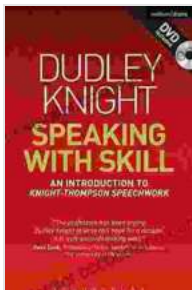


Unlock Your Speech Potential: An In-Depth Review of Knight Thompson's Speech Work Performance Books

: Embarking on a Journey of Vocal Excellence



Speaking With Skill: An Introduction to Knight-Thompson Speech Work (Performance Books)

by Dudley Knight

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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File size : 6519 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 353 pages



STANDARDS

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Every six months or so, some part or other of AVASTAVOX, the internet discussion list for the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA), sets off a brief flurry of comments on the ever-occurring issue of standards in speech training for actors. What are the virtues or liabilities in the dominant accent pattern—Good American Speech—that has been taught to generations of American actors? Do we need any single accent pattern for classical performance onstage? If so, what? If not, how does a teacher construct a voice and speech curriculum that avoids a rigidly defined pattern, yet still provides speech and “dialect” students the skills that they need to possess to work in a variety of professional environments? Are the standards that a speech teacher might apply to actor training also applicable to speech training with professional voice users who are not theatre or film performers?

The focus of this essay will be on the last two questions. I shall assert that (if we use the word “standard” to mean qualitative criterion, the only standard that we can apply generally to every aspect of speech or accent training is that of intelligibility, even though there are always many other possibly desirable characteristics which might apply to specific speech skills in differing contexts. Achieving a level of consistent intelligibility across accent groups still, I suggest, necessarily involves a speaker’s ability to articulate easily (and on stage, often reflexively) the degree of phonological detail appropriate to the task. The requirements for development of these skills in theatrical and non-theatrical contexts may differ considerably, but the issue of “accent reduction” ideology as taught to speakers outside is useful in every perspective to the requirements for stage speech.

Parts of this essay are based more on opinion derived from personal experience than on scholarship. I make no apology for this. Much of the theatre voice teacher’s research library resides in the cumulative experience of the individual shared with colleagues through thousands of interactions with students and with other theatre professionals. As I shall note more than once, there is little if any corroboration of this kind of teaching experience through controlled statistical studies. In many speech matters, the results of research studies might be extremely useful to the theatre artist; in many more, they would be quite irrelevant, perhaps even destructive to work that is delicate and intuitive.

¹ I place “dialect” in quotes because I prefer to observe the distinction generally used by linguists between “dialects,” the small regions of a shared speech group, and “dialects,” the generalizing terms which encompass lexical and grammatical components of speech.

