

## **Be friends with your voice**

*'Those who wish to sing always find a song' Swedish proverb*

All too often in our present culture we have become to accept that performers are the ones who should sing. Keep in mind singing and working evolved together. At least since pastoral life there has been a song to accompany every situation and activity.

**You may write out the answers to these questions or contemplate them.**

What was your first memory of singing? (with family, holiday, church, school, choir)

Was it a good memory? (recall your feelings: joyful, anxious, nervous, love)

Describe your voice. (loud, soft, quiet, angelic, scratchy, nasal, accent)

How do you think someone else may describe your voice?

Have you ever thought about the health of your voice? (Does it give you a sore throat to talk a lot, does your throat feel dry, voice feel forced, maybe you have a soft voice)

Have you ever thought of your voice as a teaching tool?

## **Facts about the human voice**

- ★ In reality, only about 1.5% to 4% of people are actually tone deaf or suffer from amusia (a congenital inability to hear pitch properly or at all).
- ★ The sound of your voice is unique, no one else can sound just like you.
- ★ An autistic child may speak in a flat, robotic, sing-song manner and have an abnormal voice quality. Often children with autism can sing better than they can speak, even non-verbal children will often hum.
- ★ The Alzheimer's Society has a "Singing for the Brain" program to help people with dementia maintain their memories.
- ★ Music triggers the part of the brain that evokes emotion.
- ★ Your vocal chords are actually folds that vibrate multiple times per second.
- ★ Your vocal folds make sound, but your mouth makes speech.

- ★ Singing is more right-hemisphere brain function and speaking is more left-hemisphere dominant. This is why some people who have a stroke can't talk, but can still sing or why some famous singers stutter while speaking, but are amazing singers.

*What else can singing do?* Relieves stress, stimulates the immune system, increases pain threshold, improves snoring, improves lung function, develops sense of belonging.

The best way to heal negative feelings about your voice is to get to know it better. Take a few moments and draw it out. Don't be concerned getting it just right, you are the only one who will see it! It isn't necessary to label parts, we are just appreciating the shape.

