

Psychophonetics

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A path of birthing self-knowledge and healing

Based on Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy

I have always believed it possible for each person to create his/her own unique and personal style of expression, growth and healing. However, for many years, I struggled towards this with no ready-made ways of doing it for myself or others. In all my striving, for artistic expression, emotional development and spiritual growth, the same question was leading: Can a way be found for the creation of a unique path of personal development for each individual? At one point I called this striving 'cherishing the un-born way of being born'. Something was, however, born out of this striving, and this article attempts to describe it.

The blue baby syndrome

When a newborn baby is about to get choked as the flow of oxygen does not reach her through the irreversibly cut-off navel cord she screams, and thereby discovers to her astonishment that she has got a voice, lungs, ability to breath, a new way of coping, following no previous experience. She had to become blue before the new way of breathing could be found. On the threshold of finding a new way of being, can support be given that encourages without replacing the independent, unique way of coming into being of a new emerging individual?

The reliance on experts for guidance is obviously failing us all around. We have more medical experts than ever before, and at the same time many more incurable diseases; more kinds of spiritual aspirations than ready-made religious and spiritual doctrines to name them with, and many more types of human psychological complexions than psychological theories to explain them. Knowing that there is nothing to follow anymore in human evolution, how can I support a human being professionally without taking the lead? In times of major life transition, in times of the 'blue baby', the vacuum of the self-knowledge required for the new way of being cannot be filled from the outside any more. Can it be filled from the inside?

A new way of knowing

For the new human to be born, new faculties of self-knowledge must be available. They cannot be made of new theories, however great, nor new religion, expertise or sets of answers and techniques, in any field of action. They must be made of our embryonic ability to know for ourselves. What we urgently need is not new information, but new ways of knowing. I believe that the role of the mental health practitioner is becoming progressively one of a 'spiritual midwife', in the Socratic sense of the word. Crisis, illness, pain and frustration can all be taken as symptoms of the birthing labour of the new self-knowing. Therapy could be an opportunity for spiritual growth.

One way of delivering new faculties of self-knowledge is called 'Psychophonetics – awareness of inner experience', a method of counselling, psycho-somatic, psycho-spiritual and psycho-social therapy, sustainable personal and relationship development, artistic expression and organisational consultation. In all its applications psychophonetics-counselling processes always start from the individual's existing self-awareness and existing motivation for change, as the starting point for the discovery of deeper inner resources.

Based on indications for research given by Rudolf Steiner, psychophonetics is a process of self-discovery based on the direct and powerful encounter with the resonance of all the layers of human experience, through the instrumentality of the fundamental range of non-verbal modes of communication: sensing, movement, visualisation and the sounds of human speech, consonants and vowels. These are the building blocks of all human awareness and communication. In psychophonetics-counselling we call them together 'The literacy of experience awareness'.

Write your own script

The skilful application of combinations of these elements results in people's ability to 'read' the script of their own experience. It takes the same literacy required for reading experience, to rewrite it. As we learn to read ourselves as an open book we access possibilities of re-creating ourselves from within, possibilities which were unimaginable for us while self-ignorant and experience-illiterate. Psychophonetics 'midwives' this awareness by giving each aspect of inner experience its own unique expression, free of the limitations of intellectual/verbal language, discovered from the inside out. It gives inner experiences a direct expression by activating the strong intelligence of sensation, visualisation, feeling, emotions, memories and sounds, all expressed directly through bodily gestures and movements, of which everyone is capable naturally. The direct use of the sounds of human speech invokes deeply seated intelligence, previously unconscious. It is a direct, organic link to the body-psyche and the psyche-spiritual connections. Through psychophonetics human experience can express itself in its own terms. Its ability to explore, articulate and release expressively yet precisely every aspect of human experience gives it a broad range of applications, from the medical through to the psychological and spiritual dimensions of human development and healing. Had our bodies been dead machines and our minds biological computers, as so many of us were brainwashed to believe, psychophonetics would not be a possibility. But between our physical bodies and our minds there apparently lay other layers, 'bodies' of a subtler nature. Through its direct connection to these subtle bodies psychophonetics can address our experiences directly.

What are these 'subtle bodies'?

The first one is our equivalent of the plant kingdom. In Indian tradition it is called prana, in the Dao it is called chi, Sheldrake called it morphogenetic fields, Mindell and other post-Jungians call it the dreambody, and Rudolf Steiner call it the ether or the life body. It lives not in space but in time, not in quantities but in qualities, not in atoms but in processes, rhythms and formative forces. It is the invisible reality that creates the visible one and it is, to most people, unconscious. The second 'subtle body' which lies between body and soul is the dimension of sensation, through which both inner and outer processes become dimly conscious to us. It is where deep memories, deep-seated emotions, desires, instincts, and sensuous awareness live. This is the animal kingdom inside us. It is not fully awake, nor fully asleep. It is rather in a constant dream in us. Rudolf Steiner called it the astral body, the starry world inside.

