

A Training Program for Elemental Calls

A basic training program in empowered vocalizing is simple to follow: the constituents are not complicated or obscure, and build from very ordinary foundations without technical vocabulary or pseudo-mystical jargon. Such simplicity does not alter the fact that teachings of the type described in our training program have been in use for thousands of years; the ambience of culture and the language employed, of course, will change from time to time and place to place, but the basics of human energy, breath, voice and the Elements remain.

The initial stages of this training require careful repetition and regular application; this type of training, like any other, builds through regular use. Idle experimentation is fruitless, but careful repeated effort, combined with patience, will bring distinct and powerful results.

The following program of training may be easily self-administered, or may be undertaken by a group of people working together. If the second option is followed, there should also be some individual work at home, not only to build upon and reinforce group training, but to ensure that the group does not become the sole source of inner work, possibly creating a false dependence.

The different units within the program may also be worked within their own right at a later stage and upon more advanced levels, but the basic sequence of training and development must be established first.

As a general rule the basic units outlined should be worked with until they are familiar and natural, before any of the advanced stages are tried. Such familiarity and naturalization will take a minimum of two to three months, and a full cycle of each stage outlined below could take a year from beginning to end, and then continue as a regular discipline for the rest of a lifetime.

For reference purposes, a general suggested time-scale is included with each stage or exercise, but different people will learn and develop at different rates, so it is not to be considered as a rule or an inevitable pattern. Much of the pacing of inner disciplines becomes, with long practice, a matter of intuition, but the intuition and self-pacing cannot develop until a firm foundation of very strict, disciplined training has been laid down. Without this essential hard work and discipline in the early stages, there is nothing for the intuition to work with, no established patterns either as physical training or in the way of inner growth. Traditionally, a personal teacher is present to assess the points of transition, to suggest or define when the pupil may move on into higher or deeper aspects of training. Today we are not able to work in this manner, so each stage is laid out as a simple overall plan of self-training.

Breathing the Four Directions *(the first month)*

This exercise is best done out of doors, on, or before open windows in fresh air. The fresh air rule applies throughout all empowered vocal work, though at much later stages it may be necessary to work indoors in seclusion with advanced visualizing techniques.

All the usual basic rules of meditation apply, such as wearing loose, comfortable clothing, working in a situation where no sudden disturbance will occur, and ensuring careful attention and concentration upon each phase of the exercise. This is not, essentially, a course of physical training in the sense of a sport, of keeping fit, or of muscular development. Although we use the voice, it is not a type of vocal training in the sense of artistic endeavor, though it will help natural expansion and beauty of voice considerably in the long term. It is a holism, a harmonic program of work which combines physical and inner training; by this method false barriers between inner and outer energy and expression, between the vital forces, the imagination and the body, are gradually broken down and realigned constructively.

If you are addicted to tobacco the preliminary breathing and balancing exercises may help you towards a cure, but empowered vocal work cannot progress beyond the most basic levels if you smoke. The choice is simple: if you wish to work with empowered voice and chant, you must give up your addiction. If you cannot do this, you are too ineffectual for this type of inner development.

By way of balance we should add that nonsmokers will also have any number of addictions and habits that come to the fore as barriers to inner development; there is no 'value' judgement as to one addiction or negative habit being any worse or better than another. As we are concerned here with breath and vocal tones, however, smoking is the most prevalent weakness and addiction that interferes with or counteracts progress and empowerment.

In spiritual and magical development, the weaknesses or imbalances are seen as feedback patterns between the Elemental energies of the individual; they are like knots or tangles which absorb life energy and divert it away from proper routes, from harmony and balance. If they can be unraveled and reassigned in a more balanced pattern, these convoluted self-amplifying nodes of elemental energy are tremendously valuable and effective sources of power. Training exercises such as the detailed program described here can go a long way towards lessening the hold of habits and negative tendencies, but the will to change must come from the individual.

Let us now return to the breathing exercises themselves, either outdoors or in a well-ventilated room, Some simple deep breathing may be done while standing or sitting to clear the lungs. No special techniques should be practiced during this warm-up, as they will interfere with what is to follow. If you have already learned yoga breathing exercises or similar techniques, you will need to clear your mind down to the very simplest basics of healthy breathing, and absolutely nothing more. Mixing techniques is a waste of time and energy, and, in some (admittedly rare) circumstances, can be debilitating or even potentially dangerous to health and psychic balance.

