

SONICSHAPES

(formerly ShapeTapes)

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SONICSHAPES RESEARCH PROJECT

These are the results of a research project conducted in Sheffield over the winter of 1988-89. The subjects were volunteers who heard of the experiment via word of mouth. Some already were using Shapetapes, some were entirely new to them. As there was no funding, the project was dependent on the goodwill of these volunteers. They were aged between 25-40, most with a fair degree of self-awareness and were, in varying degrees, used to self observation. There were initially 15 subjects. One dropped out after 2 sessions due to pressure of lifestyle and lack of time. this made a total of 100 sessions.

The agreement was that each subject would listen to each of the ShapeTapes in the presence of the researcher, describing what they experienced. They could choose which tape and the time gap between sessions. A session consisted of 45 minutes i.e. one side of the tape. The subjects had the freedom to end the session if they felt uncomfortable.

One of the difficulties in analysing the results is that different individuals respond to the tapes according to their basic type. Predictably, HELIX type subjects who are energetic and outgoing felt SQUARES to be too heavy and slow, TRIANGLES types who are quick and have an edge of sharpness had a less than positive response to the slow circularity of CIRCLES.

Also, subjects chose the order in which they listened. Would they have experienced them differently in a different order? Or if I had taken them all through in the same order?

I could not rule out the effect of their becoming used to the process, or the possible balancing effect of listening to the previous tapes. Indeed, subjects seemed to become more mellow, feel more balanced and have more positive experiences of the tapes as the experiment progressed. By the end of the project, most subjects wondered whether they would have different responses on a second run, and would have been willing to repeat the experience. Two sessions were repeated, one by accident, the other because It had been so dramatic we wanted to see if the same thing would happen.

The reactions were consistent in both cases with the first listening, no significant change being noted. (These two repeats are not included in the analysis.)

There was as much consistency in the individual response to each of the tapes, as in the general response to each tape - i.e. subject D.R. reported that he went out of body, felt himself to be flying or floating and had vivid imagery in nearly every session, while subject M.T. consistently reported his experience of the sounds as affecting him physically, giving a sense of grounding or balancing with relaxation and pleasurable sensations.

Enough similarity was present in the response to each tape to give a picture of the different effects of the sound, while there was enough variation and unexpectedness to be reassuring that the researcher was not influencing the results through expectation.

The most notable examples - in 15 out of 15 sessions FOUR LEAF CLOVER was experienced as relaxing, soothing or reassuring, while no-one reported feeling grounded or centered with LINES. These results were consistent with previous experience of the ShapeTapes.

In 8 out of 15 sessions CIRCLES was experienced in the sacral area. In 8 of 15 sessions FOUR LEAF CLOVER was experienced around the heart, in 9 of 15 sessions HELIX was felt to affect the forehead or brow area. We had hypothesized that these sounds related to these chakra areas. No-one felt SQUARES in the upper chakras. and only one person experienced CIRCLES in any of the upper three chakras.

One unexpected result was the number of sessions in which subjects felt themselves to go out-of-body, that is they experienced a part of themselves as detaching from or hovering above their bodies. Some had sensations of tipping as if the floor was tilting, flying or 'tripping' which were described as being similar to hallucinogenic experiences. While some subjects regularly had these sensations, others had none. The total was 28%

In analysing the results, I have chosen those experiences which were common to the sessions and regularly reported.

In 100 sessions, only 6 proved to be 'negative' with subjects experiencing discomfort, disliking the sound or the effect it had on them and failing to get to a point of ease with it. However, several subjects reported having learned something important from these sessions, or commented that the tape would be good for them. Most were curious to know whether they would respond differently if they listened again at the end of the project.

In practice we found, with subjects already familiar with the sounds, that if they left till last the ones they disliked, they ended up liking them. Those who had difficulty or negative experiences were those who chose the disliked one near the beginning to 'get it over with' or those new to the tapes who chose a ShapeTape that was not 'their' shape initially.

If, after initial difficulty with the sound, they got to being easy with it, the session was called 'neutral.' Neutral sessions are those in which subjects felt both comfort and discomfort, or had no particular reaction, or went through a process before coming to terms with it. In one case, the subject experienced the exact opposite of her initial reaction by the end of the tape.

