

# Coming to a Sound Sense of Self

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Frequency is a hot topic in Sound Healing with many people discovering, using, publishing or keeping secret particular frequencies and chords that have produced good results for them. Yet there is a huge range of variation within any given frequency that profoundly affects the way a sound heals, or affects various levels of our being.

To discover some of this variation you need only hold a tone with your voice and modulate your mouth to change it's expression through the various vowel sounds.

At it's simplest expression the vowel sound can be seen as modulating the mouth from the wide open 'Ah' sound to the almost closed 'Oooo' sound.<sup>1</sup> as moving from a sound deep in the throat to a sound right between the lips.

Looking a little closer one can include those vowel sounds made by flattening the mouth to produce the 'Eh' (as in Air) and 'Eee' sounds.

This is expressed in our written language as five letters that indicate the steps between these extremes of wide open and almost shut.

**A**, Ah, as in Far, **E**, Eh, as in Air, **I**, Ee as in See, **O**, or as in Form **U**, Uu, as in Soon

in English we rarely use a pure or simple vowel sound but tend to slide one into another without recognizing it. This makes it difficult for us to recognise the letter we call 'I' as representative of the Ee sound as it is in many other languages. For example the word 'Wide' though spelt with an i if said slowly reveals the sounds Ah-Ee or in another example the pure Ah sound is given a letter we call 'Eh-ii,' though we write it as 'A' and read it in various ways according to the moment, most purely in words like 'Far'. Linguists call this method of running two vowels into one a '[diphthong](#)' which means gliding vowel and is not meant to suggest very skimpy underwear worn too low.

Surprisingly, the consonants also have a place in Sound Healing. If a tone begins and ends clearly rather than fading in and fading out one gets a consonant. Analysing how these consonants are formed in the mouth one can roughly define four groups of sounds:

- 👄 Starting at the lips one can aspirate the closed lips differently to form M, B, P, V, F
- 👄 Going back to the teeth and gums the same differences of breath form N, D, T, TH
- 👄 Going back into the throat these ways of breath form the sounds NG, G, K and then a sound not used in English, but clear in many European languages, e.g. German and Dutch and found in the German word for Laugh, Lachen.
- 👄 Consonants formed in the middle of the mouth are less simple to categorise but include the sound R, as the French and the Scots use it as well as L, S, Sh, and the soft version Je
- 👄 Additionally, the 'H' sound lies between vowel and consonant.

There is far more to this than I can do justice to here but I did want to point out that consonants can add a particular forming power to tones used in healing.

I would propose, from what we know so far, that as the chemical Elements each seem to have a particular frequency, perhaps salts have a chord and maybe we will find that more complex structures, amino acids for example, the biological basis for life, have sound signatures that include modulations of frequency expression such as we have become familiar with in vowels and consonants.

However my intention with this article is not to lay out a whole modality of phonetic healing and, though there are at least two groups that use phonetic structures as part of Sound Healing ([Chirophonetics](#) and [Psychophonetics](#)) they are not the source of this article.

I woke up about four days ago with the realisation that the five vowel sounds appear in the English pronunciations of personal pronouns in a most remarkable way. Consider the sounds shown above as the simplest expression of A, E, I, and sound in your mouth their sounds: aah, air, eee, Now run them together fast, they will, if you are reading this right form the diphthong or sliding vowel written as 'I'. the first personal pronoun, the everyday expression of our sense of self.<sup>2</sup> Those vowels that start deep in the throat and slowly flatten and move forward to sound in the centre of the mouth, used in English, present to us and others our sense of self.

Now take the vowel sounds that begin with **I**, (Ee as in See) and progress further through the mouth forming **O**, (or as in Form) **U**, (Uu, as in Soon) and, once again, run them together Iii-O-Uuu, and find yourself quite easily forming the common word, 'you'.

Thus the progress of the vowels in our alphabet, scattered amongst the consonants leads us delicately from self to other. Thus the forming of our out-breath from within our throat to right on our lips leads us in two steps from our expression of self awareness to our expression of awareness that others around us are also a self.

In the centre of this progress stands the letter **I**, halfway between the forming of self awareness and the completion of awareness of another's self. Is this why the letter I is formed simply as an upright line?<sup>3</sup> Is this why the sound it represents most purely, Eee is found in the name for self in nearly all European languages, both Romantic and Germanic?

Is this where the true Self lies, halfway between the self that arises within us and the self that we recognise in another? Notice that the **I**, in the centre of this is included in both aa,ë,ee, and in ee,o,uu. It is the one uniting factor. Could this be a deeper meaning in that Christian phrase "where two or more are gathered together in the name of I AM there also am I" ? (*the original Aramaic actually translates into this way more easily than the usual, biblical translation*)

I presented this yesterday at the Hawkwood College [workshop](#) on Sounding Bowls, and referred to the progress of human consciousness up to this point which has been a steady increase of self awareness, an awakening to personal power, individual thinking, self as distinct from the world, the tribe, the group ethos, be it religion, nation or even philosophy. The suggestion appeared to me to be that the way forward in human development as in the mouth was to form an awareness outwards of the other, to move from I to you.

