

# **Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Hosts

**Dr. David Phelps** 

Susan:

One of the big myths that I want to dispel is that you need to sound like James Earl Jones, or the female equivalent, to be effective as a communicator. Nothing could be further from the truth. The voice you have is fine. It's learning how to optimize it.

You're listening to the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straightforward advice to transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets and multiply your passive cash flow streams.

David: Good day, everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the

Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and the Dentist Freedom Blueprint podcast, back to you today

with what's going to be a really fun and a different interview with somebody who I really have a lot of respect

for. For a number of years I have followed her, and many of you have also followed her in some form or fashion. I will allude to that in just a minute how that has happened, but let me introduce my guest today first off and foremost. It's my friend Susan Berkley. Susan, how are you doing

today?

Susan: I'm so great, David. It's wonderful to be here. I've been

following you too.

David: We've interchanged back and forth. We're in some

different mastermind groups and business groups. It's fun. It's fun, not surprisingly, that circle of people we run into each other, different places, different times. That's cool about what we do, right? To just breathe the same air as

other great people do.

Susan: I love that, yeah.

David: Let me give people a little bit of your background. Susan

is an internationally-known communications expert and one of the most listened to voices in America. Actually, I've got a couple of your clips. I know you can do one live, but this will be fun. Susan is a top voice-over artist and telephone voice for AT&T, Citibank, Google, Walmart, Band Aid, Landover, Duncan Donuts. She is the voice

and her voice is very, very cool.

She's also the author of Speak to Influence: How to Unlock the Hidden Power of Your Voice, and her latest book is called, The Persuasion Code. The first book, you can get off of Amazon right now, and the Persuasion Code, Susan, you said you would be glad to give a copy of that to people who email you at voicepro@greatvoice.com. That's voicepro@greatvoice.com and reference the Dentist Freedom Blueprint podcast, so that's an opportunity for people there to get a hold of both of your books.

Susan's also the president and founder of The Great Voice Company in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. She provides training and persuasive speaking techniques for business and sales professionals worldwide, as well as training in voiceover technique.

As a frequent media guest, Susan has been featured on and in, ABC News, CNBC, To Tell The Truth ... See I didn't know that. To Tell The Truth, that's awesome. The New York Times, LA Times, and Business Week Magazine. And this is really interesting, because I don't think I knew this, Susan, but you spent 15 years in broadcasting as a radio personality, including as a traffic reporter for the Howard Stern show, and he officially

called you, I believe it was Susan Beserkowitz. Is that

correct?

Susan: That's right. You said it right, which is not my real name.

David: Susan Berkley. But that's kind of cool. I'm kind of

interested in that. So how was that working with Howard

Stern? That was some years ago, right?

Susan: It was and he was really, really raw. You know, in those

years, he wasn't national yet, he was out of New York and a lot of the bits he did with me ended up on the FCC's transcripts when they were suing him for indecency. It was pretty crazy, but you know, he's really a nice guy off the air. He's very shy, and now very successful. I liked

him a lot. I had a ball working with him.

David: Yeah, yeah, that's really cool. The other thing that I think

is unique about you beside your primary area of influence in voice is you're also a vegetarian cook and you also speak fluent Brazilian Portuguese. Now, how's that?

Because you were born here in the United States?

Susan: I'm 100% American, but I was married to a Brazilian guy,

and I lived in Brazil for a while and I actually formed some very strong ties there. I spend about six weeks a year in Brazil. Now it's kind of like a second home for me. I love

it, love the place.

David: Cool, cool.

Susan: A lot of fun.

David: All right, I'm going to try this Susan. I've got your clips

here. I want people to hear.

Susan Voiceover: Thank you for using AT&T.

Thank you for calling Citibank.

David: And this is a cool one here.

Susan Voiceover: Beyond the BMW X3 any weather, any corner,

anyplace. Any task. If you get your shopping done a little

earlier ...