In the overlap between these two layers of our mostly unconscious constitution live our deepest memories, natural as well as acquired patterns of reaction and defence, our old scars side by side with our untapped creative potential for growth. To access these layers of experience a range of intelligence much broader than the reflective-intellectual-analytical capacity of knowing is required. The above range of non-verbal modes of communication accesses both the deeper and higher dimensions of human intelligence. The deeper we go, the higher we go at the same time.

Using these dimensions as a major tool

Most human communication and the overwhelming majority of modalities in counselling and psychotherapy access only a conventional range of human intelligence: intellectual, emotional and enhanced cognition. But both the deeper layers of our experience and the higher dimensions of our spiritual potential transcend this conventional range of awareness. With psychophonetics these dimensions are the major tools. Conversational counselling is always the starting point. With the enhanced empathic skills developed in this method a profound 'common picture' is developed between client and therapist, leading to the formation of a new, powerful 'wish' arising from the client's higher being, forming the decisive direction, goal and boundaries of the process to come. The action counselling that follows accesses the broader range of awareness portrayed above: sensory intelligence leads to the 'reading' of the dynamics of experience registered in the life-body, movement and gesture expression access the intuitive intelligence, stimulating spontaneous visualisation which activates the imaginative intelligence, while sound-intelligence, accessed through the identification of the vibrational nature of each aspect of experience – activates inspirational intelligence, the ability to resonate with the inner nature of experience.

The latter is psychophonetics' major tool for accessing and addressing the deepest layers of human experience directly: the therapeutic application of the sounds of human speech, consonants and vowels. The sounds are made of the same 'material' as these layers: these bodies live in a whole spectrum of invisible yet powerful vibrations. The sounds are vibrations, extremely similar to the vibrations of our subtle bodies, where most of our experience is stored. In fact, when all the sounds of human speech resound around a living human body every aspect of one's inner experience, from every phase and level of one's life, echoes and vibrates with them, just as the strings of a piano echo with the sound of guitar strings nearby. Our subtle bodies, etheric and astral, are like the resonance chamber of the sounds. For the one who can hear, the human content hums and sings all the time; for the one who can see, the human life forces are in a constant flow of shapes and rhythm. The sounds can simulate it all, directly, precisely, and with full consciousness. The sounds are the hidden language of our inner life.

The main potentials

With psychophonetics one can come to know every aspect of oneself, to know it directly, first hand, with no experts involved. Furthermore, we discovered that as the inner picture unfolds in this way we can enter into the inner patterns and change them from inside, taking back our power from whatever took it from us and forced us to a corner in the course of our lives. We realised that, at least potentially, one is potentially as strong as the blows one received. Further on we found out that every inner need from every level can be responded to with a sound or a sound combination, sometimes giving us experiences which we never had in life, or never had enough of, yet always needed, such as safety, warmth, love, intimacy, comfort, light, soothing, energy, and much more. The sounds can bring up the desired experience from inside, from beyond the limits of memory, and make it really ours. We had to realise that one

is potentially as rich as every quality one really needs.

These are the main potentials psychophonetics is capable of manifesting when applied by trained practitioners. Clients and students can become proficient in the application of its main attributes on themselves. In order to apply it professionally to others one has to go through professional training. It is a training in the development of perception, in acquiring tools for self-transformation, in artistic expression and in counselling skills. It is a skill of addressing human experiences in their own unique terms. Psychophonetics is one practical example of the assertion that human beings these days can become the experts on their own self-management, that new faculties of self knowledge are truly with us, and that new methodologies for the manifestation of these potentials are of great relevance today.

Conclusion

At the end of the 20th century Psychophonetics-counselling was established as a practical application of anthroposophy and of Psychosophy in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. It could be termed a psychology of freedom, based on human self-knowing. The age of INFORMATION is old news. The age of EX-FORMATION is dawning. In expression we are born anew.

Psychophonetics appreciates the complexities of the human form. It conceives of humans as multi-modal and it respects people as ecological beings. It is an approach which offers possibilities to healers working in Africa as it recalls the fullness of what living could be.
(Professor Stan Lifschitz, Head of professional training for clinical psychologists, University of South Africa, Pretoria)

For further information about Psychophonetics counselling and professional courses contact:

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Reference

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