



# Joya

## Listening Training

A unique and gentle method to stimulate the brain and improve the way one learns, lives and listens.

Music and sound are powerful forces that can change perception and have an impact upon our emotions and behaviour. Intuitively we have always known this. Throughout the world and in all cultures, we've used music to 'set the tone' in our rituals and celebrations.

Over the last decades we have become more scientific in our approach. One of the pioneers in this area was Prof. Dr. Alfred Tomatis (1920-2001) who laid the groundwork for a multi-disciplinary science exploring the impact of auditory stimulation on the brain. There are various centres across the world dedicated to further developing his work; centres directed by specialists from the fields of education, psychology, medicine, theatre and music.

Just as we all have different fingerprints, we also have our own characteristic way of filtering out what we do not want to hear or concentrate upon. We may hear but we may still not listen. Listening deals with perception; with being able to focus, pay attention, and having an inner willingness to communicate. Besides this more psychological component, there is a physiological level to the process of listening (and hearing). The ear controls our posture and sense of balance - in fact, every tiny muscle in your body is connected to both sides of your vestibular system. Then, nearly all cranial nerves - the optic nerve, the oculomotor nerve, the vagus nerve - are connected or interrelated. Thus vision, breathing, heart rate, digestion as well as many other bodily functions can be affected by this primary sensory organ, the one that is the first to be fully developed while in the womb and the last to go.

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## Are You Listening?

One of the less known benefits is that by listening we recharge our brain and improve our concentration, memorisation, our zest for life and creativity. It is a snowball effect. A good listener becomes a good communicator, someone with a positive orientation, who is in touch with him/herself as well as with 'the world'. But the opposite is true as well. When our listening has been impaired, for instance in case we perceive the world as threatening, one way of coping with this, is by blocking, or warding off information. It's a protective mechanism, a subconscious process that we all go through to some extent, even with the best of parents and circumstances. Yet impaired listening will come with a price and at a certain point may develop into a downward spiral. When that is the case, there is less and less recharge, we will not be able to respond to our environment without 'distortions' or misunderstandings of one kind or another. Feelings of depression, or dis-ease, even when there should be nothing to worry about, and physical exhaustion, may very well be symptomatic of diminished listening. And the restless child that is underachieving at school may not be 'naughty' at all but just have a genuine listening problem.

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## Music as Medicine

Apart from its obvious advantages for singers, musicians, actors and anyone dependent on good communication skills, Listening Training is particularly valuable in preventing and overcoming developmental (gross and fine motor skills) and various learning and behavioural problems. For children who come to the centre we also offer various brain gym exercises and games in order to help them achieve better in school and on the sports field.

"The power of music to integrate and cure is quite fundamental. It is the profoundest non-medical medication that exists." Oliver Sachs

The Electronic Ear - a device that is key to the treatment - is designed to (re) train the ears to optimal functioning. The system allows a personalised programme of filtered and non-filtered music which has a relaxing as well as an energising effect. The sounds and music transmitted through this device target the tiny bones in the middle ear which need to be 'taught' to function properly in order for the ear drum to have just the right amount of flexibility and tension. Only with a well-functioning ear drum does the inner ear get sufficient stimulus to perceive sounds clearly enough and use this energy as a boost for the nervous system. Special headphones are designed for both air and bone conduction, creating the most potent stimulation possible.

The structure, content and length of the programmes vary from person to person. The average is 30 days of 2-hour listening sessions spread over a few months. Almost all clients commence with a vestibular program followed by the recreation of the earliest stages of auditory and language development to overcome problems caused by emotional trauma, illness, or accident. For young children this includes a simulated sonic 'rebirth' based on filtered recordings of the mother's voice. Listening Training is a subtle yet profound method that is bound to create change on levels often not even anticipated.