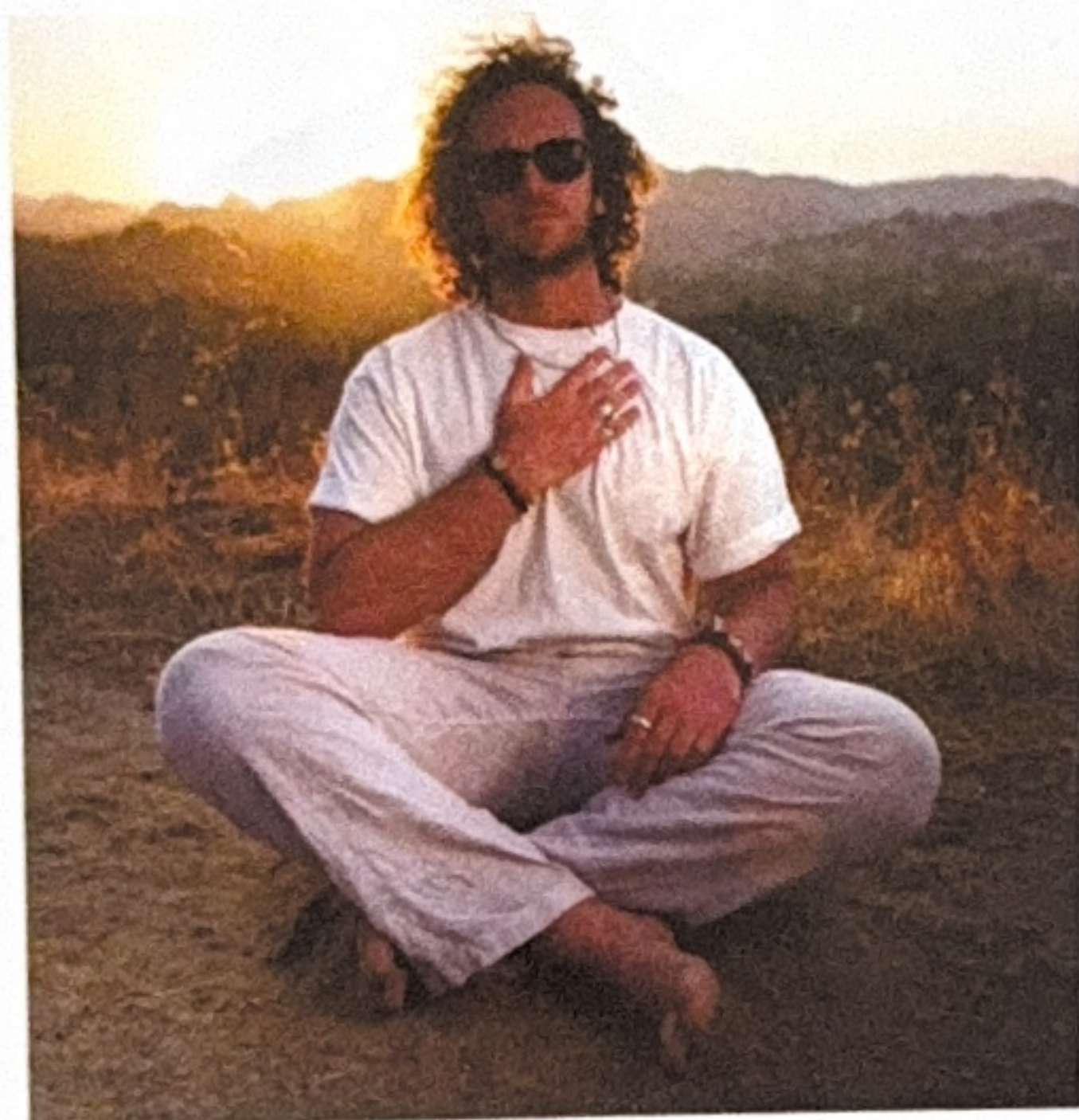


SOUND

STORIES BY
TIANA MOLONY

Can Sound Heal?

This DJ is experimenting with frequencies in house music to find out.

Long before modern science explored its benefits, people recognized sound's impact on the body and mind. Sound healing has ancient roots, woven into the traditions of cultures across India, Egypt, Greece, and China.

