

Psychophonetics – Psychotherapy as In-depth Coaching for Personal Transformation

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For individuals who choose to become the people they want to be – it is imperative for them to take charge of their own developmental process. For them, many a threshold will have to be crossed on their way to being in charge of their healing process, transformation, personal development and creative expression in the world. One of these major thresholds could, in the guise of a step forward, become a trap: resorting to external help, be it a teacher, guru, minister of religion, another belief system, or a leader. These helpers have been around with us for a long time, but over the past 100 years counsellors, psychotherapists, and more recently clinical psychologists and coaches of personal development, have joined the list – taking further the old roles of the personal guide. Is this a quantum leap forward or just a change of dress and title? The jury is still out on this.

Psychology vs Coaching

Depth Psychology – and the myriad of approaches that branch out from it – is a powerful sign of our times. It grew alongside the spread of the imperative of individuation becoming a normative standard for most of us. There are a growing number of therapists in the west: about 250,000 in the UK alone, about 700,000 in the US, and many more in continental Europe, let alone the rest of the world. Psychotherapy has been around for over 100 years and growing strong. The need for assistance in matters psychological is demonstrated by the sheer demand for them. Obviously many of us recognize the need for such help.

At the same time there are signs of a trend away from psychotherapy as a solution for psychological development. Disenchantment with the pathological focus of traditional forms of psychotherapy, resistance to the stigma and cost attached to

being a long-term patient, combined with the desire for short-term outcome and the acknowledgement that one does not have to be sick in order to strive for *personal change*, have all led to the recent development of personal coaching for upgrading performance: in the form of life coaching, health coaching, executive coaching, and business coaching.

To put it simply: while psychotherapy is, rightly or wrongly, conceived by many to be a medical orientated, long-term intervention, aiming at a progressive shift from various levels of pathology back to some notion of normalcy, coaching is conceived as the assisted striving of the individual aspirant to make a conscious shift from conventional functioning to personal and professional excellence.

Consequently, many who would hesitate to acknowledge a need for a counsellor, a clinical psychologist or a psychotherapist, will readily contact a personal, life or executive coach. The prevailing perception is this: something must be seriously wrong with you to need a psychotherapist, but it is your aspiration for further development and excellence that might attract you to a coach. Coaching promotes improvement of personal and professional performance and the holistic wellness model, appealing to the aspirants of high achievement. Psychotherapy on the other hand, offers the assistance of individuals to go deep into underlying patterns governing their lives unconsciously, mitigating the fear and resistance that otherwise prevent improvement.

Can There Be A Meeting Place Between These Two?

I recently became acutely aware of these border tensions when I became a member of two working groups assisting the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA, the highest body

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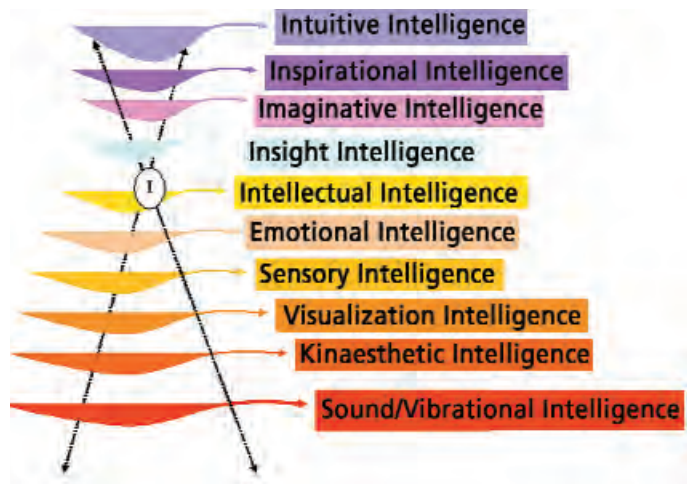
in the land for defining qualifications and unit standards for accreditation). As a member of both the counselling task group (for the Health and Welfare Sector) and coaching/mentoring task group (for the Education and Training Sector), I became aware of two disconcerting tendencies amongst leading professionals and academics:

1. The anxious safeguarding of clinical psychologists/ psychotherapists to prevent 'semi-professionals' counsellors and coaches from including depth psychological intervention in their scope of practice;
2. The reluctance of coaches and mentors being seen as counsellors and psychotherapists. Uneasy peace prevails between these two sectors for the moment, but not for long. The living continuum of different levels of human interventions has its own self-regulating life, bound to always challenge established definitions and regulations.

If psychotherapy and coaching could merge, then one could be coached for personal growth and transformation with the same kind of strategic, skill-based mentorship required for upgrading one's performance in running business, playing a guitar and horse riding. If the 'depth ethos' of psychotherapy could be combined with the 'performance ethos' of coaching, one could be coached for personal growth and transformation. Indeed, with such a combination, people *can* recover from the long-term consequences of abuse, overcome patterns of destructive addiction, and develop the ability for healthy relationship and parenthood, out of many unskilled starting points.