David: Just a couple of the clips of the many that Susan's done

over the years. So, give us your story. How did you ... Obviously you've got this great voice, and we're going to

talk about why voice is important in all forms of

communication today, but where did this start? When was your voice discovered and known to you as to be a voice that you could actually utilize in the many ways you have?

Susan: Well, you know, I loved music, and I loved radio. I started

young. I worked in college radio and then got started in professional radio in worked my way up from there. But, the big secret is that radio doesn't pay anything. It's one of those gigs that's very glamorous, but in just doesn't pay

much. When I went out on my own, I started my own business as a voice over artist, this was years ago now. I have an audio production company. We record in all

languages.

At one time, I did one particular commercial, David, that sold something like \$50 million worth of spots. It was for this thing called Topsy Tail, which is a little hair gizmo ...

David: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Susan: You remember that?

David: Yeah, I sure do.

Susan: And the commercial sounded like this: "If you're getting

bored with your hair, don't despair, now there's an exciting new look with Topsy Tail." This stupid little thing

sold \$50 million, and I made just a couple of hundred

bucks, right?

David: Right.

Susan: I was taking to some of my business friends, people like

you, and they said, "What? You did what?" How the heck did you do that? I want to know because I would love to use that in my own selling and for my staff, and all of that." What I did was I sat down and I deconstructed what I call my voice mastery techniques. The techniques that I

in a business setting for professionals and sales people, and people at the front desk, have phenomenal results.

take for granted as a voice talent, but that when deployed

It's that type of voice mastery that really allows those in voice over to sell so well that other people don't know.

These are the little tweaks that really make a huge

different.

David: Well, you know, I am not an expert at all in what you're

doing, but I appreciate when I speak to somebody on the

phone and I can just hear the enthusiasm, and the animation in the other person's voice. I'm not seeing

them, of course, I'm talking about being on the phone, but

I'm talking about what you're just mentioning, other businesses, customer service. I as the customer, I am calling another business because I want to become a customer, or maybe I am a customer of record. And it just makes a huge difference for me when that person on the

other end of the line has that voice.

We're going to talk a little bit about trust-based selling. But the voice that we hear, whether it's in person, of course this is live of course, but whether we see the person, or just it's over the phone, that voice, the inflection, all the things you teach, which I know nothing about the specifics, but I just know you're really good at this, that is so important. Talk a like about that. It's larger communication, but we're going to talk about how that can be effective for our business owners, our professional practice owners that are listening to this podcast today.

Susan:

Yes. One of the big myths that I want to dispel is that you need to sound like James Earl Jones, or the female equivalent, to be effective as a communicator. Nothing could be further from the truth. The voice you have is fine. It's learning how to optimize it. That's how you have to think about it. Just it like you would optimize your website, and I'm sure you do, for sales and marketing.

Your voice is a huge tool. In fact, it's even more important. It's you. What happens is, the goal is we want transparency. Not to have a certain type of voice, but a voice that doesn't get in the way of the message and a voice that transmits the warmth and the caring that we have and is flexible enough because there's times when want to speak in a more trustworthy manner. There's times when we want to have a little authority. There's times when we want to charm people. There's times we want to wake people up. There's times we want to sooth people.

All of those things are possible for anyone. That's basically what I teach. It's all about building trust in businesses, especially today, these days. Voice is your key tool for accomplishing that.

David:

Here's the conundrum that I see happen in businesses, all across the board, Susan. Again, I've got a lot of professional practice owners, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, and veterinarians, but again, business is business in this respect. Everybody, every company wants more customers, clients, patients. That's kind of the lifeblood, and therefore, most businesses are into some form of marketing. As you mentioned earlier website. Website, SEO, could be doing things on social media, could using direct mail, could be actually out there in their space speaking to Chamber of Commerce or Rotary.

But getting out there and what we call in business, lead generating, that is trying to get prospects, or an ideal client, or customer or patient to raise their hand and eventually make the call. The call for the appointment, where we get the engagement. We put out all this marketing and some people really go after it hard, and other people are learning how to do it now, but it's an investment of time and capital.

