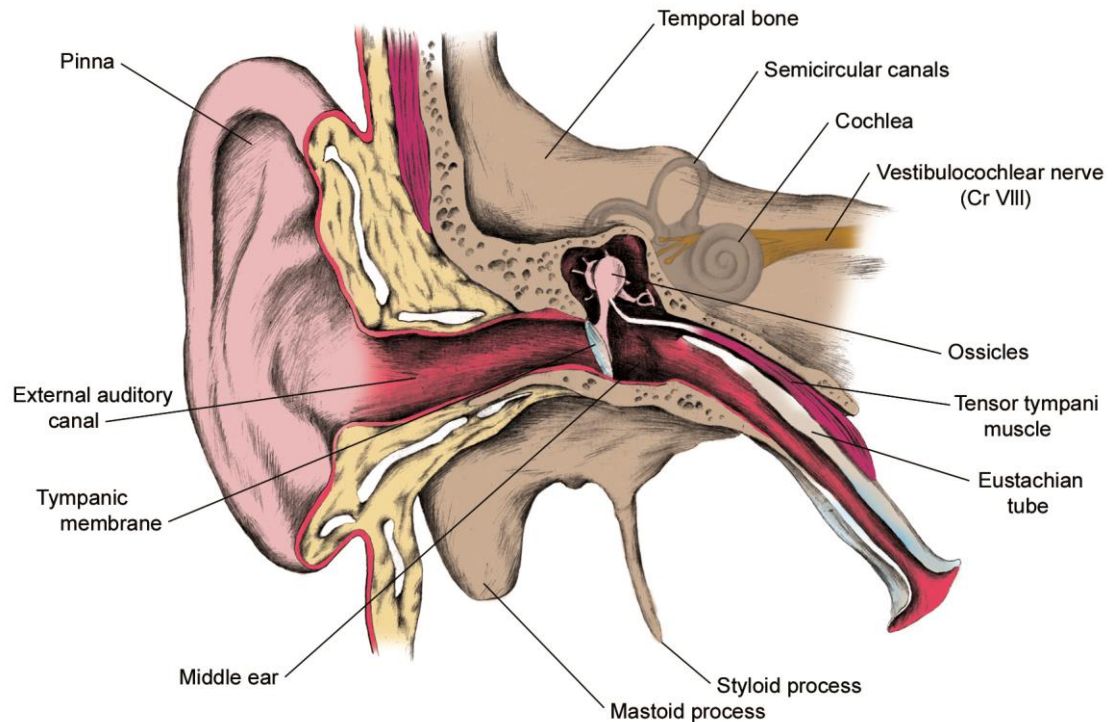


Case study 2 - Catriona



Hearing loss:

There are many causes of hearing loss, some transient, some permanent, some eminently resolvable, others the result of irreversible damage. In many situations, cranio-sacral integration can be highly effective where other methods have not helped and the prognosis can be very positive.

Catriona had been experiencing increasing deafness in her right ear. This was not only uncomfortable but was proving very difficult in her communications with others, both at work and socially, leaving her feeling frustrated, embarrassed, and tending to avoid social activities. Her right ear felt constantly blocked, the world around her sounded muffled. Her right nostril also felt blocked. She blew her nose frequently to try and relieve the congestion, and the whole right side of her head felt heavy and congested. She was not aware of having suffered any ear infections, either recently or in childhood.

Her first course of action was to go her doctor who prescribed antibiotics. This did not make any difference, so the doctor then prescribed decongestants. This still did not provide any relief and her deafness and feeling of blockage continued to deteriorate, to her continuing frustration. Further visits to the doctor did not provide any further solutions. By the time she came to cranio-sacral integration her condition had been deteriorating for over two years and realizing that orthodox medical treatment was not helping her, she decided to try something else.

Engaging with Catriona's system revealed that the whole right side of her head and face was tight, including the temporal, mandibular, maxillary, nasal, occipital and occipito-mastoid areas, and that this tightness extended down through her neck, shoulder and arm and through the right side of her thorax. On enquiry, she reported that her right arm also felt tight and restricted most of the time, especially noticeable when reaching for things.