That understanding of sound's restorative potential continues to inspire modern practitioners — among them, Lincoln Jesser, a DJ who experiments with frequencies to promote well-being.

By blending his passions for sound meditation and house music, Jesser gave rise to “healing house,” a genre he coined that's rooted in vibrational awareness. “There's a supreme magic behind it,” says Jesser, who was born and raised in the Coachella Valley.

He creates music tuned to specific solfeggio frequencies — tones, measured in hertz, believed to resonate with different emotional and spiritual states. He performs his songs live, but his shows offer more than music. Some include full meditation segments. “We're doing a lot to harness the power of group vibrations,” he explains.

The intention aligns with a growing body of research exploring the therapeutic potential of sound. cursory studies point to stress-reducing effects such as slowed breathing and a reduced heart rate.

For skeptics, Jesser's advice is simple: Just try it. Whether you attend one of his healing house shows or take part in a sound bath, “I guarantee at the very least, you're gonna leave feeling relaxed,” he says, and that's “more significant than you might realize.”

BETTER HEARING BY DESIGN

Why supporting your hearing now can boost connection, clarity, and long-term brain health.

■ Advances in hearing aid technology have made it easier than ever to stay connected and engaged, and experts say early intervention can make a big difference.

Hearing loss doesn't happen all at once — it's a slow process, says Dr. Wade Zarella, director of audiology at the Hearing Institute of the Desert. Early signs might include difficulty understanding speech, hearing higher-pitched voices, or following conversations in noisy places like restaurants.

Zarella encourages people to take hearing health seriously — not only to improve day-to-day communication, but also to support long-term cognitive function. “There's nothing that looks older than someone who puts their hand up to their ear and says, ‘Huh?’ and ‘What?’,” he says.

Thanks to artificial intelligence, today's hearing aids have evolved into multifunctional tools. “Instead of just being hearing aids, they are an all-purpose device now,” Zarella explains. “That's opening them up to more people who otherwise might have been hesitant to consider them.”

AI allows hearing aids to adjust dynamically in real time, filtering out background noise and clarifying speech in complex environments, like concerts or crowded cafés. “The AI has given these manufacturers the ability to make these decisions lightning fast and accurately — without distortion,” he says.

