

STORIES OF CONNECTION ELICIT RESONANCE

What is resonance?

The latest social neuroscience confirms that when we live our lives in close proximity to one another, our nervous systems are networked through the phenomenon of *resonance*. Like a musical instrument picking up the vibrations of the music played nearby, humans can detect the emotional tones of other animals.

How do we know when it's happening?

Resonance is something you can feel in your body. It is strongest when someone nearby is *engaging* with you. Being with someone who is expressing emotion, especially about a struggle—registers in our bodies. We vibrate with others who are having a challenge that reminds us of what's important to us. We are most engaged when we become aware of what we hold most precious. But any moment in which we feel moved, we KNOW it because we FEEL it.

Diverse resonance?

Just like a healthy ecosystem needs diversity of microbes, fungi, plants, insects and animals to survive, people need resonance from diverse sources. Imagine a guitar with six strings. Sound is going to vibrate from each string differently. We too need different resonance for all our humanizing notes to ring.

What's the benefit of sharing resonance with each other?

Resonance is not an individual skill but a collective capacity. When we share with one another how we are resonating, we increase the effect of resonance. And the more of us who do that together, the greater our collective capacity to bear our struggles. It is a powerful resource for a community, and one that's 100% renewable! It can bring us together, and keep us together.

What interferes with it?

The Stories of Separation reinforce isolation, suspicion, and separation. They desensitize us through continual overexposure to violence and sensational media. These signals interfere with our resonance sensors so that we do not notice how connected we are to one another. To notice and call attention to your experience of resonance is a powerful strategy for subverting the Stories of Separation.

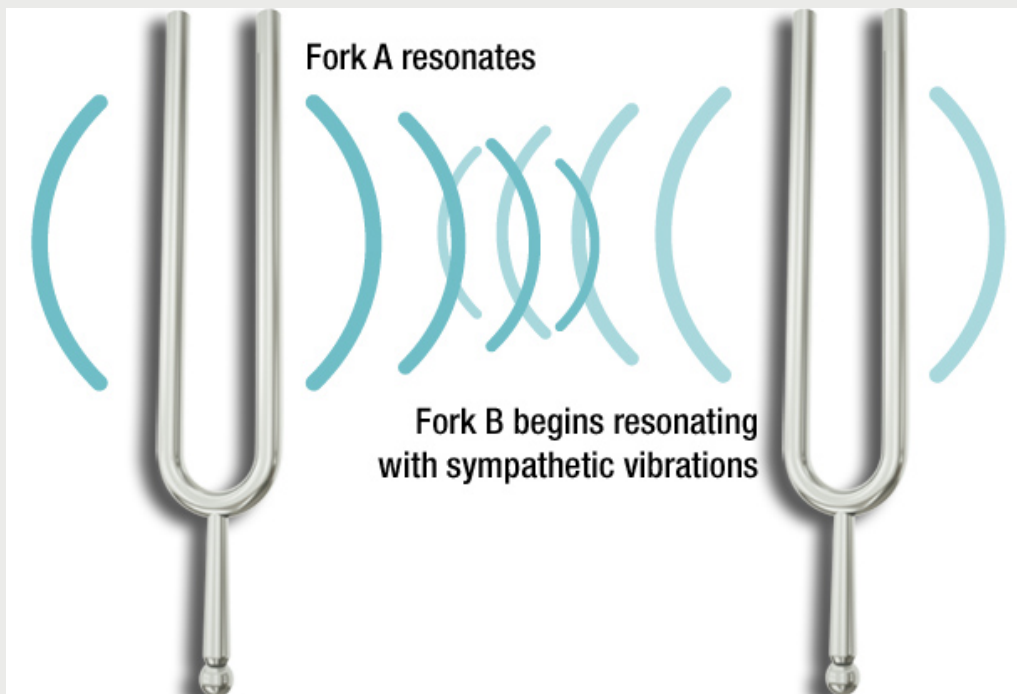
Resonance is a right!

Just like food and water, humans have a basic need for resonance. It is critical to a sense of belonging, acceptance, and empathy for others. It is even necessary for your health and immunity. Resonance should be considered a human right. It should never be restricted to only those who can pay. Resonance is free, a resource for collective liberation.

“A musical tone makes physical objects vibrate at its frequency, the phenomenon of sympathetic reverberation. A soprano breaks a wineglass with the right note as she makes unbending glass quiver along with her voice. Emotional tones in the brain establish a living harmony with the past in a similar way. The brain is not composed of string, and there are no oscillating fibers within the cranium. But in the nervous system, information echoes down the filaments that join harmonious neural networks. When an emotional chord is struck, it stirs to life past memories of the same feeling.”

[Lewis, T.; Amini, F.; Lannon, R. (2007). *A General Theory of Love* (p. 128). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.]

LEARNING TO SHARE RESONANCE



Why share resonance?

Sharing resonance is a gift to a storyteller. It lets them know what parts of their story are the most humanizing for both of you, supporting connection through vulnerability and empathy both ways.

Sharing resonance is an intentional somatic practice like meditation that requires shared responsibility and discipline. Group members should support one another to stay engaged while listening and keep to the guidelines.

What to do...

As you listen to someone telling Stories of Connection, tune in to the moments when you feel most engaged by what you hear.

Prompt: Share back with the storyteller the specific story **moments** when you felt “**right there with them.**”

Example: “I was right there with you when you asked your brother for help and he told you he didn’t want to hear about your problems.”

Hint: They may be the moments when you felt almost as if the events were happening to YOU. Those were the moments you were resonating.

What NOT to do...

Interpret

“From your story it sounds like you were actually depressed.”

Tell Your Own Story

That reminds me of when I was depressed.”

Ask Questions

“So how old was your mom when she had you?”

Share an Opinion

“I don’t think you should focus on the past.”

One-Up

“You think THAT’s bad! Listen to what happened to me!”

It’s cool...

If you catch yourself doing any of these, CONGRATULATIONS! You **caught** it! Which means you’re becoming more aware of habits that interfere with resonance. Yay!

Hint: If you’re not sure whether you’ve drifted away from resonance, you can keep to the storyteller’s own words when sharing the MOMENT.

If you find yourself drifting while listening, it might be because you are doing one of these. Once again, great noticing!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This participant guide includes adaptations of the works of Marshall Ganz of Harvard University (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/marshall-ganz>) and New Organizing Institute (<http://www.neworganizing.com>).

It integrates materials originally authored and adapted by a collaborative team at The Relational Center (<http://www.relationalcenter.org/>), including Mark Fairfield, Cedar Landsman, and Lucien Demaris—working together on initiatives incubated through The Relational Center and further developed by Relational Uprising (<http://www.relationaluprising.org/>). Many other thought leaders have contributed ideas that shaped the outcome of these materials.

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