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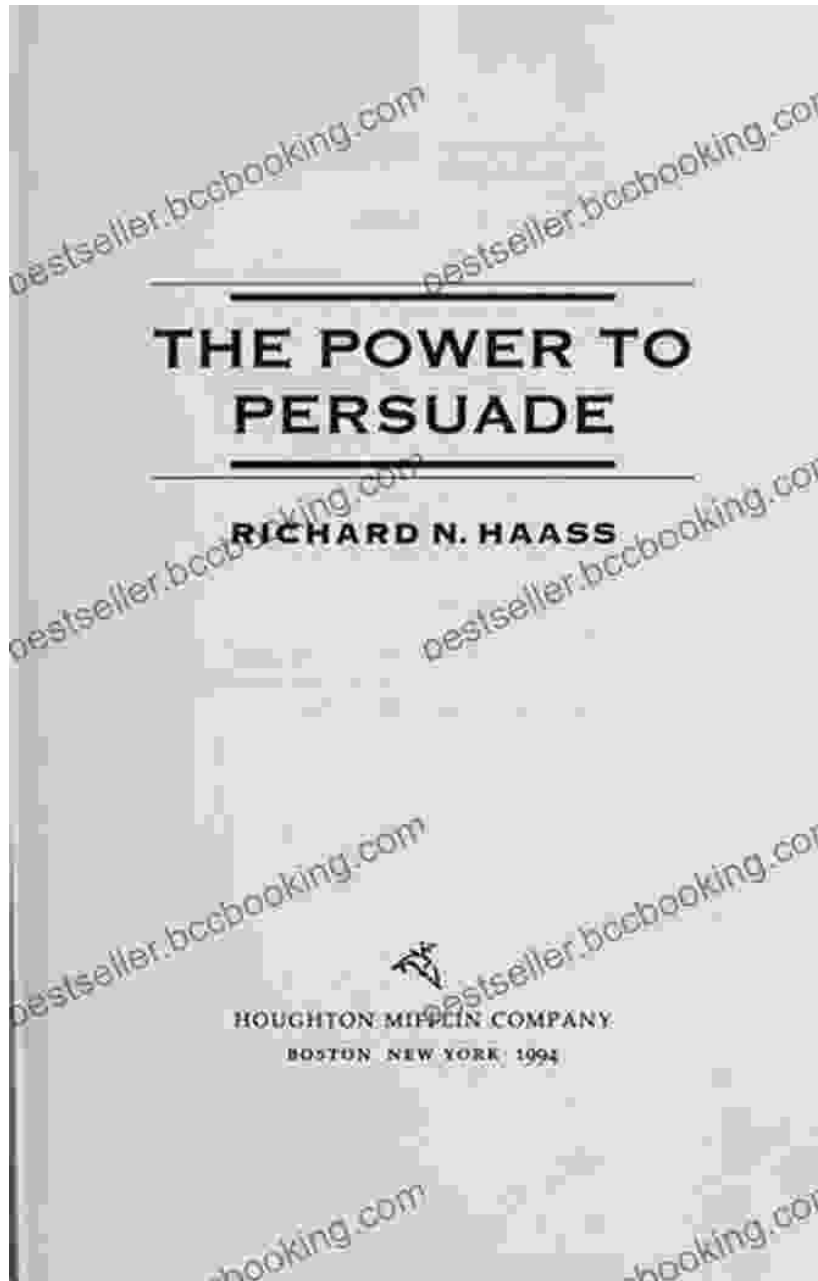
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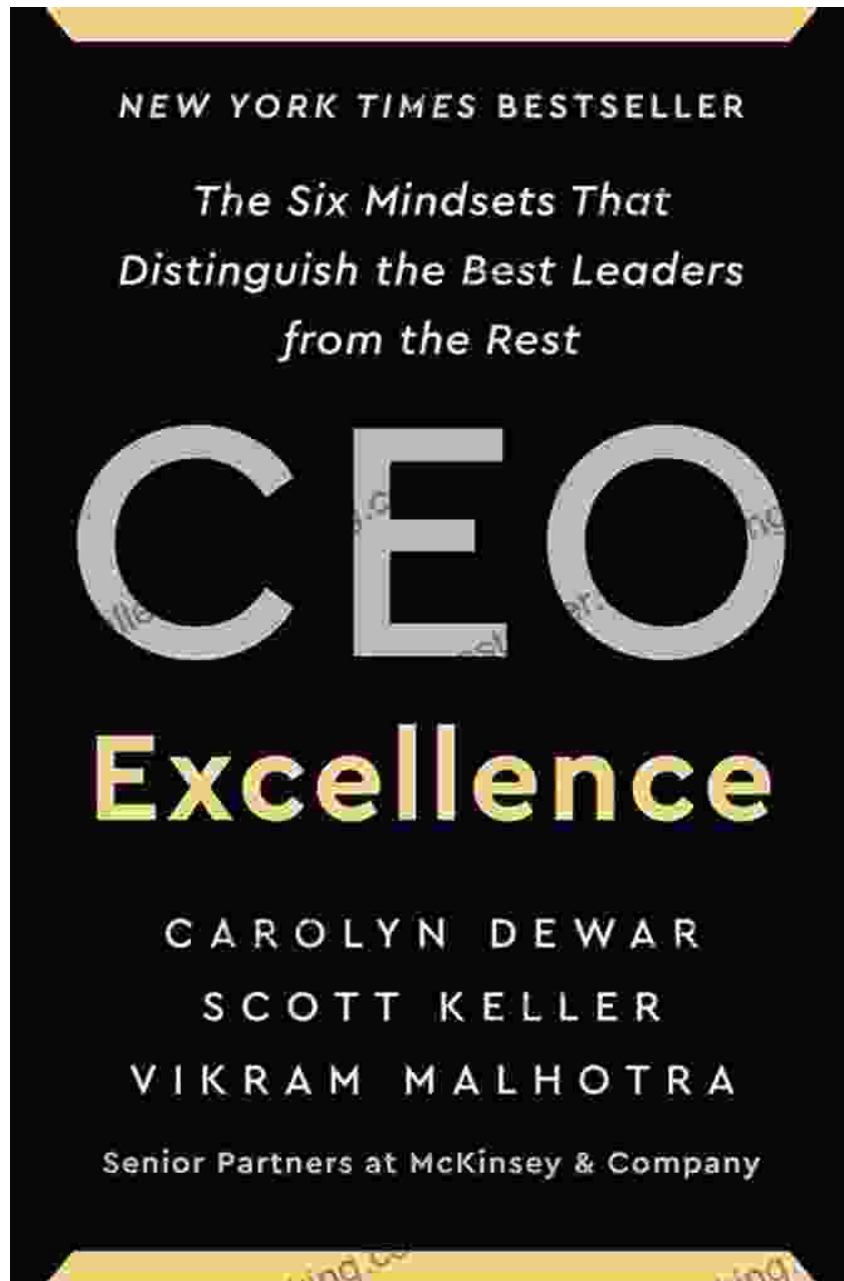
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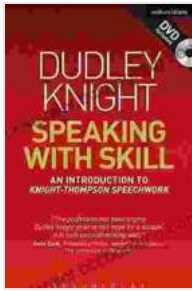
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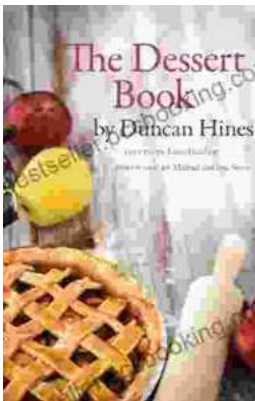


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