

Tips for a New Karaoke Singer

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Read the first in this series: [Things a KJ May or May Not Tell You](#)

Karaoke is hard! Very hard! If you remember the first time you performed a song in front of strangers, it was a terrifying experience.

Here are some New Singer karaoke tips to help you along the way.

Singing Karaoke is SCARY!

My daughter told me I had a great voice (SHE actually DOES!) and she wanted me to do Karaoke with her, but I was terrified of Karaoke... Then my friend, Judi (another Karaoke PRO), got me up there with some encouraging ego-brushing words, and a lovely smile to ease my nerves – I remember my first time singing karaoke was a duet with her – Silver Bells, because it was Christmas time.

My first solo performance was a song I knew really well, “... and I’ve been hooked ever since.

For karaoke veterans like myself, getting up to sing is child’s play.

But please remember, at one time in your life, getting up and singing in front of a group of strangers was very scary. And sometimes, (okay, almost always) it’s best to have someone present to elevate your courage.

Get Used to the Bar Culture

It’s okay to tap someone lightly on the back and force your way through the crowd. It’s okay to stand in line outside the restroom. Where it is not cool is to stand directly behind someone at the urinal. (in other words,) Give people their space.

This Will Not be a Good First date

Karaoke is loud. Super loud. Don't try to do karaoke on a first date unless you're finishing out the night. At best, you'll be texting back and forth.

Long Songs are Generally a Faux Pas

Try to not sing anything over 6 minutes unless you get the KJ's permission. Sadly, this rules out American Pie, Freebird, Meatloaf, and others.

If it's a slow night, hey, anything goes! Busy night where we have to get 25 people up and singing? Keep it short.

Respect the Regulars

If you respect the regulars, eventually you'll become one too.

The regulars are the drinking and tipping customers who are smart and take an Uber home.

Do your best, applaud, buy someone a shot now and then. Break in to the inner circle. And in no time at all, you'll be one.

But never, ever, try to jump in front of the regulars. It's just not cool. Not cool at all.

Group Songs are Awful

I know, I may get slammed for this, but group songs are awful! If it's more than two people, making a group song sound good is near **impossible**.

The mics we use are top-notch. Most group song singers hold the mic at arms-length so they can get all the people in.

As a result, we just see four-to-five (ladies) screaming and having no idea what they are singing.

If you must do a group song, give one mic to a competent singer, and share the mic with the rest of the singers.

Tipping is Appreciated

American culture is that of a tipping culture. Whether you think tips are bribes... eh... (could be), or not...

A small appreciation of \$1 to \$2 per song is the norm.

Yes, the KJ is getting paid for the show, and perhaps is being comp'd on drinks. But there's the unloading of the equipment at the venue, loading it back into the vehicle after the show, tear up, tear down, and the drive back... then, finally the KJ's night is over.

What you see at the karaoke show is the tip of the iceberg unless the KJ is fortunate enough to work at a venue with a built-in sound setup.

Don't Bug the KJ

The KJ is herding cats. And the cats are drunk. So it's a hard job.

Don't go up every 5 minutes to check up on your song. We'll call you. Trust me.

We'll Get You Singing, We Promise!

If we can't get you up to sing, we'll tell you. Promise!

It is appropriate to ask the KJ when you are up when you sign up.

Sometimes it's an hour. Sometimes you are next. You just never know.

Don't Hog the Mic

When the KJ gives you the mic, that is your queue to sing. It's not your queue to say hello to mom.

Please do not grab the mic from the KJ. When we're ready, we'll give you the mic.

Also, after your song, it's still not cool to say hello to mom.

Remember, we have control over your mic. We'll just turn you off.

When the Show is Over, it's Over

Yes, you want to get that one more song. The answer is always NO.

Here's why:

We're paid to be at the venue, and we want to go home when we're finished.

Also, the bar manager is usually the one who shuts us down, so it's not always up to us.

Plus, even if we *were* to put in a new singer, it wouldn't be you. It would be the next person in the rotation*.

So, please, *pretty please*, understand that **NO**, we cannot and will not accommodate you.

Respect the KJ's Equipment

Leave your drink at your table. If you are worried about being drugged (a legit concern), tell the KJ. We'll find a spot for your drink. Promise.

Please don't place your drink near the setup.

Accidents happen, even sober. One spill will destroy our equipment.

Applaud, Always

I honestly don't care if the person is a *diva*, or a *douche*, or even if the person is singing your most detested song (see below).

Show some appreciation. Remember, karaoke is hard. Show at least *some* appreciation by a clap or a whoop. Consider how you might feel (no matter how good you *think* you are) if someone did that to *your* "performance".

Heckling is also welcome (but only after or before the song).

And for Goodness' Sake, STOP SINGING "PICTURE"

It's a horrible song. Don't do it. I *will* plan out your death.

Your Turn!

Please share your karaoke tips below in the comments.

*see **TIPPING** for exceptions 😊

Last modified: 10:09 PM