RT-AWS1-7

Attending With Sound

We are all vibrating beings. If we tune to how someone else is vibrating and match it, the sense of being recognized at that depth is very powerful in evoking learning.

Meeting another person with sound is often less familiar than touch or movement. There are several possible ways to begin. One is to imagine what sound might fit in the body part, perhaps a shoulder, that you are attending to. It can be useful to find a sound that fits in your own shoulder in the same place.

Another way to begin is to imagine what sort of sound that shoulder might express if it could sound. The main thing is to begin. Then you can "feel/hear" or "see/hear" how your partner responds to the sound. Or you can ask your partner to tell you their experience. Then you can fine tune your sound.

As it is with touch and movement, the intention in attending with sound is to notice "what is willing to meet me," not to project sound into your partner's body.

Sometimes, in the process of meeting what is there with tone, the sounds that happen are "unpleasant" or "dissonant" rather than "harmonious." In music both dissonances and consonances are harmonies. Consonances are stable harmonies and dissonances are active harmonies. Music would be quite dull if it consisted of consonances alone. Dissonances provide the movement that impells our ears along to the end of the piece, where we settle into consonance.

When dissonant sounds arise while toning with a partner, stay with them. Let yourself be curious about them just as you might be curious about a texture or movement that you feel in a person's body. As you stay attending, you may notice your tone and the body changing, on their own, at the same time.

Partnering

Discuss with your partner where you will be attending to them.

Establish yourself. Wait for curiosity to arise.
Expand your attention to include your partner.

You may touch your partner, or not, as you choose.

Ask internally, "What is willing to meet me here?"
Translate your perceptions into sound, using your imagination. Use your own body for reference, if you like. Sing the sound you imagine, or just guess.

Notice how your partner's body responds to the sounds you sing. Let your voice change as it will while you follow your partner's responses.

Invite your partner to sing with you.
Let your curiosity and your partner's body suggest new sounds.

When your exploration feels complete, say good-bye and thank you with your whole body, and return your attention to yourself.

Share your experience with your partner after both of you have played both roles.

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> Mantras consist of vibrations. Our nerves, our ganglia, and our cells also vibrate. The law of resonance teaches us: Anything that vibrates reacts to vibrations, even (as recent discoveries have shown) to the most minute vibrations, and to those that only a few years ago could not be measured - brainwaves, for instance - and hence logically also to vibrations that have yet to become measurable.
>
> Joachim Ernst-Berendt -
> *Nada Brahma: the World Is Sound*

Resonators

Our human bodies are wonderfully flexible and responsive musical instruments. By directing our attention to different tissues in our bodies as we sing, we can change the resonant qualities of the tones - as if we could transform ourselves from flute to trumpet to cello. So, when you sing your body two things are happening together. Your body parts receive attention, a tune-up you might say, and your voice broadens its vocabulary of resonance at the same time.

A frequency will amplify inside a space that matches its size. The A 440 pitch that orchestras tune to fits the size of the average adult human chest. Tiny high frequencies fit into the minescule bone caves of the ethmoid bone between your eyes.

Different tissues affect tones in different characteristic ways. The muscle in your shoulder adds different characteristics to a tone than your heart, a fluid-filled muscle, does.

The best way to learn the vast and subtle variety of tonal expressions available to your voice is to get to know your instrument. Play with your body. Make sounds everywhere.

> It has been said since ancient times that the nature of reality is much closer to music than to a machine, and this is confirmed by many discoveries in modern science. The essence of a melody does not lie in its notes; it lies in the relationships between the notes, in the intervals, frequencies and rhythms. When a string is set vibrating we hear not only a single tone but also its overtones - an entire scale is sounded. Thus each note involves all the others, just as each sub-atomic particle involves all the others, according to current ideas in particle physics.
>
> Fritjof Capra

Singing

Exhaling and sounding are relaxations of the diaphragm.

Singing is the second half of your breath. Work happens in your diaphragm in order to breathe in. Breathing out, singing, is a relaxation. Play with the notion that the sound is always there (it is!) and that all you have to do is join it.

Only a few muscles need to engage when you sing, your diaphragm and the tiny muscles that move your vocal chords. Neither your diaphragm nor your vocal chord muscles have much sensation. When you feel effort accompanying your singing, it is extraneous.

Curiosity and the attention that follows curiosity are what lead to ease in singing. They are an alternative to the assumption that you have to make a sound, cause a sound, or force it into being. The muscles involved with sound work reflexively. The more we consciously think about the production of sound, the more we get in the way. Whenever you find an easy, comfortable sensation that accompanies a sound that you like, simply return to that sensation.

When you sustain a tone you are allowing your diaphragm to relax very slowly. It is difficult to feel your diaphragm directly, but you can easily feel the expansion of your abdomen that results when the diaphragm is working. Take a deep breath and notice the sensation of expansion in your abdomen. Then breathe out very slowly, imagining that your abdomen is continuing to expand. Try it again, making a sound on the exhale.

Let down to go up.

Sometimes when people want to sing a high pitch they point their chins up. That gesture only pinches the neck. The same principle applies in singing as in other movements, you need to go down in order to go up. In order to sing a high pitch, let your chin drop, let your shoulders drop, let your weight drop into your feet. The sound and the crown of your head will float up in response to all this dropping.

Lesson 4. Attending Through Sound

Warm-up - Aligning the Three Body Weights

1. Stand and slowly roll your head, then your thorax, then your pelvis toward the floor until you are hanging upside down.

2. Roll yourself slowly back to standing, feeling each body weigh as it drops to the ground through your feet. *Let down to go up.*

3. Touch your head on either side, just in front of your ears. Imagine your fingers extending to touch each other in the middle of your head. Imagine dropping a plumb bob on a long string from the place where your fingers meet. Arrange your three body weights so that the plumb bob swings freely without bumping into the opposing curves of your neck vertebrae or lumbar vertebrae. Walk around the room, letting your plumb bob hang freely as you walk.

4. Grow a cone head and a dinosaur tail, extending your vertebral column in both directions. Walk around again feeling your cone head and dinosaur tail.

If It Is, It's Vibrating

We are vibrational beings in a vibrating universe. Our sense organs are tuned to percieve certain frequency bands in ways that are useful toward making sense of the world. Our eyes are tuned to the very fast frequencies of light between ultraviolet and infrared. Our ears are tuned to the medium fast frequencies of sound, our fingers to the somewhat slower frequencies of the kinesthetic realm. Our brains interpret these vibrational patterns as representations of objects and movements in our environment.

If we had sense organs tuned to the rest of the frequency continuum, we might be able to directly experience the continuous vibrational fabric of the whole universe. The task of making useful distinctions with which to learn, then, would be very difficult.

Resonant Kinesiologists attempt to straddle the line of demarcation between experiencing ourselves and other people as separate objects and experiencing ourselves and others as a vibrating continuum. We use our imaginations to translate visual and kinesthetic information into tonal representations of people and sing the tones we imagine. Such singing, just like touch and movement, serves to amplify the person's experience of themselves.