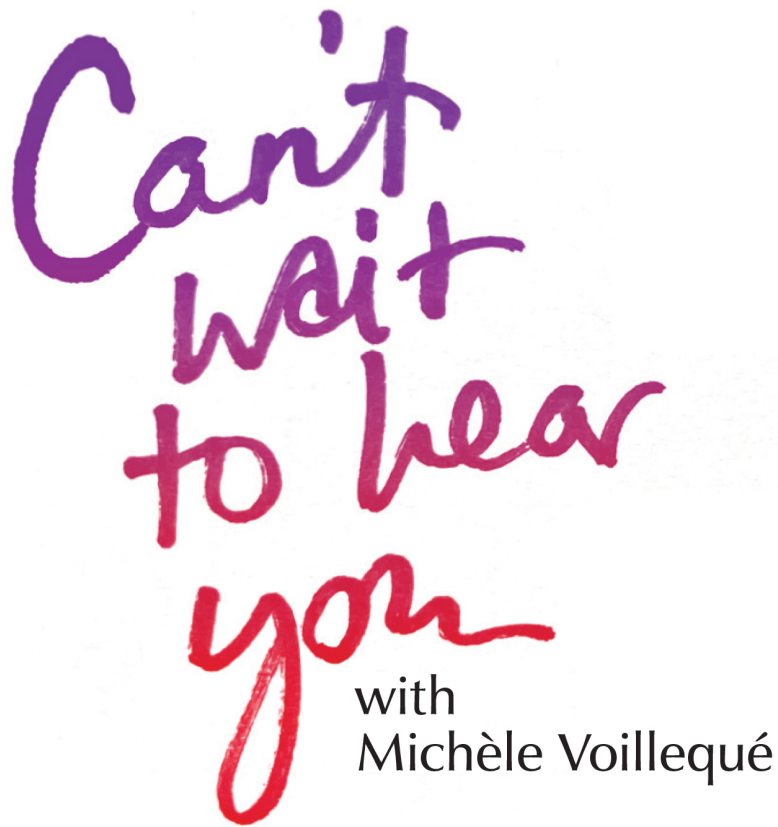


## Ep #36: Capable of More



### Full Episode Transcript

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Your voice is unique to you. It grows as you grow. It changes as you change. If you're curious about the relationship between your voice and your body, your heart and your mind, welcome. My name is Michèle Voillequé and I can't wait to hear you.

I offer free consultations either over Zoom or over the phone to help us figure out whether we're a good fit for one another, a new student and I. And when you sign up for the free consultation, there's a form you fill out. And one of the questions I ask on the form is, "What would you most like to learn from me?"

And another question is, "A year from now, what would, how will your life be different for having taken voice lessons?"

And one of the things that people often write is, "I feel like I'm capable of more, and I want to find out what that is." And this is such a beautiful idea, a beautiful thought to have in your mind, "I'm capable of more."

It opens up just so much opportunity for exploration and adventure, and it's really useful.

I have found myself in recent weeks kind of grappling with, "I am capable of more," because there has been a lot on my plate, and part of me feels like, "I'm not capable of anything right now."

Like, "Life is too full. I have too much. No, I'm not capable of more. Let's just stop this right now." Right?

"I'm overwhelmed. I'm overloaded. I'm overburdened."

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And then on the other hand, I feel like I'm capable of more, I am capable of more, because my voice has grown a lot in the last few months. I stretched myself vocally and now I feel like, "Wow, vocally, I am capable of more and I have no idea what that's going to sound like!"

I really feel like I'm on a new edge with my voice that feels really exciting and expansive and amazing.

So I want to talk about this troubled (sometimes) relationship that can happen with feeling capable of more.

In the case of a new student coming for a lesson, feeling capable of more and holding a lot of doubt.

I have many, many students who are taking voice lessons for the first time in their lives, or who are taking voice lessons after a very long time of not taking voice lessons. Maybe they were a singer in their youth and they had lessons and then they, you know, it just fell by the wayside and now they're coming back to it.

And a fair number of my students have sung all their lives and have long histories of taking lessons and so lessons are not, not a big thing. They're used to, all of a sudden, not knowing what they're going to sound like. They're used to that growth that happens vocally when you start studying.

But many of my beginner students or my returning to singing students, that's one of the first hitches in their learning. They're excited to sound better, and yet they're afraid when they sound different.

And so managing that dynamic, right? Better is going to be different. We all know this intellectually, but when you start sounding different to

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yourself and it's bigger and it's freer and it's like nothing you've ever heard before, that can feel really scary.

And so when I say there's a hitch, that's kind of the hitch, it's getting through that, that dissonance.

“I don't sound like I used to, and I'm not sure if this is how I should sound.” That's a scary moment.

And for a lot of students who are coming to voice lessons for the first time, it's taken them a long time to get to me.

They might have had this thought, “I'm capable of more,” when it comes to singing or speaking differently, they might have had that thought for the first time years and years ago, and it was immediately countered in their brain by their effective inner critic who said, “No, you're not. This is as good as it gets. You're fine. Are you trying to be fancy? Are you trying to be famous? Stop that. Knock that off.”

And that thought “I'm capable of more” still keeps coming back and maybe at some point they share that thought with someone who isn't entirely receptive.

