

### Preface

This is the first of three linked articles on Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises (EARTE).

They are primarily intended to be used in conjunction with Autogenic Training, or similar trainings that facilitate an Amplified State of Consciousness [de Rivera 2017 / 2018]. The three are:

- A11: This group is primarily physical in nature – i.e. short physical exercises, some of which have specific neuro-physiological effects.
- A12: This group deals more explicitly with distressing emotional and feeling states, some of which involve expressive writing.
- A13: Here the emphasis is more on personal development – in terms of Self Realisation – and moving towards our Authentic Self.

In practice, each of these three groups of EARTE overlap and complement each other.

However, in order to keep each set distinct, the EARTE exercises are prefixed with an A, B, or C as tabulated below:

- A11: EARTE Series A
- A12: EARTE Series B
- A13: EARTE Series C

Furthermore, this series of exercises are not intended to be read over at one or a few sittings. The purpose of this series of articles is not that they are simply read over and put to the left side of our brain as an academic exercise. The purpose of them is to practice the exercises themselves. So I suggest that, at least for most of them, they are tried out and practised several times before moving on to the next exercise.

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As a group of exercises, they facilitate greater resilience to the ups and downs of life. When life is stressful, our bodies may respond in the flight or fight mode, neuro-physiologically associated with hypervigilant states, cortisol, and Sympathetic Nervous System arousal. This can make us feel both uncomfortable and unsafe.

The series of Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises act as anti-dotes to such distressing states – by facilitating the rest, repair, and recuperation side of our Nervous System, which is associated with positive social engagement and the release of oxytocin. In essence, these exercises can allow us to feel safe.

#### *Acknowledgements*

*Thanks to Michael Ross and Annie Sturgeon for their most helpful suggestions and proof-reading; and to Ruth Sewell for her most helpful reflections.*

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## Part I

**1. Introduction to Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises (i.e. A11; A12; and A13)**

These Expressive *Autogenic Resilience Training* Exercises (EARTE) have emerged from various sources, including Luthe's series of exercises which, within the British Autogenic Society, are called Intentional Off-Loading Exercises.

The main focus in this article is on the EARTE that have a playful and often physical nature (EARTE Group A). Positive emotions and mental states act as anti-dotes to distressing states, and at the same time facilitate well-being and health. Regular practice of the EARTE can therefore be of benefit to ourselves and our relationships; this can enable us to water the positive, life enhancing "seeds" within us and others, while at the same time refraining from watering the distressing / negative seeds in ourselves and others [e.g. Hanh 1998 pp 206-209].

In general, this series of exercises is best seen in the context of Reflective and Awareness Building Approaches<sup>1</sup> such as Autogenic Training. They are grounded in at least three traditions:

- i. Ancient (mainly Eastern) Meditative and Spiritual Practices
- ii. Specific Western Philosophical Orientations, and
- iii. Neuro-science.

We will now briefly look at each of these in turn<sup>2</sup>.

i. Ancient (mainly Eastern) Meditative and Spiritual Practices

Within the teaching of Siddhārtha Gautama (Buddha), there is a wonderful practice called "changing the peg". If we have a distressing emotion / feeling, one effective way of dealing with it is to reframe our mental state into that of a positive state. By way of analogy, for example, if a wooden tent peg is rotten, a good remedy is to replace it with a wholesome wooden peg [Hanh 1998 pp 207-210]. This can be applied metaphorically to our feelings / thoughts / emotions [Hanh 1998 as above].

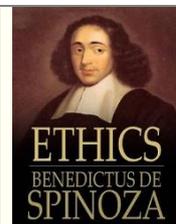
This approach has subsequently been seen to be sound neuro-physiologically (see ii and iii below).

ii. Specific Western Philosophical Orientations

Spinoza, a Dutch Philosopher, describes a perspective that is not dissimilar to that of changing the peg. He said:

..... An affect cannot be restrained or neutralised except by a contrary affect that is stronger than the affect to be restrained.

Spinoza 1677:  
Ethics, Part IV; Proposition 7;  
Translated by Edwin Curley.



<sup>1</sup> In the original draft I had used the phrase 'Mental Training' here. Ruth Sewell, and Autogenic Psychotherapist, has reservations regarding this term, as it may feel to some a "fierce/controlling term and strongly indicating a heavy cognitive bias". This was not my intention, and so I have replaced it with her suggestion of Reflective and Awareness Building Approaches.

<sup>2</sup> This section is partly based on Ross 2010 pp 152-154.

Antonio Damasio, an eminent neuro-scientist, comments on Spinoza's proposition thus:

In other words, Spinoza recommended that we fight a negative emotion with an even stronger but positive emotion brought about by reasoning and intellectual effort. Central to his thinking was the notion that the subduing of the passions should be accomplished by *reason-induced emotion and not by pure reason alone*.

Damasio 2003; p 11 - 12  
italics added - irfr

By “passions” in this context Damasio is specifically referring to distressing “negative” emotions such as fear and anger. Now, what does the phrase “reason-induced emotion mean”? A purely cognitive / analytic response to a distressing emotion / affect will not change much; the change comes about when it is linked to a life enhancing emotion – and a positive affect will at the same time change / reframe the way we think<sup>3</sup>.

Many of the EARTE series have a playful nature, and facilitate activation of the Ventral Vagal Parasympathetic Nervous System (VV PSNS) [Porges 2011], and thus a sense of Well-Being and feeling settled within – leading to wholesome Social Engagement [Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018]. All of these dynamics can act as antidotes to distressing emotions / affect.

Hence the importance of adopting practices such as Expressive Autogenic Resilience Exercises.

### iii. Modern Neuroscience Perspective

Here, Damasio’s and Panksepp’s perspectives very much overlap. Positive mind states such as PLAY and CARE (Nurturing) Neuro-Circuits facilitate the release of oxytocin and endorphins, which themselves act as antidotes to distressing emotions / affect [Panksepp 1998; also Goleman 2003]. In addition, such positive mind states and play are intimately linked with positive Social Engagement and our Ventral Vagal Para-Sympathetic Nervous System – and so with modalities that bring about well-being [Porges 2011; Porges and Dana 2018].

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The EARTE exercises covered in these three articles are:

- A11: Series A: Playful physical exercises. In general, these are best approached in a somewhat playful way in which we are curious in a mindful way, and at the same time re-connecting with what the French refer to as *Joie de Vivre* ( Zest for Life) – that we may have experienced often in childhood.
  - ❖ Regular activation of our PLAY circuits act as anti-dotes to distressing or “negative” feelings that we may experience [Panksepp 1998].

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<sup>3</sup> In this context, some of the “Off-loading exercises” can be problematic, as the discharge of, for example, feelings of anger or anxiety is left as just that; it is not replaced by a positive emotion / feeling. Some therapists, in dealing with anger issues, suggest a type of “Off-loading” that may include pillow bashing to allow out the expression of anger / resentment, yet this is always followed with reframing of the whole perspective. For example, expressing anger in a specific anger exercise at one of our parents may be part of the healing process; yet it will not go far enough unless we are able to reframe matters with the realisation that without them we could not have been, while at the same time developing compassion for them including reflections on them as, for example, a seven year old vulnerable child.

- ❖ At the same time, these dynamics activate our Social Engagement System and “approach behaviours”, as opposed to “withdrawal behaviours” [Porges 2011].
  - ❖ Hence the regular use of these exercises can be life enhancing.
- A12: Series B: This group is more to do with focusing specifically on distressing feelings and emotions, such as recurrent irritations / anger, and grief, in a specific and therapeutic way.
  - A13: Series C: The final group reflects exercises more to do with personal growth and development. Luis de Rivera’s “Feeling the Feeling Meditation” and “Meditations on Constructive Feelings” could be included in this section. (See also website: F6 series, and F7).

