Voice Unbound

HARNESSING VOCAL POWER FOR EMOTIONAL HEALING



Story
Practice
Expression
Healing
A More You

ZEENIE SUMMERS SARUMI

GROWTH LIFE POWER

Voice *Unbound*

A BOOK BY

Voice *Unbound*

Harnessing Vocal Power for Emotional Healing

ZEENIE SUMMERS SARUMI

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Gentle Wellbeing Disclaimer

This book offers gentle guidance and insights into the power of the voice for emotional well-being and personal expression. The practices and perspectives shared here are intended to support your journey of self-discovery and creative exploration. However, this book is not a substitute for professional therapy or medical advice.

If you are experiencing significant emotional distress or health concerns, please consult with a qualified healthcare provider or mental health professional.

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A NOTE FROM ZEENIE

Hello, and welcome.

I'm Zeenie, and like many of you, I have spent a good portion of my life with a song in my heart. I have used my voice in song and storytelling, in performance and in private, in words and in sounds that did not need words at all. I have sung in English and Yoruba.

I have hummed, prayed and explored invocations drawn from the different spiritual languages that have accompanied my life. Sometimes my voice has carried meaning. Sometimes it has simply carried breath. As a singer and songwriter, it would be easy for me to speak about the voice only as an instrument—something to train, strengthen, control and present.

That is one truth. But it is not the whole truth. The voice also exists before the performance. It is there in the involuntary sigh that leaves the body after a demanding day.

In the tune you make up while moving around the house. In the low hum that asks nothing of you. In the tremble that appears when a sentence matters. In the prayer whispered when polished language feels too far away.

Over time, I began to understand that the voice is not merely for performance or for being heard by others. Sometimes it is the safest, quietest and most intimate doorway back to ourselves. For a long time, I viewed my voice through the lens of expectation: Would it be good enough? Would it sound beautiful?

Yet stillness and silence taught me that the voice carries much more than melody. It holds breath, memory, identity, emotion and the stories we may not yet know how to tell. This book grew from my curiosity about that other voice—the one beneath presentation. I wanted to understand why making a simple sound could sometimes alter the feeling of a moment.

Why singing with other people could create a kind of belonging that conversation did not. Why breath, tone and rhythm could reveal something the thinking mind had not yet put into language. And why, at certain moments, a hum can reach somewhere that words cannot. In these pages, I want to share the quiet revelations I have gathered about voice—not as a technical manual, but as an invitation.

A NOTE FROM ZEENIE

An invitation to explore the sounds you already carry. An invitation to listen to their whispers. An invitation to meet breath, resonance, silence, song, chant, movement and community with curiosity rather than judgement. I am not offering myself as a therapist, nor presenting the voice as a cure.

I am writing as a singer, songwriter, storyteller and fellow human being who has spent time listening to what voice can hold. The scientific and therapeutic ideas in these pages are offered carefully, alongside gentle practices for personal exploration. Take what supports you. Leave what does not.

Seek qualified care whenever an experience needs more support than a book can give. You do not need to call yourself a singer to enter these pages. You do not need a powerful voice, a wide range or the confidence to perform. This is not about becoming a different singer—or becoming a singer at all.

It is about discovering the expressive and restorative possibilities of the voice you already possess. You already have a place to begin: one breath, one vibration, one honest sound. My hope is that Voice Unbound becomes a warm and grounding companion on your path. Most of all, I hope it helps you listen without immediately trying to correct what you hear.

Your voice does not have to prove anything here. It only has to be met.

With warmth,
Zeenie

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The Voice You Already Carry



Listen gently. Nothing here needs to be performed.

Before the Note

Before there is a song, there is breath. Before there is a speech, there is sensation. Before you decide what to say, your body may already have spoken: a sigh, a laugh, a swallowed word, a hum, a gasp, a sound of relief when you finally close the door behind you. These small sounds rarely receive much attention. They are not rehearsed. They do not arrive dressed for an audience. Yet they belong to your voice as surely as any sentence or melody.

We are often taught to think of the voice through performance. Is it strong? Is it clear? Is it pleasant? Does it carry? Can it hold a note? Can it persuade a room? These questions have their place, but they can make the voice feel like a finished product—something valuable only when it is controlled, impressive or approved.

This book begins somewhere quieter. It begins with the voice as evidence of life moving through you.

The Voice Before Performance

Your first relationship with voice was not technical. Long before you knew grammar, pitch or social etiquette, sound helped you reach towards the world. It announced hunger, discomfort, delight and need.