- a) Stand upright with arms raised to a horizontal position. Empty your lungs by breathing out using the diaphragm to expel as much air as possible. As you expel the air, gently lower your arms to your sides.
- b) Breathe in steadily through the nose (mouth closed, tongue touching the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth). As you breathe in, raise the arms steadily, and rise on to your toes. This may take a little practice initially, so if you lose your balance, simply breathe out and begin again.
- c) With arms held out horizontally, expel the breath through your mouth, counting quietly aloud '1-2-3-4' and lower your feet and arms together to the position of rest.

This is the outer or preliminary form of the exercise. Several levels of inner work are added to it as you progress, the first being brought into operation as soon as you can draw breath and rise on to your toes and remain balanced for the minimum of four to eight seconds necessary. As you develop breath and balance, this period will lengthen naturally, but it should never be a feat of endurance or a self-imposed trial. There is always a natural limit and period to such breathing and balancing and this begins as a fairly short period, and gradually lengthens. Striving is counterproductive.

Breathing the Directions *(within the first month, extending well into the second month)*

The first breath out, quietly uttered as '1' is defined by focusing awareness before you. The second breath is defined by focusing awareness to your right; the third behind you, and the fourth to your left. When this circular focusing or orientation has been completed, you descend to your position of rest, as already described and practiced. It is important not to turn or twist the head or body; although we rotate awareness through a full circle, the body and head remain perfectly balanced and relaxed, facing forward.

During this part of the exercise, people sometimes have problems deciding how far their awareness extends. In practice it is best to assume that you are extending your perceptions no further than the length of your outstretched arms; thus by rotation of the Directions as described, you define a sphere of awareness and energy around yourself. There is a wealth of magical and metaphysical potential in this part of the exercise; the sphere of consciousness or Being ultimately extends through the universe, which is in itself an infinite sphere of expansion/contraction. For practical purposes, however, we work to more modest personal dimensions, though in developed work the awareness can be focused through the use of the imagination into other dimensions, to distant locations, or to make contact with other entities. We shall leave all of this aside for the present, and remain working with our breath and uttering the Directions. ¹⁹

Once the basic breathing, balancing and orientating exercise has been progressed until it is familiar and easy to carry out, we move on to the next stage. Before doing so, the basic breathing and balancing work as described above must be done regularly; as with all meditative or inner disciplines, the exercise should be carried out daily, preferably at the same time of day. Ideal times traditionally for this type of work are dawn (literally) or very late at night, around midnight. This is by no means inflexible, and individuals may find that the middle of the afternoon or sunset are equally empowering. The main point is that the breathing and balancing must be done regularly every day, and that the exercise must be worked through at least seven times in succession to have any long-term effects.

Once a day is the minimum required for this type of training; anything less is pointless and trivializing. A serious student or group would gradually build the exercises until they harmonized with the fourfold pattern known as the Wheel of Life. This conceptual model of relative energies and states (see Figure 1) gives inner balance, though it should never be regarded as an icon or a dogmatic set of rules. If the minimum required work is once a day (at a key time which suits the student best, but always at the same time each day), then the maximum is four times a day, to correspond and harmonize with the Four Elements, the Four Quarters, and the Four Seasons. Thus we might carry out the exercises at Dawn, Noon, Evening, and Dusk.

In many world traditions these are the sacred times for singing specific songs or chants, and for playing specific types of music, or even specific musical instruments. The foundation of this cyclical approach to energies, music, and consciousness is to attune to the natural phases and harmonies of the land and planet, as they are expressed within one's immediate environment.

Primal Utterances *(third month)*

Having built up the power of breath, and developed some degree of skill in orientating to the Four Directions, we now begin to bring in the deeper levels of the training, which involve dedicated and precise use of the imaginative forces. The following stages are added to the physical exercise:

- a) Before inhaling and rising on the toes, pause for a moment of stillness. This involves the ancient technique of suspending the activity of the mind, reducing activity as near to Nothing as possible. There are a number of training techniques suitable for this, and one is included at the end of this chapter (see page 15.5). The first inhaling of breath comes from this state of Peace, of Stillness, and the nearer we can approach to stillness, the more effective the breath, balance, and utterances will be ***(third into fourth month)***. This part of the training cannot be rushed or passed over, for all that follows simply will not work without it.
- b) The simple exhalation and gentle counting is replaced by utterance of key sounds. These are usually the Elemental vowels, with one vowel attuned to each Direction. (See Chapter 12 for a more detailed description of the use of vowels in association with The Four Elements.)
- c) Thus we breathe in, rise upon the toes, raising arms to a horizontal position. The breath is then exhaled slowly while uttering the four basic vowels in a simple pitched chant, on one single level of pitch or note. The note is, at first, whatever note arises spontaneously from within you. No more is needed in the way of vocalization at this stage, and that spontaneous note, energized breath, and vowels merge together to generate a potent sequence. The Vowels are identified with the Four Directions: Before, Right, Behind, and Left (see Figure 7). ***(fourth into fifth months)***