And then I see so many have this breakdown, at the interface. That is where the person, or prospect, has come through the direct mail, has come through the social media, has come through the website, has come through whatever the lead-generation process has been and then they make that call. They're ready. They raised their hand high enough. It's like, "Yes, I want to try out that company. I need what they're offering. I've heard enough, they've got what I need. And then there's that phone call, and it all falls apart.

Susan:

Yeah. It not only falls apart, David, but then the customer goes online and gives your company a one-star rating, and you are sunk. And that's when I get a lot of people

coming to me for help because they're in pain. They've worked so hard, like you say, on your marketing, but that that one point of customer contact isn't optimized. Whether it be the professional, themselves, it's probably not. It's probably somebody at the front desk, which they just never train on this stuff.

I believe it starts from the moment you hire somebody. The practices that I work with, one of the first things I help people do is make sure that they're hiring correctly. I often will even be part of the hiring process. They've got to leave a message. I vet all the messages that are left because I'm like the voice whisperer. I can feel a lot about how somebody is going to be. But not only that, I can train the office manager, or whoever is doing the hiring, on what to listen for.

That's the first step. You want to make sure the wrong person doesn't get through the door. And then the next step is you have to, as I'm sure you help people with their scripting, right?

David: Sure.

Susan: So, it's not just the words, it's how they're saying it. The

people just aren't necessarily empowered about the tremendous different that pitch, tone, inflection, rate of speech, and even diction makes. A lot of the practices that I work with are bi-lingual, which is very important these days to have people that have people that speak both Spanish and English and sometimes even other languages. Then you run into even a new set of issues where a person is speaking English a second language

and there's some issues there as well.

There's a lot to train on and to my delight, the staff is always thrilled to get this type of personal and professional development.

David:

Yeah, when I had my practice, Susan, I just assumed, poorly, of course, but I assumed that those who were answering the phone were doing at least a very good, or at least an acceptable job. I didn't understand how I understand today, the importance of having the right person. It could be the business owner, but most cases, it's not. The right person answering the phones and handling the customer correctly. No training. At least I provided no training. I hoped they were doing well, but you know what, I didn't know.

Let's say we have a business owner, we have one of our doctors who provides really top-ranked service but the communication line may not but good, or here she may not even know. Let's take an existing business or practice, where would you start? How would you start assessing, again without making the people, staff answering the phone, making them feel under the gun, or this big critique? Because obviously there are things you can help them do, but how do you do it in a way that empowers them? Enlists them?

Susan:

Oh, sure, yeah. So, obviously the way that the doctor positions the help is important so it is understood that I'm not here to fix anything. There's nothing broken. It's enhancement and professional development. Technically, what happens, is that I start by doing a baseline call analysis. I come in, I meet with everybody so they know who I am. I'm recording a baseline. I'm listening to everybody ... Well, most offices have a means of recording the calls, and if not they should.

I go through those and I create a report of findings for the doctor. And then I will come in and I'll do a workshop where I train people in my Speak to Influence method, and my trust-based speaking methods. And then afterwards, I'll usually follow the company. In other word, if they're local, then I'll come and I might actually sit in on listening sessions where we listen together, or I train somebody in the office to do that. And then I'll follow up and I'll check and see how people are doing. Because, as you know, I'm sure, David, that doesn't get measured, doesn't get done.

It becomes something that once I think the doctor and the owner understands the importance of this, that it's one thing that can completely blow everything else that they're completely investing. And not only that, give them a zero-star rating and screw them up online. Once they understand that importance, they start to perk up and take this seriously.

The great news is that if you've got good people working with you, they pick this up right away and they're learning it pretty quickly. One thing that's fun that I have in some of the practices where I'm working is that they have a buddy system, so they start to listen to one another and they start to critique one another. The whole standard for the practice gets elevated when everyone is on board. It's a great thing to see.

