

Rhythm, the Nervous System & the Cycle of Sound

The Nervous System (NS)

Most people aren't "too sensitive"
they are often **not settled enough in their system**

The nervous system is always listening
for cues of **safety, rhythm, and predictability**

It is not hearing sound as music first
It is tracking:

- Is this safe?
- Is this predictable?
- Is this overwhelming?
- Is there space to process this?

Two key states

Sympathetic → **Yang**

Activation · mobilisation · readiness

This is the part of the system that prepares us to act

- increased energy
- focus
- movement
- alertness

Helpful when balanced

Overwhelming when constant

Parasympathetic → **Yin**

Rest · digest · repair

This is the part of the system that allows us to settle

- slowing down
- softening
- processing
- restoring

This is where integration happens

A regulated system can **move between these states**
rather than getting stuck in one

Rhythm — Drum as a Teacher

Going back to the drum on day one, we learnt that rhythm is not just about sound — it is about how energy moves

The drum showed us a simple but powerful structure:

Every sound contains a cycle

A beginning · a middle · an end

Every sound contains a **cycle**

A beginning · a middle · an end

Three core phases

Strike → **initiation** → **Yang**

The moment of action

Where something begins

Resonance → **vibration** → **unfolding**

The continuation of the sound

Requires both Yin and Yang

Silence → **space** → **integration** → **Yin**

Where the system processes

Where change actually lands

Cycle of energy

As facilitators, we are shaping:

- how something begins
- how it sustains
- how it resolves

Transformation doesn't just happen in the sound

It happens in the space that follows it

Trust the full cycle

Working with these dynamics

In sound therapy, we are working with these dynamics

We are not just creating sound

We are influencing how energy moves between:

Activation ↔ Integration

The Gong & Rhythm

A gong is not just Yang

It is a **rhythmic force acting on the system**

So the question becomes:

- Are you pushing intensity without rhythm?

Or

- Are you guiding a wave?

Activation → peak → resolution → integration

Because this is what the **nervous system is tracking**

Not sound as performance

But sound as **experience**