

# The Voice Awakening Souls-Application and Practice of Vocal Psychotherapy

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**Abstract:** This Paper Detailedly Introduced the Research Status, Significance, Levels and Guiding Methods of Vocal Psychotherapy for the First Time, and Examples of Its Application in Clinical Practice as Well as Its Progress and Achievements Were Given.

## 1. Introduction

Vocal Psychotherapy is a New Branch of Music Therapy. This Treatment Mode Uses Voice to Express, Listen and Interpret, Thus Creating an Infinite Possibility Where a Person Can Awaken the Memory, Image and Emotional Changes in the Past Days At the Level of Self-Unconsciousness, Thus Making Him or Her Change and Grow Up. in a More Popular Way, Vocal Psychotherapy Deals with Various Psychological Problems and Adaptation Problems by Means of Voice.

Vocal Psychotherapy is a psychological therapy method that has gradually begun to be implemented in China in recent years with the rise of music therapy here. Professor Austin of the University of New York is the first person who wrote a book on vocal therapy, and for the first time, she put forward the concepts and methods of “song of self” and “song of free imagination”. The author also has the experience and understanding of “song of self” and “free association singing” through self-practice. The theory and practice of Professor Austin have opened a skylight into Vocal Psychotherapy. However, how should we treat visitors in China? Specific treatment examples of Vocal Psychotherapy's technology were shown in this paper.

### 1.1 What is the “Song of Self”? Why is It Needed to Study the “Song of Self”?

The song of self has two main meanings. On the one hand, it refers to our voice, returning to our original natural state. On the other hand, it is an interpretation of our inner emotions.

### 1.2 “Song of Self” in Vocal Psychotherapy Contains Two Kinds of “Sound of Self”

The crying and giggling when we are born and our babbling in our early day are all the voices of ourselves expressing our inner needs. As we grow older, in the process of whether our wishes are met or not, we learn how to express our wishes. Our language begins to change, and some expressions are not from our hearts. Many adults know that singing can make people happy and relieve their emotions, but most people who have not learned singing just sing unconsciously. Therapists make conscious adjustments to visitors in their unconscious natural singing, the principle of which is to make adjustments on the basis of their natural state of singing and their self-appreciation. For example, some people like pop music, some like bel canto and some like folk vocal music. Therapists often adjust their songs according to their needs. For visitors who have no idea about themselves in this aspect, therapists should choose songs that are relatively more suitable for them according to their own conditions.

### 1.3 Promotion of “Song of Self” on Body and Mind:

In fact, singing is a kind of activity that can move muscle of the whole body, especially the muscles of the oropharyngeal cavity and nasopharynx cavity, waist and abdomen, neck and legs. What is important is that a good scientific method of vocalization enables the muscles which can promote singing to actively participate in the operation, and at the same time, other muscles that do not directly participate in the singing movement should be fully relaxed. Singing breath is chest-abdomen combined breathing, which is deeper than our usual breathing. This kind of regular

breathing that drive waist and abdomen is a massage to internal organs and an exercise to vital capacity. It is very comfortable to sing with open throat and chest, but only the singer himself can enjoy this feeling.

The same is true in psychology. Vocal Psychotherapy can make visitors pay close attention and train a high degree of self-awareness that is not affected by the external environment but is integrated with the external environment. People who sing well generally have a good ability of interpersonal communication, cheerful personality and independent views. Vocal Psychotherapy makes use of these characteristics to mold visitors so that they can achieve the desired changes in singing behaviors and thereby achieve psychological changes within a certain period of time.

## **2. Significance of Studying Vocal Psychotherapy:**

The most important reason for studying “sound of self” is that it is the most original and natural voice that everyone has since his birth. However, our voice slowly changes along with the changes in our language and habits of emotional expression as we grow up, and then many of us can no longer clearly and accurately find a way of self-expression. “Sound of self” requires control and grasp of breath and body in a relaxed state, so the state of “sound of self” can make people feel very comfortable, which is also very good for promoting the physical and mental health of visitors. Vocal Psychotherapy can promote the rehabilitation of many mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and so on. It can also help people adjust their mental state, such as reducing or eliminating negative symptoms, relieving stress, reducing dependence on drugs and improving sleep. In addition, it is conducive to maintaining the mental health of normal people. For example, it can help them relax, promote mental pleasure, improve interpersonal relationships and improve immunity.

