



# Vocal Self-Portrait

Your relationship with your own inner-outer voice is one of the most intimate you will ever have. As your witness and sound-awareness skills strengthen, you will discover how to listen to your voice with deepening acceptance and respect. In this chapter I invite you to begin unraveling the story of your very own voice more deeply with an exercise called “Vocal Self-Portrait.” Although I have worked with thousands of individuals, I have never heard the same vocal story or vocal self-portrait twice. Every human being is born with a unique sound. And that song carries a unique vibration encoded within your body from conception. This sound is available to you like a guiding star, whenever you choose to listen and tune in. This unique voice gives you an essential understanding of who you are, as well as how and why your life is unfolding the way it is.

As soon as you slide down the birth canal and out into this world, your natural voice bursts out. From thereon begins a long winding road of learning how to best express your truth and to be truly heard. The stability of the environment into which you were born, your waking and sleeping patterns, your opportunity to suck breast milk, to be nurtured and loved in the early days of this unpredictable and vulnerable shift from womb into life on Earth—all these events and more impact your voice and freedom to express yourself. As you explore your environment, the sound of your voice is constantly on call, issuing a range of emotional demands from alarm to deep satisfaction, shock to sweet utterance, laughter and tears, to whispers of tenderness and delight. As your limbs discover themselves, your primal sounds reach out nonverbally, stretching your tiny lungs with a startling array of vowel sounds spiraling around—“aaaah,” “uuuu,” “mumum,” and “dadada”—one sound waving into the next. Your awkward and miraculous arrival into this new unknown world gradually lets go.

According to the melody and vibration of your song, you will start communicating with the world around you, with shifts reflecting what you experience: the quality of attention, creative support, and loving presence received, or perhaps indifference, neglect, abandonment, or abuse. There is no knowing how the song of your soul will be enhanced or inhibited by your early childhood years.

From the hundreds of vocal self-portraits I have been privileged to read and process, it has been evident that the apparently negative conditions of early childhood did actually provide, for some, the essential grist and resistance required to inspire their unswerving drive to stay true to their authentic voice, or to access it once again in later years. For others, it was the positive nurturing environment and the prosperous conditions that provided exactly the appropriate setting to flourish and harness the expression of their true voice once more.

***This practice offers you an opportunity to build a balanced life, a healthy conscience and the creative will to follow your Vocal Impulse and to embody your authentic voice on Earth. HERE WE GO!***

## Vocal Self-Portrait Practice: A Reflective Practice

When you look back to your childhood years, how did you most easily communicate, both with yourself and with others? Did you feel more at home to be alone with your inner voice, silently; or was it through your speaking voice that your true authority emerged? What part did singing play throughout your life in revealing your essence to others? **Consider writing a vocal self-portrait that describes your relationship, from the inside out, with your voice as you experienced it throughout your life – from childhood to NOW - in all its forms.** As you journeyed from childhood into adolescence and adulthood, what enabled you to communicate most authentically, in your raw naked truth, without censorship or self-consciousness? Which situations made your blood run cold, causing

you to retreat into yourself? Begin to turn over every stone of your life: your significant relationships, with parents, siblings, elders, friends, lovers, animals etc How did specific events in your life e.g. rites of passage, ceremonies, initiations, achievements, obstacles, rewards and challenges affect you and your communications?

**I invite you now to write your own Vocal Self-Portrait in which your voice is the hero or heroine of the story, highlighting the circumstances and relationships that maybe sabotaged you once, then challenged you to move courageously on, until you finally felt empowered to explore and transform your relationship with your true voice, the one that has brought you to the Vocal Impulse Advanced Training NOW. Start by writing uncensored** as you remember all the memories —silent, spoken, and sung—in no more than four pages. The aim of this vocal exercise is to build a clear, courageous, and openhearted relationship with your life and with the voice that has brought you to this moment. This practice alone will enable you to face yourself, to let go and to forgive old narratives and to build a deeper courage, to restore honor to your very own Self, and where required, to your family, soul friends and your new community here. This practice invites you to remember who you are through the voice of your soul, your naked voice, the authentic voice of your life.

## **Vocal Self-Portrait: Preparation**

Be sure to approach this practice with the same nonjudging mind and loving presence you have developed thus far through a direct experience of your witness consciousness. You will need a pen, some paper, and a quiet space and time to relax into this process with no distractions.

**Choose any of the following approaches to kick off your writing:**

- **Brainstorm:** Hand-write in an uncensored stream of words, using word association to trigger the significant moments in life and activate your historical imagination.
- **Recording:** Start remembering your vocal journey by speaking your story into a recorder so as to catalyze your memory.
- **Body movement:** Start by moving, letting your body remember and express the highs and lows, weaknesses and strengths, from birth to present day.
- **Sounding:** Begin by improvising and sparking your memory of the highs and lows, along with specific memories of how your voice blossomed, contracted, and evolved throughout your life.
- **A combination of 1–4:** You may want to integrate some or all of the above approaches to access and arouse the story of your voice.

## **Vocal Self-Portrait: Completion**

Once you have brainstormed, made notes, and recorded the story in as much detail as you can remember, set aside a relaxing space and time to sit down and write a distilled version of your unique vocal self-portrait.

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