Psychophonetics is such a combination of coaching and psychotherapy and, therefore, I choose to introduce it as a form of in-depth coaching for personal transformation and change. It bridges the above polarity along with a few others: the gap between verbal-reflective and the experiential-action-expressive modes of therapy, as well as the tension between the striving for spiritual development and the commitment to taking responsibility for one's emotional, relationship and health challenges.

Psychophonetics is a development and direct application of Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy,¹ an extremely applicable language, map and context for psychological and spiritual awareness when experimented with and applied practically. One major attribute of Psychosophy is the conception of the human 'I', the core of one's identity as an ontological being with its own source, rather than a result of nature and nurture. The 'I' is conceived in Psychosophy as an ontological spiritual being in its own right, a representative of a world of spirit which is its origin. The psyche or soul is its matrix for it, as much as the physical body is a matrix for the psyche. To the psyche the 'I' is a centre and an essential structure. It is also a potential source of limitless higher human attributes, such as: renewal, inspiration, meaning, purpose, direction, energy, endurance, a sense of vocation, ideals, values, and a dimension – a source of relating to others from a dimension higher than needs. Conceiving the 'I' as a potential source of input into the psyche is the most power-



Levels of Intelligence Accessed in a Psychophonetics Session

ful support for wellness, positive future orientation and developmental approach taken by Psychophonetics.

Creation of Psychophonetics

Psychosophy's 'inner road map', combined with a unique approach to drama as an awakener for human self-awareness and healing, became the developmental path that led to the creation of Psychophonetics. Research on a new method of performing arts formed its early beginnings, and started in the UK in the early 80s, while I was a student of drama at Emerson College in Sussex and at the London School of Speech (now Artemis School of Speech & Drama, E Grinstead). After 27 years of experimentation, research and development, and 18 years of application and teaching in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, in April 2007 the Psychophonetics three-year part-time professional training commenced its UK and European operation. The UK branch of the Cape Town-based Persephone Institute is providing this professional training course through Hawkwood College in Stroud, Gloucestershire.

Psychophonetics is an expression-oriented form of personal development, counselling, coaching, psychotherapy and Drama Therapy. It has transformed powerful processes for actors' training, character building and performing, into psychotherapeutic application. It can be defined thus:

- The creation of a new wholeness
- Through the shaping of new meaning
- Out of the meeting of past and of future
- In the body's inherent resonance consciously

The name Psychophonetics is a composite of psyche and the sounds of speech: consonants and vowels. The sounds of human speech, the primeval universal human language, in which all babies babble before they speak, hold the key to the intrinsic relationship between experience, memory and cognition. Psychosophy states that all memory is stored not in the nerve system and the brain but in the resonance of the Life-Body (Ether Body, Pranic Body, Chi). It views the Life-Body as an organism of formative forces and intelligence which lives in a continuous flow between the physical body on the one hand and the sensory/emotional awareness on the other. The Life-Body IS the psycho-somatic bridge. The substance and the structure of the Life-Body are vibrational in nature, made of resonance. Its essential vibrational structure resonates with the archetypal human Alphabet, the universal group of consonants and vowels

Paintings by Valerie Yule, Psychophonetics student



Dreaming on the Tree of Life
The masculine and the feminine moving away. I was being left on the Tree of Life.



The Calling
An incredible bright light shone in the tree and I couldn't look at it, but it opened up the well of the unconscious.



Beginning of the Journey
I found the child within the realm of unconscious. She is encapsulated and alone, waiting.

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shared with the whole of humanity, with minor variation. This is a version of the Kabalistic 'Tree of Life': the sounds of speech (*Otiot* in Hebrew) have created the world, and through their human reproduction, creation itself can be either renewed or destroyed – *Life and death in the hand of the tongue* (an old Talmudic proverb). This is also the foundation of many forms of initiatory teachings of which Psychophonetics, as a new branch of Anthroposophy, is one version.

Sound Research

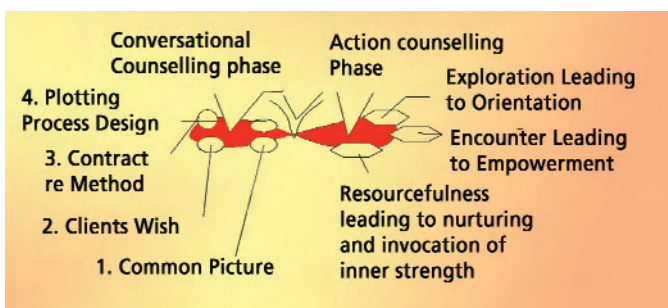
During the years of experimental theatre and clinical work we found that the sound holds the key for the exploration, transformation and re-creation of human experience. Inspired by Steiner's indications for Sound-Feeling laboratory, we established two fundamental realities:

1. Each of the sounds of human speech resonate in a whole characteristic range of human experiences engraved in the body-memory [this we call 'Sound-Vocabulary'];

2. Every human experience, from every level of existence, from any period of one's biography, can be matched and emulated with a specific sounds-combination, once expressed through a spontaneous bodily gesture [this we call 'Sound-Naming'].