David:

One of the things that I know happens in some businesses, unfortunately, Susan, is that the staff has not been empowered by the owner, or in this case, our doctors. Again, not because the doctor doesn't want to, he or she just doesn't in how to. Because we're typically

trying to control everything and we're not trained in business and these things.

So, we trying to be what I refer to as the shill answer man. All the staff comes and asks the doctor all the questions, right? Instead of the doctor empowering, through training, how to handle "customer issues," which many times, don't have to be issues if the staff is given permission or authority to handle things up to a certain level.

Number one, it shows to the customer, the patient, that there's something different about this office. That staff member didn't delay helping me switch an appointment, or had an insurance question or treatment question. That member just took care of it. Didn't say, like, "I'll call you back tomorrow when I get a chance to the doctor." Or the doctor is tired, he doesn't want to answer 50 questions.

How much training do you feel like needs to be in the empowerment and authorization of staff to actually have the permission by that owner to take care of certain things and handle appropriately?

Susan:

Yeah, I think it's a big relief for the owner when they are empowered. So 100%, your practice can't grow until you have a culture of doing that for people. And I think in some cases, there isn't any type of knowledge base for the staff. That's the starting point.

One of the practices I work with is actually a law firm. They're disability law, so they get a lot of people who have had some sort of tragedy in their lives. They had questions, so, "How do I help somebody that's in pain?" I would think that would with the doctors as well. Or, "How do I help somebody that's had some type of a loss?" "What do I say, and how do I say it?"

Or even, "Some of the people that call, I can't get them to stop talking. How do I graciously get them off the phone in a way where I'm not going to offend them in any way?" And then of course there's, "How do I deal with somebody angry?" "How do I control myself when I'm upset? And How do I continue to sound professional?" All of those issues, it's a huge relief for the doctor and for the practice owner when people within the organization are empowered in that way.

David:

When the staff are given those tools, and I'm just assuming because I'm not a staff member in that regard, in doing that function, but I would assume that having those tools, resources, that you train them on, changes their whole outlook on their daily responsibilities.

In other words, I can see if there was just a negative umbrella around a practice because there was no empowerment of the team, it wasn't a great place to work, there was no training in place, and the staff just shows up and says, "here's another day and I've just got to answer the phone and all I'm going to hear is all these complaints and issues like that, whereas you're able to turn it around and give them these tools, resources, whereas you're able to turn it around and give them these tools, resources, so that now, they look at maybe a challenge.

Maybe a customer has a valid issue, but still, as you said, might really need some help and see how you can turn that around. Without all the tools, resources, or training, most of us would be stuck. And we would, as you said, be very frustrated. Finally, get that phone call and you don't feel good. But you change the whole dynamic so that whatever it is, you can actually feel good about what you're doing.

Susan:

And I think that's what attracts a lot of really good office people to a practice in the first place. They're in healthcare. They want to be helpful. They're attracted to that in some way, so let's empower them and help them help others.

As you say, not have that negative cloud over the businesses but a positive thing that people get. And in the voice, the voice within three seconds conveys whether the cloud is anchored in negative or not. You want that positive vibration all the way across the board.

David:

Yeah, yeah. Susan, what about people that have a voice that maybe is a little shrill, maybe a little nasally. Are there things that they're able to do to maybe change the intonation of their voice, to make it a little bit more pleasant? Is that something that you would do or try to help someone who actually had a great attitude but maybe that voice just wasn't that pleasing. How do you deal with that?

Susan:

Yeah, you know, you might think that voice is something like your height, or your eye color, that can't be changed. But it's not, actually. It's very similar to going to the gym and changing the shape of your body. It's kind of muscular and there's a muscle memory. Absolutely you can enhance almost every voice can be enhanced and improved. Like I say, you want to optimize everybody's skills.

