

Tagar, Y. (1996). *The healing power of expression with Philophonetics Counselling*. In Ian Gawler (ed), 'The Mind-Body Connection'. Yarra Junction, Australia: The Gawler Foundation (pp239-250)

The Healing Power of Expression with Philophonetics Counselling

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His work is devoted to empowering people to take charge of their inner resources for healing, development and creation, and to transform disease into opportunities for growth.

Yehuda Tagar

PART I: THE MODALITY

Philophonetics Counselling, Language for the Inner Life is a new modality of healing, non-verbal communication and expression called Philophonetics Counselling. This modality enables people to access, release and heal aspects of inner experience from every period and level of their lives. It uses Sensing, Movement, Visualisation and Sounds as direct means of healing inner issues on the physical, vital, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. It creates lasting improvement in people's ability to self-manage and self-heal conditions such as Pain-Management, Recovery from Sexual Abuse, Emotional Stress, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Migraine, Overcoming Addiction, Fear, Cancer Counselling, Regaining Inner Strength and Self-Parenting Skills, to name some major ones. Philophonetics counselling draws on Humanistic Psychology, Anthroposophy, Psychosophy and elements of the Performing Arts.

The Workshop

Personal crises on any level echo and leave traces within the bodily dimension of the human psyche long after they disappear from the conscious mind. From there they emerge whenever triggered by new personal and health challenges, either as an opportunity to resolve and heal them or, when no new awareness is applied to them, as a further depletion to one's condition. Philophonetics counselling involves the experiential, non-verbal dynamics of the body-mind connections in a creative healing process using sensing, movement, visualisation and sounds, through which the inner layers of experience can be accessed, expressed, communicated, released and transformed. These tools are designed to become a range self-sufficient skills for self-help, maintenance and healing for both clients and practitioners.

The workshop will demonstrate philophonetics counselling potential in caring for past and present pains and traumas.

PART II: WHAT IS PHILOPHONETICS-COUNSELLING?

Introduction to Philophonetics Counselling, its Applications and its Formats

Philophonetics counselling is a relatively new modality of therapy to be introduced into the growing field of complementary therapies during the past decade. It has been formulated out of research in the fields of drama, humanistic psychology and psychosophy (anthroposophically based psychology) starting in the early 80's. The name philophonetics was coined in 1986, meaning literally 'love of sounds' and broadly 'conscious relationship to one's experience through sensing, movement, visualisations and the sounds of human speech'.

It is a method of exploration, expression and transformation of inner experiences which combines Counselling, Artistic Expression, Body Work, Self-Observations. In all parts of the therapeutic process the client is completely in charge of it, being the sole source of information,

observation, choices and action. The role of the therapist is to provide a range of useful possibilities, points of view, exercises and practical tools for achieving goals defined strictly by the client. A skilled, sympathetic, positive and imaginative listening is the main tool the philophonetics counselling work.

Anthroposophy, on which philosophical and scientific ground philophonetics is based, claims that a profound purpose and meaning underlies the inner and outer life of every individual, and that fundamentally each one of us is potentially equipped to deal and to make use of the challenges and the opportunities presented on one's journey.

Philophonetics counselling puts these promises to the practical test. Based on our experience of what could be achieved with the help of this method we make the following professional claims: that

- A) everyone is potentially capable of knowing what is happening within one's body and soul,
- B) everyone is potentially as strong as the strength of one's experiences, good and bad, having the potential power to take charge of one's life, and
- C) that everyone is potentially richly endowed with every quality one truly needs for one's well being.

These claims we put to the practical test in every philophonetics counselling session, with very good results.

How do we (Philophonetics Counselling Practitioners) do it?

Suppose you suffer from extreme stress because of accumulative pressures from work, family life, ill health and troubling negative patterns of thoughts and anxieties. As things get worse you no longer know which in all of these factors is a cause of which, and which of them are the effects. It is all too much, your state of health is deteriorating, and the doctor (or any other practitioner) suggests that you see what philophonetics counselling can do for you.

