

Notes from Group Meditation- Aug 14, 2024



Ideas on Listening

If you know me you might know that I'm fascinated with sound. I have studied sound as a healer, as a musician and as a meditator. Maybe it's an area of "study" for many other human beings also.

If I ask you to watch your thoughts.. that might be challenging for some of us But if I challenge you to listen for the sounds, that might feel easier. Most of us are open to sounds that aren't too loud or a shock. The sounds of waves, of the wind in the trees, the sounds of birds, of children playing or, of course, music are all soothing sounds. Sounds are vibration and you are a vibrational being. By that, I mean that your body is vibrating down to the cellular level. The most obvious vibration might be your heart beat, but there are many rhythms and vibrations that fill your body- electrical impulses in the brain, growls of your belly. Many vibrations aren't heard by your ears. One author explained the body's "songs" as each cell is singing its song to all the cells around it.

Alfred Tomatis (1920-2001) was a French ENT specialist, researcher and founder of a method that uses sound to help overcome physical and emotional challenges. His work is carried on by his family today. (<https://www.tomatis.com>) While his work is extensive, I'll just explain one really interesting aspect to you. Tomatis learned that when we are exposed to a traumatic or frightening experience, especially one that happens repeatedly, our body/mind actually blocks the frequency associated with that experience. So, if as a child you had a neighbor who was crabby and yelled at you often, the frequencies in that person's voice is blocked. There are about 20,000 different frequencies that we can hear so missing one or two isn't a problem. But Tomatis found that many people have difficulties hearing, for example, many high or low tones because of this. Not hearing low tones can make it difficult to learn a new language. He also found a connection to emotional/ mental health- meaning sounds that are blocked can affect our health. The good news is, it's correctible by being exposed to the blocked tones in a safe environment and listening.

Now if you wanted to experience the actual process of having your hearing analyzed for blockages, you'd have to work with a Tomatis professional. I believe there's one in Chicago. But another idea to come from this knowledge might be that just consciously listening to a wide variety of sounds in a safe environment can be good for us.

Practice

In today's practice, we're just going to explore listening. First take a deep breath and check within to see if you can hear the impatient voice of an authority figure from your past saying, "Now, just listen here..." I'm sort of joking but also not. This listening today is something we will explore by choice, seeking to take good care of ourselves. Nothing more.

First we'll spend some time, just listening to the sound of ocean waves. I'll play the tone of one of the bowls every 15 seconds or so. Just rest, breathe and listen. Notice when your mind wanders off, calling it gently back to the job of listening.

You can choose to do this meditation anytime- maybe outdoors but also by sitting down to really listen to a favorite piece of music. Notice how you feel, what sounds affect you positively. If you feel agitated, pay attention to what feelings are rising up, where did they come from. And of course, if you're not enjoying the practice, you stop.

Second practice

I played a piece of music I'm calling Ocean Meditation for now. You'll hear the sound of waves but also lots of other sounds- high tones, low vibes. Just listen. Notice how your body feels at the beginning. Notice if the music is helping you to calm. Which tones appeal to you?

The act of listening itself is a form of meditation. We often choose a focal point as we're learning meditation. We can focus on our breath, the weight of our body on the seat of our chair or on listening. Hearing intentional sound, like music you might choose, or a guided meditation. You also can hear noises from outside- traffic sounds, voices, air conditioner. Consider allowing all the sounds to be acceptable- none being good or bad. You may not want to hear traffic sounds all day but they also don't have to ruin your meditation by your considering them an interruption. Life is noisy. Relax and find your calm, grounded center wherever you are.

There are more online resources

at <http://www.SuniMoon.net/resources>

You are also welcome to visit my [YouTube Channel](#)