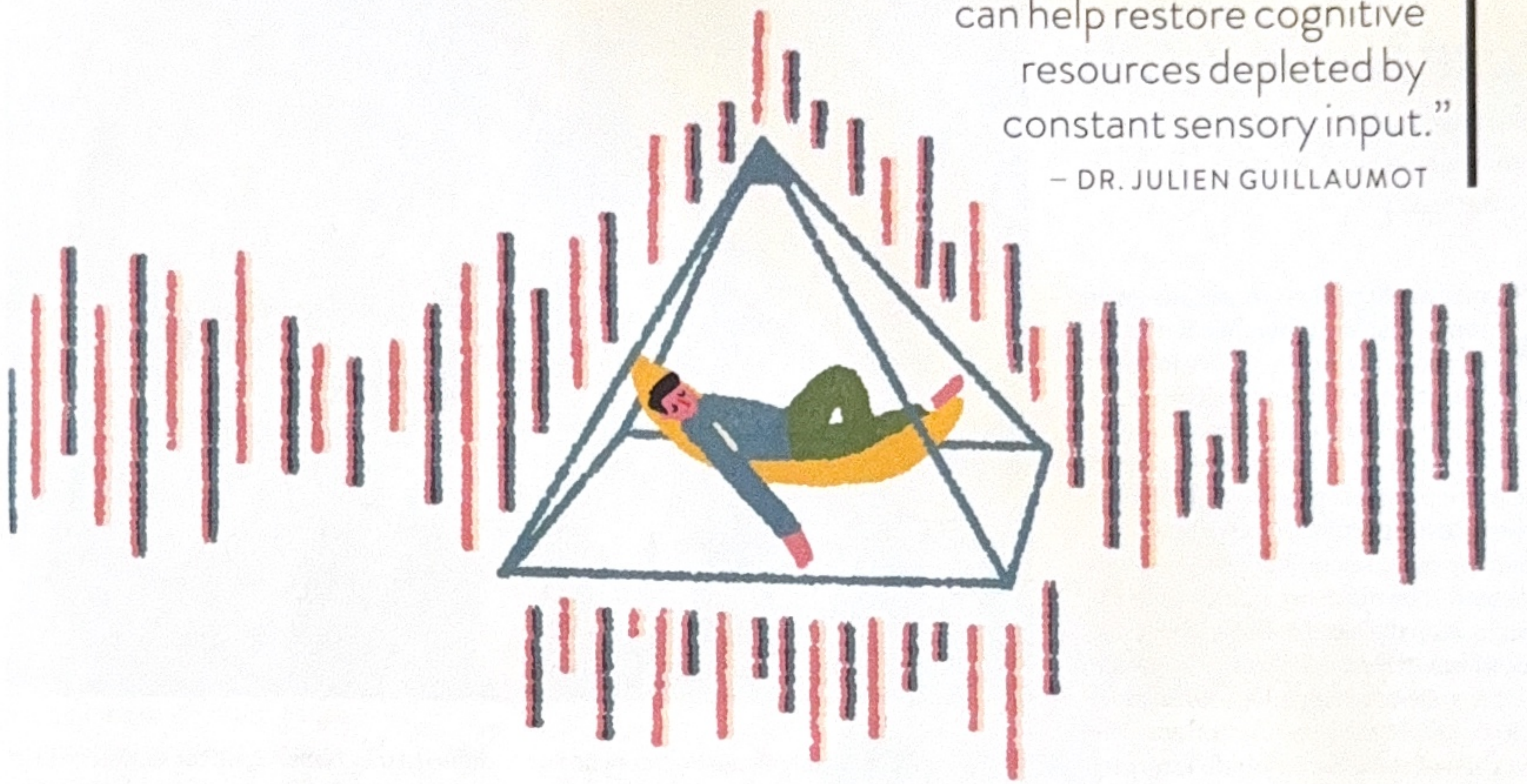
The benefits extend beyond clearer conversations. Recent research suggests they also play a protective role in long-term brain health. A 2024 neuroscience study out of Melbourne, Australia, found that older adults with hearing loss who began using hearing aids showed cognitive stability over three years, while a comparison group experienced declines in memory, attention, and motor skills.

Although age-related hearing loss often begins in the 60s, audiologists like Zarella are seeing younger patients with early ear damage. Genetics can play a role, but lifestyle factors matter too. He recommends using earplugs at concerts, turning down the volume on headphones, and taking breaks after prolonged noise exposure.

Bottom line: Supporting your hearing is a smart investment in your health, at any age.

“Periods of silence
can help restore cognitive
resources depleted by
constant sensory input.”

— DR. JULIEN GUILLAUMOT



How Silence Affects the Brain

Why a little quiet time can improve focus, creativity, and emotional well-being.

There's a certain kind of calm that settles in when the noise stops. When distractions fade, and you lean into the stillness, ideas often come more clearly, and the body begins to unwind.

Studies show that incorporating quiet time into a daily routine offers a range of benefits, including reduced cortisol levels, improved sleep, enhanced creativity, and possibly even brain growth.

Research has found that chronic noise exposure can elevate cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone. "Overall, periods of silence can help restore cognitive resources depleted by constant sensory input," says Dr. Julien Guillamot, a neuropsychologist at Palm Springs Neuropsychology. For those living in high-stimulation environments,

even a few minutes of intentional quiet each day can help lower stress levels. "Allowing our brain to be in silence allows for rest and eases emotional processing," he explains.

Silence may also play a role in supporting long-term brain health. A 2015 study published in *Brain Structure and Function* examined how different auditory stimuli — including ambient noise, white noise, vocalizations from mouse pups, Mozart, and silence — affected neuron growth in adult mice. While both Mozart and silence increased precursor cell proliferation, only silence led to a greater number of new, immature neurons after seven days.

These findings suggest that quiet doesn't just soothe the nervous system — it may also promote self-awareness and neuroplasticity. "Silence allows for interoception, which is the ability to tune in to your internal body sensations," Guillamot says. In silence, the mind has a chance to rest — and perhaps, to grow in ways we're only beginning to understand.