We're not trying to make everybody sound like Marilyn Monroe, or George Clooney, or someone like that. We want everybody to be an enhanced version of themselves. That's you with energy, with enthusiasm, with warmth and a voice that holds up throughout your

speaking day. That they're not slumped over. They're drinking enough water. They're hydrated.

And they understand that in a sense, this is show business. When they walk into that practice, they're on. And they've got to leave their other part of the day behind in service of the practice, in service of the practice, in service of the patients. It's amazing when you have that kind of corporate culture, what happens to a practice.

David:

Yeah, very good, very good. Let's talk a little bit about body language when we're talk on the phone. It seems to me that we're just talking on the phone, so how would body language fit into that, because they're not actually seeing what we're doing.

Susan:

Yeah. You know that's one of the first things that I work with a team on because that is a key, key driver of the sound of your voice, and your health, actually. Your ergonomic health, if you're on the phone a lot or sitting at your desk a lot. I always encourage people to get telephone headsets and help them understand of course that a smile on your face puts a smile in your voice.

But not just that. You should speak with your hands when you talk. You should stand up. It gives you more energy, more enthusiasm. Slumping in your chair, it's just deadly to the sound of your voice. All your energy just gets sapped out. That's one of the first things that we work on to help change and enhance the sound of any voice.

David:

Susan, what are the four components that you describe in terms of trust-based selling?

Susan:

This is something that I've identified, David, based on all my years as a professional voice over artist. We're

experts at changing our pitch, our tone, our inflection, to convey different feelings with our voice. I think that everybody has one of these four basic voice types, or a combination of them.

One is the trust type. That's the person who talks ... you just trust that person. He's like your friendly grandfather. Your uncle. Walter Cronkite, for those of us of a certain age we remember that king of grandfatherly sound. Other people have natural authority in their voice, so when they speak, you're going to sit up and take notice.

There's the charm voice type, which is the person that ... the great story teller that will go on, and on, and on. And then there's the enthusiasm voice type. That's the person that's kind of hyper, kind of over the top, filled with energy.

The great thing about these vocal influence types is we can all learn to adapt pieces of these for different types of speaking situations. For example, I would imagine that if I were a doctor and I'm doing a case presentation, I don't want to sound too enthusiastic, right? I want to ... oh goody, this one, oh, 60 grand, oh, maybe 120. Oh, wee ha. I might feel that way, but I don't want to sound that way.

Nor do I want to sound too charming. I do want to sound trustworthy. I want to use the trust voice and maybe a little bit of authority in there when I'm telling them, hey, you really need to take care of this problem otherwise you're going to lose all your teeth, right? There's a little bit of warm authority where your finessing your voice.

But again, the key here is that people are not aware of how they sound. The first step in any voice improvement process is to get balanced feedback. When I work with

my doctors, I work with professionals, I work with staff, we're recording people and listening to recordings or, even better yet, it would be fantastic to record a case presentation, then analyze it and enhance it and test it to see what works.

David:

Susan, have you ever put any numbers or data together, any metrics on that you believe, or others they consult with. Because I know you deal with a lot of great businesses owners and marketing. How much in dollar revenue, are there any statistics on how much dollar revenue is possible lost but they businesses in general because if the gap that we're talking about here, where we go marketing was leads coming in, but it's a drop.

There's more than one place for it to drop. We're talking about on the phones, when someone calls in. But there's also the drop when you actually have the client, customer, patient in the office. You've done a client presentation, and then you just mentioned, how is that conveyed to, in this case the patient, the doctor, to show more trust?

And then hand it over to an assistant who may be a financial manager who actually handles finances. So many places where the communication lines can be dropped. Any idea, any stats, any range of figures? I think it's got to be way more than most business owners even think. What do you think?

Susan:

It's way more than they think or would believe. I'll give you a story. This is anecdotal. I was talking to a friend of mine who's an infomercial producer. You know those things rake in millions and millions of dollars. You've seen it. In this particular case, it was for a kitchen product. He had a winner and really they were making millions. Everyday six figures.

