



YOUR NAKED VOICE – SOUNDING FROM THE SOURCE

By Chloe Goodchild

What do you love about your voice?

I love to ask this question because it invites such a wide spectrum of responses. What voice? Which of the many voices inside me are you talking about anyway? My speaking voice, my singing voice, my inner voice, my outer voice? How can I answer these questions when I don't even think I've got a voice. Whose voice am I anyway?

The voice I'm asking about is your **Naked Voice**. This is the real voice inside you. For myself, the Naked Voice is my true sound. It's the sound that is free of self consciousness and fear. It's the authentic sound, free of effort and the desire to impress or control anyone. This Naked Voice is a sound that is the sound of your true nature, it is your Self Aware sound. When you are speaking 'naked' you are entirely at home with yourself.

The name Naked Voice happened upon me in 1990 after years of struggling with the "who am I" questions of my existence. In that moment I

was suddenly able to hear myself and everyone around me as one unified voice. All my self consciousness, all my neurotic obsession with my personal identity along with all its dramas, disappeared for several months and I found myself in an ever deepening field of listening. The identification with my ordinary mind was severed in such a way as to 'dislocate' and free my attention from a ME centred reality to a BEING centred Reality.

This experience was a great blessing, as it brought about a profound healing of a childhood wound. Following an unsuccessful surgical operation on my tonsils when I was 4 years old, the trauma of this experience closed down my hearing for several years. So at that time as a little child I had to learn how to listen and to communicate with great difficulty and yet at the same time this shocking childhood experience was inevitably the very training that I needed for the work that we are now doing with the Naked Voice.

When I was in that deafness experience my main solace came from an inner sound, a sound inside myself and this was my reference, so when hearing came back around the age of seven, music and sound and song became my great

refuge initially and then my teacher for life and it has continued to be the teacher of this work. I'd been searching for a much freer way of sounding that could satisfy the hunger of all my longing to express myself. The Naked Voice, sound and song can be a means of exploring one's own self awareness and music as a metaphor for life rather than as a vehicle for entertainment or performance.

Both ancient wisdom and the latest advances in science agree that every particle of matter, every phenomenon we experience, is a form of resonance or vibration. The voice is a direct expression of this vibratory nature, an immediate way to connect with the resonance that is all life. There is nothing more personal, more tied to your identity, than your voice. It is a primal means of expression and something true about you that precedes rational thought and conceptuality. Yet many people it seems, don't love their voice, poor voice, we speak so harshly of it, yet it rarely answers back. And many of us spend our lives trying to avoid or ignore its calling. There's usually something wrong with it, like how it sounds on the tape recorder, or even more so when it tries to sing!



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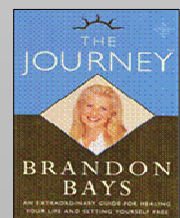
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There's something intrinsically terrifying about the human voice for many people. This terror gives us some clue as to why we live in such a world as we do and as why we can no longer afford to remain disconnected from the true voice, daydreaming or sleep walking our way through life. Maybe so many people are terrified of singing because of the sheer disarming aliveness that it can generate in every cell of your body, heart and mind. As sound starts pouring from your mouth it surpasses the boundaries of your analytical rational mind, it awakens your singing heart, it touches the true resonance of your naked self. This experience can be so emotionally disorientating for your mind, yet its gifts are immeasurable for the regeneration of your human spirit and for the revelation of a forgotten intelligence that we've come to describe as sound intelligence.

Now come on tell me – what do you really love about your voice?

This question is essential, it activates in most people, no matter how lost or found, a sudden quickening in their listening attention, their eyes go on alert, or their eyebrows rise up in apprehension, their heart misses a beat or they try to change the subject, or get up and leave the room very fast.

For over 20 years I've asked this question of 10,000s of people across the world, from India and Africa, to Canada and the USA, in supermarkets, schools, prisons, conferences, workshops and trainings, in war zones, council chambers, hospices, health therapeutic and spiritual centres. Time and time again the first response to my question is negative, probably 8 out of 10 people say "I really don't like my voice"

Sometimes I love to sing a simple melody to the words "How I Love You" at my local supermarket shopping mall. This simple recurring chorus slowly descends the musical scale step by step from the top of the octave to the bottom, from the crown of your head to the root of the body, and then returns to the top again "How I Love You How I Love You". I sit at the end of the escalator serenading the shoppers as

they descend. I particularly like choosing that spot because I know that I have a captive audience for the next 2 minutes or so, as they are descending the moving stairs and they cannot run away!