The three articles are best considered as a whole; and to some extent the fruits of A13 can perhaps only truly manifest once we have done the spade work, as it were, of A11 and A12.

As already mentioned, it is strongly suggested that this series of exercises are practised in the context of on-going meditative / Reflective and Awareness Building Approaches such as Autogenic Training.

Most of the exercises described are simple and short. This does not mean they are simplistic.

- ⊗ We evolved in nature with grasses, trees, rivers, wildflowers; the sun, sky, moon, stars, clouds, rain, and sunshine as our companions.
- ⊗ Communities thrived when the felt safe.
- ⊗ The neurophysiological underpinnings of these exercises are essentially to do with the appropriate activation of our Ventral Vagal (VV) PSNS [Porges 2011; Porges and Dana 2018; Levine 2010; Rosenberg 2017]. (See also A 13).

Awakening on fine mornings close to nature enhances a sense of wonder and – at times – a feeling of movement and dance. The EARTE can facilitate / enable / us to get back into the rhythms of nature and our own being.

### References and sources

These are generally included with each of the Expressive ART Exercises described, in addition to a full Reference list on page 30.

Article A13 is scheduled to have the full list of references for all three articles.

Part II

**Expressive ART Exercises Series A**

Linda Graham makes an important and profound comment at the start of Chapter 2 in her 2018 book: ‘Resilience: powerful practices for bouncing back from disappointment, difficulty and even disaster’.

Our most basic responses to all of life’s challenges and adversities begin with our bodies.

Graham 2018 p 27

This group of (mainly physical) exercises in Series A help us to get in touch with our bodies – and resonates with the “Practices of Somatic Intelligence” described by Graham. Series A, in conjunction with regular Autogenic Training (or other approaches involving Amplified States of Consciousness [de Rivera 2018]), form a good foundation for the EARTE series B and C.

**EARTE No A 1. Playful Loosening Up Exercise [PLUE]**

This is an excellent way of releasing physical – and also emotional – tensions. It can be helpful if we allow ourselves to get into the habit of doing this gentle exercise several times a day, such as: before washing up; if we are feeling a bit tense or upset for whatever reason; before a meeting at work – and during a meeting (providing we introduce the idea mindfully).

Before and after the exercise, we can stand quietly for a moment with eyes closed; observing within; and becoming aware of any bodily sensations.

**The Exercise:**

With our eyes open, we begin by gently shaking and moving our fingers, hands, wrists, and arms; neck and shoulders and trunk; then move on to the lower limbs, here shaking one at a time (!), and gently moving the ankles, and allowing them to soften.

On some occasions, we may feel the need to do the exercise more vigorously. Adopt a PLAY-full manner.....

- We do a sequence lasting from 10 to 30 seconds or more; then:
  - stand still again and check how the body is\*\*.
- ☸ We can flow into the exercise in a dance-like manner, allowing gentle sinuous movements of the whole body and limbs, should the flow take us in this direction.

\*\*Should we then become aware of any (further) tensions within, it may be helpful to repeat the exercise.

❖ *Source: Wolfgang Luthe – and British Autogenic Society*

### **EARTE No A 2. Shoulders Awareness Exercise**

This group of exercises enables us to check into a part of the body: the shoulders and neck area.

#### **A 2.1: Initial Awareness Exercise**

- i. We can do this in a sitting or standing position.
- ii. We start by shrugging our shoulders quite tightly, and holding for half a minute or so, before releasing.
- iii. Notice how this area of the body feels as we hold the shoulder up tightly.
- iv. Notice how other parts of the body feel.
- v. Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?
- vi. What does this exercise tell us? Tell me?

Once we have connected with this exercise, and experienced the feeling in the shoulders' areas, we can then move on to the more valuable part of the exercise: A 2.2 and A2.3.

#### **A 2.2: Flowing Shrugging Shoulders**

- i. As before, we can do this in a sitting or standing position.
- ii. We now gently begin shrugging our shoulders in a flowing way....
- iii. and then gently releasing them.
- iv. Repeat this sequence several times in quite quick succession, in a flowing sort of way.
  - ❖ Live Experience how this feels.

These exercises can be introduced quite easily on Zoom, in this era of Covid 19. They can be refreshing and fun for both the student and the Autogenic Therapist!

- ❖ Source: Jamie Marich, Ohio: Conference "Trauma and the Body" London 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019; with thanks

#### **A 2.3: Variation of 2.2: Gently Rotating Shoulder**

My brother Michael Ross, who has been practising / playing Tai Chi for nearly thirty years, suggests an alternative to the shrugging exercise above, as described below.

- i. As before, we can do this in a sitting or standing position.
- ii. We now gently rotate our shoulders backwards (i.e. start a circular movement, rotating them initially backwards, downward, forward, and then up several times) in a gentle flowing way....
- iii. Follow this by rotating the other way (i.e. initially rotating them forwards...)
- iv. Experience how the exercise feels; experience the feeling.

#### **Postscript on EARTE A2 Group.**

The first part of this exercise A 2.1 can get us in touch with the fact our shoulders may often become tense. Once we become aware of this, we leave behind A2.1., as we become increasingly aware of such tensions. The beauty of A 2.2 and 2.3 is that they are playful exercises to dissipate such tightness. Try both of these, and then continue with the one that you find most helpful.

***EARTE No A3: Mini General Exercise for Releasing distressing feelings <sup>Negative Affect</sup>; or  
just for fun (MGERNA)***

1.	Stand up with feet slightly apart.
2.	a) Raise both arms b) Raise one foot above the ground (so that the knee is nearly at a right angle) c) Bring your hands / fists down – at the same time as stamping the raised foot..... d) .....while letting out a <i>loud roar</i> – or any sound you like – <i>in a PLAY-full manner</i> .
3.	Repeat 2 above twice more.
4.	Then repeat 2 and 3 but with the other leg.
5.	<u>Now:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring your hands / fists to the front of your chest (breastbone / sternum); and firmly press them (the knuckles) together as you breathe in deeply.</li> <li>• Then throw your arms out, with a wonderful release of: Ahhhhhhhh;</li> <li>• And at the same time, a smile can embrace our face.</li> </ul>
6.	Repeat 5 once more, in a PLAY-full manner.
7.	Notice how you respond and how you feel during and after this series of exercises**.
	❖ Sources include Hetty MacKinnon, Glasgow, 1990s

\*\* Many students of AT really like this exercise; and it is important that we approach it in a PLAY-ful way. It can help us to see the wider picture, as when an AT student of mine did this exercise just after the key to her flat had broken in the lock – so she had to phone her friend for help. On the phone she found that she was laughing – and this surprised her friend. However, the MGERNA exercise had allowed the student to see the key break in a wider context.

Now it also can happen that, for example, when we do the stamping of the feet part of the exercise, this may trigger a feeling of discomfort within us – rather than of playful release. In the fullness of time, however, we may still come to enjoy this exercise; and in the meantime enjoy it from 5 onwards.