Through a relaxed, warm and non-threatening skilled conversation the broad picture of your situation is being unravelled, laid out in front of you, non-judgementally observed, included and listened to. Very often this is the first time you gave yourself a special hour during which the full load of what occupies your mind, heart, gut and body can be fully shared and sympathetically listened to even by yourself, let alone by a sympathetic friend. For that is what a counsellor is: a sympathetic, objective, supportive professional friend, who, for a limited time, gives you his/her intense, caring and undivided attention. That by itself is a great release, relief, deepening, breathing and perspective-creating.

The Conversational Phase

Following the creation of the *common picture* between you and the counsellor, you will be ceremoniously invited to make a '*wish*' regarding the displayed content in (imaginative) sight. Your wishes could include the desire to be able to get rid of this wretched headache you get in the middle of the day, the neck and shoulder tightness you get at the end of it, the negative

thoughts you are helplessly pestered by on your way to and from work, the tension and mistrust which prevail between you and your office staff, the un-expressed anger with your workers, the strange disappearance of joy from your marriage-life, the nasty confrontations with your children and the general depletion of energy in recent times. Your wish could also include the deep desire to re-connect to your true self, your feelings, your inner child, inner woman, inner man; to recreate a sense of direction in your life, a sense of meaning and purpose, to discover your new vocation, to access your creativity, to find harmony in your life, or to release your sensuality from the grips of ancient fears.

Most of the above patterns and sources have their seat of origin and their dwelling place not in the area of thought and words and clear pictures in front of you, but rather in the unconscious regions of your emotional, bodily and habitual levels of existence, to which, normally you have no direct access. That is the limitation of verbal communication: it can embrace and deal with what is in front of us, not with what is “behind” us, so to speak. In order to become conscious of the inner dynamics underlying one’s condition, these patterns must be accessed directly to consciousness, in their own modes of being and of communication.

The Modes of Non-Verbal Communication

This is where we make a shift in phonetics counselling from the verbal to the expressive modes of communication. We are using four modes of non-verbal communication: *Sensing, Movement–Gesture, Visualisation and Sounds*.

Through the instrumentality of *Sensation*, with which every emotional experience can be traced to its origin through the traces it leaves in the subtle dynamics of the body, and through the instrumentalities of *Gesture and Movement* which can directly express the sensations — that dimension can become observable and accessible to treatment.

The expressive *Gesture* and the movement enhance the imaginative ability, inherent in everyone, to create precise mental-pictures which can reveal the inner psycho-somatic dynamics underlying the condition in question. *Spontaneous-Visualisation* becomes a powerful, reliable mode of knowing.

A sensation of headache, shoulder tightness, knotted stomach, pained neck — could all be sensed, expressed through the clenching of the fists and the contorting of the rest of the body, and, with the help of the breathing, held and then released with *sounds* (GGah, Pshh, Dah, Bah, FFah) can be largely released. Being released, the origin of these tensions can be traced through the range of imaginative pictures which such a release will make possible. And then the exploration, encounter and release can move into the deeper layers, the deeper patterns of response which regularly cause the tensions.

Negative thoughts can be traced to either their emotional or bodily origin. Again, sensation, gesture and visualisation will reveal what words and mental reflection will conceal. An inner pool of fear from future which is not being paid attention to and checked logically can take revenge for this lack of attention by “invading” the mind from “behind” so to speak. The observation of the bodily processes accompanying the mental ones could easily reveal these connections, rendering them accessible for care and treatment by oneself.

Examples of Applications

Exhaustion, depletion, fatigue, unexplained constant tiredness — could all be traced to the particular inner blocks which prevent the flow of life health-bearing energy in the body and in the soul. By entering in sensation and in movement into the inner experience of fatigue and exhaustion — that which drags me down, weighing on me, blocks me and chokes me can be discovered. More than not, the origins of bodily weakness are in the emotional arena, in fears, rages, feelings not released and not expressed even to oneself. Taking responsibility for one's inner life can result in rapid changes in one's bodily wellbeing, even down to the strengthening of one's immune system with all its ramifications.

