

Sounding Bowls

Opening Hearts Across the World

by Tobias Kaye: Designer and sole maker worldwide

How Does Sound Heal? And What is Healing?

Extended from a Reply to James D'Angelo.

Read original article at http://www.soundtravels.co.uk/a-HOW_DOES_SOUND_HEAL-57.aspx

I found James D'Angelo's article of this name a very neat round up of the questions that face any who wish to help heal with sound and vibration.

There were two particular things that I felt stimulated by and wanted to reply to, I will bring them up in the text, and there is one overarching theme that made me put my thoughts together to reply.

In order to address the question of how healing works I think we need a clearer idea of what healing is. There are many deep works of culture that refer to the relationship between the human spirit and health and in individual biography we commonly see how accident and illness frequently mark turning points in a personal life story. Contrary to this much of our modern medicine and even philosophy, as if at a loss to know how to approach the question of personal development, take a kind of Darwinian approach of improving bodily health and strength at any cost.

James D'Angelo talks about health of the chakras and how health in the body can flow back once a chakra has been 're-tuned' and there is plenty of evidence for this. However to modern science the chakra is still a mystery. How much more of a mystery then is the technology of human development, of the pursuit of meaning in individual life? Yet this, I propose is the true source of health.

Darwinism and bio-physics has increasingly underlined the supposition, unique to the modern age that consciousness is a product of biological processes. To me this is akin to suggesting that the reason for a given car journey is the fuel that has been consumed. It is clear that the journey could not have happened without the consumption of fuel, but it is also clear that the reason for most car journeys can not be found in the structure or nature of the car itself. Thus it is clear to me that consciousness is supported by the body but comes itself from other sources and has aims that are greater than the body even as the reason for the journey is greater than the car.

If health does indeed flow from a healed chakra into the body, might it not also flow from a healed sense of meaning and from finding direction in one's life into these chakra's and thence into the body? I think there is a good deal of evidence that this does happen. Indeed it is a founding principle of various forms of medicine, notably Ayurvedic from the ancient east and Anthroposophic from the modern west that this flow from healing the deep spirit, through helping it to re-touch it's direction and meaning in life, down through the astral, or feeling for our daily life, into the etheric, or chakra organism that makes for

real healing in the physical body. Some people working with the subtle edges of Cancer treatments speak of this sort of approach as “attitudinal medicine” healing the attitudes that cause illness. This is perhaps the most subtle type of subtle healing and much more research needs to be done, yet the effects some healers are having in this field are significant and remarkable.

From this point of view one can look very deeply at why different sounds treat the same chakras in different cultures. If there are indeed two levels of being above the chakra system then there is good reason that they would respond to different stimuli, depending on the cultural context. Culture, like individual biography having, in this case for a group of people, a spiritual direction and a soul nature.

I like James D’Angelo’s definition of sound as applied in healing as having some “regularly vibrating natural source preferably rich in overtones” organised sound does seem to lie deep within the formative nature of matter and I suggest that classic references to sound, or the word, being at the beginning of all things are far more than speculation or philosophy. ‘The Word’ is the organisation of sound to carry conscious meaning. Notes, overtones (intervals), music are similarly the organisation of sound to carry deep emotive meaning and as such both phonetic healing and frequency-group healing fit into the structure of assisting a person to reconnect with their meaning and direction.

I am careful here not to say *find a sense of meaning*, because such a phrase suggests that maybe consciousness does arise from bodily processes and life has no meaning unless we give it one. In the context of this article I can confidently say that this idea is, in itself, unhealthy, likely to produce ill health. The idea that consciousness itself has meaning and direction with or without a body to reflect it is the basis for finding true health in this context.

Today even many religious practitioners, priests and so forth have lost their relationship with this question and, persuaded by the huge body of scientific evidence that there is no human spirit have fallen back on the popular view that we have to *make* a meaning to our lives in order to be happy. To actively seek that which already exists, a meaning and direction that, in the hurly burly of existence we have forgotten, is too subtle a concept for many in this age of multitudinous facts and torrents of disconnected information that masquerade as knowledge.

So, given that healing is a flow that begins in the connection to one’s sense of meaning and runs through one’s general happiness with life, down through the chakra’s that sustain the etheric body and in to the physical life of the organism, how does sound healing relate to this? Surely there is a relationship between the organisation of consciousness into the life and body of earthly substance and the organisation of sound into tone, interval and phonetic expression that can concur with and assist each other with, as James D’Angelo puts it, sympathetic vibration. Does not all healing involve some level of sympathy?

The big omission in James D’Angelo’s article came when he characterised the healing bowls of the east, mixed metals, and the west, quartz glass, and failed to mention those of the middle, wood with strings. It is clear that not all sound healers are yet aware of the powerful effect these instruments have in many healing contexts and that may be

connected with a definition of healing in as much as many of the healing effects of the European, stringed-wooden Sounding Bowls have so far begun within the context of the spirit and soul before flowing into other areas of human life. There are reports of direct physical effects but most often it is within the spiritual and emotional (astral) aspects of the human being that the effects are felt. This is by no means less important, though many of us today are less aware of imbalances within our finer bodies, there are those for whom these balances become dangerously disturbed. Some of England's top High Security Psychiatric Hospitals now use these European Sounding Bowls and report truly far reaching and valuable effects on their clients.

There is a very strong tendency for people to seek to be healed, yet anyone doing healing, even within mainstream medicine is aware that if the patient is not actively engaged and wanting to be healed no therapy can do much. Modern medical science is just beginning to reach into this area of how to engage a person in their own healing and those working on the more subtle edges such as vibrational healing are well aware that the healing they can assist in is ultimately created within *and by* the person they are treating. This is the area within which Sounding Bowls of the European variety, stringed-wood really work. It is their special gift that they awaken the client's interest in their own life, direction, and engagement in the meaning of their lives.

Where a Sounding Bowl is offered it is not unusual for the client to shed tears, even upon first seeing the instrument. How or why this might happen is mysterious but it does. Many people report feeling the sound resonate within them on more than a simple physical level and it is not uncommon for people to report feeling as though changes are taking place in their body in the region of the physical heart.

People familiar with sound healing and the eastern and western singing bowls have sometimes commented that the metal and glass bowls take them into a very high space, or make them feel out, or around their body and then compare that with the effects they feel on playing or hearing a wooden, stringed Sounding Bowl by saying that they feel that last within them, close within their heart, or say that they feel the centre is warmed and relaxed by the sound.

Many therapists and healers using these stringed Sounding Bowls also comment on this heart-related effect, speaking of how people with huge amounts of inner tension to the point of dangerous mental illness can relax with Sounding Bowls better than any other instrument they use, and how people who distance themselves pathologically from life and their own experiences can reach out and be moved by touching, holding, playing Sounding Bowls of this type.

It is my proposition that these finer feelings, the opening of the heart, the connecting with a sense of one's own self worth and a feeling of warmth within are necessary precursors to any healing, of any sort. Evidence suggests that many of those who have found remarkable 'openings' as a result of working with Sounding Bowls have gone on to find healings to many other issues in their lives, physical or spiritual.

If you have experience, ideas or opinions on the role of finding the deep meaning of life within healing or conversely have an opinion on the role of healing in this deep area of the meaning of individual life, I would be delighted if you would add your comments at http://www.soundtravels.co.uk/fa-Why_A=432_The_Verdi_Pitch-2141.aspx