This completes the first three of the  
Expressive **ART** Exercises (Series A) in this article.  
They help us to be in touch with our feelings and emotions in  
an accepting way.  
Feelings and Emotions are there to give us information about what is  
going on in our bodies [de Rivera 2018].  
We allow ourselves to accept / acknowledge these  
without judgement.  
[See Rumi 1995: The Guest House]

## Expressive ART Exercise No A4: Affect Expression through Non-Verbal Sounds

### 1. Recap on unexpressed, repressed, or blocked emotions

- Most / all of us carry around with us some repressed or blocked emotions. Such emotions, if unexpressed, can lead to a feeling of dis-ease; and in time this may lead to disease.
- Children, in a facilitating environment, release distressed feelings without any inhibition – and, as a result, are often soon back PLAY-ing happily again.
- On the other hand, children who have not experienced a nurturing and CARE-ing atmosphere may become very distressed and appear to be mentally retarded. However, PLAY therapy can restore their well-being, as in the classical account of Dibs [Virginia Axline, 1964 / 1988].
- The exercise described below can help us to get in touch with such emotions; and release them, particularly if we adopt a playful approach.
  - It is designed to 'reopen the door' – in a therapeutic way – to those socially unacceptable noises which education, "self-discipline" or "self-respect" close to us.
  - In particular, this exercise may be helpful if we have problems with unresolved grief or on-going anger issues.
  - Making grunting and groaning noises, or rocking backwards and forwards and moaning, can help to release such blocked feelings.

Thus, all of us can potentially benefit from this exercise. In Section 2 below are listed some general indications for the exercise.

### 2. Some specific reasons for carrying out the Expression of Noise & Sounds Exercise.

- When we wish to let off a little bit of 'steam' or tension.
- Tension in throat when speaking, singing and / or public speaking.
- When we are experiencing difficulty in releasing emotions.
- When we feel we have a need to cry but are unable to do so.
- Just a general desire to release distressing feelings.

This is one of the EARTE series where I would particularly suggest that it is done only in the context of regular Meditation / Autogenic Practice\*\*.

### 3. How to do it:

- Allow yourself to make any and every noise you wish. (These may include all those weird and wonderful noises you felt forbidden to make as a child, or did not allow yourself to make.)
- Approach the whole exercise in a PLAY-full manner [PLAY-neurocircuits – Panksepp 1998] – this means that this exercise can be fun and enjoyable.
- Play with your vocal cords. Be adventurous and creative – with no attempt to impose any pattern, other than to follow what emerges naturally from within; go with the flow.
- Become curious – and note how you feel before and after the exercise.

**Duration:** Five seconds to five or ten minutes



\*\* Some of the EARTE exercises may release disturbing bodily sensations or memories – just as can be observed by completing the Check List for Autogenic Reactions. If we are practising some form of regular meditation / Autogenic Training, then this will moderate any such reactions – and should they occur we will be better placed to deal with them appropriately.

*Expressive ART Exercise No A 4: Non-Verbal Sounds continued*

**4. Some further points:**

- This exercise is sometimes called the Noise Garbage Exercise; in the sense that we are releasing unresolved internal issues ("garbage") through Sounds and Noise. (Note: vegetable waste, a form of garbage, is actually valuable: if composted properly, it can, in the next spring, allow wonderful flowers to blossom and bloom. See also Macy & Johnstone 2012 pp 57-81, especially pp 73-75; this chapter reflects on "Honouring our Pain for the World" in the context of climate change.)
- The exercise, as indicated above, can get us in touch with various emotions that may have become latent or repressed; so this can be seen in terms of initial steps towards feeling the feeling, discussed in the thematically related article web article F 5A: Feeling (Experiencing) the Feeling Meditation.
- As we *express* these feelings and emotions, in a PLAY-full manner, we will rid our bodies of damaging chemicals (mal-molecules); and replace them with other chemicals (eu-molecules) associated with health and harmony (Ross 2010). A PLAY-full approach facilitates this process<sup>5</sup>.
  - ♻️ A playful manner is associated with the release of the eu-molecules, and these act as anti-dotes to distressing feelings and their associated mal-molecules.
- Some people find it helpful to combine this Noise and Sound Exercise with the *Playful Loosening Up Exercise [PLUE]* (EARTE No A1).

This EARTE No A4 helps us to de-block blocked emotions and repressed feelings – such as frustrations.

Eu-Molecules and Mal-Molecules

Molecules in the body are obviously not good or bad in themselves. However, recurrent stressors and unresolved emotional issues can lead to the release of chemicals such as cortisol; if this continues for months / years, damage to the body may result. In this context, such chemicals (informational substances – Pert 1997) have been called mal-molecules [Ross 2010].

- Mal-molecules are generally associated with increased Sympathetic Nervous System (see also Figure 4.1 below ) efferent activity (brain to body) preparing us for fight / flight. This changes the state of the body, and this change is then relayed to the brain in terms of increased SNS Afferent activity – which is subjectively interpreted as "all in the body is not settled"; leading to us not feeling good in ourselves – i.e. negative affect [Craig 2015].

CARE, nurturing, PLAY and relaxation, on the other hand, are associated with the release of life-enhancing chemicals such as oxytocin; in this context, these can be considered to be:

- ♻️ Eu-molecules. [Ross 2010 (Eu: Greek for positive; good)].
  - Eu-molecules act as anti-dotes to mal-molecules.
  - In addition, eu-molecules are generally associated with increased Ventral Vagal Para-Sympathetic Nervous System activity (Figure 4.2).

Meditative approaches, including Autogenic Training, facilitate the release of eu-molecules.

5. Feedback from the body, mal-molecules and eu-molecules /

<sup>5</sup> In the case of Dibs, he sometimes acted out in PLAY negative and destructive feelings; yet by the end of each therapy session he had generally restored his own inner harmony; his negative feelings were no longer dammed up [Axline 1964].

Expressive ART Exercise No A 4: Non-Verbal Sounds continued

**5. Feedback from the body when we have unresolved / distressed feelings within, especially when these are blocked**  
 ➤ **Neurophysiological underpinnings of distressed states – and their reverse**

One of the main purposes of these Expressive ART Exercises is to reduce the physiological imbalance caused by recurrent stressors and, at the same time, enable us to express our (sometimes blocked) feelings appropriately. Bottled up feelings are associated with distressing states of the *body*, illustrated schematically in Figure A4.1. In this situation, we pick up mentally that all in the body is not quiet / is not settled. So we feel ill-at-ease. This overlaps with hypervigilant states in which there is recurrent activity of our flight / fight systems.

The reverse is true: if we are able to express our feelings in wholesome ways, so they are not blocked (for long), our well-being will be enhanced. We simply practise an appropriate Expressive ART Exercise at our earliest opportunity, which can then be associated with the dynamics of Figure A4.2.

In principle these two figures have the potential to reflect the position before and after each of the Expressive Autogenic Resilience Trainings Exercises covered in these articles. However, my sense is that a significant shift from the red image to the blue image below will be greatly increased if:

- ⊗ The Expressive ART Exercises are combined with
- ⊗ Regular practice of AT Standard Exercises – at least two or three times a day.

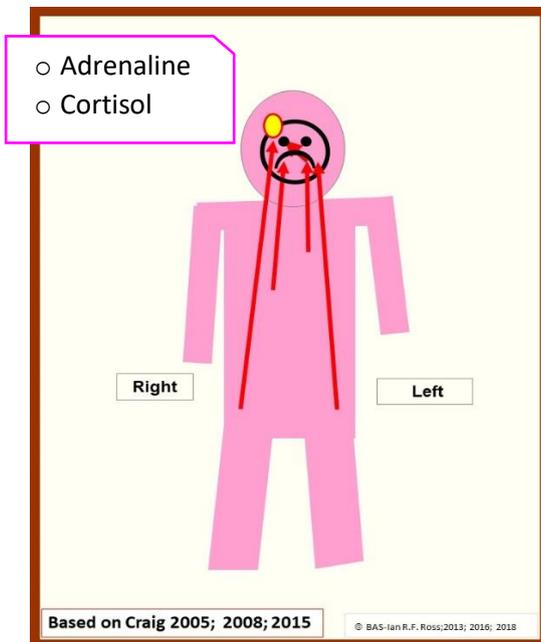


Figure A4.1  
 Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)  
 pathways to Brain

Schematic representation of bodily states before and after an EARTE, especially if accompanied with regular AT Practice of Standard Exercises.

