

Brain Shift – Healing Rhythms

Jeff Strong Talks About His Successful Method

Interview by Christian Salvesen

Your studies on people with physical and mental problems are impressive. Does the brain shift-series address listeners with health problems? Or is it designed to help each one of us to live a better life? And if so, how does the music work (for a “healthy” person)?

Jeff Strong: The CDs in the Brain Shift Collection are for general well being and are not designed for people with any significant neurological issues. Those issues are addressed with our other CDs and programs. For regular people, the Brain Shift Collection aids in synchronizing the brain for life-enhancement. Each CD in the set is designed to have a different effect. So, using the Deep Meditative State CD, for example, would allow a person to have an easier time meditating and to meditate more deeply than without it. The Transition to Sleep CD, as another example, aids in speeding the onset of sleep.

All of the CDs in the Brain Shift Collection rely on the entrainment aspect of using auditory rhythm to influence brain activity. In its simplest form, the pulsation of the rhythms synchronize the brain to a relaxed neurological state. Each CD in the set uses variations on the tempo of the pulse and complexity of rhythms to achieve a specific goal, such as increasing concentration with the Focused Attention CD or helping someone being more creative with the Creativity and Problem-Solving CD. The CDs in the Brain Shift Collection are a way for anyone to experience the powerful effects that auditory rhythms can have on the brain.

Slow music calms down. This simple idea does not fit with your findings. The more complex the rhythms the more reduction of fear, it seems. Can you explain this phenomenon?

Most music creates calm by soothing the person psychologically which in turn slows their breathing and then relaxes them. This is called the

relaxation response. With the relaxation response, the listener keys into the tempo, melody and harmonies and has an emotional or psychological response to the music. A person's response relies heavily on his associations with different music, thus different people respond to different music.

With REI, and the Brain Shift Collection, we're relying on the way a person's brain responds to a specific auditory impulse on a physiological basis without any psychological association. The Listener's brain responds to the pulsation of the rhythms and entrains. Entrainment is a nearly universal response and doesn't rely on whether someone "likes" the music. As long as the rhythms are played at an appropriate volume for a minimum length of time a person's brain will respond. The advantage here is that the calming doesn't require any particular associations with the music and doesn't require someone being in the right mood to benefit from it.

Often the percussions are combined with keyboards. How important are harmonies or melodies in your approach?

The stimulation of the rhythms is the most important part of my work. The harmonic and melodic content is actually a hinderance to the effectiveness of the rhythms. The more melody and harmony we add, the less effect the rhythm has on the listener. We use the melody and harmony on our CDs to moderate (reduce) the effects of the rhythms. This enables us to keep from over-stimulating people.

Without getting too technical, the entrainment effect on these CDs is most powerful when the volume is low enough that a person doesn't actively listen to the music. This engages the primitive brain - the part of our brain that is constantly working to determine if something in our environment is a threat to our survival. The primitive brain responds to the patterns and will facilitate the brain entraining to the rhythm. Adding melody and harmony engages our intellect and part of the brain looking for associations to put a stimulus into context. Once an association is made, our emotions enter into the equation, reducing the entrainment response to the rhythm.

What would you suggest for a general integration of “brainshift” into healthcare and healthsystems (in the US/Europe)?

We have developed the REI CDs and programs for use in health care settings with very specific purposes. The Brain Shift Collection, on the other hand, wasn't created for the healthcare system at all. I created these CDs to improve well-being of people who desire the brain enhancing capabilities that we can offer. That said, everyone can likely use a way to calm their brain and reduce their anxiety. This would especially true for anyone dealing with any physical illness. So from that stand point I'd say that the CDs in the Brain Shift Collection could be useful in a healthcare setting. In this setting I suggest playing the Neuro-calm CD quietly in the background. The Deep Meditative State CD would be very helpful for people just beginning to learn how to meditate, so I could see it being used in meditation classes.

What is the most important thing in your life?

The most important thing in my life is my family. This work I do with rhythms follows right behind. I've dedicated the last 27 years to exploring and experimenting with auditory rhythm to help as many people as possible. I intend to spend at least the next 27 years continuing to learn more about how and why rhythm can have therapeutic effects on a variety of neurological issues so that we can have an even greater impact on the people we can help.

For Further Information See: www.reiinstitute.com

Die CD-Serie:

Jeff Strong: Brain Shift Collection. Power-Rhythmen für Heilung & Klarheit. 8 CDs, Gesamtlänge: 7 Std. + 45 Min, J.Kamphausen, Bielefeld, ISBN 978-3-89901-208-8

Info www.brainshift.de