The other suggestion within this seems to me that there is a True Self that, living within all of us is more truly found in the space between I and You than in either one of us alone. It is to the finding and warming of this self, this growing Child of all Humanity that Sounding Bowls seem to speak. Their resonant response from the sacred-spiral inner form of Sounding Bowls seems to enable people to come to a feeling of this True I AM in themselves, thus making it easier for them to relate to that goodness in others. Evidence for this lies in the numerous stories of people locked or lost in themselves who are able to come out and relate to others better after Sounding Bowl therapy. This is particularly easy to see where depression and autism are in the picture but once the theme is noticed such a response can be seen in much of the feedback from the field of therapeutic use.

On getting back from the workshop I found a message on my answer-phone from Jane Francis, who had been a creative part of the course, to say she had just realised that one can do one more, important transformation with these sounds. Her insight moved me to put this article together.

Taking the last three vowel sounds and moving backwards with them, **U,O,I**, Oo, Or, Ee and slurring it into a diphthong one arrives very easily at 'we'.

From this point of view one could say that individual consciousness evolves from the infantile I, Me, need, need, need, to the teenage social bind of 'nothing is Ok if my peers, YOU, You, you disapprove or criticise it' to the eventual maturity of equality, in which we are able to find that which is common in us and grow community, a world that shares from that place of mutual recognition, awareness of the equality of the Self that lives within us all.

I suspect that part of Freud's contribution to the modern age has been an unwitting pollution of the concept of Self. It is all too easy today to identify the Self with his concept of Ego and think that the possession of self is an evil to be overcome rather than a place of awareness without which responsibility is not possible. Compounding that we have prevalent today the underlying belief in Game Theory that states that if you do not use every opportunity afforded for self advancement at others' expense you are letting yourself down and letting down those who rely on you to provide for or assist them. This has made it more difficult for a growing awareness that that which lives in me as self awareness, and is named by me variously as I or Tobias is exactly the same (though from a different perspective) as that which lives in you and is named by you as I or Sally, Tom or whatever handle has seemed good to you to represent yourself with. Further that what I do with my own 'I' affects us both equally. If I am not loving and respectful of my own 'I' you also suffer. Equally true and less commonly noticed today is that what I do to your 'I' affects me as much or more than it affects you. Truly the I stands between us, as the True Human Self. The fact that we form this sound at the end of pronouncing self and the beginning of speaking other seems to me a quite magical representation of the importance of awakening to this image of the True Human Self.

Could it be linked in to the fact of English being the main international language today that this awareness, this discovery of the True Self that lives between I and You is nascent in human consciousness and is key to our survival of our present crises, social and environmental?<sup>4</sup> Empathy is the concept that I can within myself feel what is happening in you. Recent biological discoveries have shown that this consciousness leaves it's mark in the physical, and [Empathic activity](#) can be traced in delicate movements in the brain. I suggest this is the tip of an iceberg and that we will find in time that we can trace biological activity resulting from empathy deep into human tissues and organs, not least the heart.

Whether you see human consciousness as emerging from the biological traces or descending from higher consciousness and evolving a deeper relationship with itself and it's biology with time Empathy remains an important concept and the essence of Empathy is that there is a higher truth than self that unites I and you, that We together can forge something new, and step in human development that the world is waiting for with baited breath. Manifesting this higher self, this core of true empathy depends on developing a warm and sound sense of Self. We each of us are poised on this threshold. Sounding Bowls wish to assist in this awakening, this moving over to a newly resonant individual and social group.

Tobias Kaye 28 June 2010

<sup>1</sup>Many people use this already in meditation as part of the 'OM' or 'AUM' tradition, ending in closing so far that the lips meet, producing the 'mmm' sound. Some see this archetypal meditation as part of the 'Ways' given to by the Gods for 'coming in,' closing down our cosmic openness and slowly evolving a sense of a Self from which our individual response-ability can grow. Or to put it another way the route by which we may become one with the God who dwells within us rather than relying on the gods who hold/held us in their arms for so many millennia

<sup>2</sup> Comparing the concept of 'I' with that other personal word 'me,' it appears that 'I' refers to what flows through me, "I think; I feel; I want" whereas 'me' refers more to what flows towards me. "she's talking to me; can you give me..."

<sup>3</sup> *An upright line is the symbol for human self awareness. Unlike animals we have an upright spine/posture. Standing truly upright is a sign of an elevated self awareness.*

<sup>4</sup> *Phonetic healing is a development of Sound Healing that is also nascent amongst a smaller number of people. Could it perhaps also offer ways to our address individual crises? I for one know practitioners who have been using it with remarkable efficacy for a number of years.*