

## Appendix #5. Stepping stones

### *P.'s stepping stones*

- **Knowing the instruments well:**  
When knowing your instruments and your voice well, you have a greater opportunity to be free. Free to create and play into the space where it is possible to be authentically present. Free to express what is needed in a way that is relevant and meaningful.
- **Letting go of control**  
When P. does not try in advance to control how the music should sound or does not feel obliged to convince people about his musical competences then he experiences himself and his music as more authentic. The experience is generated from somewhere else than from the conscious mind. In general, P. tries to "*cleanse himself out of the system*" and tries to avoid controlling his output. Instead, he focuses on being present, being responsive and not letting his analytical intellect ruin it all by trying to sound good because then he would "*drop it all on the floor like a bucket of glass*".
- **Having an active and vibrant musicality**  
When the musical material is not locked in a fixed form it enhances a need to be musically conscious and authentic in the performance of it. The music and the songs can be shaped together with the patient, in the moment, and P. can, thus, convey the songs and the music adapted to the situation from an authentic place in him.
- **Having an open mind / attitude**  
Not being biased but being reset, neutral, and open towards the other. Being free from pre-defined ideas about the patient's needs, and not to be influenced by information about the patient from colleagues or patient records. The authenticity depends on a non-biased attitude.
- **Being able to alternate between 'thinking' and 'feeling'**  
When "*the brain interferes*" and you become too analytical in the situation, then you can lose the ability to be authentic. If you are not at home on your instrument, you can be judgmental and blocked, focusing on technique. However, it is not unequivocally negative that the brain interferes. There are several active analytical processes in a session, but you must be able to navigate these shifts without losing contact with the other and with yourself.
- **Having energy**  
A natural musicality imparts an experience of authenticity. When P. has the energy, physically and mentally, to support his musicality, he experiences the music as completely natural and authentic.
- **Taking in to send out**  
P. senses the response from the others in the room, notices their attention and their physical responses but he also senses the room 'as a whole'. He reconciles with both the material space and the psychosocial space as he experiences what he denotes a "*hyper-attention*"; Being very attentive in a fusion with who and what is in the room, and letting his music be inspired by that. Intuitively and spontaneously, he relates to the inputs he senses and sends out his own communication - through music - influenced by this sensing. The

music then becomes an audible expression of the overall ambience the room and all the things and people in it.

- **Being present**

Presence gives the authenticity space. Presence, to P., can merely be about making sure to be rested, possibly meditate, and thereby be aware of being present and accepting.

- **Using phrasings, micro-phrasings, and micro-adjustments**

Phrasing (the ending of phrases) as a vocal technique and as a musical, emotional consciousness can help "(...) *carry the emotional all the way to the door*". There is a very intimate field in a voice that is not tired but has the energy to "*carry the phrase all the way to the door*". If you do not carry it to the door, then the listener, according to P., does not reach the door either. With his voice and through the specific melodic phrasings, he has the possibility to move people, refocus their attention, or change their emotional state. P. experiences himself and the music as authentic when phrasing "*musically consciously*" from an inherent musicality.

Micro-phrasings – understood as very small, musically dynamic phrasing in relation to the client – can have a significant impact, according to P. It is a very delicate balance to make these tiny, bodily, and musical adjustments but they are the ones that can make the big difference. At the same time, for P., it is also about "*keeping myself out of the equation*" which involves liberating himself from his own intentions and plans to approach these micro-phrasings in the interaction with patient and relatives.

However, P. emphasizes that phrasings and micro-phrasings are not always the golden path to the "*experiences of magic*" and the feeling of authenticity, but he often experiences these techniques as active co-players in those moments. Furthermore, not only vocal phrasings can have this effect, but since the voice is P.'s main instrument that is where he experiences himself as most precise and most trained to perform exactly that kind of work.

- Micro-adjustments: There are many micro-adjustments in the dynamics of the sessions and between the accompaniment instrument and the voice. It is the ongoing dynamic, bodily, and musical adjustments in the music along with lots of other techniques that affect the entirety. These micro-adjustments are inextricably linked to the ability of the aforementioned "*hyper-attention*"; to sense both the other, oneself, and the whole room and to react and adjust accordingly in a continuous and spontaneous movement. As an experienced therapist P. can regulate the balance between emotional overstimulation and emotional fulfillment where only very small adjustments need to be made. P. designates this balance "*singing a knife edge*".

- **To involve oneself**

To P., focus is not on merely reproducing original musical material but finding the specific emotional qualities in the music and conveying these, in his own way, from his own inner life. Activating his personal musicality and interpretation of the songs in that process makes the dissemination of the songs more authentic, in P.'s view. In addition, he finds that the listener becomes more actively listening when his own musicality is at play in this way.

### *H. and N.'s stepping stones*

- **Delegating authority to the client**

For H., the concept of authenticity is closely related to the concept of authority. When letting go of plans and ideas about what the client should learn, reclining a bit, and merely being present then the client gets, according to H., the opportunity to step into her own authority without H. *"filling in and compensating"*. Authority, own as well as others', is therefore about taking - or getting - responsibility for one's own personal shortcomings and *"filling oneself up from within"*.

- **Letting go of control and planning**

In a music therapeutic setting, being able to be 'bewildered' is essential for H. – not knowing what exactly is going to happen, letting go of the planning, and then reclining a bit to let the other step forward and *"show what is going to happen"*. H. herself experiences a surplus of mental resources when she stops planning and let go of the ego. It is experienced as liberating to give up controlling - in this way *"many more RAM's will be available"*, as she enthusiastically puts it. According to H. those moments cannot be planned nor controlled through techniques. They cannot even be sought. They are to come spontaneously.

- **Making use of meditation and personal development**

Like P., H. also experiences how meditation can strengthen a movement towards the experience of authenticity. H. equates meditating with practicing musical elements such as scales or other concrete musical skills that one can teach and be taught. Scales are not necessarily music in themselves but practicing and knowing scales can help removing the obstacles that can inhibit one in surrendering to the music. In the same way, meditation can help removing the obstacles that may stand in the way of, for example, the experience of authenticity.

It can be an overwhelming experience to encounter authenticity, according to H., because it can activate an awareness of one's own limitations that prevent one from being authentic. It is therefore relevant to become aware of one's own obstacles. When you experience being authentic, according to N. and H., then others can also experience it and, possibly, react to it - positively as well as negatively.

- **Having an awareness of own energy and readiness**

Authenticity requires, according to N., a certain amount of energy and a bodily readiness. It may take time for N. to find her way back to herself and into the music and into something that can be expressed with authority, meaning, and readiness if she lacks the energy. H. acknowledges that there can be a *"long way back to yourself"* if having been in situations that were challenging. She finds it important to be gentle with oneself, when having been in demanding situations.