So now they have the voices and the opinions of other people in their head now, maybe from their family, “We're not singers. We don't do that. None of us are musicians.” “We're shy people. We don't speak in public. That's not what we do.” So another kind of squelching of that desire, that thought, “I'm capable of more.”

And then through whatever mysterious, miraculous path, the thought just doesn't die. “I'm capable of more.” And at some point it gets joined up with a thought, “And I'm brave, and I'm courageous.”

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“I'm capable of more, and I'm brave enough to find out how much, or what that would be like.”

And often that's about the time they start stalking me online and maybe a few months, sometimes it's been years. People have told me they've followed me for years, you know, like kept the tab of my website on it open, saved as a bookmark for a really long time before they ever go to push the button to schedule a free consultation or to send me an email or to make a phone call.

And then they do, then they arrive and we're here and we have together this opportunity to find out together, “Yeah, you are capable of more! And what is that going to sound like? What's that going to look like? What's that going to feel like?”

And that relationship of exploring your capability, finding out what more is for you, that is absolutely the joy of teaching for me. And it feels sacred. It feels like the most important kind of container that a relationship can be. One where we don't know the outcome, exactly.

If you believe you're capable of more, I believe you're right. And together we're going to figure out what that looks like. But neither of us honestly know exactly what that's going to be. And that's fun. And it's also scary. And again, it's a joy.

And there are moments in the learning process where it can feel like, “I'm not capable of any more. I'm done. I'm full. I cannot try one new thing.”

“You want me to learn how to lip trill? No, I can't do that. That's a step too far.”

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“You want me to work on singing longer notes? Nope, not up for that this week. Not gonna go there.”

And then, you know, fill in the blank, all kinds of things, wherein the process of learning new skills, learning to use our body differently, we just can't go there today. And that's okay. You can still be capable of more.

I was thinking about this this week in reference to my own feelings of overwhelm that I've been having and feeling like, “No, I'm not capable of more. Thank you. Go away. Stop.” You know, not about teaching, but about other things in my life. “No, I don't have any more to give.”

I'm not capable of maybe climbing a mountain today. But I am capable of taking a nap. I am capable of more rest. I'm capable of more delicious food, more nourishing food. I'm capable of a slightly longer walk at the end of the day to just wind down.

I am capable of more in other areas that are supportive and healing and helpful and get me feeling like I can do other things again, right? They're nourishing.

So even when “I'm capable of more,” feels like a lie, feels like a cruelty, feels unfair and just wrong, like a phrase to run from, I want to suggest, I want to offer to you, that “I'm capable of more,” could be more of anything else.

What is that thing that you're most needing? Is it compassion for yourself? Is it a sense of spaciousness, either in your body, if your body's feeling really tense and tired and collapsed and awful? Are you capable of more spacious scheduling? Of finding more time for yourself?

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You can be capable of finding more wonderful music to listen to.

But to speak more specifically about the voice-training process, let me tell you that you are going to be capable of more in at least three distinct areas as you work on your voice.

You're going to find more physical strength, you're going to find more neurological calm, and you're going to find a stronger grounded sense of being.

Those are the three main areas I find I spend most of my time working with my students. So, if it feels scary, if you haven't started working on your voice and you're like, "Oh!" and now I've done a great job of helping you feel insecure about what's before you. That wasn't my intention, but I know that it could have happened.

What you can expect is that you're going to grow in strength in your trunk. Your breath support system and your relationship to your belly, is going to change in a positive and strengthening way.

Your relationship, actually, to your whole trunk, not just your belly, but your chest, the front, the back, your lower back, your legs, your relationship to your body is going to change and you're going to feel stronger.

Your relationship to your voice itself is going to change. You're going to learn to hear yourself differently and to think about your voice not as only an expression of your identity, but as a tool for making sounds, an instrument. You're going to come to think of your voice actually as an instrument.

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And you're going to learn how very much your emotional, spiritual presence has to do with how well you're using your voice and how your presence and attention, open heartedness, willingness to connect, security in yourself, safety in yourself, how much that has to do with how well you sing or speak.

So even when you decide that you're capable of more and something gets scary or goes awry, there's always a safe place to return to and still make progress.

What I find with many of my students is they have a wealth of experience in other areas of life that directly informs how they use their voice, or how they use their body for singing or speaking.

Lots of my students have taken yoga classes, some dance classes, rock climbing. Some are endurance runners, lots of other experiences with their body where what I'm talking about with them vocally, they have an immediate analogy, an immediate metaphor from some other aspect of their life.

And I think I said "for many of my students," I think this is true for all of my students. We're all good at something. We all feel capable and confident at something in our lives.

And I find we can use that as a resource in the voice lesson to anchor the changes we're making, to relate the new skills you're learning here to something you already know.

And that has the effect of helping you be capable of more in all kinds of areas of your life, not just singing or speaking.



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This comes back to the truth that your whole self really is the instrument. And the good news is that a lot of what you've learned to this point in your life we can probably use to help make singing and speaking easier.

So I leave you with this thought, this “I'm capable of more” and I just want to ask how does that sit with you, when you think of that? “I'm capable of more.” In what areas is that exciting and illuminating and expansive and amazing? And in what areas is it like, “No, no, not today. No, I'm not capable of more.” I'm really interested.

I feel this week anyway, that life is a bit of a dance around this idea. “I am capable of more. I am capable of more.”

Thanks so much for listening.

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