Positive sessions are those in which the subject had pleasant sensations and/or felt a sense of well being, comfort or increased energy. These responses were quite profound at times, being described as 'one of the most important experiences of my life,' 'a complete experience,' 'deeply moving' and etc.

68% of The sessions were experienced as positive. As There were 100 sessions, figures can be described as percentages. The breakdown of These figures in relation To individual tapes is as follows.

SQUARES	positive 9	neutral 5		Total 14
CTRCLES	positive 10	neutral 2	negative 2	Total 14
TRIANGLES	positive 10	neutral 4		Total 14
CLOVER	positive 14	neutral 1		Total 15
ROSE	positive 7	neutral 5	negative 2	Total 14
HELIX	positive 9	neutral 5	negative 1	Total 15
LINES	positive 9	neutral 4	negative 1	Total 14
TOTAL	68%	26%	6%	100

Several subjects reported a marked shift in their perception of time, this being felt either as very fast or extremely slow. This was not linked to whether or not they were enjoying The sound. The sessions lasted 45 minutes (one side of the tape) unless they requested a stop. It should be noted here that one subject finished the session early every time. Usually after 30 minutes when she felt she had had enough, though on one occasion within 5 minutes of the end. As The TRIANGLE personality type is impatient and has difficulty finishing things, it was interesting that 3 of the early endings were with this tape. All of The sessions went on for at least 20 minutes.

'Felt like 5 minutes!' (CIRCLES)

'Seems to have been going on a long time' (TRIANGLES)

'Felt about 10 minutes!' (TRIANGLES)

'Time passed very quickly' (HELIX)

'Seemed very long, definitely closed down time.' (SQUARES)

	Stops session early	Time sense altered
SQUARES	1	2
CIRCLES	1	1
TRIANGLES	3	3
CLOVER	1	3
ROSE	1	1
HELIX	2	1
LINES	2	2
TOTAL	11%	13%

Several subjects allowed the sounds to take them to a deeply relaxed state, sometimes dropping briefly into sleep, more usually remaining aware but silent until the end of the tape. Frequently if they did speak from these deep states the voice quality was noticeably deeper. They regularly reported feeling recharged after these experiences.

Imagery was often rich and vivid, sometimes with remembered childhood incidents. Some subjects experienced the sounds as having colour.

‘Taking me to a very deep state. cleansing, so relaxed I am hardly aware of my body. A very inner state, perceiving my body differently, from within. Very pleasurable.’ (ROSE.)

‘A deep state of relaxation, calmed me down enormously’ (CLOVER)

‘Sinking deeper into myself, getting to a very peaceful place where there aren’t many words. I could go to sleep.’ (LINES.)

‘Immediately feel myself going down into myself, my voice feels different, reverberating. I want to go back to the cradle. Images of an angel, an eagle.’ (LINES)

‘Image of a volcano, hotness coming off me, being taken from my core. Purple and red colours flooding in like a corkscrew.’ (HELIX.)

‘Rays of silver light doing loops.’ (HELIX.)

‘Unearthly pinks and blues.’ (ROSE)

‘I started thinking of design projects, the sound facilitates imagery.’ (TRIANGLES)

‘I see a rich tapestry, jewelled and elaborate. I realise the richness of my imagination has always felt scary. I must make this tapestry. My imagination is going wild! (TRIANGLES.)

‘I went into a deep level trance state with imaging, my attention expanded, spaced out and centered at the same time.’ (HELIX.)

‘I became a house martin, flying round the house at breakneck speed, then an owl in soft gentle flight.’ (LINES.)

	Deep state of relaxation	Imagery, colours
SQUARES	3	7
CIRCLES	5	5
TRIANGLES	6	7
CLOVER	6	6
ROSE	3	4
HELIX	3	7
LINES	4	5
TOTAL	30%	41%

Many subjects reported feeling centered or grounded, and reports of relaxation and a sense of being soothed were common with SQUARES, (11 of 14 sessions) CIRCLES, (13 of 14) and FOUR LEAF CLOVER, (15 of 15).

Fewer people reported feeling peaceful with TRIANGLES (10 of 14 sessions), or HELIX (9 of 15). These were more usually experienced as energising and exciting. No-one felt grounded with LINES. only 2 with TRIANGLES and ROSE.

‘Things are grounded and normalised - quite a relief.’ (TRIANGLES.)

‘Amazing grounded feeling. My arms and legs are a part of the ground. I feel deep inside the earth.’ (TRIANGLES.)

