

Voice and Movement as a Healing Force

by Dr. Joy Freeman D.C., Ph.D.(cand)



As young vulnerable beings, from infancy to childhood, we were subject to the inadequacies, wounds and empty places within our parents. Consequently they, and in particular the mothers of most people in this culture, were not able to provide consistent nurturing care even though they may have intended to do so. Quite often the greatest love and affection were given at times our parents were feeling most needy of filling their own voids. Hence, the child feels an anxiety and fear that is associated with his very survival. From early on we are trained to pacify these feelings by being taught to "self nurture". This is not in the positive sense that we hear about in learning to love ourselves but rather unnatural ways in which we are left to fill this emptiness ourselves. It starts as early as being given the pacifier to "shut us up" and continues on later in life with food, do-aholism, drugs, sex, alcohol, compulsive TV and the long list of other possible addictions. All attempts to nurture, sooth oneself and fill a void.

In addition, accompanying this inability to adequately nurture was usually some form of aggression, either passive (covert) or outwards displays (overt). In order to survive emotionally at a time when our vulnerability was so great due to our absolute dependence, we developed many defense systems. For to truly feel the extent of the fear, anxiety and aloneness could have meant annihilation.

Along with learning to self nurture in ways that were not truly nurturing we developed "fantasy bonds", which had us attach to and build up what was good and deny and diminish what was not good. Both of which, without awareness and work, get carried forward to adulthood as various forms of addiction and attachment to unhealthy and detrimental relationships.

These and other defense systems served us greatly at that time, but the challenge is that they keep us from forming truly healthy bonds with others now as well inhibit our ability to move toward goals that would constitute a self actualized and fulfilling life.

Because our defense systems are a left brain function, they are best accessed through the right brain, other wise it is like fighting fire with fire. Through non linear processes such as working with the body, the voice, art, and movement, our emotions, memories and awareness' can be readily accessed and the energy released, which would otherwise be diverted by our defense systems. In addition, the body holds all the clues and messages about what is inside and with the help of a therapist versed in body oriented and expressive arts therapies, these deeper truths can be brought to the surface to be revealed.

Daria Halprin, director of an institute that teaches the movement based Art/Life Process, says it very explicitly. "What I know as a dancer (and therapist) is that our bodies hold our entire life story. The physical body is full of messages about who we are, how we feel, and what we think—a living body mythology. Our bodies carry our wounds and scars, the ones which can be seen and those which are hidden. When we hold all these stories on an unconscious level, when we have no opportunity to creatively explore and tell these stories, and when we don't listen to their messages, this body, this powerhouse, starts screaming in one form or another, emerging as physical illness or emotional or mental distress. Mostly we act and live as if our bodies, feelings and mind are separate. We live in a house divided. As we begin to listen to our bodies and creatively express what we hear, our body, feelings, mind, and spirit begin to reconnect with each other." 1.)

As an aspect of the body, the voice can be used as an expression instrument for our deeper truth. Through sound, words, song, and tones, the voice can creatively speak the language of the soul. In addition, a vibration is created whenever we sound through the voice in an open way, that is healing in itself. Through voice and movement we can bypass our defense systems, expose hidden feelings, voices and decisions and thus offer the opportunity to fulfill our human potentialities.

1.) From a lecture on "Art as a Healing Force" by Daria Halprin www.tamalpa.org

Joy Lynn Freeman, D.C., Ph.D. (cand.), has been a pioneer in the healing arts for over twenty years as a natural physician, speaker-facilitator, therapist, and life transition coach. She has lectured and offered workshops and retreats nationwide and is a frequent guest on radio shows. Joy is the author of the Book *Express Yourself: Discover Your Inner Truth, Creative Self and The Courage To Let It Out*, a companion music CD, *Let It Shine*, a series of five yoga videos and *Women as Leaders and Healers* - transformational retreats and workshops incorporating expressive arts, ritual & nature.



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