

I would like to invite you into a scenario: You're walking outside, not exactly in the clearest mindstate; thinking about something really bothering you. While you're stuck in your head, birds, and other nature sounds whizz by you, somewhat alternating between your left and right side. As time goes on, you notice this stress decreasing, eventually inviting in positive energy and inspiration.

This is the scenario that Francine Shapiro observed on a beautiful day in the 1980s, something that would eventually be called “Bi-lateral sound,” an alternating stimuli that moves through the stereo field from left to right. By shifting sound from the left ear/left side of the brain to the right ear/right side of the brain, the sound travels through the corpus callosum, connecting the left and right brain, and integrating the specialties of each side – the left brain's logic and the right brain's creativity.

Bi-lateral sound is a form of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprogramming) similar to the Rapid Eye Movement cycle while we are asleep and going into dreaming. By activation, the person receiving treatment can bypass the ego and use more creative techniques to address issues, such as phobias or everyday stressors. In addition to using music alone, the therapist may invoke images to trigger certain emotions.

The method has been widely used to address patients with PTSD as well. While the music/pulse shifts through the stereo field, an image or situation is addressed, with the intention of bring it to the forefront to be faced. While this may be a somewhat painful or scary experience, the sound current lulls emotions, bringing complete focus to the situation at hand, while gradually receiving feedback as the process goes 'deeper.'

So take, for example, you're on a walk in the forest and you hear rustling in the tall grasses. For one that has had a fearful experience with a snake, that rustling might set off a trigger thinking that a snake is near, when in actuality, it's just the wind moving. By using bi-lateral sound, the nervous system stops reacting to the thought of a snake in the grass but rather, it's just the ways of nature making beautiful sound.

Unlike other EMDR processes, the entire brain slowly gets involved in the process. Because of

this, multiple things happen – a) you become unable to think of the problem and b) you start to feel relaxed. With the brain relaxed, more creative and inspirational states can follow. The practice has evolved to targeting areas that share similar qualities to binaural beats – increase in concentration, creativity, stamina, attention, retention of information and learning, length of focused attention, comprehension, and ability to manage stress.

Some of the benefits to the physical body include – ongoing and chronic pain and recovery from medical interventions, injuries, accidents and illness.

So a sample session might go like this – Similar to sound healing, I would do an intake, noting stressors or areas of your life that you would like to improve. Then I'd invoke an image – a mountaintop, for example. How does the image make you feel? Does it make you feel empowered? Does it make you scared that you might fall off? Next, the bi-lateral sound is played through headphones. What messages do you receive in viewing the image? How does your perception change as time goes on? Do you feel your stressors lessening? Do you feel more invigorated? Depending on the client, the images might change, customized to their needs. Some Bi-lateral sound practices involve quick-pulsing images that cycle very rapidly (sometimes in as little as 15 to 30 seconds each). By using this cycle, multiple areas can be covered. In meditation and visualization, bi-lateral sound enhances the brain's ability to hold an intention. Guided meditation is deepened by using bilateral sound and positive affirmations.

In conclusion, bi-lateral sound is a great tune for growth, gradually taking you out of the stresses that may steer your body away from anything that can propel you forward. In conjunction with binaural beats, bi-lateral sound has a no-holds-barred way of bringing out that which you fear, the element of self that wishes to be healed, or any area of your life that you would like to improve. While in this trance-like state, inspiration or guidance can form.