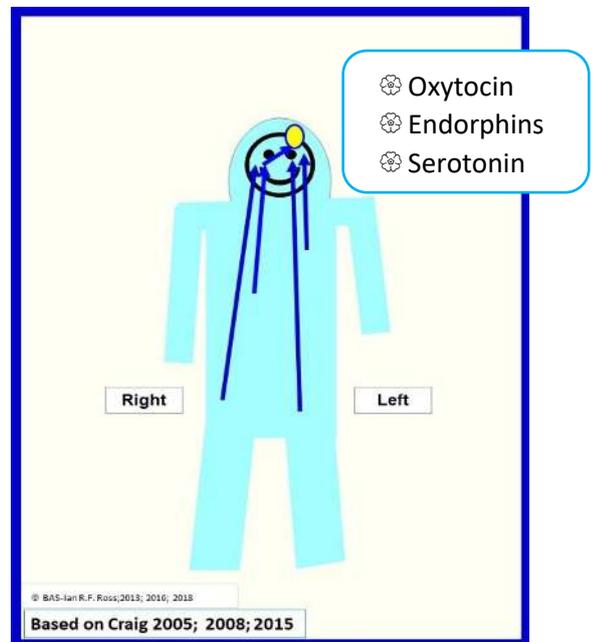


Figure A4.2  
 Para-Sympathetic Nervous System (PSNS)  
 pathways to Brain

The activation of these pathways gives us the information that the body is in an alerted state: this may feel very uncomfortable. These pathways are dominated by SNS afferent nerves (from the body to the brain) [Craig 2015]. Note such pathways are associated with the release of adrenaline and cortisol, which become toxic to the body if their levels remain high for extended periods of time.

Please note: for the sake of clarity, both of these figures only show the direction of ANS afferent nerves. (i.e. the efferent ANS fibres, from brain to body, are not shown)

The activation of these pathways tells us that “everything in the periphery is quiet” – all in the body is calm and settled; so we feel settled and in harmony [Wallnöfer 2000]. These pathways are dominated by VV PSNS afferent nerves (from body to brain) [Craig 2015]. These dynamics are associated with the Ventral Vagal PSNS Social Engagement systems, with the release of the healing and nurturing oxytocin and endorphins. Note also: sunlight, exercise, recalling happy memories and positive / wholesome visualisations boost Serotonin levels [Korb 2015].

Expressive ART Exercise No A 4: Non-Verbal Sounds continued

EARTE A4: References and sources

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## Expressive ART Exercises A5 group

### Introduction

This group of exercise uses sound as a direct way of relieving tensions and distressed states. In recent years some therapies have been developed to directly stimulate the vagus nerve – called Electroceuticals: the field of bio-electronic medicine [see, for example, Famm et al 2012]. However, for millennia there have been natural ways to stimulate the vagus nerve, and the A5 series makes use of these. Arielle Schwartz has called these “Natural Vagus Nerve Stimulation” approaches.

Humming and singing are natural therapeutic approaches to distress and previous trauma:

- ☼ The Vagus nerve passes by the vocal chords and inner ear.
- ☼ Humming and singing stimulate the vagus nerve, and so produce a calming effect.

Schwartz 2020

Adapted from her 2020 Neuroscience webinar

### **Expressive ART Exercise No A5.1: Humming Variations**

The previous exercise in this series: Expressive ART Exercise No A4: ‘Affect Expression through Non-Verbal Sounds’ allows for the playful expression of distressed feelings and emotions; this can be very helpful. In the long run, however, for more deep-seated distress, a return to inner harmony is greatly aided by a positive / nurturing type feeling being realised through a positive and stronger affect or experience. In effect, the positive affect acts as an anti-dote to the distressed state – as discussed in Part I of this article [Panksepp 1998; Damasio 2003; Spinoza 1677]. This can be facilitated through the humming / ‘sounding’ exercises, or certain types of music.

Sounds (e.g. gongs) and music have been used for millennia to soothe and heal (e.g. in the Ayurvedic tradition). In the west, this is becoming increasingly recognised [e.g. Gaynor 1999; Levine 2010; 2018]. Following loss and / or grief, music can have a particularly healing effect – for example, when Beethoven played the piano to Baroness von Ertman following the death of her child [Robbins Landon 1991 p 126].

The humming exercise, as described below, can be fun and / or soothing, whether or not we are able to sing in tune – and can help restore equilibrium and inner harmony.

- i. hum;
  - ii. alter *pitch* and *tone*;
  - iii. place the hands over different parts of body (such as tummy and / or chest);
  - iv. feel the vibrations / feeling;
- AND
- iv. enjoy the whole feeling, tuning into it.

**Figure EARTE No A5.1**  
**Humming Variations Exercise**

The essence of this exercise is to approach it in a playful manner and, in this way, we can tune into the inherent harmony within. We all have deep within us nurturing, CARE, and PLAY circuits which can be activated by this series of Expressive ART Exercises.

Duration: half a minute or so up to five minutes +

## **Expressive ART Exercise No A5.2: Humming on a constant tone**

### **1. Introduction and the Exercise**

#### **1. The basic exercise:**

This exercise is similar to EARTE No A5.1, but here we select a particular type of tone (but see below), and then stay with this through the exercise [see also Gaynor 1999 e.g. pp 95-105]. The origins of this approach date back several millennia to the Purusha<sup>6</sup> of Yogic thought, in the form of Mantra Purusha: ‘The Body of Sound’ [Frawley 2010 pp 99-106]. Within this ancient Vedic tradition, there were numerous sounds relating to different parts of the body, which go far beyond what has been conceived in many western traditions.

Peter Levine has wide experience of the use of some of the mantras listed below, which he has used extensively in his approaches to psychotherapy / healing [Levine 2010; and see Section 2 below]. The examples that follow are based on ancient Vedic and yoga practice, which originated in tune, as it were, with chakras. For example, the Bija mantra word for the heart chakra is Yam, pronounced as Yum, and notated below as Yum. All the words that have been transliterated with our vowel “a” are pronounced as though it were a “u” as in “you”. For this reason I spell them below as they sound.

In this form (in contrast to A5.1), we stay on a constant note (pitch) of one of the following sounds:

Sound	Chakra the sound can resonate with	<b>Figure 5.2A</b> Basic Toning Mantras <i>See also Figures 5.2B and D</i>
☸ Lum	Base	
☸ Vum	Sacral	
☸ Rum	Solar Plexus	
☸ Yum	Heart	
☸ Hum	Throat	
☸ AUM	Third Eye	

With these sounds, we can experiment to see which of the sounds resonates with us; and we can, over time, select those ones that feel in tune with our being. A fuller description of these sounds is given in figure 5.2D in Section 2 below. We can all benefit from practising these sounds with or without the chakras’ perspective.

#### **2. Some further reflections**

These humming exercises can be done quite gently – for example, if we are bothered that we may disturb others in the house. However, it is a good idea, when possible, to find a suitable place / room, so that we are not troubled that we will disturb anyone.

Peter Levine, in his wonderful and informative book: “In an Unspoken Voice – *How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness*”, says:

<sup>6</sup> Purusha: Cosmic Person; higher Self [Frawley 2010 p 177]. I take this to be inter-related to the self we become as we embody the concept of Inter-Being [Hanh 2012 pp 55-58].

