

# THE LITTLE VOICE THAT COULD

By Lessia Bonn

*Every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers, "Grow, grow."*  
—from The Talmud

I spent my childhood chained to a very large musical instrument. I sat at that stupid piano for hours and hours while my friends were outside having fun. Jeez, it just wasn't fair. I didn't even like classical music. Well, Beethoven was okay, maybe. At least he was dramatic.

But I wanted to sing, not play. I had a ton of songs in my head. I was never inspired by the piano; it just felt like typing to me when I played. But to everybody else it seemed I was an endearing little keyboard prodigy. They all had so much fun watching me, they assumed I was having fun too. But I wasn't having fun. I hated my fast fingers! Big deal—fast fingers. Everyone was impressed, but I was totally depressed. I wanted to sing.

When I think back, I can still feel the ouch—I still feel sorry for the little kid who was too scared to use her voice, or at least the part of her voice that really mattered. I just wish I could have said, "I want to do something else. Can't I please learn something I really like?" I wish I could have said, "Can't you see I'm just doing this for you? Can't you see who I really am?"

Truth is, I had a little voice that sounded very ordinary. My family assumed—like most people assume—that if a person has a so-called "singing" voice, everyone can tell right away. Bet even you believe that—but you're wrong. Seriously.

Here's the real truth. Everybody has that kind of "singing" voice. It just hasn't been discovered yet. People sing "Happy Birthday" badly and then give up saying, "Ugh! I can't sing. Forget it." And their friends usually agree. "Yeah, take up cello."

But hey, “Happy Birthday” is actually hard to sing because it’s full of funky consonants. Somebody should really explain *that* before a person gives up on singing. It’s helpful information. But there isn’t ever any real explaining going on now, is there?

Only Simon Cowell seems to get listened to. Whenever he harshly proclaims one person can sing while another shouldn’t even try, it just makes me crazy. I always feel like hitting him. A lot of people don’t know how to find a pretty vowel, a lot of people don’t breathe, especially when they’re nervous, and those are the things that can make a voice sound yucky. A lot of people just don’t know the tricks.

Our culture also dictates that people, especially kids, should stifle their voices and emotions. If a person’s voice carries across the room, hey, that’s just embarrassing. Ugh. Find yourself some manners. Put a lid on it. Yet we’re supposed to be able to sing. Just how exactly?

Sure, sometimes there are people who are great copycats. They listen to the radio, then mimic the singers they like and end up sounding great themselves. Most people are not great copycats though. Most people end up sounding like squeaky little church mice when they try to sing, but it’s not their fault. Truly it’s not.

I was one of those church mice. When I blurted out, “I want to sing” to my piano-oriented family, they answered back, “But you don’t have a voice.” End of discussion. That really hurt my soul. And in just one instant, those six little words shut me down. At that age a kid soaks in her parents’ truths and really wants to please them. Because I was little and impressionable, I believed what was handed to me. My voice stayed small, in every sense of the word, for a very long time. I didn’t ever feel brave with it. I kept apologizing right and left for just being me.

This is why I’m telling you my story. Maybe you don’t want to sing. Maybe you want to write a big fat novel, sell floating beds, or open yourself a dude ranch. Maybe your biggest dream is to live in Paris, but everyone keeps telling you you’re crazy—you don’t even speak French!

So tell them you’ll learn French. *Ooh lah lah*. There are three words already. Couldn’t be that hard. Tell them, “I can learn French,” and pack your bags for Paris.

“You’re crazy, you can’t do that! That’s not the way it’s done!” Don’t you just hate it when people say that kind of stuff? All those geniuses out there on the subject of *you!*

Well hey, I’m here to urge you to aim for whatever the hell you please. Don’t you dare go dumping all your dreams just because a few people around you have

no vision, no insight, or are simply ignorant of one basic fundamental fact of life: There are tricks to most everything. Learning those tricks will let you rock at whatever it is you want to do. So educate yourself!

Take it from me—I was a little voice who couldn't until I figured out that I surely could. I just kept on believing. And here was my chant: "I know I can, I know I can ..." and then ... yay! I found the voice I always knew I had.

Now I not only sing, record, and give concerts, I coach others. I'm the expert. I'm the highly-paid consultant. What a hoot! I take other singers into the recording studio and make them sound awesome because I'm a whiz at singing tricks, and also I'm pretty darn cool at producing tricks. And I've always been able to write a song, so hey, throw that in too. And seriously, I don't think Beethoven misses me much.

And do you know what I've discovered along my path? I've discovered that the tricks to singing are actually a whole lot like the tricks to life. In order to sing, a person has to cut out the worrying, collect helpful data, relax, and then simply fall into her own voice. Trusting one's deeper self is important because there's a sweet spot inside us that already knows how to sing. When we find it—oh, wow—we're there. Singing's easy! Sure, it takes faith and practice, but so what? Challenges keep life entertaining. Don't tell me you'd rather be bored.

My stepfather announced to me once, "There's nothing special about your voice." He was really certain. Years later, he showed up at one of my sold-out concerts. His updated review: "Oh my God, you're great! I'm so embarrassed I ever said you couldn't sing! Your voice is awesome! I was so wrong!"

No more Beethoven for me. Now I sing. But the funny thing is, deep down inside, I always knew I was a singer.

She knew she was a singer.... She knew she was a singer.... She knew she was a singer.... And then—*voilà!*—(another French word). Laugh out loud. Hooray for every little voice that can!

And take it from an expert: Every little voice really can.

And *kudos* for the Law of Attraction:

I *knew* I was a singer. I *knew* I was a better singer than piano player. I *knew* deep down—all those things—so I believed and believed *and imagined* placing my faith in what I knew until ...

My voice came out in spades one day. It said, "Hello. How you doin'?" And it was a cool voice. Laugh out loud. So yay for me! Because I knew I could.... I knew I could.... And now I can!

It just took a bit of uncovering.