

# Why Do We Sing?

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## WHY DO WE SING?

- Singing increases our self-awareness
- Singing increases our self-confidence
- Singing increases our ability to communicate with others
- Singing decreases stress
- Singing provides comfort to us
- Singing helps us forge our identity
- Singing helps us influence our world
- Singing helps us say the things we don't have the words to say



## THE IMPORTANCE OF PITCH

- Babies cry in tones that tell us what they need
- We have non-word communication sounds that are universal in their meaning
  - Yes. No. Yummy. Pain. Happy and Sad.
- Singing is a neurological function – harmony and perfect pitch can be taught
- Worshipers in the ancient temples of India, China and Tibet chanted to awaken chakras
- The Greek philosopher Pythagoras encouraged his students to sing each day to overcome fear, anger, worry and sorrow
- Whales, wolves, dogs and monkeys make noises that cover a variety of pitches, but only humans have fully developed speaking apparatus and a crucial speech center in the brain.

## FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH

- When we sing, our neurotransmitters fire up the right temporal lobe.
- Singing releases endorphins, which make us smarter, healthier, happier and more creative
- Singing releases oxytocin, which effects our bonding, trust, pleasure and love
- When we sing, learning and language skills improve
- Singing is used as a treatment for depression, strokes and language abnormalities
- When we sing as a group, our hearts begin to beat together
- Singing is used to rehabilitate people who have lost the ability to speak
- Singing is used to wake people from comas
- Premature babies respond faster when recordings of their mothers' voices are played in their incubators
- Associating speech with singing is a treatment for stuttering and lisps
- Singing taps deep into the memories of Alzheimer's and dementia patients
- Singing helps children with Down's Syndrome find a path to talking and communication

## FOR MENTAL HEALTH

- Singing provides an emotional release
- It's a way to express our thoughts and feelings
- Our voice is our unique fingerprint. When we are told not to sing, it can cause deep emotional pain
- Singing is used in Yoga because the vibrations we create through vocalization help us get in touch with a deeper part of our subconscious
- Chanting is used in religious ceremonies to take us to a deeper spiritual place
- Singing connects us with our essence, our soul, our own personal understanding of the Divine
- More than just notes on a page, singing gives us clarity, confidence and peace.



## CLINICAL AMUSIA (Tone Deafness)

- Clinical Amusia is a musical disorder which effects processing pitch and musical memory
- It is rare in humans – only about 4%
- Tone deafness seems to be more of a conditioning rather than an actual condition
- In other words, those who were initially told that they couldn't sing, probably can – but think they cannot
- If you can recognize “Happy Birthday” or other songs, you do not have tone deafness
- If you speak with rising and falling tones, you do not have toe deafness

## GROUP SINGING BENEFITS

- Group singing provides a means for approval
- Group singing activates the right side of the brain
- Group singing meets the need for human connection, acceptance and belonging
- Group singing provides a safe place to gain respect, self-esteem, recognition, strength and freedom
- Because it is education and promotes creativity, group singing fulfills the desire to become the most you can be
- Group singing helps achieve self-actualization
- It teaches critical thinking skills
- It teaches us there is no such thing as perfection – but the pursuit of perfection is a great motivation
- We learn to value and be compassionate toward others
- Group singing helps us find our “inner-voice”
- Group singing therapeutically helps us unburden psychological baggage

- When we come together as a community, we can lean on each others’ hearts and spirits
- It is comforting to sing with a friend or loved one
- As we become stronger in spirit, we then find our own voice and take that chance of being heard above the din of apathy and despair
- Each of us has something to sing about – some tragedy and loss which need to be heard, and some have joys they must share.

### **METAPHYSICAL EXCERSIZE**

- Put your right hand over your heart chakra
- Put your left hand over your right hand
- Visualize a peaceful setting – or physically go to a peaceful setting
- Connect with others in your world
- Close your eyes and breathe through your nose. Feel your breath go into your body
- Exhale allowing the stress and negativity of the day to escape
- “Hummmmm” your mantra on the note of your choice

### **WHY DO WE SING?**

- Singing is a basic human experience
- Our voice is oftentimes the first voice we hear – and the last voice we hear
- Our voice carries emotion, pitch and inflection
- Singing is a highly personal experience – it’s as unique as our fingerprint (that’s why there is voice recognition software)
- We sing to live – And for many of us, we live to sing!

If you can walk you  
can dance, if you can  
talk you can sing.

Zimbabwean proverb



### **Video Portions of this class were excerpted from:**

Finding Your Voice – The Necessity of Singing by Katie Kat at TEDx Jersey City  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8rmKXbYljw&t=127s>

How Choirs Have the Capacity to Change Lives by Arreon Harley at TEDxWilmington  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-heVqNNqI\\_w&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-heVqNNqI_w&t=19s)

How Singing Together Changes the Brain by Tania DeJong at TEDx Melbourne  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_HOBr8H9EM&t=230s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_HOBr8H9EM&t=230s)

Therapeutic Benefits of Singing by Elisa S. Keeler  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6O8qCwIH7o>

Perfect Pitch Lesson 1 with Adam Bendorf  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAsXCvrwN6U&t=15s>

Sound Healing – The Power of Your Own Voice by Anja Sofia Yoga  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTd0yevtx5c&t=111s>

So You Think You Can’t Sing by Deke Sharon  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrjZtmd55ZY>

Why We Sing, by Greg Gilpin. Hal Leonard Preview A Cappella Choral Series  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8oH7GKFsB0>

Books to Read: Healing Sounds - The Power of Harmonics by Jonathan Goldman