

Speech connects us so immediately and vitally because it is a physical, bodily process, to begin with. Not a mental or spiritual one, wherever it may end.

Telling 12
If you mount two clock pendulums side by side on the wall, they will gradually begin to swing together. They synchronise each other by picking up tiny vibrations they each transmit through the wall.

Any two things that oscillate at about the same interval, if they're physically near each other, will gradually tend to lock in and pulse at exactly the same interval. Things are lazy. It takes less energy to pulse cooperatively than to pulse in opposition. Physicists call this beautiful, economical laziness mutual phase locking, or entrainment.

All living beings are oscillators. We vibrate. Amoeba or human, we pulse, move rhythmically, change rhythmically; we keep time. You can see it in the amoeba under the microscope, vibrating in frequencies on the atomic, the molecular, the subcellular, and the cellular levels. That constant, delicate, complex throbbing is the process of life itself made visible.

We huge many-celled creatures have to coordinate millions of different oscillation frequencies, and interactions among frequencies, in our bodies and our environment. Most of the coordination is effected by synchronising the pulses, by getting the beats into a master rhythm, by entrainment.

Internally, a sterling example is the muscle cells of the heart, every single one of them going *lub-dub, lub-dub*, together with all the others, for a lifetime.

Then there are the longer body rhythms, circadian cycles, that take a day to happen: hunger, eating, digesting, excreting; sleeping and waking. Such rhythms entrain all the organs and functions of body and mind.

And the really long bodily rhythms, which we may not even recognise, are connected with our environment, length of daylight, season, the moon.

Condon went on to photograph people listening to a speaker. His films show listeners making almost the same micromovements of lips and face as the speaker is making, almost simultaneously—a fiftieth of a second behind. They are locked into the same beat. "Communication," he says, "is like a dance, with everyone engaged in intricate, shared movements across many subtle dimensions."