d) Above, Below, and Within. With sufficient practice, there will be ample breath remaining after uttering four vowels to the four directions to utter three further tones. These are uttered in the following order: Above, directing attention to a point just above the crown of the head; Below, directing attention to the point where the feet contact the earth (or floor if you are in a building, but visualization of contact with the earth below must be clear); Within, focusing upon what is often called the Heart Center, a power center or chakra approximately in the center of the physical body. As there are a number of slightly varying teachings concerning Power Centers, we must remain within the framework of this particular tradition, in which the Heart Center is usually called the Solar Center; a central locus or harmonic point of balance within each and every one of us. Though we visualize this as having a central physical location, in point of fact it can and does move, both during specific exercises, and during the phases of a lifetime. Such refinements, however, are not directly relevant to our present basic training.

The constituents of empowered voice may be summarized as follows:

Individual work

1. Breath and breath control
2. Utterance of tones, musical shapes, and overtones
3. Vowel sounds
4. Energized Names, Words, Calls (addition of consonants)

Group work

(includes 1-4 above before any group work becomes effective)

5. Group utterance of tones, shapes, and overtones
6. Selected harmonic patterns built through group chant/utterance
7. Call and response

Further developments of group work

9. Movement: ranges from simple, relatively static movements (hand movements and steps) to complex dance patterns
10. Repetition of tone cycles and patterns and attuning of locations through empowered music

Two essential aspects of this work have not been listed separately, as they run through all of the general categories listed above, and through all meditative, visualizing, and magical and spiritual arts. The first is controlled use of the imagination. This may involve telesmatic images (gods, goddesses, saints, angels, and so forth) or carefully defined inner-world locations such as landscapes, Elemental scenarios or symbolic structures such as temples, abbeys, even entire other worlds complete with inhabitants.¹⁹

The second is arousal and direction of the vital energies. This is known in various guises, but essentially involves a response from within oneself which occasions a change of focus and intensity in the centers of vital energy. These are known as Power Centers or chakras, while the energy itself is known as the Inner Fire or kundalini. Various traditions teach refinements of the location and arousal of power centers, and the opening out and harmonic motion of the energies is closely connected to the pitch, shape, and harmonics of empowered chant, vowels utterances, and specific calls or words of power.

The most famous example, perhaps, is the Tibetan Buddhist *Om Mani Padme Hum*, which involves an arousal and circulation of energy not only within the individual or group but through many worlds and dimensions. Other prayers, chants, and patterns of power are found in other religious and magical traditions, for the concept of the highly empowered chant linked to specific tones and words is found all over the world in all periods of history. Many cults or esoteric groups have specific prayers, calls, chants, and formulae of their own.

There has been a tendency to revive this important tradition in a trivial, commercialized manner with modern pseudo-Eastern cults, mainly aimed at selling books and highly modified semi-traditional techniques to western students. In such cults, key words or mantras and 'secret' phrases play an important part, but mainly to give the members a feeling of security and isolation from society, separating them out from those who are not members. This is a negative aspect of such traditions, showing how they may be abused.

If we examine the positive aspects, we find classical examples in the great world religions, such as *Aum* and *Amen* or *Alleluiah*. Certain universal utterances are found in all cultures, and relate to the deepest roots of speech and consciousness itself. More specifically, we find that magical traditions, mystery cults, and other initiatory sources of inner transformation employ phrases or musical calls that relate only to their own tradition, though always bridging over into a more universal comprehension. Such words of power, phrases, and musical utterances can be very effective indeed, for they are examples of fine tuning with highly defined purposes, like expert tools or dedicated equipment.²⁰

In rare examples, we find complete systems of calls and utterances taught to humanity by entities dwelling in other dimensions. Perhaps the most published and least understood of these is the Enochian system received by the Elizabethan magus Dr John Dee, through the mediumship of the unsavory and erratic Edward Kelly.¹⁰ Some of the material in our chapters and appendices comes from such an innerworld contact, and methods of working in this manner and establishing inner-world contact are discussed in Chapter 4. This is a venerable tradition involving music and spiritual or magical arts, and must not be confused with idle spiritualism or fashionable 'channeling', both of which work on a less technical and more general or even trivial level of awareness (when they are not frauds or self-delusion).

Copyright © 1996-1998, RJ Stewart