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## Too Many Voices

Parts Therapy is giving audience to the voices that represent our points of view. It can be done with anyone. Holding back a chaos of ever present voices is something else, that's schizophrenia. So it was with some trepidation that I sat down with a deeply schizophrenic young man whose mother had brought him to talk to me, and then driven off with a casual wave saying, "Have a nice time, dear!" Let's call him Dave.



I'm not a therapist. I don't diagnose and I don't treat diagnosed illnesses. I don't know much about schizophrenia, and I'm not sure I want to. I tell my clients what I can accomplish, let them choose the goal, and then do it.

There is a mistaken idea that trance is something that you go into, but we are all in a trance state to begin, usually an ego state. Hypnosis is about changing to a state of greater self awareness.

## Talking Hypnosis

I began our session of "hypnosis" at the kitchen table by asking Dave about his

problem. He said he had a lot of anxiety, sometimes bordering on panic, and he was disturbed by voices. He explained he could not find a place within the realm of his voices in which he could grow. I offered relaxation and quiet. That appealed to him, so that's where we went.

I explained how I understand words and why I find them blunt, often powerless instruments. I recalled the story of The Soundkeeper who, in *The Phantom Tollbooth*, kept all sounds locked up because people did not appreciate the good ones. I talked about how words create distinctions where sometimes there are none, allowing us contrast but also creating discord where there should be unity. I kept my voice running flat and my patter incessant until this soup of ideas melded into one big pottage. Then we went and sat in the comfortable chairs.



## Hearing All Over

I began the “official” session with a relaxation that went through the body. We started on relaxing tension places: scalp, face, jaw, and neck using controlled breath and imagination. As we moved into joints and muscles I explained that every part of one's body has a message and is aware, and we need to be in communication not just to move correctly, but also because memories and ideas are stored throughout our bodies.

Our hands store ideas of manipulation, our feet of connection, our ankles direction, our knees motion, and our thighs absorbing shock and change. And in our organs maybe we store emotions. You have to check in with yourself in order to find out. Sometimes we “get the message” in words, other times through sensations, and yet other times in ways we're not even conscious of.

Maybe his voices have home in parts of his body where they're heard or understood better. And maybe his voices are coming from these places and can better communicate through means besides words, whose power is so limited to begin with.

I suggested that the coordination of these voices and their needs is more than one

small, conscious person can handle. Coordination needs to be a whole body experience. All the systems, subsystems, stories, voices, directions, insights, obsessions, and issues have their place and needs, but he doesn't need to be at the center of it all. I asked him to relax everywhere and every one. And he did that.

*“Every joint and muscle, organ and tissue in our bodies has a voice and an ear, and each of them speak to us and listen to each other as part of the orchestra of our being.”*



## The Beach

Then I did a guided visualization that took him to his own pleasant place. For him this was the beach, but instead of taking just him there, we took the whole crew. I said that like a safari tour everyone is on-board, and everyone can find something interesting in the landscape so they can continue to chatter and be happy.

It was 30 steps down a stairway from the top of the dune to the edge of the sea, and with every step we breathed more deeply, appreciated the details of our surroundings, and immersed in feeling good, and real, and being there. He didn't have to worry about them, and they won't deafen him with demands for attention. We all went to the beach and everyone found relaxation talking to each other, talking to the body, immersed in the surroundings, and in their own relaxation. In this he can find his relaxation, and they did, and he did.

And after it was all over -- it took an hour -- he was a totally relaxed person and he told me how much he appreciated my stories about the uselessness of words and the essential role of voices, and how voices had a necessary place in process, change, and transformation. He said, "I've learned so much, and I feel so good."

That made me feel really good as I'd never worked with anyone labeled "seriously mentally ill" before. We had a wonderful time, and nothing we spoke about -- voices, visions, guides -- was at all out of context. And that's how I want it to work: he came for calm and relaxation and that's what we accomplished. What this has to do with schizophrenia I do not know, and maybe never will.



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