‘Much more aware of being in my body.’ (HELIX.)

‘Physically grounded and stable, body very relaxed and comfortable. This is a healing sound. It would be good when I'm physically ill.’ (CIRCLES)

‘These tapes are like a self-righting thing. Whatever ails you rights itself.’ (LINES)

‘Balanced in its effect. I feel centered, calm, open, very peaceful and grounded (CIRCLES)

‘The sound is comfortable, like on idealised father figure. I feel very calm and together.’ (SQUARES)

‘So deep it is all consuming or embracing like a network keeping you safe inside it. I feel grounded. relaxed, breathing more deeply.’ (SQUARES.)

‘Immediate sense of grounding, peaceful, facilitates letting go. Comforting. reassuring.’ (SQUARES.)

‘Feeling of total comfort and strength.’ (CLOVER)

‘Very comfortable, quietening, I feel secure. I feel solidly connected up.’ (SQUARES)

‘Very comfortable. reassuring, powerful, reveals myself to me. Soothing, being enveloped, grandmotherly.’ (SQUARES)

‘Breathing lower down, a sense of well being, spreading out and coming in again, languid. gentle.’ (FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

‘Full and rounded. calming, openness reaching my heart.’ (CLOVER.)

‘Very solid, very centering. grounding, centres me in my heart, feeling of being rocked, cradled.’ (CLOVER)

	Relaxed, soothing. reassuring. peaceful	Grounded, centred
SQUARES	11	6
CIRCLES	13	6
TRIANGLES	10	2
CLOVER	15	6
ROSE	11	2
HELIX	9	4
LINES	12	-
TOTAL	81%	26%

Previously I had used ShapeTapes primarily as a background to healing. Where changes in temperature were experienced, i.e. reports of extremes of heat or coldness, they were considered as part of the response to healing rather than to the sounds. As a healer I was familiar with reported sensations of heaviness, lightness and tingling as energy balances out. However, prior to this research we had not had these reactions with ShapeTapes alone, so were interested to find how many subjects did report on these sensations.

'Feeling of floating like a feather, also feel heavy at the same time. My arms feel cold and light. (CIRCLES.)'

'As if a strong magnetic field is being passed through my feet and up to my knees.(CIRCLES.)'

'Reverberating in my head, reaching down to my feet,' (TRIANGLES.)

'Feel as if my whole body is being filled up with the sound. Like an electric current going through.' (TRIANGLES.)

'I'm pulsing all over. My head is very heavy.' (ROSE)

'Tingling through body. wonderful, extraordinary. blissful.' (TRIANGLES.)

'Very, very cold, icy cold like a wind. Heavy, difficult to move. Being squashed, an incredible weight. My body is vibrating deeply all over. Incredibly relaxed.' (HELIX.)

'Heavy, dense, solid. My whole body is vibrating as if on top of the spin-dryer.' (SQUARES)

'Spreading tingly, my body is warm and energised.'
(FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

'Breathing deeply, tingly feeling down to toes. Expanding across lower part of my belly.' (CLOVER.)

‘Sensation of gentle brushes of energy up the spine. A releasing motion up and out. Waves of energy.’ (CLOVER.)

‘Like a wave running up and down, soothing the energy, undoing muscularly across front of chest and shoulders.’ (CLOVER.)

‘Sensation of being stretched out like chewing gum. Gentle tingling and a kind of spreading out from the navel.’ (LINES)

‘A release in my head and neck. I feel myself getting larger, relaxing, more open in my stomach. Feels that I am being rocked.’ (LINES)

‘The sound feels cold, is going through my bones, taking heat out through the solar plexus’ (LINES.)

‘I feel like a cat, I want to bask and stretch.’ (LINES.)

	Stretch, tingling, release	Heavy, light	Cold, heat
SQUARES	11	6	3
CIRCLES	8	2	-
TRIANGLES	10	2	3
CLOVER	10	4	5
ROSE	11	2	4
HELIX	14	5	4
LINES	14	2	4
TOTAL	78%	23%	23%

A sense of cleansing, clearing or lightness was reported in 12 of 14 sessions with LINES and 7 of 14 sessions with TRIANGLES. HELIX with 7 out of 15 sessions And TRIANGLES with 8 of 14 sessions were experienced as energising or stimulating.

These results were consistent with previous experience of ShapeTapes.