Migraine could be traced back to an inability to digest emotional pains and struggles, especially regarding close people. *Chronic fatigue syndrome* could be traced back to self-neglect. *Panic attacks, confusion interpersonal blocks, shallow breathing, circulatory problems* and *chronic pains*, could be traced back to un-released early abuses, sexual, physical and emotional, to unhealthy dynamics of parental treatment, to wounds and scars from a neglected past. A whole range of addictions, both behavioural and substance-related could be traced back to the real, hidden, blocked natural needs, which have not and are not being answered.

The following is the basic list of the types of issues treated so far with positive results with this method:

Physical/Energetic

- Overcoming exhaustion, depletion and fatigue — including chronic fatigue syndrome, M.E., post natal depression.
- Pain control, management & release, rheumatic, temporary & chronic period pain, head, migraine, internal, back, R.S.I. and psycho-somatic pains, strains and blocks.
- Connection to and expression through the body.

Emotional & Personal

- Overcoming cravings and dependencies and addictions to: food, smoking, soft and hard drugs, anti-depressants, attention and approval, access sexuality, violence, money, security.
- Overcoming reactive and obsessive patterns: defensiveness, trepidation, aggression, fear, anxiety, jealousy, guilt, shame, nervousness, subjugation, fear of public speaking, obsessive thoughts.
- Overcoming depression, chronic, long term and periodical.
- Overcoming grief.
- Recovery from sexual abuse and other forms of abuse: physical, emotional, disapproval, past and resent.
- Dissolving inner blocks: emotional, sensuous, body image, self-image, spontaneity, creativity.

- Self-parenting skills: establishing a lasting connection to the child within, learning to heal, to care and to integrate it.
- Cancer counselling: dealing with the whole range of emotional issues the disease brings about, the fear of death, the spiritual identity, forgiveness, and the enhancement of the inner immunity.
- Recovery from mental breakdown and mid-life crisis by turning them into creative turning point in one's biography.

Mental and Spiritual

- Accessing inner resources: Perspective on oneself, safety, inner warmth, inner autonomy, clarity, trust, self-confidence, inner peace.
- Contacting the inner life — establishing a lasting connection with the woman within, the man within, the inner light, the core of i am, sense of self, sense of direction and purpose.
- Decision making: tapping deeper and higher dimensions of one's intelligence for reaching the necessary perspective.
- Vocation, life transitions, inner-development — rediscovering the inner guidance, knowing and certainty for the next step.
- Cancer counselling.
- Recovering lost memory.

Relationships

- Understanding and transforming inner patterns of interaction and reaction.
- Re-discovering the potential of the meeting.
- Recovery from destructive co-dependency.
- Learning to listen to each other.
- Community building: creating a range of tools for the maintenance and upgrading of communication and effectivity within the group, of processing difficulties creatively and of tapping individuals' and group resources and potential.

All these could be made observable, accessible and capable of release, strengthening, transformation and healing with philophonetics range of practical tools.

Formats

Private sessions — all the exercises which are tailor-made during the sessions — could be adopted for self-use at home, for ever. A session lasts between 75 to 90 minutes. On average, people need to see a philophonetics counsellor practitioner for about six sessions for the recovery from a particular set of issues. The length of the period required depends largely on the willingness and the ability of the client to practice exercises and observations at home.

Group sessions — are available in the format of “self-help groups”, in which a term of eight weekly meetings of about twelve people work together on a combination of a prepared program and issues arising in the group, covering the above areas systematically, giving participants a range of basic skills for self-care with which to upgrade their standard of inner living.

Foundation Year in Philophonetics — provides a broad basis of skills for upgrading and healing every aspect of one’s life, and of enriching sustainably the work, relationship and creative dimensions of one’s life. The Foundation Year is also the pre-requisite for the professional training in philophonetics counselling.

Professional training — two year, part-time professional training towards the Diploma of Philophonetics Counselling Practitioner.