One day his voice talent, the announcer that was voicing the spot came to him and said, oh, I'm so sorry, I can't do your project anymore because I have a conflict with another one of my customers, but I've got a friend of mine, another guy in the business. He sounds exactly like me.

Plays the memo for the producer. The producer says, "Wow, I can't tell the difference. You guys sound exactly alike. He puts guy number two on the air, within 24 hours the sales plummet. They drop like a rock. He's flipping out. He's losing hundreds of thousands of dollars. The only difference is the voice. He can't perceive it but there's something invisible that the listeners to that spot perceived.

He calls back the original voice talent and writes him a very big check to be exclusive and puts the original recording back on the air and the sales skyrocket again. It wasn't something that the producer could perceive, but the audience knew because voice is that way. It creates an energy when a person speaks and a skilled person will under that and know how to manipulate pitch, tone, inflection in just a certain way to have the results they need.

I can give you another quick example that's perhaps a bit more quantifiable. Marketers bring me in, and this is kind of hush-hush. I'm kind of like the video sales letter whisperer. You know what a video sales letter is? A lot of our listeners might not know, but one of the ways that people advertise. You've seen them online, it's like a commercial that like a PowerPoint that's narrated.

There's one company that's a multi-million dollar company, that bought me into optimize the voice talent

that they were using. It was already making them millions. I did some tweaks to the way he was doing his announcements, and they told me they saw a noticeable difference, I think I was like a 20% increase in one of their products because I worked with this guy, so it matters. It really, really matters, and the exciting thing is now is that these techniques that are used behind the scenes by marketers are now available for practice owners.

David: Outstanding, outstanding. All right, I think some people

may not believe me that I'm really talking to the voice of AT&T, so I'll play the recording, but you got to give it to

me live.

Susan: Thank you for calling Citiphone banking. Your account

balance, David, is \$600 million, because you're a friend of

mine.

David: I love it.

Susan: Can I tell you a really quick story? Do we have time?

David: Sure.

Susan: So, my dad was a Citibank customer and one day he's at

a business luncheon and he goes to pay the bill with a Citicard, and it's declined. It was one of those things where the payment crosses in the mail. He pulls out cash,

pays the bill, no problem. Gets back to his office, calls the bank, gets me on the phone saying, "Your card has been declined, do not use your card." He told me he was yelling into the phone, "But Susan, it's dad. You know I'm good

for the money." All I kept saying was, "Your card has

been declined, do not use your card."

David: Oh man, too close to home for that one. Right?

Susan: It was.

David: Well, our listeners can realize they have actually me or

are meeting virtually, I guess, someone on this recording someone they have probably heard over and over many times over the years. That's what struck me as that voice because I have heard it so many times. Yes, one of the

great voices of America.

Susan, people that want to get in touch with you, learn more about you, possible engage you in some help with

their training, their voice training with their staff,

communication, all the things we've talked about to covert marketing leads to raving patients and fans of the practice

or business, what's the best way to do that?

Susan: Yeah sure, I'm going to give you a few ways, my website

is greatvoice.com, and the best way, I mean you could send me an email to voicepro@greatvoice.com, or call us

at 800-333-8108. We're in New Jersey. Eastern time zone. That's 800-333-8108, and mention you heard me

on your podcast and I'll take real good care of you.

David: And even will send you a copy of her latest book, the

persuasion code.

Susan: I absolutely can. I'll be happy to do that. I'll be happy to do

that.

David: All right, well greatvoice.com. Susan Berkley, thank you

so much for your time of day. It's always a pleasure and I'm glad we got get some great information out to our listeners because I know is a major factor in whether one is profitable barely squeezing by, and if they would focus

on this one area, it could make a huge difference still.

Susan: That's great David. Thank you so much for the time. I

appreciate it. Until we meet again.

David: Absolutely, Susan, take care.

Susan: Okay, bye-bye now.

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