



## Anxiety can block your ears

Do any of the following apply?

### Adults:

- Lack of enthusiasm
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sadness (although you have it 'all')
- No Joy!

### Teenagers:

- Intelligent yet underachieving
- Low energy
- No sense of direction
- Restless
- No Joy!

### Kids:

- Behavioural problems
- They hear but won't listen
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of co-ordination and motor skills
- No Joy!

## The Effects of Stress

In an ideal world we would grow up in an organised, peaceful and safe environment. In the real world we often don't. Our stress responses may start early in life, even as early as the womb, since babies are affected by their mothers' adrenaline levels. Infants are highly sensitive to the emotions of their caregivers. They will sense the fears and tensions around them and become stressed themselves. This often becomes apparent in the first born children especially when they are boys. Since boy babies are developmentally a bit behind girl babies, their digestive system tends to be more sensitive. They often are more restless, sleep less and cry more. This can create a vicious circle of anxious parents who get more and more stressed and concerned and babies responding to this anxiety by becoming colicky.

Another factor is that adrenaline and other stress-induced neurotransmitters may weaken the immune system, which may create another vicious circle - namely that of increased vulnerability to bacteria and viruses. Tummy bugs, ear infections - they can all be indicators of underlying emotional upsets.

"Her parents gave her only conditional acceptance. She learned that she only felt loved when she wasn't being herself" Joel Covitz

Children who grow up in a survival-oriented environment will – as we now know – develop the General Adapter Syndrome (GAS), a complex physiological mechanism designed to permit them to continually adapt and cope. Stress causes the release of certain chemicals which will numb the brain on the one hand but make it hyperactive on the other. Memory and learning may be profoundly affected since under stressful circumstances our brain waves go faster and the ability for logical and creative thinking is inhibited. Even environmental noise such as traffic, certain types of music and television or equipment like computers can keep brain waves on the alert.

By adulthood, chronically stressed people are often unaware of how affected they really are, since this coping mechanism has become a way of life - but at a cost. Sleeping disorders, poor appetite, and a lack of a real 'innocent' joy may be the result. Unresolved emotions end up being relegated to the sympathetic nervous system where they can build over time into fear and depression, possibly combined with sudden outbursts of anger or despair. On a physical level, these emotions have a major impact on our immune system. We truly 'store our issues in our tissues'.

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## The Listening Training

Music has a mysterious way of reaching into the depths of our brain and body, which may call many unconscious systems into expression. Those of us who have tried to 'medicate' their issues with either over- or under-the-counter drugs, or constantly working too much, may experience the liberating effect of sound without the use of any other stimulant or means of compensation. Tomatis found that numerous physiological & psychological functions are associated with impaired listening. He believed that sound can be seen as a nutrient - a very important nutrient, especially when we are young and still very vulnerable.

*Listening Training Can Be Quick, Gentle and Simple!*

We are not used to thinking in simple terms, especially not when dealing with trauma. Yet this method has helped thousands of children and adults to:

- develop better communication skills
- improve their self-confidence and posture
- have greater focus and clarity of mind
- accept the past for what it is and should be, the past!

"There is no feeling, except the extremes of fear and grief, that does not find relief in music." George Elliot