

Yesterday I was doing some research on various treatments for depression and I came across something that's interesting, inexpensive, and you can do it at home. What could be better than that?

It turns out there is a whole lot of conversation about the benefits of music therapy for many issues, both clinical issues and just plain daily challenges.

This makes sense to me just from the perspective of how I feel inside when I hear a great song that gets my head working and my feet tapping. Music can make me feel good even when I'm a bit down in the dumps.

Of course professional music therapy takes more than tuning into your iPod. It's actually a process that requires skill and training to put together musical elements that promote mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. Qualified music therapists are used to address Acquired Brain Injury, emotional trauma, pain control, substance abuse and many other common issues, such as stress management and depression.

Some of the techniques used in music therapy are listening to music in a group, improvised singing, body movement, and painting to music. All of these sound very familiar to me. There are many examples of each of these activities being used to promote creative process. Artists will listen to music that inspires them when they are working on a painting. It is not uncommon for people to sing to themselves... in the shower, in the grocery store, walking to work, and of course driving in the car accompanied by the radio.

This connection to music seems to be inherent. Have you ever seen a toddler swaying to the music coming from the TV? Teenagers have a particularly strong relationship to music. They find leadership and statement in their generational brand of music and they're happy to wear their musical choices like a badge of honour.

Brain waves, breathing, heart rate are all vibrational. There is a beat in every body. Most cultures have a kind of musical mantra that is connected to core identity. Chanting is used to

produce a consistent vibration that calms and consoles. Ancient repetitions of sound and words are passed from generation to generation as a therapeutic anchor when strength and fortitude are needed for survival.

Stress can definitely be reduced with the right musical experience. We all know about the hot bath therapy. Next time add relaxing music and feel the tension leave your body.

My research got me thinking that maybe it's time to turn up the music when I'm doing the dishes or cleaning the bathrooms. Maybe it's time to share a dance with my husband in the living room, or tear up a rug with my dog when we're killing time on a rainy day.

We used to say that music is the language of love. It may also be the language of health.