This connection is the foundation of Psychophonetics. Sound research revealed to us the intrinsic connection between body-memory, body healing intelligence, emotional patterns and creative imagination. It opened up for us the genius of a whole range of human deep-intelligence which expands rational/intellectual awareness into emotional, sensory, kinaesthetic, visual and vibrational intelligence, while maintaining waking consciousness and core identity. The sounds enabled us to consciously enter the depth of memories embedded in the living body. By 1990 it became a form of deep personal processing.

Psychophonetics is still a form of theatre, minus the auditorium. We learned to regard ordinary life as a form of un-rehearsed performance. We had to realize performing without rehearsing is as unskilled as unrehearsed theatre. Psychophonetics is a form of 'back-stage rehearsing' for the preferred performance of life. But first it must be applied as a form of 'literacy' with which to 'read' the unconsciously written, unconsciously repeated performance of old habits. The old script must be 'read' through



Counselling Phases



Spanning the Void

Entering further I experienced a separation of worlds, of all that is un-reconciled within; The child falling through the void, the higher self as an onlooker, unable to enter and the one who is lost in the gulf between these worlds. It is this one who is the choice maker and who has the power to choose again.

expression before other 'scripts' can be conceived, imagined, created, rehearsed and re-written, with the same literacy.

A Typical Session

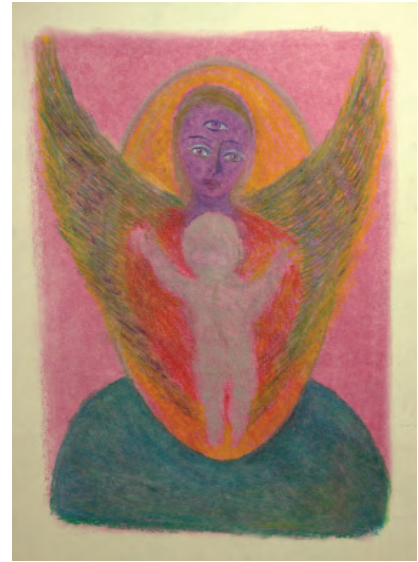
Every Psychophonetics session is a double bill: Conversational Counselling leading to Action-Counselling. *Explored in skilled deep empathy* the personal content creates a Common Picture which encompasses new self-awareness on the part of the client. Into this new self-conception a 'Wish' is invited, defining the client's freshly chosen direction and objective for the next phase of the session. The 'Wish' becomes the practitioner's 'job description'.

Next the 'Action Phase' begins. It consists of choosing a characteristic moment from the client's recent life which exemplifies the pattern in question. This moment is explored through sensing body memory – into a re-activation of the original experience, in a safe environment. The script underlying the pattern in question will then be revealed to the client's direct observation in its intrinsic structure, various internal characters and dynamics. The inner script is made visible when



Finding the Motherground.

Through forgiveness and compassion of my disowned past I become the centre of my story. I can now become the Mother who can embrace and receive my lost child.



A New Birth

In embracing the child I find my true presence. I find my heart connection and inner being.

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expressed, then the re-writing starts to fulfil the 'Wish'.

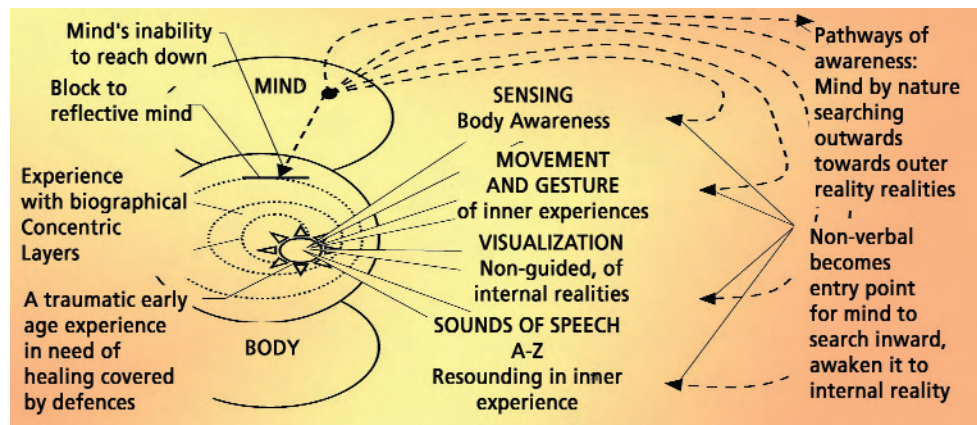
The following are the modes of deep intelligence that will be activated for that new insight into one's own inner working:

- **Sensing** of the body-memory patterns;
- **Gesturing**: three-D spontaneous bodily expression of the sensation of the memory activated;
- **Beholding**: exiting from the gesture into perspective and visualizing the

exited position – and the inner story reveals itself;

- **Sound-Naming** the various inner characters revealed to operate behind the veils of daily perceptions, interpretations, projections, responses and reactions.