Along with multitudes of other people, I have experienced various chanting and ancient “sounding” practices that facilitate healing and help open the “doors of perception.” Singing and chanting are used in religious and spiritual ceremonies among every culture for “lightening the load” of earthly existence. When you open up to chant or sing in deep, resonant lower belly tones, you also open up your chest (heart and lungs), mouth and throat, pleurably stimulating the many serpentine branches of the vagus nerve.”\*\*

Levine 2010 p 125

\*\* Note that this also means increased activation of the myelinated PSNS (Ventral Vagal), schematically indicated in EARTE A4, Figure A4.2, and reproduced on the next page (as Figure A5.2C).

He goes on to discuss an approach to these exercises, in relation to our breathing pattern when toning the mantra, as illustrated in Figure 5.2B below. Please note that I have replaced his original Voo designation with Rum.

- i. Begin the exercise by finding a comfortable place to sit.
- ii. Slowly inhale, pause momentarily, and then,
- iii. on the out breath,
  - o gently utter the “Rum” sound as though it were coming from your belly.
- iv. At the end of the breath, pause briefly and
  - o *allow* the next breath to slowly fill your belly and chest.
- v. When the in-breath feels complete, pause, and again
  - o make the “Rum” sound on the exhalation until *it* feels complete.
- vi. It is important to let sound and breath *expire fully*, and to pause and *wait* for the next breath to enter (be taken) *on its own*, when *it* is ready.
- vii. Repeat this sequence several times.....

Levine 2010 p 126

*Italics in original*

Bullet points and layout by IR

Rum replacing Levine’s “Voo”; however, “Voo” is also a good sound to use.

Peter Levine’s approach here implies that we are synchronising with the rhythms of nature, rather than imposing our rhythm on nature.

It is suggested that we use the breathing suggestions here in all the above mantras.

Figure 5.2B

Constant Tone Exercise harmonising with breathing

Suggested duration: several slow breaths to several minutes or longer

This approach, in connection with the breathing, seems apposite for all the other mantra / humming exercises listed in Figure EARTE No 5.2A above. Also note that we can play around with the sound so, in this example, the Rum tone can be varied.

Figure A 5.2C /

Expressive ART Exercise No A 5.2 continued

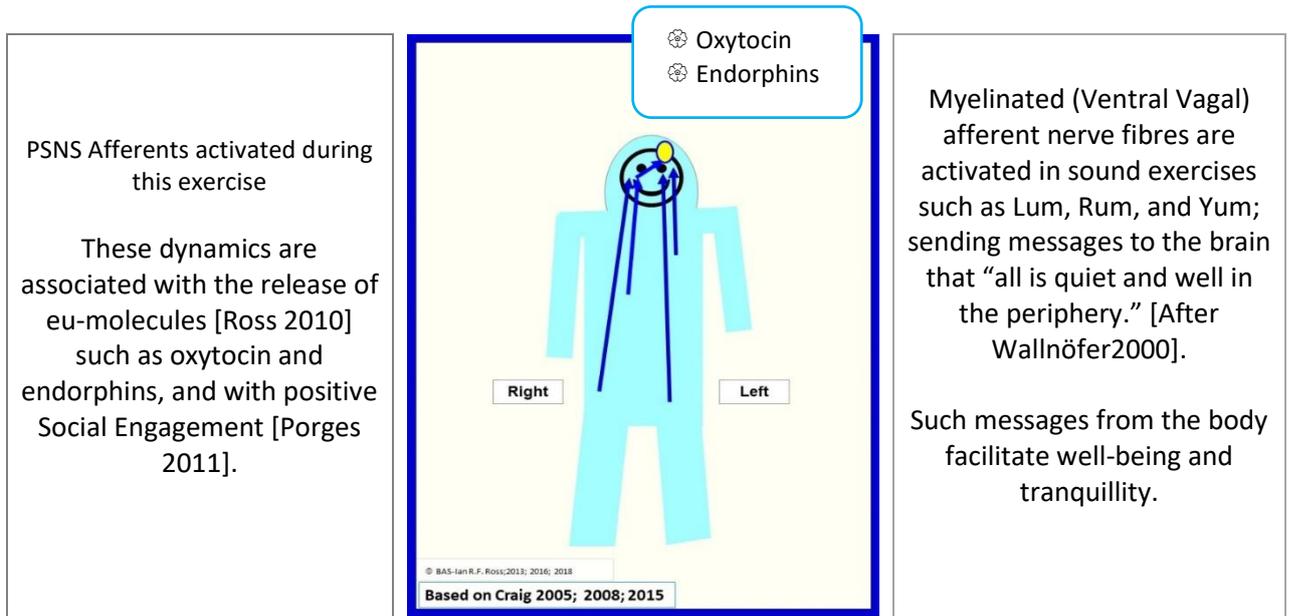


Figure A 5.2C  
Ventral Vagal Afferent Pathways  
activated in chanting

Figure 5.2B above portrays a classic way of practising a mantra. A further approach is one in which we repeat the Bija mantra sound several times on each outbreak [McLennan<sup>7</sup>]. In the case of the Hum sound, we would repeat it several times during each expiration, so the sequence becomes:

- ⊗ Slow inhalation
- ⊗ Exhalation: “Hum hum hum hum hum hum...”  
And repeat several or more times.

\*\*\* \*\*

Figure A5.2D below relates the Bija<sup>8</sup> mantras discussed above with some of the associated dynamics from these old Indian traditions.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Sue McLennan, Yoga Teacher and Autogenic Therapist in Melrose, for introducing me to this.

<sup>8</sup> Bija is a Sanskrit term meaning “seed”. Seed mantras can be seen as having the potential to transform us and produce wonderful “fruits”. [See also Keown p 35].

Sound (Bija mantra)	Chakra	Some key associations	Colour depiction***	Further comments
Lum	Base	Grounding Structure Stability	Red	Maslow's physiological needs
Vum	Sacral	Fluidity Adaptability Sexuality	Orange	Trust; intimacy; safety
Rum	Solar Plexus	Emotional Energy Assertiveness Creativity Self Confidence	Yellow	Self worth Self esteem
Yum	Heart	Love Gratitude Compassion Exchange	Green	Sharing Generosity Empathy Maslow's Love & Belonging
Hum	Throat	Communication Speaking the truth Self expression	Bright Blue	<i>Contra</i> : difficulties in speaking one's own truth
Aum (AUM)	Third Eye	Intuition Psychic ability Source	Indigo	Maslow's Self Actualisation <i>Contra</i> : blindness to truth; mental rigidity; cut off from emotions
"...contains all of the potential sounds..." [Frawley 2010 p 126 ]	Crown	Transcendence (see also A14 on web)	Violet / White	Merging with universal consciousness

Adapted from Scottish School of Yoga Therapy; with thanks to Sue McLennan, Melrose.

Figure A5.2D  
 Mantra Type Exercises and their derivations from Vedic Traditions

\*\*\* **Colour** Depiction and suitable mantras to use

There are very ancient associations between colours and the various chakras. Sue McLennan points out that:

- a) "not everyone visualises colours"<sup>9</sup>
- b) "those who do may visualize a different colour and that's ok\*. That is the colour they would work with."

When using these mantras, a frequent practice (though not mandatory), is to start at the Base Chakra (i.e. with Lum); and then we can work up through the others should we wish. Note that each Bija mantra sound will have an effect on the other chakras as well, especially those adjacent to it. If a particular mantra appeals to us, we can start with it – with the realisation that regular practice of this Bija Mantra will resonate with all the other chakras.

In reflecting on the above metapsychology, it is important that we do so without judgment. Rather, we can marvel that there are different, ancient, and noteworthy traditions that may help in our own personal development.

Some therapists may utilise colours associated with chakras in a particular way. In the context of Autogenic Training, if we experience some distress / tightness during the "Throat Area Warm" exercise, we have the option to:

<sup>9</sup> I am one of those who has not experienced spontaneous specific colours with specific chakras.