PART III: A CASE-STUDY: CANCER AS A THRESHOLD OF INNER HEALING MIDWIFED WITH THE HELP OF PHILOPHONETICS-COUNSELLING

Clara’s Journey

I have had the honour of accompanying Clara in the last phases of her journey towards her death as her counsellor. I saw her only five times. It has been a remarkable journey.

First Session

She was in an advanced stage of cancer when I first saw her in the middle of 1995. She realised by then that the chemotherapy was not working, that she had just a few months to live, and she was tired of the losing struggle of survival. “There must be more than survival” was her first powerful statement to me, one of many arising out of unfathomable depths of soul, triggered to become conscious by the strange alchemy of facing the threshold of death.

Many professionals, friends and relatives were surrounding her with their concern for therapy, cure and minimising her suffering. Clara was quietly developing another agenda: “I have to unlearn many ways of surviving. It is time to face them, and to clear myself from the past”. For this she came for counselling. This has been our common task. Like comrades on a common road, we took it on.

The past was haunting her, and she had a sense of urgency in her wish to let it go in time.

She felt she was not allowed a sense of identity as a child, appreciation of who she genuinely was, and she learnt to survive without expressing her uniqueness. The habit lingered into later years, covering her true essence. Suddenly it was not OK to put up with this habitual cover.

Out of all that could be wished by a terminally ill person, her stated wish was: “I want you to help me to get in touch with my true self, to find a voice to express it. Something needs to be retrieved from many years of being crushed.” Wish accepted. Clara was at that point fifty years old.

We first turned our attention to her bodily experience. Clara felt she was “split from her body” for many years.

We allowed the body to express its inner experience in its own way: Sensing, movement and posture. In translating her bodily sensation into gesture rather than into words, the body’s experience spoke directly to her attentive mind. She translated what it said to her for me in words: “I feel in need of nurturing,” said the body. “Something is starved inside of me, inside my belly.”

She then let go of her crouched position, shook it off, and focused her attention on the core of that starvation. Encouraged, she entered in gesture into that experience, becoming the experience of starvation. The focus shifted to the heart. On exiting from that position and reflecting on it, Clara knew that it has been her heart, hidden in her stomach, which was starved for love from very early on. She was cut off from heart nourishment.

We entered the process we call in philophonetics counselling “enlivening”: supporting the circulation of the body’s life-energy with movement, breathing, gesture and sounds. She moved gently every movable part of her body, spontaneously and effortless, and her warmth had increased. She noticed tension in her shoulders and in the belly. The tension was expressed in gesture, tightened further with an intake of breath, and released in gesture, movement and sounds. Her warmth increased further. Being more aware of the life-dynamics in these parts — she could express their inner needs: to be nurtured, to be soothed and protected. Now that the tension in these parts was released, there was an openness to receive support. Sounds were discovered which could address these needs: MMM in a deep tone, a soothing SHHH, a sheltering HUBBB. Her body received these sound-vibrations with enjoyment and relief which was expressed in gesture and movement. The enlivening process was completed for the day.

She felt warm, accommodated, relaxed and consoled. The loving presence of her husband who accompanied her in the session secured the maintenance of this atmosphere around her as they departed. There was light in her face.

Second Session

A week later Clara reported in the second session that she has managed to practice “enlivening” successfully at home. On the medical front intense treatments were taking their toll, but Clara could distinguish between what was not in her hands, and what was. And now she was eager to get on with her inner agenda. There was a big issue from the past to be cleared: guilt. “Guilt is eating me up”. She could identify a constant voice telling her that she had no rights. As she spoke, this great tiredness came upon her, and she had to lie down. All her energy was sapped away. A black hole in her belly was draining her forces, and her instinct was to run away from it into the head: “I can’t be in my belly because it is too gloomy there” she said. There in the head — she knew what to do. “My rational mind is a great escape. That is what I have always done”.

