

SONGSOURCING™

A Song Without Borders Sponsored Initiative

**"Forget your perfect offering.
There's a crack in everything,
that's how the light gets in."**

- Leonard Cohen



INTEGRATION *thru Spontaneous Songmaking*

- Dan Siegel, M.D.

What brings us joy in life? What brings vitality out of us? What brings us health?

One way to understand the basic process that brings us health is called *integration*.

Integration is how we take separate things and then bring them together.

It's a way of creating harmony in life. And when we have harmony we can be more flexible. We're adaptive, we have an inner sense of coherence, we're energized, we're stable. It's the essence of wellbeing.

What can we do in our lives to create integration?

Well, one of the things we can do is participate in playful, creative, spontaneous activities- like *spontaneous songmaking*. Songmaking is a really interesting process because it links a number of parts of our nervous system to each other. So it's a source of creating integration.

For example, in music you have the rhythm, which is resonating with our bodily selves- and you have the melody, which, higher up in the nervous system, in the cortex, is what creates song-patterns.

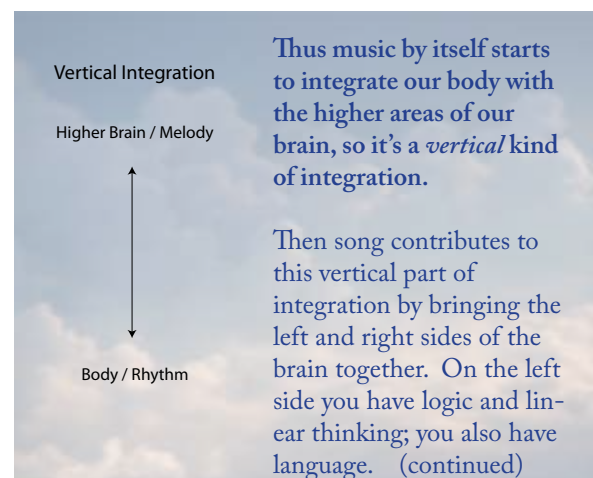
SongSourcing™ supports creative expression as an integrative educational practice.

Developed by artist/educator Michael Stillwater, it uses spontaneous songmaking as a means for 'bringing the inside out'.

"There is a songwriter in everyone. Michael Stillwater's SongSourcing... helps remove internal barriers, allowing the inner songwriter to be free to create."

-Donny Pike

composer, former singer/songwriter of *The Lettermen*



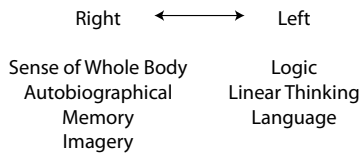
INTEGRATION

with *Spontaneous Songmaking* (continued)

Yet, the amazing thing is on the right side of the brain you've got a sense of the whole body, you have raw spontaneous emotions, and you have autobiographical memory. Memories are often encased within images, rather than language-based.

So when we participate in spontaneous song, often we're generating from our imagination, processes from the right hemisphere- but to bring them out and translate them into words we need to use the left.

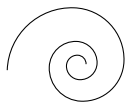
Bi-Lateral Integration



So when you give yourself an invitation to participate in spontaneous song, you're actually linking the stuff of the right with the process of the left in a *bi-lateral kind of integration*.

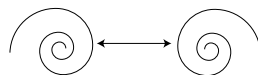
But spontaneous song is even more than vertical integration plus bi-lateral integration. It's also something called *narrative integration*. Narrative is the way we tell stories. Human beings are a story-telling species, and song is a wonderful way to combine stories with spontaneity.

Narrative Integration



Bringing Your Story Out from the Inside

InterPersonal Integration



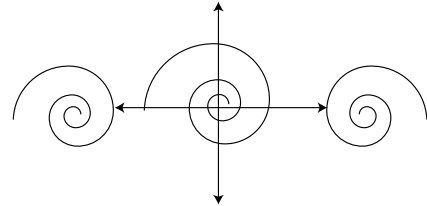
Story Sharing
Co-creation
Two minds (or more)
become a 'we'

In the spontaneous songmaking method, you may bring the themes of your life, (or the life themes of people around you if you're sharing a song), together with the details of the story. It's the telling of a sequence of events, and the inner experience of the people and the events, often in a way you've never thought of before. **So narrative offers a different kind of integration in the brain itself.**

There's even a fourth kind of integration, if you're sharing a song with other people- whether they're listening to you, or co-creating a song with you- then you have something called *inter-personal integration*. That's the way the inside of our minds become linked to the inside of other people. It's the way two minds or more become part of a we.

Spontaneous song offers all of these opportunities to promote integration- *interpersonally, narratively, bi-laterally, and vertically*. And so it's a wonderful way to promote health and thriving with a sense of joy. Creativity emerges out of integration.

Four Domains of Integration in SongSourcing™



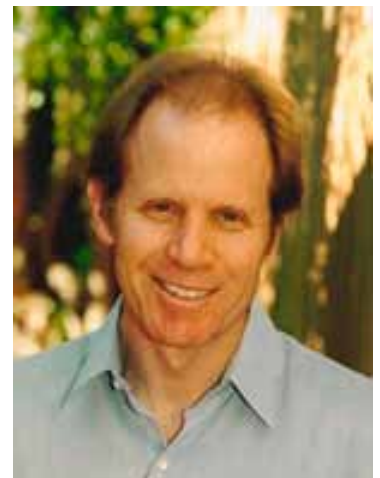
As adults it's fun to participate in spontaneous song, but for children in schools, it's also extremely important to have the opportunity to go beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, and actually develop reflective skills, to develop what I call 'mindsight', and actually see the internal world. Thus in schools we can actually create this 'internal education' by offering all sorts of experiences where kids consider the 'inside' of themselves and the 'inside' of other people. These social and emotional skills that are developed simultaneously help promote academic performance and help people thrive. Spontaneous songmaking is one important way of accessing the inside world and letting it come out.

