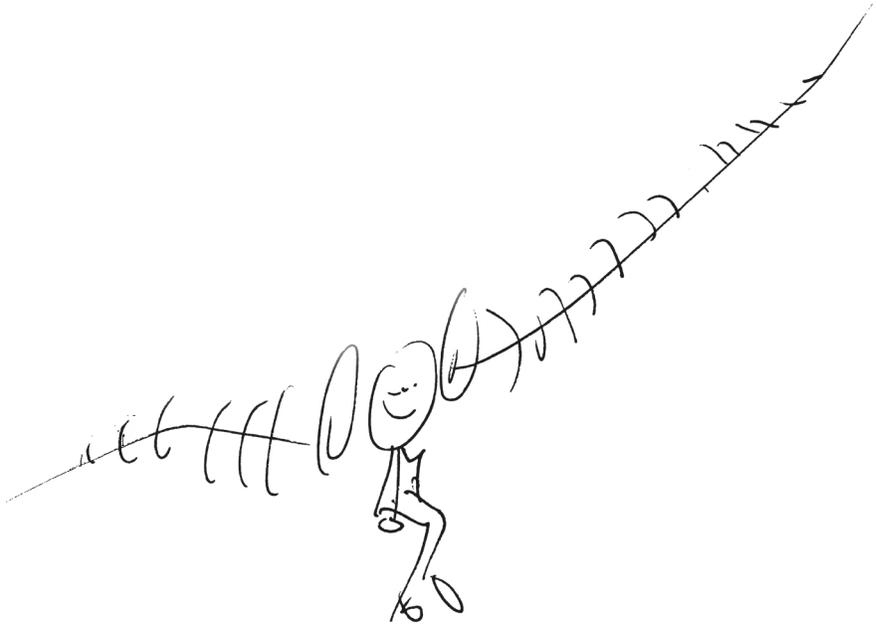


# Sound Meditation

*“Hearing draws in more,  
but seeing rather leads outward –  
the very act of seeing does this.  
Therefore in eternal life we shall rejoice  
far more in our power of hearing  
than in that of sight.”*

Meister Eckhart (1260–1327)



Conscious listening:  
near and far.

In daily life, the world around us is full of sounds. We're often not aware of these sounds, because we filter most of them out. But we can decide to heighten our perception, becoming more aware by consciously paying attention to the variety of sounds in a certain environment, or by intensifying our awareness of the quality of the sound.

In class, we often perform the following sound meditation:

## Instruction

We close our eyes. This allows us to block out any visual stimuli. Then we'll concentrate on the sounds – trying to consciously perceive them, one by one. We'll attempt to simply perceive the sounds, without interpreting them subjectively and without naming them. In this way we are immersed in a world of its own in which it's possible to discover many new things.

Is the sound loud or rather soft? Is it high or low? Is it soft or rather hard? Is the sound repeated or do you hear it only once? Does the sound have a melody or is it rather monotonous? Does it build up slowly or does it occur suddenly? Are there moments of absolute silence?

We will now first try to concentrate on sounds that are very far away – far outside the room we find ourselves in at the moment. Examples: cars, a plane in the distance, someone working in the garden with a saw ...

Now try concentrating on sounds that are still outside the room but closer. Examples: voices, people passing by, birds singing ...

Now pay attention to the sounds in the room you're in. Examples: radiators, people moving around, coughing, someone drinking water ...

And now concentrate on the sounds in your own body. Examples: breathing, body movements, a rumbling in your stomach, swallowing ...

And can you maybe even hear your own thoughts?

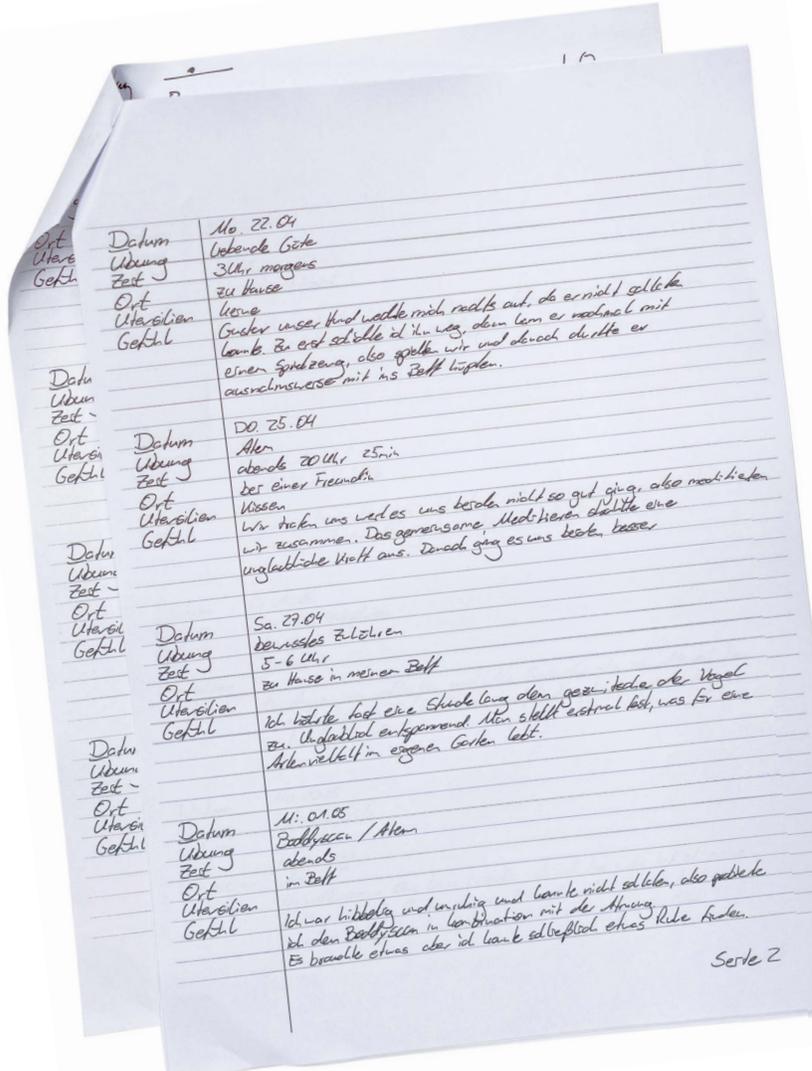
Sound meditation can be done anywhere, and is not limited by time. Every place has its own world of sound – whether one is in a forest, at the train station, in a café, at the shopping center, or by the sea. If one practices attentive listening more often, one automatically becomes more sensitive to various sounds. The same goes for silence and noise. One learns to hear more selectively, and this capacity can be useful in various situations. A good example of this is the ability to hear your own voice better. It can tell you a lot about how you feel. The same applies to consciously listening to others' voices. Acoustic features of the voice say something about the personality of a person, such as emotional stability, introversion and extroversion.

