



Music as Medicine: Healing for Body, Mind, and Soul

What if music wasn't just "music"? What if music was actually a *powerful medicine*, and listening to certain types of music could promote healing? What if music could not only help lower your blood pressure and slow your breath, but could actually assist you in battling serious illnesses?

We all know that music can improve our mood. Yet few people know there is actually a scientific field called music therapy with board certifications and degreed programs from schools around the world. Even fewer people are familiar with the field of sound healing, also practiced around the world, with its roots going back to the earliest records of ancient cultures and tribal healers.

The Scientific Case for Music Healing

In recent decades, the research around sound healing has established a scientific link between music and its ability to impact the body at the cellular level.

Studies conducted in the 1990s at Bryan Memorial Hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska and St. Mary's Hospital in Mequon, Wisconsin reinforced the healing power of music. Researchers concluded that music significantly lowered heart rates, eased blood pressure, and helped regulate respiration rates among surgery patients.

Dr. Claudius Conrad, a senior surgical resident at Massachusetts General Hospital and accomplished pianist, has studied the effects of music on critically ill patients. His findings showed that those who listened to Mozart sonatas required less sedation when compared to a group that listened to no music. Moreover, they had lower stress hormone levels, blood pressure, and heart rates than the control group.

A 2007 study in Germany showed that music therapy helped stroke patients recover faster. Various additional studies suggest that music can benefit the immune system, improve the ability to focus, help control pain, create a feeling of well-being, and greatly reduce the anxiety of patients awaiting surgery.

The Power of Music and Voice

The healing powers of music and the human voice are being combined in a series of audio recordings featuring the compositions by seven-time Emmy award-winning composer Gary Malkin. Malkin's work has been praised by the likes of authors Don Campbell (*The Mozart Effect and Music: Physician for Times to Come*) and Dr.

Christiane Northrup, M.D. (*Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*). Malkin's music, said Northrup, "connects me with my soul and inner wisdom, moving me to tears of gratitude... I'm moved beyond words by this profoundly healing work."

Developed by the team of Malkin and healing music pioneer Michael Stillwater (co-creators of *Graceful Passages*, *Care for the Journey*, and *The Heart of Healing*), spoken words and film-score quality music are combined with extraordinary results. In *Heart of Healing* album, for example, the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, Marianne Williamson, Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, and others – spoken in soulfully soothing voices – together with his own original music. The combination produces a result which is easily accepted by the conscious mind, while, at the same time, dives deep into the recesses of the unconscious. Healing music like this produces a profound feeling of relaxation and tranquility.

Dr. Eva Selhub, a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School and senior physician at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine, researches the differences between bodies prone to illness and those prone to health. She discovered that feeling nurtured, loved, and connected actually reverses chronic stress in a deeper, more enduring way, and leads to physical healing and emotional balance. Malkin's music helps produce this kind of experience.

According to Malkin, "few strategies are as immediate and integral as engaging in a daily music listening practice. Few practices engage our hearts and spirits as successfully as finding music that allows us to relax, breathe deeply, and reflect on what matters most to us. When you begin to take your listening habits seriously, you will begin to feel empowered as you realize that you can shift the emotional and spiritual context of your life, as simply as designing your own sonic environments, tailored to your lifestyle and taste."

Click here: www.wow4.me/SS/ to sample Gary Malkin's music from the Sound Sanctuaries collections by Wisdom of the World.