

## Belonging to nature with our voice

**Duration:** 30 minutes to 1 hour

The aim of the practice is to show how **we are always connected with our surroundings**, it can be with humans or with other beings in nature. Even if we are not conscious about it, our presence in a place **makes us part of an ongoing polyphony of voices and sounds**. People in difficult health circumstances can realize they are always part of this orchestra and cultivate a sense of belonging with the planet here and now.

**Inspired by the starling birds, this activity is inviting people to resonate together** with their direct surroundings by mimicking the ambient sounds. This practice helps us to be more aware of the activity around us and create a sense of empathy by becoming the other for a moment.

**Step 1:** If outdoors let's choose a spot where there is a rich variety of sounds and avoid too noisy locations. Let's form a circle standing on our feet. Let's talk about the Starling bird and the great ability to vocalize and mimic the sound of other birds and even the sound of machines.

**Step 2:** When ready, let's start listening and whenever ready, pick a sound we like and mimic the sound and rhythm of it. It can be any sound, machines, birds, voices...etc If we want we can move around to follow the trajectory of the sound. At any time we can become silent and pick another sound of our choice.

**Step 3:** After 5 minutes let's form a circle and share how we resonated with the space and what or who we became for a moment. Mark the difference between sounds (language?) and noises (absence of language?). Ask if the sound of the wind, the river and the ocean are sounds or noises. You can categorize the sounds in 3 groups based on the classification in bioacoustics by Bernie Krause: geophony (sounds of the Earth), biophony (sounds of the living beings) and anthropophony (sounds made by humans and their machines)

**Step 4:** propose the discovery of mobile phone apps:

- Merlin Bird, to recognize birds by their songs (<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/sound-id/> )
- Decibel X, or similar to measure the decibels and potential noise threshold in the city
- Deep Time Walk app, discover when the first sounds of living beings appeared on the planet (<https://www.deeptimewalk.org/> )

**evaluation:** This practice should awaken the ability of the participants to listen carefully and play with their voice to imitate nature. If the participants continue to make sounds after the practice this is a good sign they enjoy imitating sounds and that they will do so naturally in

the future. Remark that imitating birds' songs is a very good way to learn to identify their presence and that some people are great masters in imitating birds.

**other comments:** If the activity takes place indoors, use an audio recording of birds songs from the local area, complemented from the Amazon rainforest for example to explore similarities and differences of the biodiversity between continents.

**references:** This practice is inspired by great teachers, Nature of course but also Rich Blundell and the [Oika](#) project, Jon Young from the 8 Shields and the partners from the project No One Forgotten, beyond others. Thank you!

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