There are 1.4 billion people in China, 1% of whom are heavy mental patients and 16.6% are light mental patients. Vocal Psychotherapy is helpful to rehabilitate patients with severe psychotic symptoms, correct the mental state of patients with mental disorders and promote mental health of normal people. Music therapy in China is gradually gaining the recognition of general audience and the attention of professional institutions. It has gained great progress in both theoretical exploration and clinical practice, and it is the time to further deepen the theory and work. Vocal Psychotherapy is still a virgin land to be reclaimed in China.

## **3. Hierarchy of Vocal Psychotherapy**

Vocal Psychotherapy treatment is divided into two levels. One is the “song of self” which is based on the existing songs. The songs used at this level are those made by others. If a visitor likes a song very much, he will have a lot of feelings and experiences when he sings this song. The song here mainly plays a suggestive role. Another level of Vocal Psychotherapy, “sound of self”, is the melody of the heart of the visitor under the guidance of the therapist.

“Sound of self” is a very important part in Vocal Psychotherapy. Everyone is very creative when he/she is young. Children can speak their own language, tell stories made up by themselves and sing impromptu songs. The song that blurted out at this time is what I think of as the sound of self. Adults often go out to find support but forget their treasures are in their own hearts. “Sound of self” in Vocal Psychotherapy is guided by two parts in two directions. On the one hand, the visitor is driven back to the natural vocal state and issues a variety of natural expressions of emotions. On the other hand, they are guided and motivated to know his inner melody and sing his inner emotional feelings with melody. During this process, the therapist and the visitor interact with each other.

## **4. Principles and Guiding Methods of Vocal Psychotherapy**

The principle of love: the therapist cares for the mind and body of visitors and promotes the initiative of the visitors themselves. The therapist does not criticize, blame, or judge during the treatment.

The principle of confidentiality: The therapist should keep secrets for the visitors. If the personal information of the visitors is needed in the research, the researchers must get the permission of the visitors and hide their names.

The principle of song selection for the “song of self” in Vocal Psychotherapy:

The therapist guides a visitor to select songs that he or she likes or those can promote the relationship between the visitor and the therapist, or help the visitor select songs that have different functional implications for the psychology. Based on the communication with visitors, the therapist selects songs with different functions and meanings for them to promote their health. The visitors incorporate emotional experiences into their singing so they can return to the past, feel the present and look forward to the future in an emotional experience. Gao Tian once said in his book that we cannot change the facts or hurts in the past but we can change the human experience.

Methods: companion, guiding, wound repair. Regardless of which technique is used, the therapist communicates with the visitors first or they sing in the form without words. The visitors can select the vowel “a” or “u” to sing and then fill in the words.

#### 4.1 Guiding Technique in the Treatment of Depressive Boss (Z)

Z was a 32-year-old female. When she came to the studio, she was plain, in simple-style clothes and with drooping face and listless eyes. But she spoke without pausing for breath. Her opinion on her mother had been uncontrollable and her communication with her mother always began with a quarrel and also ended by a quarrel. They even could not stand each other anymore. Z once had a very good impression on her mother, because she strongly proposed that the family do the hot pot business many years ago, and the whole family greatly benefited. However, as she grew up, she found that her mother was not as capable as she once felt, and many of her decisions were even wrong. Her father was diligent in doing things at home, while her mother only boasted. She promised to relieve uncles and aunts, but in the end it caused big family conflicts. Z could not stand the bad difference. In addition, her mother's failure in stock investment and the bleak business of the hot pot made her feel that everything her mother did was wrong.

We communicated about her mother for a long time, but she insisted that her mother had problems and hoped that we should meet her mother. After communicating with her mother, we thought that Z was the focus of these problems. Each generation has its own unique methods and concepts in dealing with things, and we are not able to change and influence what has happened. The last generation is old, and we are no longer children. We have a broad vision and our own viewpoints, and we can create and influence the future. We are already adults. Sometimes we have to get along with them with an attitude to kids. She suddenly realized that what I said was reasonable, and she was willing to use a more peaceful attitude to examine her relationship with her mother. Her inner self did not grow up, but her mind instantly became much mature after my suggestion.

In addition, Z often looked at the mirror for seven or eight hours, thinking that there were so many imperfections on her appearance. This is an expression of excessive pursuit of perfection and unclear understanding of herself.