To my amazement the shoppers descending the escalator love being sang to. They love hearing the words "How I Love You" focused on their unsuspecting faces as they gracefully float down to earth. But then when I stop singing and I ask them "What do you love about your voice?" everything suddenly changes again, everything closes down, and they usually tell me a negative childhood story, first about when they were thrown out of the school choir or told to shut up at home or speak when spoken to, all those sad memories that we hold on to for dear life, for some strange bizarre self denying reason. Sometimes I let myself imagine and feel the sheer numbers of lonely people walking the planet, carrying their trapped voices inside the burden of memories bending low their backs. When I imagine this I begin to understand why the world is in the crisis it is in and all because we forgot to remember what we most love about our voice. "What do you love" is even closer to home and who is singing anyway, which brings us back to "Who Am I?"

Our personality, it seems, has assumed dominion over the real voice inside us, that ancient secret memory lying dormant deep down in the marrow of your bones. So how may we once again redeem and honour the presence of this true sound inside us? The one that has been loving us all our lives.

The **Seven Sounds of Love** aims to do just that.

I was first introduced to the Seven sounds of love, or Saptac, which means 7 steps, in Indian, in 1985 by a wonderful north Indian French singer, Gilles Petit. My work with Gilles was always accompanied by a practice of the Indian scale, substituting our Doh, Re, Mi with the Indian Sa Re Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. So it was I first experienced the power of the 7 steps, the Septac, which I now call the Seven Sounds of Love. This early experience was formative in discovering what I later called the Naked Voice.

With his inspiring guidance, I

began to understand the far reaching possibilities for the singing voice as a vessel for an embodied resonant expression of the human spirit. Over the last 20 years I have learnt to explore and express myself through the subtle microtones and spaces between each of the seven sounds with a greater depth of awareness and listening as the musical notes begin to open up a vast uncharted spectrum of feeling inside me, energising my body, dissolving negative emotion, and freeing my spirit in ways I've never known.

Each sound carries vibrational power that awakens a specific realm of self awareness and wisdom within us. This sound is available to everyone, you don't have to be a singer to be able embark upon this sounding work. In fact sometimes being a "singer" can actually be an obstruction.

This sound work is sometimes described as vibrational medicine or musical homeopathy. Singing the Seven sounds is like walking into a garden of flowers, each one has a unique fragrance, expression and intensity, reflecting back to us the colours, moods and voices of our souls landscape and longing for union, the expression of our true presence. These sounds constellate musical intervals, modes and melodies that have the power to awaken our inner depths, embody and free up the human spirit. I and my core team, have created a simple method using these sounds with voice and meditative movement to overcome fear, awaken compassion and instil peace of mind.

Your naked voice and sound is probably the most essential and intimate relationship you will ever have and this can be the most challenging intimacy to engage with, especially if you have never tried before. However, once you have had some practice with responding to it there is no end to the wisdom you can encounter there. Your real voice is the sound of your true nature. Its spoken and poetic potential, its emotional range its energy, resonance, frequency and volume impact your relationship with your voice, weather its spoken, poetic or sung and all the spaces in between can tell you everything you need to know about your naked self.

No more books need to be read, no more songs need to be sung,

just your voice and you. Your voice brings you to the edge of your naked self, it takes you over. The startling truth is that YOU, the resonance of your Being, is so easy and so simple to access. Yet once you're in there with it, it is deeper and more beautiful than your personality and your rational mind could ever fathom. The tendency is therefore towards ignoring this inner journey, to bolting the door on spirit to ignoring the beauty, the one that made you in the first place. It is a rare one that goes after this treasure, the wisdom inside you. That wisdom, the wisdom of your sound is much deeper and older than the polarity of all the conflicts that we are so besotted with on the surface of life.

Falling in love with your own voice and learning to sound out love's longing for itself is a power beyond all belief. Singing with our naked voice ignites a power of longing, a longing for somewhere we have never been, a something we cannot name. Singing naked generates an energy that can turn all this paranoia of the soul, the madness of our fear, our terror of death, into a madness of an entirely other kind. We call it the madness of love. Beyond all ideas of right and wrong doing, a madness that moves you irresistibly from the inside out and sings of a fearless music called **NOW**.

This article is taken from extracts of Chloe's recently published Sounds True album (Jan 2007), **Your Naked Voice**.

Chloe Goodchild is a regular visitor to Ireland where she facilitates training and other events.

Chloe will be in Ireland for a special interactive concert in Dublin, St Ann's Church, Dawson St, on Sat 29th March 2008, 7:30 – 9:30.

We aim to have over 600 people joining their voice in chant and song, to change the resonance of the city!

Chloe will also be holding a **1 day Introductory Workshop on Sunday 30th March, St Kevin's Community Centre, Bloomfield Ave (off South Circular Rd), Dublin 8.**

For more information please contact Catherine Walsh
087-7534501

Email : sjwalsh@yahoo.ie
www.thenakedvoice.com