- Use the Hum mantra – say a few times a day for several weeks; or
- If we experience the colour blue (or another colour\*) with the throat chakra, we can also consider wearing a blue (or other \*colour) scarf around our neck. All colours have particular frequencies, and this informs some therapists to make use of these in *specific* circumstances therapeutically with specific patients / clients.

### **3. Some concluding reflections on these mantras**

The developmental transitions through the chakras can generally be seen in terms of increasing activation of our Ventral Vagal PSNS, associated with a sense of safety, nurturing and CARE-ing. Peter Levine, in commenting on the use of these chanting ('sounding') practices, says:

It seems likely that the change in the *afferent* messages (from the organs to the brain) allows the 90% of the sensory (ascending) vagus nerve to powerfully influence the 10% going from the brain to organs so as to restore balance. Porges concurs on this key regulatory system:

- "The afferent feedback from the viscera provides a major mediator of the accessibility of prosocial circuits associated with social engagement behaviours"<sup>78 [Porges 2009]</sup> "

Levine 2010 p 127  
 (bullet point added – ir)

In other words, these sound exercises increase VV afferent PSNS signals to the brain, allowing the body to relax (thanks to axiomatically increased PSNS efferent signals to the body), and at the same time down-regulating SNS activity. Fear and distress are transformed into a sense of calm and safety.

Sue McLennan has commented that the use of these approaches, including EARTE A4 and A10, can be "the key that unlocks that person" – thus allowing each of us to develop our potential and Authentic Self – and Jen.

### **Two further Exercises:**

I recently attended a virtual Neuroscience seminar by Arielle Schwartz on "Vagus Nerve Regulation and Trauma Recovery [Schwartz 2020]. In her presentation, she mentioned two exercises that I feel complement A5.1 and A5.2 – and overlap with them. She describes them in a helpful and succinct way, and I felt it would be fitting to end this section with them.

EARTE No A5.3 and 5.4 /

### Expressive ART Exercise No A5.3 and A5.4

The exercises described above (A5.1 and 5.2) are examples of nurturing approaches through natural stimulation of the vagus nerves<sup>10</sup>. The exercises described by Schwartz are in the natural vagal stimulation group, and appear below.

- i. Adopt a comfortable position (such as the Autogenic 'Arm chair position')
- ii. We then close the ears with the palms of our hands (thumbs down).
- iii. Allow the lungs to gently fill with air on the inbreath, and then...
- iv. .... gently start humming on the outbreath,
- v. feeling the vibration of the eardrum
- vi. Repeat as long as desired

Adapted from Schwartz 2020

#### EARTE No A5.3

This is sometimes called the Honey Bee Breath – based on Bhamari Pranayama.  
 Adapted from Schwartz 2020

Shutting off the ears like this intensifies our awareness (vivencia) of the humming-vibrations.

- i. Sit in a comfortable position....
- ii. .... allowing ourselves to become centred.
- iii. We now take a deep, slow, breath in through our nose....and then
- iv. Exhale through the mouth with a:
  - o "Haa" sound
- v. Repeat – again for as long as desired.

Notice the sensations in the roof of the mouth

Adapted from Schwartz 2020

#### EARTE No A5.4

Based on Haakara Pranayama (the Haa Sound Breath)  
 Adapted from Schwartz 2020

All these exercises conducted in a mindful way –  
[vivencia](#)-ing the experience

<sup>10</sup> as opposed to neuromodulation with vagus nerve stimulation via Electroceuticals – the field of bio-electronic medicine [e.g. Famm et al 2012].

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Also see: School of Chi Energy: <a href="http://www.chakratraining.com/the-chakras-part-one-how-the-rainbow-colors-came-to-be/">http://www.chakratraining.com/the-chakras-part-one-how-the-rainbow-colors-came-to-be/</a> for a briefish discussion of the origin of Chakras colours in an historical context. This website appealed to me for its honesty – and that we do not have comprehensive answers to some of the issues raised relating to chakras and colours.	

Also: with grateful thanks,  
 for their advice and wisdom for this section,  
 to:  
 Sue McLennan:  
 Yoga Teacher and Autogenic Therapist,  
 Melrose, Scotland;  
 and my wife,  
 Bernie Rowen-Ross:  
 Psychotherapist and Remedial Yoga Teacher

The next two exercises were demonstrated in a whole day seminar  
by Cécile Rozuel on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2016:  
The 'body-psyche question' in perspective: *A Jungian view on healing and yoga*.

### Preamble to EARTE No A6 and A7

Life for many of us has become rather serious. If we are stressed or anxious or depressed or simply distressed, then there will be little joy and playfulness in our lives. Certain approaches and exercises can act as antidotes to such negative and distressing mind-states – as in this Series A in general.

The two Expressive ART Exercises below are examples of such exercises.

### EARTE No A6

Repeat  
sequence three  
or more times

- i. Stand with legs a little apart.
- ii. Breathing in, raise both arms in front so that they are just above horizontal.
- iii. Continue breathing in as the arms sweep flowingly down and out to their own side.
- iv. Continue breathing in, and allow the arms to sweep up to above the head.
- v. Now, *as we breathe out*, we allow our arms to sweep down (and out) on their side of the body as the knees slightly bend.
- vi. Enjoy each stage of the exercise in a playful manner; and especially in section v. we can choose to breathe out with glee and joy.

vii.

🌀 Note that the knees will often naturally bend with the rhythm of ii, iii, and iv.

I really like this exercise. At first, I found it a little difficult to get the rhythm right; yet with practice we can flow into the exercise – during which we may experience a sense of zest, energy, and Joie de Vivre. We can gently allow ourselves to flow into the exercise, and the exercise then flow into us.

In each of these EARTE, we tune into the body and the experience right now in the present moment. This is the live experience of the moment, described in Spanish as Vivencia [de Rivera 2018].

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**EARTE No A7:**

This is a wonderful exercise, even though to start with it may seem outlandish.

- i. Here we lie on our back – preferably on something soft such as a carpet, yoga mat, or blanket.
- ii. We raise both arms and legs – with legs bent at a right angle at the knees.
- iii. Gently move them with a fun shaking motion (with legs, a little like kicking [Ogden 2018]).
- iv. As we do this, gently start to giggle / laugh and notice what happens and how you feel.
- v. Continue for as long or short as you like!

It is common when, as adults, we start to do this type of exercise that we feel inhibited or stupid. This does not mean that the exercise is not for us; rather it is a reflection that, for whatever reason (no blame), we have lost touch with our innate PLAY-full nature.

This series of exercises, in general, helps us to get in touch with our innate PLAY circuits within [Panksepp 1998; Axline 1964].

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\*\*\* \*\*

### **EARTE No A8: Expressive Smiling**

(after Ekman 200x and Wallnöfer 2000) 😊

As we develop mindfulness, it will become apparent that each time we become angry<sup>11</sup> – and especially if the anger manifests in behaviour, words, or gestures, we are activating our ancient RAGE circuits, and allowing the anger neuro-circuits to become more deeply imbedded in our neural pathways.

If, on the other hand, we allow / invite a genuine smile<sup>12</sup>, then we will be activating our CARE<sup>13</sup> and PLAY neuro-circuits – and the associated molecules that "drive the brain to activity typical of happiness" (Ekman 2003; p 130). This is I think not dis-similar from the Law of expression and its reversal - Ludwig Klages (1872-1956) - referred to by Dr Heinrich Wallnöfer in his 2000 Schultz Memorial Lecture as one of the eight basic principles of Autogenic Therapy:

.....it is obvious that our posture shows very clearly our mood. Put the other way round, one can alter the inner mood by changing the posture, the pattern of movement and so on.