In the treatment of Z, I often asked her to look in the mirror to see how beautiful she was when she sang. I told her to remember her beauty in her mind. The songs I selected for Z were *The Same Song* (‘同一首歌’), *Unforgettable Character* (‘在水一方’), *Velvet Flowers* (‘绒花’). *The Same Song* is a song full of positive energy, suggesting that I would help her go through the difficult period. *Unforgettable Character* and *Velvet Flowers* meant that she could see her beauty and bloom her youth. At the first test, the Depression Scale showed that she had many severe symptoms. But after three lessons, the test results showed that she had basically been cured, and she felt very good.

Z was accompanied by her husband when she first came. Feeling that her husband loved her very much, I recommended her a song called *The Touch of Your Hand* (‘牵手’). However, she was not very touched, but instead talked to me about feelings. She and her husband were introduced by her parents. She thought that he was very honest and dutiful but also felt that something was missing in him. Later, Z met a Chinese boy studying in the UK. She had a feeling of heart melting, but neither

of them expressed their love for each other. In the end, she married with the man (her husband now) in view of her parents and her own rationality. The rational choice and passive participation made her have no sparks of love and passion with her husband, so that she had no sexual appeal and did not want children. I chose *A Glass of Mellow Wine* (‘一杯美酒’) for her to arouse her feeling of love. In June 2017, Z told me that her baby had been already three months. She is very grateful to my help to her, and now she is very happy.

#### **4.2 Companion Technique in the Treatment of an Senior Executive (J) with Emotional Crisis**

J is a lively, cheerful and intelligent Shanghai girl. She felt that she could not find a right person to tell her emotional crisis, except me. The beginning of the contradiction with her husband was just a word from J: “I have never been picky about your father and your mother”. His husband immediately returned without hesitation, “What happened to my father and my mother? Aren't they good to you? J was angry. She just wanted to express herself as a very easy-going wife, but her husband regarded it a very serious problem. She was very angry with her husband's attitude, and then did not want to speak anymore. She was still very angry in the following week. Her husband was on a business trip On Valentine's Day, and she found her husband lie with her after he came back. After questioning, the husband admitted that he had an infidelity. He said he had a one-night stand with a net friend because of his depressed mood, but they had no contact after that night. J wanted to divorce but her husband repeatedly implored. Although J decided to forgive him in the end, she could not forget that thing from the bottom of her heart. After carefully understanding the situation, I told her to communicate with her husband more. No matter what happens, refusing communication is the thing that hurt the relationship the most. I asked her which song she would choose if she wanted to sing at that moment. We gave up the first song because it was too sad. Later she chose *I Want Us to Be Together* (‘我要我们在一起’). I thought that song fit her mood then.

In the first class, she found the state of self-sounding, and she felt very good when she sang well. “Singing is like this! It seems that it is not from my mouth, said she. This mobilized her excitement. Soon we sang *My Heart Will Go On* (‘我心永恒’) and *You Lift Me Up* (‘你挺起了我’), and the smooth and comfortable singing made her forget her dissatisfaction with her husband. The treatment went very well and she went back happily.

#### **4.3 The Help of Wound Repair Technique to Mr. X**

X is a vocal music teacher. The therapist asked him to choose the one he liked better from the Major Chord and the Minor Chord, and then the therapist played out the rhythm. In the context of this chord, he sang casually, starting with a single tone. The therapist sang the question with the music “How do you feel? What do you think of? Just after a few quarters of melody, X recalled his Grandma and his hometown. X cried heavily. His grandma had passed away and he had left his hometown, but the pain in his heart clearly emerged at that moment...

“My feelings of my hometown still stay at the time when I was a teenager, when I held my dreams of singing but spoke poor Mandarin. The language of my hometown has seriously affected my life goal of singing, and I began to hate it. But on the other hand, home and hometown are the warmest places in my heart. I remember that a leader asked me to add his name before the opening of a show. This sudden change disrupted my thinking and I performed so terrible on the stage that everyone laughed at me. In the next decade or so, I retrained myself in various hosting events. The therapist said: “Yes! Over the years, you have completed an amazing transition from a boy who spoke in tongues to an expert who has successfully reported at national conferences. You have completed a phased self-realization process.” After the communication, X finally understood the inner mood of his hometown. Now he is passionately involved in the next stage of work and life.

### **5. Conclusion**

We have achieved some stage results and accumulated some experience in the practice of Vocal Psychotherapy. However, as a treatment and an emerging discipline, the theory and practice are still

lacking in China. In order to help more people to alleviate the emotional pains, stresses and pains of their emotions, our exploration and practice will continue.

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