We look at a life-pattern as a form of repetitive drama enacted by a typical cluster of internal characters, each appearing on the stage on cue to play a predictable role. There is a list of typical given characters at the start of the play,



Mind Sensing Movement



Sounds a whole range of 'Action Sequences' has been created over the years: Sequences of Exploration, of Empowerment, of Resourcefulness, of Overcoming Reactions, of Owning Projections, of Confronting one's Shadow and of Enlivening the Body Energy, have been forged out of the practice itself. Specific 'Topic Sequences', such as decision making, vocational counselling, inner child, heart protection, recovering from chronic fatigue, panic attacks, fear of public speaking, stress management, relationship improvement, sexual issues, recovery from abuse and addiction, overcoming artistic blocks and team-building, have evolved. The process of creating new sequences for new applications is on-going.

The use of sounds takes place through all of them. Every experience, actual or desired, offensive, protective, nurtured or expressive – can be imagined, sensed, visualized, gestured – and a sound combination can be found to match it with precision. Once matched, the sounds enable that experience to be released or enhanced, dissolved or invoked, enhanced or diminished, all according to the direction dictated by the client's original or updated 'Wish'. Their impact on the body-mind continuum keeps resonating long after the session has ended, and right into the real life situations to come. While the impact of concepts and verbal interactions is likely to take a long time to penetrate into the deep layers of the body memory, where the entrenched patterns control our responses, the sounds penetrate these layers during the sessions, and the patterns themselves – not only the awareness for the patterns – undergoes a lasting shift.

What has been achieved during the rehearsing/session time can be re-practised in many special moments before and after crucial interactions in daily life 'performance'. A daily practice of a new, freely chosen pattern of response and action becomes an option. This is the very spirit of coaching: when the game is on, the coach is not on the field. His/her job is over and done. Successful coaches become dispensable in a relatively short period of time, and not an entrenched, indispensable component of the client's coping mechanism.

In Conclusion

The use of Deep-Intelligence, non-verbal modes of operation in a Psychophonetics session combines the

The name

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coaching ethos of efficacy and performance with the psychotherapy ethos of dealing with deep underlying patterns. They converge into one integrated professional pathway, one that we call: 'Encouraging Inner Strength'.

A higher potential of humanity hovers above us all, seeking manifestation. A process of personal transformation is required for that potential to be realized. Amongst other opportunities for personal transformation, such as love, art, creativity, parenthood and friendship, there lives a unique human meeting called counselling/ coaching/ psychotherapy session. Whatever its professional name, the following are the basic ingredients required for such a process:

1. If the client is firmly held as the centre and the authority of the process;
2. If the coach/therapist sees him/herself as the 'midwife' of the client's higher potential, while at the same time being a growing person him/herself;
3. If the challenge at hand is viewed by both as primarily an opportunity for personal development...

...then that sacred human meeting will indeed become an opportunity for the manifestation of the higher human potential. Such a process will be fruitful even in the short term in both the client's and the therapist's live. Psychophonetics is one such solid form for this kind of a human meeting.

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Psychosophy, Rudolf Steiner's approach to psychology and psychotherapy, was founded in Berlin in 1910. Ignored by his own followers for most of the 20th century, it forms the theoretical foundation of Psychophonetics from its inception. Persephone Institute UK offers a Graduate Certificate in Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy every year at Hawkwood College alongside its major Psychophonetics training.

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just like in the old *Comedia del Arta*. First we have to explore and expose those characters, then to change their given patterns of habitual interactions. Some of them, who have out-played their roles, will be removed and dissolved. Others, who were sorely missed – will be invoked into existence guided by the client's imagination. At the end of a classic Psychophonetics session there will be at least one character less and one character more – compared to the starting list of characters.

How It Works

Out of the basic ingredients of Sensing, Movement, Visualization and

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Further Information

Psychophonetics professional training courses are available at Hawkwood College, Stroud, Gloucestershire, with a new intake starting every April. For more course details contact Hawkwood College on Tel: 01453 759034, Fax 01453 764607; info@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk, www.hawkwoodcollege.co.uk

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