

Sample Chapter from "Of Course You Can Sing!"

who told you you can't?

This is the reason I started teaching. This is the reason I wrote this book. Every time I meet someone, and they inform me quite sadly but firmly that they can't sing, I immediately ask back, who told you that? It is how I begin with new students as well. It is always my first question, because it is never the person themselves who got that idea first. What child doesn't let a song rip at the top of their lungs, sure that everyone is enjoying their music? It is not until someone else, a parent, a relative, a peer, an enemy or a teacher stops him or her that they begin to become self-conscious. And nine times out of ten, I bet most of the time, they were simply inappropriately loud in a public place and were just being told to be quiet – not to silence their musical outlet forever!

So really, whose voice is in your head saying you can't? You don't have to ever confront them or even think about it past this exercise. But, for once hear that voice as something other than your own.

After you have identified whom it is, listen closely to what they are saying. At this point in your life, you have probably digested those words as your own. Well, I want you to get them out of your mind and body once and for all. They are not your words, your sentences, your beliefs or your desire. So why hang on to something old, mildewy and not even yours to begin with? Let it go so that you can make room for new words of encouragement and support. I remind you, OF COURSE YOU CAN SING! So get rid of any lingering doubts that you cannot.

The brilliant thing about life is at any moment you get to re-decide who you want to be. If you wake up on the wrong side of the bed, no one will stop you if you turn around, get in and start all over again. (In fact most people will thank you for the effort to put a more positive spin on your and their day). So, the mere fact that you are reading this book implies that you would love the chance to choose who you are today, and who you are includes being someone who can sing! What type of singer and how you

are received in the world is not the issue at hand here. You need to first and foremost decide inside that you can do it. No matter what anyone has ever said, or what someone will possibly say in the future.

unfair comparisons

Remember this: if you are comparing yourself to others, you have already lost the game. The beauty about singing is that there is not one single person who is more than anyone else. Because there are so many types of sounds and so many tastes, there will never be “The Best Overall Singer in the World”. Like I said at the beginning, Maria Callas can’t compete with Patsy Cline, Carly Simon can’t compete with Barry White, Elton John can’t compete with Bonnie Raitt. They just don’t have any basis for comparison.

There is no reason to think in a competitive way. Even if there is a job that you are coveting, there will always be another one later. Or that one can suddenly open up when you least expect it! I once auditioned for a show when it was first being cast that I did not get. But almost a year later, I did get hired as a replacement. I discovered when I got into the show, that the first few months had been medieval torture for everyone involved, and only now was everything settling into a more palatable existence. So where I had been so sad that I did not get the part originally, I was actually saved from a bad experience, and got to play the role at a time when I could relish and enjoy myself! So, trust that if you didn’t get a job, or a song or something you wanted, that it is always still possible and if it never happens, there is probably a great reason that is protecting you!

sing better? or stardom?

Something else to consider as you explore your voice and your capabilities, is whether you simply want to sing better, or whether you want to be a star. Performing ably and performing profoundly are two very alternative visions for yourself and it is important to know the difference. Some people have an innate magnetism that draws attention to them. That does not mean that other people are not talented, in the least. It just means that they are great at what they do but they don’t necessarily command heightened attention.

I think it is possible to create an aura around yourself. But I strongly encourage you to create YOUR aura, not an approximation of someone

else's. What makes YOU special? What makes people want to hear you and not someone else? It's a sticky, tricky question and not one that is easily answerable. But you know it when you see it. And you know it when you have experienced it. There is a story about Marilyn Monroe, that a friend of hers was walking with her and said, "Do it. Turn it on". Within moments, everyone and their mother was noticing her when just before she had been walking pretty anonymously down the street. Call it charisma, call it star quality. It is something bigger, other and amazing. If you think you've got it, cultivate it.