Then she acknowledged that the part of herself which was locked away in the belly, surrounded by judgement and guilt — was still stuck there, depleting her vitality and clarity, while her mind was running away from it into the head. She made a choice, to override the instinctive escape, and to enter the “gloomy place” in the belly, where the need for healing was. Only she, consciously, could perform that healing, she knew, and she took full responsibility for it.

She relaxed into the dark place in the belly, (like Orpheus into the underworld, passing the scary barking dogs), and came to rest within the gloomy, dark place in her belly. It was not as frightening as she thought. She could breath. There was a great need for gentle warmth in that place. We found that the sound FFF spoken gently could bring just that desired warmth into the belly. She breathed in with that quality in the intake of air, and breathed out expressing warm, soft, gentle blue FFFlame of FFF. In her active spontaneous visualisation the colours in her belly changed: from dark blue into green which became more and more golden-green. Light and warmth spread inside her belly. Her energy returned, and so did her joy.

Then it was safe enough to become conscious of the source of that gloom. It came naturally and spontaneously: age 16 months, a baby in a refugee camp after the war, isolated from mother for 2 weeks, depression in there ever since. Early memories at 2 years old: no warmth, no connectedness to mother, an abyss of unexpressed sadness.

Clara was invited to invoke the energy and the presence of the mother she never had, but always longed to. She could easily do it, but something in her heart blocked the access to this imagined nurturing energy. She "became" the heart, sensed, felt and gestured its inner experience. She felt and then saw pieces of icy broken glass stuck in it. They blocked the access of warmth to her inner being. This was the end of the session. Her tasks until the next session were to enhance her connection to the inner mother energies she had just discovered in herself, and to come to know what these pieces of glass were made of. This was the most difficult end of session we had.

Third Session

When Clara came to the next session within a week, she knew exactly what people in her life represented these icy pieces of broken glass. She could name them, make the connection between outer biographical events and patterns and that metaphor, and she was ready for a big clearing job. She wished to be rid of these influences once and for all, now. And then — to heal the heart, the seat of her real self.

We started the action phase of the session by restoring in memory and in sensation the experience of the "inner-mother" nurturing energies which she invoked in the previous session: MMM and FFF sounded them well. Then we entered into the danger zone.

In sensing, gesture and visualisation the map of the debilitating pattern was drawn up. Fortresses of fear were guarding the way to the wounds. The fear was in the stomach; the devastation — in the heart-sheath. Clara "became" the fortresses of fear, spoke their aggressive sound: a blocked GGG. In the heart they transformed into the arrows of the broken glass with the gesture and the sound of a piercing T. Clara sounded it all, acted it all, and when she was ready — she used the same forces to get these energies out of her heart-sheath, one by one. It was a painful operation with no physical instruments, open flesh and knives. In was in pure images, sensations and sounds. But it had the very real effect of clearing the poisonous energies, and to allow warmth and healing to enter and to do their work.

The connection was made. Clara could now bring her warmth to bear on the heart, the pieces of glass melted away, and the invoked mother's warmth could reach it. The love and warmth and compassion that Clara gave to others all her life — was now available to her inner being which was cut off from the sunlight by coldness, judgement and the contraction of guilt. The "inner-mother" energy reached her very intensely with the help of a combination of the sounds FFFF and MMM spoken rhythmically, softly, mediated by the round, reassuring O vowel. Something deep was healed, consoled, embraced. Guilt had no hold, real forgiveness could be imagined.

Clara left the session as if a huge weight was lifted off her whole being. She was at home in the sunlight.

Fourth Session

A few weeks passed by. Clara's physical conditions deteriorated further to a degree which disabled her to come to the clinic any more. The next session took place at her bedside. She was physically very frail and hardly capable of movement, but clear and alert in her mind, and determined to complete the clearing work as she saw it.

She told me that the last bit of inner poison was still in her, a residue of a very early sexual abuse which she was never strong and safe enough to revisit, tackle and heal. She was determined not to go with this pollution stuck in her. She wanted to reach it, clear it, release it and then to complete the forgiveness to the person concerned, who was by then among the dead for many years. She did not want to take this baggage with her to the other side.