Wallnöfer 2000

With this in mind, we can add to our skills this EART No 8 exercise. In some Buddhist traditions, there are *Gāthās*<sup>14</sup> such as:

Breathing in, I am aware I am breathing in;  
 Breathing out, I smile.

Hanh 1993; adapted from pages 10 and 15  
 Hanh 1991; p 10 still to find this reference if correct  
 with slight modification.

Such phrases will, as implied by Ekman above, activate eu-molecules [Ross 2005X].

An alternative and more playful form of the above is the EARTE embracing laughing, described in EARTE No 7 above.

Postscript /

<sup>11</sup> The practice of "naming and taming" [Siegel 2010] (Affect Labelling) helps to off-set such anger. For example, we can say silently to ourselves: "Anger"; or, and perhaps better still: "Hello Anger; I see you are arising within me". This helps me to distance myself from the anger arising. On the other hand, if I say: "I am angry", then me and my anger become one – and I can be taken over by the anger in my Body-Mind. In this sense, the anger has us, rather than us having the anger (to reframe Carl Jung: "Complexes have us, rather than we have complexes").

<sup>12</sup> A genuine smile is of course quite different from a forced smile; in the former our eyes "light up", yet not in the latter.

<sup>13</sup> CARE and PLAY here using Panksepp's notation for Primary Process Emotions [Panksepp 1998; also known as Emotional Operating Neuro-Circuits – or Systems – EONS (see website articles)].

<sup>14</sup> *Gāthā* is a Sanskrit term for "song" or "verse", and used quite extensively by Thich Nhat Hanh [e.g. 2006].

Postscript:

A playful introduction to this exercise – especially if we feel a bit inhibited about it, is the pencil experiment, described by Linda Graham in a (video) seminar I attended. It is in two parts:

- a) We place a pencil above our upper lip, grip the pencil with the lip. See how this feels and the expression that develops on your face (try it in front of a mirror). What emotions / feelings does the expression evoke?
- b) We now place the pencil in a mischievous way between our lips, pressing it far back as it will (almost comfortably) go, and grip it between the teeth. We now become aware of how we feel, and notice the expression on our face.

In general terms, a) induces not so pleasant feelings / expression, whereas b) can elicit a genuine smile that lights up our face and eyes (and the now smiling muscles around our eyes) as we flow into the practice.

- o Smiling for twenty second can bring about a measurable shift in brain pattern [Graham 2020].

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### **EARTE No A9 Heart Felt**

This is one of the exercises that Linda Graham teaches in her resilience training approach to human distress [Graham 2018; 2019].

It can be very helpful if we are needing a bit of TLC<sup>15</sup>, are feeling low, or are feeling misunderstood. In this exercise, we can tap into our inner CARE and nurturing circuits [Panksepp 1998] – and in this way tapping into our innate Natural Healing System, and so a sense of safety [Porges 2011] and well-being.

#### **The Exercise**

- 1) Sit quietly in an Autogenic Position.
- 2) It may be helpful to start with a gentle Neck and Shoulders Warm Exercise<sup>16</sup> (Partial Exercise).
- 3) We then gently put our hand(s) on our heart area....
- 4) ..... and breathe in a slow breath – long and slow to our heart with warm feelings.....
- 5) .....such as:
  - ☼ ease or safety (these may be memories)
  - ☼ well-being
  - ☼ wholeness
  - ☼ of being loved and cherished
  - ☼ contentment<sup>17</sup>.
- 6) We allow a warm glow to permeate our being.
- 7) Vivencia<sup>18</sup> the warm glow.... and / or other wholesome arising feelings.
- 8) Gently breathe out with a long outbreath.....
- 9) ..... continue for several breaths....
- 10) Allowing the exercise to continue for twenty to thirty seconds or longer.
- 11) Towards the end of the exercise, we can allow a gentle smile to caress our face.

We can repeat this exercise several times a day; this facilitates the release of oxytocin, and transforms us into being socially engaged – and in touch with our deeper self, our Jen (Human Heartedness), and the nurturing and CARE circuits within – for the benefit of ourselves and others.

Linda Graham suggests that we practise this exercise five times a day for a week or more – and this will enable the relevant neuro-circuits to become established – so that they can take over from, and down regulate, harmful negative (ruminating) neuro-circuits.

#### Postscript /

<sup>15</sup> TLC: Tender Loving Care – Cambridge English Dictionary

<sup>16</sup> In the Autogenics 3.0 version [de Rivera 2018]. In the 2.0 version this is: “Neck and Shoulders Heavy”.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Annie Sturgeon for suggesting contentment.

<sup>18</sup> Vivencia: A Spanish term possibly best translated as “Live Experience” [de Rivera 2018]; such as hearing a blackbird sing; being in the moment of a beautiful sunset.

Postscript:

I recently came across a YouTube clip in which a mother comforts her distressed daughter. A few minutes later, the girl lifts her doll out of a Play-Buggy, and starts to cuddle and comfort the doll, just as her mother has comforted her.

This is a reminder to us that however distressed we become, we have the potential to tap into these amazing CARE and nurturing circuits within us, to comfort and nurture ourselves and others. In cuddling her doll, the daughter is mirroring the behaviour of her mother, with the activation of the girl's own innate caring abilities – having been catalysed by the mother's own maternal modalities. Such modalities can be transmitted trans-generationally, through both direct learning / mirroring, and through epigenetic dynamics.

As we become adept at this new exercise, the neurones that are firing together will wire together, and this is how new, creative, and wholesome learning and skills come about.

Paraphrasing Hebb 1949

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Linda Graham makes a lovely statement regarding this exercise.

The hand on the heart and deep breathing activates the para-sympathetic nervous system and calms us down. Evoking the image of feeling safe and loved can activate the release of oxytocin in the brain. Oxytocin is the hormone of safety and trust, of "calm and connect". Oxytocin acts as an immediate anti-dote to cortisol, the hormone of the stress response, quelling the stress response of flight-fight-freeze. Oxytocin is one of the best resources we have to help clients to recover from the effects of toxic shame and to support mindful practice, and we activate it by feeling loved and cherished. Doing the one minute hand on Heart exercise five times a day will actually begin to heal the heart and re-wire the brain.

Graham 2010

See also: A 13 Series C: EARTE C3:  
Wheel of shame and resilience building exercise

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### **EARTE A9 Heart Felt Variation**

There is a lovely teaching by Thich Nhat Hanh in which we can take good care of the hurt (wounded) inner child within in [Hanh 2010].

Sometimes we may become aware that the distress within us is coming from our "hurt inner child". What does a mother do when her child is distressed? The 'good enough' mother [Winnicott 1990] will pick the child up and cuddle her / him.

In the same way that the good enough mother or father will comfort her / his child, so we can comfort our hurt inner child. For this it can be very helpful to have a representation of our hurt inner child in the form of, for example, as soft cuddly doll. I use a lovely furry hedgehog. We can adapt the original EARTE A9 to embrace taking good care of our hurt inner child.

Variation of Heart Felt Exercise /

**Variation of Heart Felt Exercise**  
**Taking good care of our hurt inner child**

- 1) Sit quietly in an Autogenic Position.
- 2) It may be helpful to start with a gentle Neck and Shoulders Warm Exercise.
- 3) We then gently lift up our distressed inner child, represented by the teddy bear / our cuddly toy....
- 4) .... and bring it to our heart.....
- 5) ..... breathing in a slow long breath to the heart of the teddy – that is, the heart of our inner child – with warmth and
- 6) feelings such as:
  - ☼ tender nurturing
  - ☼ comforting...
- 7) .....and in this way loving and cherishing our teddy / distressed inner child
- 8) .....allowing a warm glow to permeate the being of our teddy / soft toy – and so our own being.
- 9) Gently breathe out with a long outbreath.....
- 10) ..... continue for several breaths....
- 11) Allowing the exercise to continue for twenty to thirty seconds or longer.
- 12) Towards the end of the exercise, we can allow a gentle smile to caress our face, as we tenderly stroke the teddy.