Her main concern was her hearing, but it was immediately apparent that the symptoms in her ear were part of a much wider picture and were being maintained and perpetuated by the tension she was holding throughout the right hand side of her body. There was undoubtedly restriction in her head and face which needed to be addressed, but it was also essential from the start that treatment should also involve the release of the tightness through her thorax, shoulder and arm, up through her neck – which was pulling her head and neck into a contracted pattern of tension, tightening the muscles and soft tissues at the base of the skull and contributing to the congestion and poor drainage of her ear.

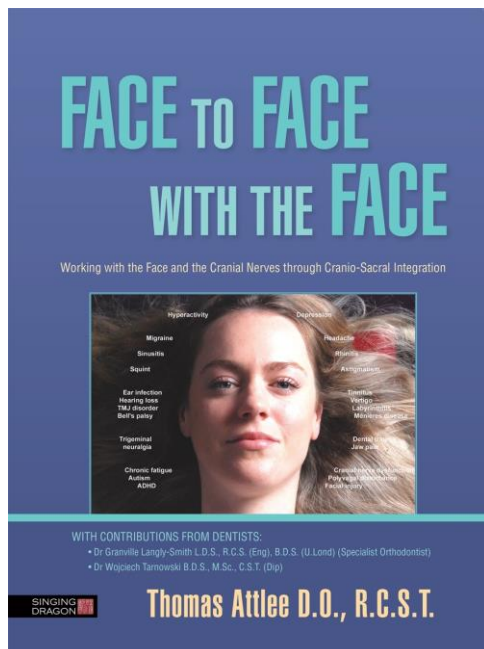
As the right side of her body released, the cranium became more responsive, and the various restrictions in the temporal bone, occipito-mastoid suture, sphenotemporal suture, sterno-cleido-mastoid muscle, suboccipital muscles, Eustachian tube, nasal bones, maxillae, and mandible all began to release and settle into greater mobility and balance.

The hearing loss had only become apparent around two years ago, but it was clearly evident from the quality of the tissues that the pattern of tightness and restriction on her right side had been developing for many years prior to that. Since the pattern affecting her ear was so widespread and long-standing and was being perpetuated by her day-to-day activities, progress was slow at first, with little symptomatic relief initially, only transient glimpses of change during the first few sessions, with gradually increasing indications of change as treatment progressed, and it took around three months and ten treatments before Catriona's hearing fully returned. This inevitably led to her doubting the effectiveness of the treatment, and she required constant reassurance that the situation was progressing, that underlying changes were taking place, and that the treatment would be successful, in order to ensure that she followed the process through.

Further suggestions regarding self care were also beneficial – encouraging her to sleep on her left side (in order to encourage drainage of the right ear and to avoid compressing the tight right side), to avoid blowing her nose forcefully (as this was forcing mucus up into her ear and sinuses), to hold her phone on her left side (to reduce the tension that she held in her right arm and shoulder and to avoid the tendency to bend her head and neck to the right), and to be mindful of the way that she used her right arm in day-to-day activities, developing a more relaxed, less intense use of the arm and shoulder.

The changes took time, but after three months her hearing was fully restored – for the first time in over two years – to her great relief. She also felt much more comfortable and at ease in her body generally.

Thomas Attlee is founder and principal of the College of Cranio-Sacral Therapy, London, the first and most established college of Cranio-Sacral Therapy in Europe, now in its 31st year. He is the author of “Cranio-Sacral Integration – Foundation” and the newly published “Face to Face with the Face”. www.ccst.co.uk



Thomas Attlee's new book *Face to Face with the Face* explains how Cranio-Sacral Integration can help a wide range of persistent and painful conditions involving the face and the cranial nerves – from trigeminal neuralgia, sinusitis, hearing loss and TMJ syndrome to autism, chronic fatigue and polyvagal disturbance – through a deeper understanding of quantum levels of health and the biodynamic forces which underlie the body's inherent healing potential.

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