remember.

I saw injustice and I raised my voice for every girl's right to go to school.

Malala Yousafzai
(*1997)
human rights activist and the youngest holder of the Nobel Peace Prize

The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness...

I yearn for heart friendship between the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims.

Mahatma Gandhi
(1869–1948)
leader of the Indian independence movement

Socrates
(470–399 BC)
Greek philosopher

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

Greta Thunberg
(*2003)
Swedish environmental activist

The eyes of all future generations are upon you.

Martin Luther King
(1929–1968)
American leader of the civil rights movement

Hear ...



A conversation is not just about telling the other person what you want them to know. It is just as important to understand what the other person is saying.

When I actively listen another person, I pay full attention to what they're saying and watch their body language. I don't judge them and I try to understand them.



... or listen?

Silence

Silence is an incredibly useful thing. Silence gives us time and silence also builds tension. Films and theatre would not work without silence. But did you know that there are different kinds of silence?



a comforting silence



an awkward silence



a silence when there is no need to say anything



an angry silence



a silence that gives us time to think

A story without words

Now we know that silence plays an important role in communication. But how do we convey information without speaking?

In fact, speech is not the most important part of communication. More than half of a message consists of what is known as **non-verbal communication**, which means the things we express via our posture, facial expressions and gestures.

Non-verbal communication is what allows us to understand each other without words. We all know how to do it. Let's see if you can describe what is happening in the following story.

If we weren't able to communicate without words, we wouldn't be able to perform pantomime!



You'll certainly be better
at communicating now.
All you have to do now
is practice.



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Speech, written messages, our posture and facial expressions are all part of interpersonal communication. And that's not the half of it, as nowadays a lot of communication is done with different kinds of technology. Penetrate the secrets of communication and start practising the skills that will help you improve your relationships with those around you.



**Whether you are
the life and soul of
the party...**

**... or more of
a shrinking
violet...**



**... this book
is for you!**