This is why what's offered through *SongSourcing*, Michael Stillwater's spontaneous songmaking method, is a great opportunity to promote internal education through a creative process of integration across multiple domains, supporting well-being in our lives.

Spontaneous songmaking is a great opportunity to combine play with growth.

Dan Siegel, MD, is Executive Director of the Mindsight Institute, an educational organization that focuses on how the development of insight, compassion and empathy in individuals, families and communities can be enhanced by examining the interface of human relationships and basic biological processes.

He is author of *The Mindful Brain* and *The Developing Mind: Toward a Neurobiology of Interpersonal Experience*.





Responses from SongSourcing Participants

*...my whole system
had been changed and transformed.*

Michael Stillwater is a remarkable teacher, inspiration, and role model for spontaneous song. My experience in his class was nothing short of feeling my whole system had been changed and transformed.

He takes people who, like myself, are shy and uncomfortable around singing, and makes everything alright. To be in his class, there's no judgment. He reminds us we are all free 'to offer amnesty' to our creative self, and that includes our inner singer and songwriter. This frees everyone and allows them to simply create and be spontaneous.

I have watched adults become childlike in their innocence and learn to play again- to be spontaneous, integrate, get out from a linear form of thinking, and move towards a creative, innocent, non-editing way of being.

People within the workshops come from diverse backgrounds and create all sorts of remarkable songs and melodies. I always feel it's something of a miracle.

Not only is this work invaluable for adults, especially educators that are teaching, inspiring, and influencing children, but this is a remarkable work for children themselves. To affirm in them their creativity, their spontaneity, that their voices matter, and that they can feel joyous and highly creative.

Thank you, Michael Stillwater, for creating a space and an environment that allows us all to be childlike!

**-Elizabeth Lindsey, PhD
Filmmaker/Anthropologist**

*...feeling my feelings
and letting the words come.*

I attended a SongSourcing workshop in Italy in the summer of 2009. The background music was so inviting, calling forth a deep wish to sing, along with the words and feelings, thus making it possible for me to fully accept and express what I was experiencing in the very moment.

But then, amazingly, because I was singing about it, and accepting it at the same time, the feeling continued to transform- develop, change, and ultimately turn into a solution for an issue I was dealing with at the time. I was basically just listening to my own words as I was observing my feelings. I didn't feel I was doing anything- all of this was happening, and I was witnessing it. It was a very healing and integrating experience for me.

While there were many experiences, because there were all these different ways of spontaneous songmaking that Michael taught us, I think the most impressive and touching experience for me was just singing what I felt in that very moment. And all of this happened without any doing on my part, basically. It was a stunning experience and I'm very thankful."

**-Nikolaus von Stillfried
workshop participant**



Michael Stillwater

Musical artist, keynote performer, educator, and award-winning songwriter, his spoken word/music albums *Graceful Passages: A Companion For Living And Dying* [Book & 2CD set] (2000), and *Care For The Journey: Messages And Music For Sustaining The Heart Of Healthcare* (2005), co-created with Emmy Award-winning film composer Gary Malkin, have received national acclaim. These recordings, along with his chant and spontaneous song CDs, provide resources for self-reflection, inspiration and insight. Stillwater serves people internationally as a consultant for enhancing creativity and for sustaining health-care using music and the arts. He is Founder of **Inner Harmony** and **Song Without Borders**, dedicated to awakening the inner song, offering retreats and trainings focused on the healing power of song. His forthcoming book/CD, *SongSourcing: Spontaneous Songmaking for Health and Harmony* (2010), will provide educators and others with a hands-on resource for spontaneous songmaking.

Visit www.innerharmony.com for a **SongSourcing** workshop in your area, or order the online course. To sponsor a workshop, contact music@innerharmony.com

www.innerharmony.com
www.companionarts.org
www.songwithoutborders.net

Within our current system of education, music is often neglected in favor of basic academics. At the same time, music has been relegated in our society to the specialists, the singers and musicians who we hear daily on radio, live performance or recordings. Without in any way diminishing the gifts delivered by contemporary musical artists, the fact that we as a culture have relegated music to 'experts', rather than allow it to emerge from each of us as a natural expression of our humanity, versus a critically judged performance, is ultimately detrimental to our happiness, our health, our creative flow- possibly even to our sense of who we are.

What if a way were possible for children and adults to connect to the experience of the music within them, distinct from yet complementary to traditional music education?

What if anyone could easily reconnect to the song inside of them, by expressing how they're feeling and what they're thinking in a free-association manner?

There is a way, and we are calling it *SongSourcing™* _ connecting back to the source of the song inside. It's the practice of spontaneous singing, allowing the inner song to come out. *SongSourcing* is a creative, expressive educational method to reconnect to one's inner self by creating song 'in-the-moment', a way which anyone, regardless of their musical background- or no musical background- can find easy, familiar and immediate.

