

**Sound Sidebar #2—Chanting**  
**The Outpost Exchange**  
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The universe is sound and we're all picking up the vibrations of everything and everyone we encounter.

Jeff Thompson, D.C., BFA, founder and director of the Center for Neuroacoustic Research in Encinitas, CA. explains how this fact can affect how we feel after interacting with certain people. "We oscillate to the vibration of everything around us, including other people," he states. "If you hang out with an enlightened spiritual master, attending talks every night, you might not remember a thing that was said, but you feel different. It's more about the interactions of your fields, than anything that else, such as what was said. It has to do with relationships and your resting frequencies."

Thompson goes on to explain scientifically why we hit it off with some people and not with others. "You and I are both resonating at different frequencies. If those frequencies happen to fall within a certain mathematical relationship to each other that in music we call a harmonic, then we click. If it's an anti-harmonic, the best thing we can do is agree to disagree. And that may happen with your own kid!"

Because of all the different vibrations and frequencies we encounter on a daily basis, it's important to have a practice to keep oneself tuned up, so to speak.

In his book, "The Healing Power of Sound: Recovery from Life-Threatening Illness Using Sound, Music and Voice," medical oncologist Mitchell Gaynor, M.D. provides numerous suggestions for developing a sound self-healing practice. One such suggestion is his "Fundamental Sound and Imagery Meditation," which is taken from his book and shared here:

"Begin by closing your eyes and creating a mental picture that represents your essence—a column of pure, vital energy, a rushing waterfall, a bright white light, or any other strong visual manifestation of your essence that feels intuitively meaningful to you. If applicable, invest this image with the power to spur change or regeneration in any part of the body that calls out for healing.

"Now further animate this mind-picture by combining it with breath and sound. The power of breath is such because it is the quintessential element of life. *Perceptible* breath is what we feel when the air moves through our nostrils or our mouth. The circular force of breath that draws it in and moves it out is the life energy that comes from our essence. And sound is nothing more than audible breath, a way to manifest our infinite life energy.

"The most fundamental sound in every religious practice I know, whether it's Christian Gregorian chants, the Jewish mystical Kabbalistic tradition, Sanskrit, Native American,

or Islamic Sufi practice, is the sound *HU*—the basic healing sound that connects all of us with our heart center. This exercise gives you the opportunity to invoke that sound at the same time that you feel the force behind your breath.

- “1. Breathe in and out through your nose for one minute. Think the sound *HU* as you breathe out.
2. Breathe in and out through your mouth. Chant ‘*HU*’ with each out breath. Continue for one minute.
3. Breathe in through your mouth and out through your nose. Think *HU* as you breathe out. Continue for one minute.
4. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Chant ‘*HU*’ with each out breath for one minute.

“As you open your eyes and return to awareness, hold in your mind the memory of that image, imbued now with the force of sound and breath. Take it with you as you move through your day, as a reminder that you were born with the power to bring into your life sustained periods of serenity, pleasure and happiness.”

Chanting is a powerful and simple way to incorporate a sound practice into one’s life. Chanting in a group is exponentially more intense because of the law of entrainment. Gaynor hosts regular chant sessions for his cancer patients. “Chanting in a group is very, very powerful,” he says. One such opportunity to experience the phenomenon of group chanting locally is at the East Side Kirtan, held at the First Presbyterian Church in Shorewood on the first Friday of each month. *Kirtan* is an East Indian style of chanting Sanskrit mantras.

Hundreds of residents of diverse ages, backgrounds and beliefs flock to Milwaukee’s *kirtan* on a monthly basis to take part in this dynamic call-and-response world music that incorporates the audience right into the performance. Led by Milwaukee resident Ragani, The East Side Kirtan—which is the second largest ongoing *kirtan* in the country, right behind New York City—features traditional Indian instruments such as the tanpura and harmonium, mixed with modern Western guitar, bass, flute, drums and more. For more information, log onto [www.raganiworld.com](http://www.raganiworld.com).

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