As we grow, vocal expression becomes more complicated. We learn which sounds are welcomed. We notice when speaking brings attention, disapproval or misunderstanding. We may become careful. We may soften ourselves, speak quickly, apologise before making a point, laugh when uncomfortable, or remain silent until we are certain it is safe to be heard.

None of this means that the true voice has disappeared. It means the voice has learned from experience. That distinction matters.

If your voice becomes tight in certain rooms, it is not necessarily failing you. If it shakes during an important conversation, it may be carrying the weight of importance. If singing freely feels easier alone than in front of another person, your body may be responding to exposure rather than lack of ability.

The task is not to bully the voice into confidence. The task is to become curious about what it is already communicating.

> VOICE NOTE
>
> Your voice is not merely the sound you make. It is also the relationship you have with being heard.

What the Voice Can Reveal

Emotion does not live in the mind alone. It changes breathing, posture, muscle tone, attention and movement. Because voice depends upon breath and the coordinated movement of the body, it can change with those states too. You may recognise some of these shifts:

- Anxiety may shorten the breath or hurry the words.
- Sadness may lower energy and flatten the tone.
- Anger may sharpen volume, pace or articulation.
- Fear may make speech thin, quiet, interrupted or temporarily unavailable.
- Relief may arrive as an audible exhale.
- Joy may widen the sound before you have consciously decided to express it.

These are tendencies, not rules. Human beings do not all sound the same when they feel the same thing. Culture, personality, health, environment and habit all shape expression. The aim is not to diagnose yourself from a vocal clue. It is simply to listen.

When you notice your voice without immediately correcting it, you gather information. You may hear tiredness before admitting you need rest. You may notice that your throat tightens around a particular subject. You may discover that humming makes an ordinary task feel less lonely. You may find that a certain song gives safe shape to an emotion that prose cannot yet hold. The voice can be a messenger. It should not be forced to become a verdict.

A Sound Does Not Need a Name

There are experiences we can explain clearly, and others that resist a neat sentence. Sound can meet us in that unfinished place. A hum does not require a conclusion. A long vowel can be felt without being translated. A melody can hold tenderness, grief and gratitude at once without demanding that one feeling defeat the others.

This is one reason voice can be useful in emotional exploration: it allows expression without requiring immediate explanation. But gentleness is essential. More sound is not always better. A practice that feels settling for one person may feel exposing or uncomfortable for another.

You are allowed to stop. You are allowed to keep your eyes open, make the sound quieter, shorten the exercise, or simply listen to your breath instead. Choice is part of the practice.

PAUSE & NOTICE — YOUR EVERYDAY VOICE

Without changing anything, notice your voice during one ordinary part of today. Perhaps it is while answering the telephone, greeting someone, speaking to yourself, singing along to music or sighing at the end of a task. Ask:
What happens to my breath?
Where do I feel the sound in my body?
Do I make myself louder, smaller, faster or softer?
What feels natural? What feels performed?
Do not try to improve the sound.

TRY THIS — THE FIRST HUM

This three-minute practice is an introduction to vibration, not a singing exercise.
1. Find a comfortable position. Sit, stand or lie down—whichever allows you to breathe without strain.
2. Let your jaw be easy. Keep your lips gently together rather than pressed shut.
3. Take an ordinary breath in. There is no need to fill the lungs dramatically.
4. As you breathe out, allow a quiet “mmm” to appear. Choose an easy note. If no note feels comfortable, make the sound very softly or return to silent breathing.
5. Notice where the vibration is easiest to feel: lips, face, throat, chest, or somewhere else.
6. Rest for a breath. Repeat several times without chasing a particular sensation.
7. When you have finished, remain still for a moment. Notice whether anything has changed—and allow “nothing changed” to be a valid answer.

The point is not to manufacture calm. The point is to meet your voice without asking it to perform.

If humming causes pain, dizziness, distress or vocal strain, stop. Persistent vocal discomfort should be discussed with an appropriately qualified health professional.

A Small Record

Complete these sentences in a notebook or voice memo:

- Before I hummed, I noticed …
- While making the sound, I felt …
- The easiest part was …
- The part I resisted was …
- If my voice needed something from me today, it might be …

There are no model answers. A record helps you notice patterns over time, but it does not need to become another task to complete perfectly.

> **CLOSING INTEGRATION**
>
> The voice you already carry is not waiting somewhere in the future, after confidence, training or permission. It is here in the breath you release, the words you choose, the sounds you swallow, the melody you remember, and the hum that belongs to no audience. This first meeting asks very little of you. Listen.

Make one easy sound if you wish. Notice what happens. You do not have to sound beautiful to sound true.