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[Articles & Bibliography](#)

[Events](#) [Links](#)

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DISCOVER YOUR NATURAL VOICE

By Chris James

Who likes the sound of their own voice? This is a question I ask people time and time again, when teaching them how to love their voice, or how to discover their voices. The responses is usually the same: maybe one professional singer, a handful of bathroom singers, and, whether it's a crowd of 500 or an introductory workshop of 30-40, 80-90% of people will laugh and put up their hand and say they don't like their voice, or they don't think they can sing in tune.

The reasons given quite often fall into the same patterns. There is the classic example of being asked not to sing in the primary school choir- being asked to do woodwork while everyone else is singing, or being asked to mime! So often that is the result of being given just that one chance, and the child was very nervous, and just blew it that one time.

For many people there have been times in their formative years when there was too much conflict or things happening that the young person, or sometimes the adult, really didn't want to hear. What happened then is that you started to selectively filter your sound, becoming tone deaf," and perhaps actually becoming a little bit deaf.

You see, you really were born with a beautiful voice. You were born with the ability to sing beautifully, with total openness. I mean, the image of dancing and singing through a field of flowers with total lack of self-consciousness is potentially in each one of us.

We are also born with the ability to actually heal with our voice. This healing quality of the voice can range from the communication of wonder that comes with just listening to a beautiful singing voice, to the pure quality of a tone affecting the physical and emotional body of the person to whom it is directed.

So what happens? This is what we are born to be able to do, yet such a large percentage of the general public believe that they are not capable of doing it at all. And so people who, in every other aspect, are fully functioning adults, or rather fully functioning members of our society have had their development arrested quite early in their life. My experience is that it is essential to uncover the beautiful voice.

The voice is a natural part of our being! We have been given some amazing tools to explore our potential as human beings. The ability to perceive the extraordinary colours of our planet, and the ability to smell and experience the effect that aromas have on the brain, are all part of our potential. Another part of our potential is to have a free-flowing instrument of expression -it's a natural thing!

Another reason is that the voice is one of the main keys that we have been given to access a state of communion with the divine-to understand and experience a natural relationship with what has been called sacred. Instead of using concepts and beliefs to try to elevate ourselves to a state of heightened awareness, we have a tool we can use to sharpen our focus and bring ourselves to that state where we experience much more of Reality.

So here we have a few reasons why it is so important to rediscover our natural voice. The flip side of all this positivity is that part of yourself is trapped at that time when you shut down your singing voice or your true speaking voice. And, as we become more aware in general, we want to be free of the limitations of these trapped and wounded aspects of ourselves.

There are also many tangential benefits to discovering your natural voice. We touched upon this when talking about the ability to access some of the higher aspects of ourselves through the voice or through pure tone. One of the immediate and tangible results of freeing your voice is the enhancement of your ability to listen. They say that the average adult hears some 8% of their aural environment. We may know the experience of talking to someone who is not really listening. In fact this is the norm.

What there is to be discovered within you is the ability to listen without judgments, to listen without thinking what you would say, or without wanting to jump in to correct or to agree with the speaker. This ability to be a true listener is like giving a gift to

someone. When a person experiences the safety net of your attention and focus they have the chance to express things they have not been able to express ever in their lives.

Nature has provided us with so many aural cues for coming into the now, or elevating our consciousness. When we start to access the purity of our own tone, we will start to be aware of these aural cues- in the wind, in the ocean, and in the song of the birds. These cues have always been there. It is now understood that high-frequency sounds charge the cerebral cortex. When you are in a state of heightened listening awareness, you can feel the effect of a bird's song-a simple bird song, one that you may hear every day. You can feel it ripple through your body, and subtly alter your awareness.

Another benefit of discovering your natural voice is your ability to speak your truth. We have so many convoluted reasons for not saying what we actually mean. I know that I have to continually evolve with this aspect of myself. It's so much easier to be Mr. Nice Guy and not confront an issue. However, every time we do choose to speak our truth, we are enabling ourselves and the people we are talking to, to move forward.

A side benefit of this concerns the fact that many of the things we wish to say, and don't say, stay stored in our body. The freedom you experience when you speak your truth, whether simply saying NO clearly (and being heard,) or a set of more complicated emotional understandings you are trying to communicate, can be felt within many other aspects of your life.

When a person feels they can't sign in tune hears of this idea being able to sing in tune, they cannot conceive where one would start to unravel the voice. The process, like so many things of this kind, is really very simple. The first thing to do is to get everyone laughing, moving your body, feeling free to groan, to make noise, to yell.

At this stage we are not even thinking of the tunefulness of the voice. So many people need to just become unstuck with sound in general, so the first thing to do is to unstick the voice.

The first sound we really concentrate on making is a deep heartfelt groan., A full groan that reaches down into the belly and beyond, is perhaps the most relaxing sound the human voice can make. You feel it reverberate in your belly, through your hands and even your legs. When people first groan, they will probably encounter the need to open their mouth! This sounds so simple, but when you have been nursing the suppression of expression of a lifetime, just opening your mouth fully can be quite a journey. Sometimes even at this stage, people already experience some of the emotional release of freeing their voice naturally.

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