

Aspects of facilitation in group Soundings

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The **first aspect** in all this was the use of the voice itself.

I was a professional singer for 30+ years and after moving away from this, have experienced various teachers who use the voice for growth work such as, Giles Petit (Strong Indian influence, especially the Indian scale), Chloë Goodchild (focus on chanting from eclectic sources), Kiran Rani (Sufi Qawwali, Islam devotional music) and Johannes Theron of the Roy Hart Theatre, Paris (sounds as well as music). I am also informed by my growing body of experience in facilitating voice work with human development groups ranging in size from 5 to 25.

The confidence in using my voice that the above work has generated, impacted on group members in two ways:

- a) It had the function of an umbrella, under which they could gently move around and explore.
- b) It was intimidating and had the effect of shutting down.

The learning here for me was how to balance, how to sustain the umbrella, but not pushing too far out thus impinging on others. This is a constant struggle, to know intuitively where this living edge is.

The **second aspect** as a facilitator was to see whether the essences of what Stephen Cope (1999, p. 97) calls 'transformational spaces,' could be honoured. Namely, that:

1. They create a quality of refuge.
2. They create safety through constancy in relationship.
3. They encourage creativity and experimentation.
4. They are organized around "transitional objects" that are constant and reliable.
5. They do not deify these transitional objects, or themselves.
6. They provide us with a way of finding out who we are.
7. They do not have to be perfect.
8. They are open to, and support, other paths to development

The **third aspect** was the Tao concept of Wu-Wei, described by Kardash (2004) as, "A key principle in realizing our oneness with the Tao is that of *wu-wei*, or "*non-doing*." *Wu-wei* refers to behavior that arises from a sense of oneself as connected to others and to one's environment. It is not motivated by a sense of separateness. It is action that is spontaneous and effortless. At the same time it is not to be considered inertia, laziness, or mere passivity. Rather, it is the experience of going with the grain or swimming with the current. Our contemporary expression, "*going with the flow*," is a direct expression of this fundamental Taoist principle. In its most basic form, this refers to behaviour occurring in response to the flow of the Tao with what Mitchell (1988, p. 76) calls "...a peculiarly unforced quality."

It seemed to me to hold tremendous potential for an accepting and inclusive approach to using the voice as an instrument of exploration and expression.

References

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Mitchell, S. (1999). *Tao Te Ching - An Illustrated Journey*. London: Francis Lincoln Ltd.

About the author

Russell Stone is registered with the BACP and UKCP as an integrative counselor and transpersonal therapist, and is a skillful group facilitator. As well as having an MA in transpersonal counseling and psychotherapy, he has taught on trainee therapists for many years. He combines all this with a wealth of experience from a successful international career as a composer and musical performer with some of the world's best known artistes. Russell uses Sounding to help individuals, groups and organizations to explore beyond their own boundaries, and evolve towards their highest potential.