Mindful listening is best practiced with curiosity and with a certain spirit of discovery. A film worth seeing about silence and sound is *In Pursuit of Silence* by Patrick Shen. In a meditative way, the documentary explores our relationship to silence, sound and the influence of noise on our lives.

## Primary literature used for the lessons

Shen, Patrick (2018). *In Pursuit of Silence*. Köln: mindjazz pictures. [DVD]

# Journal Notes Sound Meditation



## F. S.

4/17/19, sound meditation and breath meditation

Duration: approx. 10-15 min.

I have a certain place that I only visit by myself. It's situated on a small hill with many trees and bushes. I like to sit down on the ground and lean against a tree. There I feel as if I am a part of nature.

I start to concentrate on my breathing and on what I can perceive and hear around me. Everything happens right in front of my eyes. Bees fly around, melancholic bumblebees fly slowly from leaf to leaf. Leaves rustle beside me and above me. Rays of sunlight make their way through the leaves to the earth. The wind blows sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker, sometimes it comes from the right, then from the left.

I often try to hear things that are not directly in the foreground. For example, I heard pedestrians or cyclists from further away from the small path leading along the stream. My head is free, and no thoughts disturb me. This place gives me strength.

## J. W.

6/21/19

sound meditation

Where: on my balcony

Duration: 15 min

Before the meditation I was a bit unfocused. That's why I concentrated all the more on all the sounds that can be heard from my balcony: the birds, cars, people talking, the wind, airplanes, barking dogs, the opening and closing of a garbage can, etc. An awful lot of noises and even more ... Afterwards I was suddenly much more involved and even hours after the meditation I heard much more intensely than usual. Even on my keyboard I could hear every tap (the sound), and it gave me the feeling of being consciously present. Every sound happens NOW, in the present, allows me to be completely aware.

## Name / initials not mentioned

Date: Sat. 4/27

Exercise: conscious listening

Time: 5:00–6:00 a.m.

Place: at home in my bed

Tools:

Feeling: I listened to the chirping of the birds for almost an hour. Incredibly relaxing. It helps you to realize what biodiversity lives in your own garden.

## M. N.

5/3/19

**Duration: approx. 5 min.**

This morning I was meditating when the child my girlfriend takes care of was here. This child was crying and screaming all the time. So, I thought I'd try to block out this noise through my meditation. Unfortunately, this only helped to a limited extent – the screaming was too penetrating and so I stopped.

## N. S.

5/4/19

**5-minute sound meditation**

I have tried to hear, identify and classify sounds inside and outside the house.

03.05.2019  
Heute morgen hatte ich meditiert, als das Tager-Kind meiner Freundin hier war. Dieses hat die ganze Zeit geweint und geschrien.  
Also dachte ich mir, ich versuche diese Geräuschunfälle durch meine Meditation auszublocken. Leider hat dies nur bedingt geholfen - das Geschrei war zu penetrant und so habe ich abgebrochen.

Dauer ca. 5min.



Atem  
Meine heutige Achtsamkeits-  
meditation hat mich voll und  
ganz ins Hier und Jetzt geholt.  
Ich habe sehr stark meine  
Nasenflügel beim Ein- und Aus-  
atmen wahrgenommen und war  
kaum von Gedanken abgelenkt.

21.06.19

- Hör-Meditation
- Auf meinem Balkon
- 15 Minuten

Vor der Meditation war ich  
etwas unkonzentriert. Deshalb  
konzentrierte ich mich umso mehr  
auf die ganzen Geräusche, die  
von meinem Balkon aus zu  
hören sind: die Vögel, Autos,  
sprechende Menschen, der Wind,  
Flugzeuge, bellende Hunde, das

Auf- und Zuzumachen der Mülltonne usw.  
Wahnsinnig viele Geräusche und noch  
mehr... Danach war ich plötzlich  
viel mehr bei der Sache und  
ich hörte auch noch Stunden nach  
der Meditation viel intensiver als  
sonst. Sogar auf meiner Tastatur nahm  
ich jedes Tippen (das Geräusch) wahr,  
es gab mir das Gefühl ganz  
bewusst Da zu sein. Jedes  
Geräusch passiert gerade JETZT;  
in der Gegenwart; lässt mich  
ganz Da sein.



ohr

Schallwellen  
(ich kann leider nicht malen)