

Fundamentalism and Artistry: A Look at Religious Trauma and the Vocalist

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Definitions:

Fundamentalism:

1. A strict, literalist interpretation of a holy Scripture
2. A 20th century Protestant movement emphasizing certain “fundamentals” of Christianity

Evangelicalism: Protestant movement that emphasizes:

1. The four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
2. Personal Conversion (or indoctrination since birth)
3. Scriptural authority (Sola Scriptura: by Scripture alone)
4. Preaching the Gospel – “Good News”

Trauma: A reaction of the Nervous System to an event or upbringing that changes a person’s ability to deal with everyday events.

Self: The way the brain senses internal processes and external stimuli and creates an identity around it

Agency: The feeling of having control over one’s life, future, and surroundings

Part 1: Impacts of Fundamentalist Upbringing:

- Hierarchy of importance/ reliance on the church
- Tainted image of humanity and self
- Loss of critical thinking
- Loss of identity and individualism
- “Us versus them” mentality
- Enforcement of patriarchy and purity Culture
- Utilizes cult manipulation tactics for congressional retention
- Often condones homophobia, transphobia, racism, Christian Nationalism

How do you think these things could impact artistry?

Room for Additional Notes on Part 1

Part 2: Impacts of Trauma on the Body and Mind

- Religious Trauma Syndrome: often silent because:
 - It doesn't appear as serious to the outside world compared to traumas that are physical
 - Church is seen as good and morally upright
 - There is the fear of severing family and community ties by speaking up
- "Self" and "Agency" are diminished in Fundamentalist communities, while dependency on the Church and Jesus is seen as holy and righteous
 - How can you manage artistry and the physical sensations of the voice if you are trained to lose the self, numbing these physical sensations?
- Additional Impacts: Perfectionism; fear responses leading to inaction; dependency on attractor states; issues with development and attachment; difficulty with language, memory, and imagination

How do you think these things could impact artistry?

Room for Additional Notes on Part 2

Part 3: Impact of the Vocal Studio

Functional Voice Training

- Utilizing anatomical terminology and evidence-based practices
- If you understand how your instrument works, you can create different combinations of different sounds
- Takes the “mystery” out of singing so that it can be trained and REPEATED
- Criticism: hyper fixation on internalized focus

Cross-Training

- Thyroarytenoid (TA) and Cricothyroid (CT) muscles control how thick or thin the vocal folds get
- Just like you need to strengthen BOTH the biceps and triceps for a stronger arm, the TA and CT muscles need to be worked in order to create a stronger instrument
- Criticism: likelihood of mastery of many different genres seen as impractical and improbable by some

Speech Training

- Often present in collegiate Theatre programs
- Utilize a Bottom-up training to build confidence
- Helps fight gender stereotypes in the speaking voice
- Speech to Singing training provides the singer with a sense of self within their craft

Feedback Tactics:

- More feedback is necessary at the beginning of the process
- Give students helpful affirmations and workable feedback (as opposed to “good” versus “bad”)
- Should come from a place of empathy and understanding

Room for Additional Notes on Part 3

Additional Resources

Part 1: Religious Trauma

- *Leaving the Fold: A Guide to Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving their Religion* by Marlene Winell, Ph. D.
- *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women became Gospel Truth* by Beth Allison Barr, Ph.D.
- *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* by Kristin Kobes Du Mez, Ph.D.
- *Evangelical Disenchantment: 9 Portraits of Faith and Doubt* by David Hempton

Part 2: Trauma and the Body

- *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.
- *The Boy who was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook* by Bruce Perry, M.D. Ph.D.
- *In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness* by Peter A. Levine, Ph.D.
- *Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy* Pat Ogden, Kekuni Minton, and Clare Pain

Part 3: In the Voice Studio

- *The Musician's Mind: Teaching, Learning, and Performance in the Age of Brain Science* by Lynn Helding, M.M.
- *Cross-Training in the Voice Studio: A Balancing Act* by Mary Saunders-Barton, M.A., and Norman Spivey, DMA
- *A Systematic Approach to Voice: The Art of Studio Application* by Kari Ragan, DMA
- *The Singing Athlete: Brain-Based Training for your Voice* by Andrew Byrne, M.M.