It was clear between us that this was not the time for great external action in the mould of the past few sessions. On the other hand there was no need for it. The process of conversing and taking hold of the inner, subtle realities was by then very familiar to Clara. We could do it all in sensing and visualisation. And so we did.

Step by step, in a precise common dynamic visualisation, communicated by very few words, we created a pathway for the poisonous residues of the old abuse to be released out of her system. She did not need to confront the person any more, to sort out her relationship with him. All this, one way or another, was finished and done with. Now there was just the inner cleansing to be completed. The inner washing of her life-body.

She found the inner pool of the dark sediment in her life-body around her heart, and she led it gently, like an inner detoxification of foreign liquids, down her body into a place in her lower back, which had, in her inner experience, an exit in it. From there, without resistance, the dark, poisonous sedimentation of the inner pollution she was carrying for most of her life could leave her body, never to return again. A great relief was registered in her face when this process was completed. A gentle wafting of the sound SHHH spoken by both of us, accompanied by the faintest of movements with her arm, (the only movement she did physically during the whole session) — completed the operation. She was very relaxed and happy, and very tired. By the time I left the room she was practically asleep.

Fifth Session

The fifth and the last time I saw Clara was the shortest. It was a check up. It was initiated in the previous meeting. She was crossing the abyss slowly, surely, with a deep peace of mind. Her earthly business were done and completed. She was by then in a space of her choosing. Physical pain did not reach her any more. There was no irritation, complaint or desire, apart from the wish to be left in peace. All this was exchanged between us with very few words, and through the eye contact. There was a great and solid peace in the room, and a sense of dignity, solemnity and clarity.

I had only one question to ask her: "are you in the space in which you wish to be?" She softly answered "Yes" with gentle light in her eyes. She was as ready as I could ever imagine a person to be. We parted very simply, as if we were going to meet again within a week. We both knew we would not, and we both knew that this was OK.

Three weeks later Clara passed away into her further soul journey. She left in peace.

Conclusion

We did not attempt to cure Clara of cancer. This was not our task, responsibility or intention.

Our task was to heal Clara's relationship to herself, to her biography, to the people with whom she had close relationships, to her life on earth.

Two processes were going on at the same time: (1) the deterioration of the physical body towards its inevitable (with all of us, sooner or later) disintegration. (2) the emergence of the inner being of Clara, for whom the process of disease was a major opportunity for the awakening, the righting and the healing which she was not able to accomplish through her previous, physically healthier condition. The sickness and the dying processes are seen as two of many phases in the soul's journey, not as the end of it. This is not a belief system. This is the articulation of the direct experience of the counsellor and the client in the above process. The disintegration of the body is a fact. The disintegration of the inner being is not a fact, but only so many peoples' assumption underlying un-acknowledged fear. In fact, the reverse of disintegration of the inner being of the physically-dying person is discernible for an un-biased observation: a phase is being accomplished, triggered and strangely supported by the unique condition of the terminal condition. One is left in awe of the magnitude of the process.

A unique inner wisdom, inner light, intense sanity and powerful inner beauty is bursting forth from the disintegration boundaries of the body as from prison, and the soul is becoming visible to the observer, and accessible to the consciousness of the client, very often for the first time in one's life, not a moment too early or too late.

Ushering a person as a counsellor in that unique, sacred passage between life and death is a profound experience and a unique privilege. I am deeply grateful for the range of tools provided by phonophenetics counselling for such a task and for many others. The nature of the insights, knowing, intelligence and dynamics in such a depth of experience would only in a very limited way yield themselves to the articulation of words only. The nature of the experience is colour-

ful, sculptural, pictorial, sentient, kinaesthetic and soundful. When these non-verbal languages are available to practitioner and to client alike — the communication and the interaction can take place on very deep and very high levels, conducted in a direct and therefore very effective manner. The non-verbal communication can then complement the conversational communication into a greater, broader human interaction.