Figure EARTE A9 A  
 A representation of our inner child – here as a cuddly hedgehog



Figure EARTE A9 B  
 Bringing our hurt inner child, here represented by the hedgehog, to our heart

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**EARTE No A10 Playful Creative Release Of Emotions****PLAY-CROE**

This series of exercises can either be done on their own or in sequence. They can be fun to do when we are feeling good; and they can also be very helpful to do when we are not feeling so well in ourselves. The full sequence is as follows:

1. <b>Running Grunt</b> (into.....)	Standing up, we start running on our feet, and while at the same time starting to say out loud.....
2. <b>Running A.E.I.O.U.</b> (into.....)	<i>aaa - eee - eye - ooh - u-ooo</i> <i>Repeating several times</i>
3. <b>"Aikido"<sup>19</sup></b>  (into.....)	<i>Arms raised above shoulders, at the same time raising one knee so the thigh is horizontal;</i> <i>bring down the arms sharply on Huh!.....</i> <i>.....and at the same time stamping the raised foot quite forcibly.</i> <i>Repeat twice more.....</i>
4. <b>Yoga 'chopper'</b> [Assuming back is O.K.]  (and finally.....)	Crouching down, so knees bent; nicely balanced with arms raised in the air; as we bring them down to "chop the wood" (as if with an axe) we let out a wonderful Huh! or Ha! <i>Repeat twice more...</i>
5. <b>Tibetan ..... Ha !</b>	Breathe in through nose, While bringing our hands / fists to the front of our chest (sternum); pressing the knuckles together quite forcibly; we now pause at top of breath; then throwing our arms out wide emitting a loud Ha! <i>Repeat once more</i>

**Note:**

- These exercises can help us release anger; resentment; frustration; fear and anxiety<sup>20</sup>.
- They can also be very helpful in releasing general tension; or when we wish to let off a little 'steam'. They can be used at home, at work, and out of doors.
- The noise that we emit (e.g. "Huh"; "Ha"); should be a deep noise coming from the pit of our stomach.
- There is no need to be violent or over-stretch the body; what is important is our attitude of mind in letting go; of *letting go in sounds and movements in ways that are satisfying to us*.
- As you throw your arms out in part 5, notice what happens to your facial expression; if nothing happens, perhaps repeat the Tibetan Ha more vigorously.

<sup>19</sup> Aikido is the most recent Martial Art to originate from Japan; it was developed by Morchei Ueshiba (1883 -1969) and offers a synthesis of the best traditional (non-competitive) schools.

<sup>20</sup> It will be noted that the fifth part of the exercise overlaps with the *Mini General Exercise for releasing distressing feelings* (MGERNA – EARTE A3).

EARTE No A10 PLAY-CROE *continued***Some further comments:**

- This exercise can be fun – and when appropriate we can do it with children.
- Such exercises can activate our PLAY circuits and be associated with the release of eu-molecules, such as endorphins, which act as antidotes to negative and destructive emotions (Panksepp 1998; Sunderland 2007; Ross 2010).

**Some reflections on our physiology:**

- If we are suffering from negative thoughts or disturbing emotions, this will be associated with an upset in our physiology (and the release of “mal-molecules” – Ross 2010 pp v; 71-72; 275 & 281).
- This disturbance in our physiology will take time to settle down.
- Research has shown that positive moods and feelings will reduce the time taken for our disturbed physiology to settle down (Fredrickson 2003).
- This PLAY-CROE exercise in general, and the Tibetan Ha in particular, will also help our disturbed physiology to settle down more quickly – and at the same time enhance the release of life-enhancing “eu-molecules” (Ross 2010 as above).

Positive attitudes, meditation, Autogenic Training (the Standard Exercises), and this PLAY-CROE exercise can all act as anti-dotes to negative / toxic or distressing mind states.

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“Aikido..... is a modern Japanese martial art developed by Morihei Ueshiba, as a synthesis of his martial studies, philosophy and religious beliefs. Ueshiba's goal was to create an art that practitioners could use to defend themselves while also protecting their attackers from injury. Aikido is often translated as "the way of unifying (with) life energy" or as "the way of harmonious spirit". According to the founder's philosophy, the primary goal in the practice of aikido is to overcome oneself instead of cultivating violence or aggressiveness. Morihei Ueshiba used the phrase "masakatsu agatsu katsuhayabi" (Japanese: 正勝吾勝勝速日) ("true victory, final victory over oneself, here and now") to refer to this principle. Aikido is the most recent Martial Art to originate from Japan; it was developed by Morihei Ueshiba (1883 -1969) and offers a synthesis of the best traditional (non-competitive) schools.”

- This is a good principle for “knowing ourselves” and Autogenic Training (IR).



Part III

### **3. Postscript to EARTE Series A**

As is apparent, this group of exercises has focused on physical movement, facial expressions, the body, and feelings in a playful and nurturing manner. Regular practice of them strengthens the neural pathways of our nurturing / CARE, PLAY, and curiosity (wholesome SEEKING [Panksepp 1998]) pathways that facilitate well-being, and help to overcome distress and the negative outcomes of stress.

When you practise these body-based exercises / skills<sup>21</sup>, little and often, you strengthen the neural pathways of feeling safe, centred, grounded and at ease. These feelings prime the neuroplasticity of your brain, making it receptive to further learning and able to try new, more flexible behaviours and take new risks.

Graham 2018 p 55

All learning involves establishing new neural pathways that have to be activated repeatedly for deep learning (both physical and mental) [Hebb 1949]. It is a little like walking through a dense wood with no path. The first time it is difficult; if we return to the same route each day, we gradually establish a path that becomes easier to follow, until one day it becomes well enough trodden to become potentially life-long.

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<sup>21</sup> Graham describes this as 'body-based tools'; I have replaced the word tool with 'exercises / skills' in the context of Section A of EARTE. Mindful approaches and Autogenic Training enable us to develop new skills to deal with the ups and downs of life.

Part IV References et al

4. Thematically Related Articles on Web

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A7	Porges and the Polyvagal Theory – Reflections on clinical and therapeutic significance	2012
A8	The Polyvagal Theory and a more sympathetic awareness of the ANS (after Porges et al)	2012
A 9	Emotions, Well-Being and Immune Function: Awe and Shame as modulators of Being – for good or ill	2015
A10	Towards Transformation: Surviving and Thriving in the era of Covid 19 – and building inner long-term Resilience to the vicissitudes of life	2020
A12	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises Series B	2020
A13	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises Series C	2021
A14	Mind-Body States in Meditative Practices	Scheduled for 2021
B3 Part I	The Origins of Affect and Affective Neuroscience – <i>and the misplacing of Affect in the Neo-cortex</i>	2012
B3 Part II	Emotional Operating Neuro Circuits – <i>a brief introduction to Panksepp’s model</i>	2012
B 22	A playfully sympathetic approach to the Polyvagal Theory <i>An introduction to Flourishing Autogenically</i>	2020
B 24	Autogenic Switches and Well-Being	2020
F 3A	Principles of Autogenic Transformation – Some underlying neuro-physiological precepts of change	Work in progress
F 4	Some Consequences of Blocking Feelings.... <i>of not allowing ourselves to feel the feeling</i>	2019
F 5A	Feeling the Feeling Meditation (after de Rivera 2018)	2019
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