‘It is clearing space along my left side. My right side feels very clean.
(CIRCLES)

‘Could be getting on with things, enlivening, more an outward focus.’ (TRIANGLES.)

‘Like spring cleaning going on above my body. A sense of being on the edge of something about to happen. I want to get up and move.’
(TRIANGLES.)

‘Quite enlivening, sharp and clear, focusing, it probes a bit, clearing things out.’ (ROSE)

‘Effects of purifying, stripping away what is inessential. Afterwards I had more energy than since age 15.’ (HELIX.)
Note: this 43 year old man had been having problems with tiredness and lack of energy.

‘A light clean feeling, stimulates thought.’ (LINES)

‘Very light, energising, hands very warm.’ (LINES)

'Getting high in a nice way, a wonderful flow of energy, slightly how I feel with drinking coffee. It has cleared a lot, exciting yet cosy to listen to.' (LINES.)

'I feel renewed, refreshed, restored. I haven't been this relaxed in years.'

(LINES)

'Pleasant, pure. clear, like a spotlight coming down'. (LINES)

'I feel very light, cleansed and quietened. It cleanses The aura. It is purposeful, a lot of direction and strength in it.' (LINES)

	Energised	Cleared, refreshed, lightened
SQUARES	3	2
CIRCLES	4	1
TRIANGLES	8	7
CLOVER	2	3
ROSE	3	5
HELIX	7	2
LINES	5	12
TOTAL	32%	32%

Out-of-Body or 'tripping' experiences were frequent.

They occurred with sounds like SQUARES (5 of I4 sessions) and FOUR LEAF CLOVER (5 of I5 sessions) which we had previously associated with grounding, as well as with HELIX (5 of I5 sessions) which is often experienced as 'spacey.' However, a high percentage of subjects experienced all The sounds through the solar plexus, so it may be that the impact that the resonances had on that area facilitated O.B.E's.

'Exceedingly spacey, profound, total, reminded me of being stoned. almost psychedelic.' (TRIANGLES.)

'As if elevating in a circle, floating off, stretching - I must be 15 feet long!' (HELIX.)

'A part of me keeps leaving, going through space, weightless, as if being pulled out through my navel.' (HELIX.)

'I am flying upside down, hovering a little and being spun around.' (SQUARES.)

'Feel I am being sucked out to a point up and to the right, being pulled off over my right shoulder.' (CLOVER.)

'I thought I was physically going to fly. I came right out of body for a moment, slipped up then slipped back again.' (CLOVER.)

Several subjects had a strong sense of themselves in a new way, sometimes during the session, or within a few hours afterwards. This was variously described as:

'I returned to a space where I haven't been in a very long time.' (SQUARES.)

'I went to a part of myself I hadn't been to before, like an inner core or fibres.' (HELIX.)

'It brought me back to what is most real in me at the moment. Contacting things on a deep level.' (TRIANGLES.)

'As if in a totally different part of myself' (HELIX.)

'A level of connectedness that has never been there before, now I have a new body.' (CIRCLES.)

'It throws me energies I am not using, uncomfortable from that point of view, but very useful. It shows me that all The energies are there. It removed some anxiety or doubt.' (SQUARES.)

	O.B.E'S, Tipping or Tripping.	Aware of self in new way.
SQUARES	5	2
CIRCLES	3	5
TRIANGLES	2	6
CLOVER	5	4
ROSE	4	-
HELIX	5	5
LINES	4	2
TOTAL	28%	24%

Several subjects experienced a variety of emotions in response to the sounds. Some briefly felt a sense of panic in response to the high speed of HELIX. Other emotional responses were linked to childhood memory or unresolved issues which were apparently triggered by the sounds. In these cases there was usually a sense of resolution as the tape continued.

A surprising reaction was that several subjects went into spontaneous laughter, (5 sessions) which sometimes lasted throughout the session. This seemed to be due to some kind of release.

'Increasing irritation which I thought at first was due to the sound annoying me. It became almost unbearable, then I suddenly realized that I was extremely angry - the irritation was in me, not coming from the sound! The sound put me in touch with my anger and at the same time seemed to clear it. I felt such relief! Next morning my shoulders were more relaxed than they had been in weeks.' (LINES)

'A very Tender one.' (CLOVER)

'Makes me want to laugh, as if it is tickling me.' (HELIX.)

