

Sound Healing

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~By Kirsten Antony, R.N. ~

The sweet sounds of a babbling brook.
A tuning fork calibrated to 528 hz.
Gregorian or Sanskrit chanting.
Mozart's "Laudate Dominum".

These examples listed above are a variety of sounds and music that can heal the body, mind and soul. They can be used as healing modalities known as music therapy or sound healing. These are forms of healing therapies that have been used from the beginning of time and science is now catching up with what has been known for ages: sound is healing.

To understand how music can be a healing therapy, one can look to mathematics and physics. But, to simplify, everything including sound has a vibration. It is through vibration and resonance that music can be healing. These vibrations can affect the physical body, emotional body, subtle body and brain waves.

As an example of music affecting the emotional body, I was recently moved to tears while listening to a piece of chamber music, The Quartet for the End of Time. The backstory of this piece is a chilling tale, but it was simply the musicians and their instruments alone that changed my emotional vibration to resonate with that piece of music. Music can be a powerful and transformative experience.

Music therapy can be found here in Colorado at Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center in Lafayette. This was the first hospital in the United States to incorporate the principles of music therapy in a holistic healing environment. By using entrainment to synchronize brainwaves, certain types of music are used in different areas of the hospital to illicit a variety of relaxation responses. For example, the emergency room would have a different soundtrack than the ICU waiting room which would then be also set to a different soundtrack than the chapel.

The selection is based on the science of brain waves and how they can be affected by certain music. There are four different states of brain waves: Beta, Alpha, Theta and Delta. Beta is our normal state of consciousness. Alpha is a state of daydreaming or meditation. Theta can occur in deep meditation or sleep and Delta occurs in deep sleep. Listening to classical music can change our brain waves from Alpha to Theta and cause deep relaxation. A state of relaxation is what we want to be aiming for to get to a healing state.

Sound healing can be similar to music therapy, but one difference is that sound healing tries to facilitate healing by the use of specific frequencies and intentions to impact healing. Specific tools such as bells, gongs, and tuning forks can be used as well as the voice. Sound healing can be passive whereby someone uses an instrument to bring the body to a state of vibrational change. It can also be participative by toning. Toning is using the voice to create vowel sounds that can bring the body into balance.

The world is full of a wondrous plethora of music and sounds for healing. I hope you find something that resonates with you!