



FIT FOR LIFE

Read my lips

Carol Westmorland's neighbour has it right: creating an effect with your audience is all about projection

It was too much. The bloodcurdling screams piercing the tranquil air of Cumrew. They had started some weeks before. From nowhere, then eerie silence. Our lovely neighbours were their usual selves. If anything, they seemed jubilant. Nothing seemed amiss. Curiosity and concern was getting the better of me. These screams seemed staged. Could it be that my am-dram queen next door was in production?

Well I was right. She was, and the bloodcurdling screams were to be midway through the play.

So it was that we, a close knit set in Cumrew, sat through a full-house, thoroughly entertaining performance of *How the Other Half Loves* by Alan Ayckbourn, in the Green Room Theatre, West Walls, Carlisle.

Shona, the screamer, has great diction and a powerful set of lungs. As a performer that is a must. Great diction is something I appreciate. Teaching would be impossible if I could not make myself understood and with a quiet voice, unlike Shona, I really have to project. This involves a great deal of facial animation.

Enunciation is the act of speaking clearly and concisely. Bad enunciation is mumbling and slurring. You will captivate with good enunciation whereas poor enunciation will be frustrating to both you and the listener.

In a normal day, how often are you asked to repeat yourself? If it is a lot then perhaps you mumble or simply do not command attention.



'IF YOUR VOICE LACKS CONFIDENCE, SO DO YOU'

Mumbling is when you don't open your mouth enough to speak. The words you say have nowhere to go. You may also look down. If your voice lacks confidence so do you.

Repeat the following: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If you can repeatedly say this with clarity then you will master the art of good enunciation. You should, to do this properly, sit yourself up, release your shoulders down and back which lifts your chest then engage with your audience.

Alternatively you could do a lot worse than join an amateur dramatic society. They could certainly teach you a thing or two about projection if those bloodcurdling screams are anything to go by.

Break a leg.

Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.co.uk