'Sobbing in my chest. crying, feeling there is no point to life which is a common feeling to me. Some anger. Then I am laughing, feeling much better. Afterwards I am much less heavy.' (SQUARES)

Note: This subject was depressive. He chuckled quietly throughout half of the session.

'Makes me laugh, giggly, a lot of emotion, warm, open, positive. It gives me emotional pleasure, I feel compassionate.' (FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

'Anger, stubbornness, a sense of determination.' (FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

'I started laughing uproariously almost immediately. I don't know what was so funny, perhaps The little plips and pleeps that keep happening

to the sound. It is quick-witted.' (LINES.)

	Emotional awareness or response	Laughter
SQUARES	1	1
CIRCLES	2	2
TRIANGLES	2	-
CLOVER	4	1
ROSE	3	-
HELIX	1	-
LINES	1	1
TOTAL	14%	5%

The correlation of each of the sounds with one of the chakras, or energy centres, is as yet a tentative suggestion rather than an established fact. We were therefore interested to see if subjects would experience them in the areas we thought the sounds related to, i.e.

SQUARES with Base or first chakra,

CIRCLES with Sacral or second chakra,

TRIANGLES with Solar Plexus or third chakra,

FOUR LEAF CLOVER with Heart or fourth chakra,

ROSE with Throat or fifth chakra,

HELIX with Brow or sixth chakra,

LINES with Crown or seventh chakra.

it may be a statement of our culture that a majority of subjects experienced all of the sounds through the solar plexus (33%) with the sacral centre a close second (26%)

HELIX gave the most clear response. Of 15 sessions the sound was experienced in the forehead 9 times, in the sacral area 8, and in the solar plexus 7 times. Possibly these multiple area sensations were due to this being experienced as the most stimulating of the sounds.

In 8 of 14 sessions CIRCLES was experienced as affecting the sacral area and this sound was experienced the least in other areas.

TRIANGLES, another stimulating sound, was experienced almost equally in brow and solar plexus (6 and 5 sessions.)

FOUR LEAF CLOVER was felt in the heart area in 8 of 15 sessions.

It may, again, be a statement of our culture that LINES was felt mainly through the solar plexus, the emotional and power centre, rather than through the more spiritually aligned Crown chakra.

'It creates more space around the physical area of the base chakra.' (SQUARES)

'Incredibly powerful. Energy coming in through the base chakra.' (SQUARES)

'Energy coming out of sacrum and pouring out all over me. The sound affects the solar plexus, I felt nauseous.' (SQUARES.)

'Immediate feeling in the base, bottom half of my body felt leaden. It would be good for me, I have trouble accepting the limitations of the human condition. It brought me back to basics.' (SQUARES.)

'It affects the sacrum, a burning ache and a coolness in the base. A sense of expansion in my solar plexus and heart. Afterwards the base feels better, energy flowing in the proper direction.' (SQUARES.)

'Centres me in my heart, expanding, I can feel where I stop it.' (FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

'A ring of coolness round the solar plexus and heart, moving and spreading out in concentric circles.' (FOUR LEAF CLOVER.)

'Centring in brow, looking out from there, powerful and focused.' (HELIX.)

'The high sound affects my forehead. a searchlight. Also affects solar plexus.' (HELIX.)

'Opens up the third eye. Pulls things in from that point. I could float out.' (ROSE)

'A lot going on in solar plexus, energy radiating out from there.' (TRIANGLES.)

'My fibres are going upward from the solar plexus.' (TRIANGLES.)

'I feel it in my head. the crown. My solar plexus is very calm and open.' (LINES)

Experience of chakra areas in relation to sounds.

There were 15 sessions each of HELIX and FOUR LEAF CLOVER. All of the others were 14 sessions. The percentages relate to the total number of sessions. Several subjects experienced the sounds in more than one area.

CROWN - BROW - THROAT - HEART - SOLAR PLEXUS - SACRAL- BASE

SQUARES	-	-	1	3	3	4	4
CIRCLES	1	-	-	2	2	8	-
TRIANGLES	1	6	-	1	5	3	1
CLOVER	-	1	4	8	6	1	-
ROSE	1	5	3	3	3	1	1
HELIX	1	9	3	4	7	8	1
LINES	1	1	-	1	7	1	-
TOTAL	5%	22%	11%	22%	33%	26%	7%

