

# Stress, Burnout and Breathwork *with Dan Brulé*



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# STRESS, BURNOUT AND BREATHWORK

*With Dan Brulé*

*This seminar took place at the Woodlands Healing Spa & Center for Conscious Living outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, in May of 2013. The following is a summary and list of the principles and practices presented at the seminar:*

- Drop the idea of scarcity and a sense of limitation
- In reality the more we give, the more we receive
- Remain connected to your Source when serving and giving to others
- Re-awaken the childlike unmanageable spontaneous energy
- Use the breath to create a space in you for more energy
- Fill yourself and overflow versus giving from a limited supply
- Draw energy up from within you, not just from around you
- Learn the art of taking “minute vacations”
- Be more playful in life; bring more playfulness to your work
- Balance serious work time with afterhours playfulness and fun
- Establish unconscious breathing patterns that recharge and restore you
- Master the “full yogic breath”
- Learn to infuse every cell of your body with breath energy
- Learn De-Reflexive Breathing
- Use your breathing to generate energy at will
- Aim to be an ever-flowing source of aliveness
- Align what you do for money with your purpose in life
- Drop energy suckers like judgment, resistance, and attachment
- Free yourself of guilt, shame, anger, resentment, etc.
- Realize that everything is love, that we live in an infinite ocean of love
- Free up blocked/stuck energy with forgiveness and gratitude
- Don’t resist down cycles: they are a natural part of life and growth
- Identify and eliminate chronic muscular tension
- Master the art of “Engaging the Exhale;” Learn to let go
- Use your breath to clear the fears that are held in your body
- Master the cleansing breath: the “coming home breath”
- Practice faith and trust. You are always already safe and free!
- Learn to draw in energy and to release tension at the same time
- Breathe in a way that both charges & relaxes, strengthens & soothes you



*This Stress, Burnout and Breathwork Seminar was corded live, and the audio recording is available. This is an edited transcript of that recording.*

**Managing energy and preventing burnout is something that's important for me, and it's important for anyone who is doing healing work with other people.** During a breathing session, if I am giving a lot of myself, then it is very easy for me to get depleted, tired, or burned out.

However if during a session what I am doing is tapping into the source of my energy, then the more I work, the more energy I have. Rather than getting depleted, giving to others has the opposite effect: I am charged, I am have more energy.

If you are going to give of yourself, it's better to fill yourself up and give from the overflow, rather than dip into a half-filled bucket. Rather than sacrificing something of yourself and giving from a sense of scarcity, you need to learn to receive while you give, and then share from your abundance.

Starting with the sense or the belief that you have a limited amount of energy available to you is a trap. If I have a container—my personal container or personal supply of energy—and I give only from that, then with each cupful I give to others, I have less and less for myself.

Making sure that I am connected to my source—making sure that I have one foot in the world and one foot in the ocean at all times—this is the best way to make “burnout” a moot issue.

Some fundamental things have to be put in place, or changed: starting with the idea of limitation. That would be a really good place for you to start. Question the conditioning and programming, the beliefs and feelings that you have around limitation of any kind, of any sort, on any level.

If that concept is functioning in me then, then it stands to reason that if you give me something, then now you have less and I have more. And if I give you something, then I have less and you have more. We are stuck in a place where burnout is inevitable if we allow that program to run us.

**One of the basic things about the spiritual life—about spirituality let's say—and maybe what's connected to something we could call ultimate reality is this...**

I use the analogy of a wrist watch. On my first to Russia, I saw that people were really into psychic phenomena and extra-sensory phenomena. They were open to all the mystical realms... So we asked the question: “How do you know what is ultimately real? What is ultimate reality, and ultimate truth?”

I know that this wrist watch is not ultimately real. On the purely spiritual level it's more of an illusion than an actual thing. If I give it to someone, then I don't have it any more. That's proof that I am not functioning on the level of spiritual truth—of ultimate reality.

If it's real and if I give it away, then I should have more of it. If that doesn't happen, then I am stuck on this level of duality, of illusion, where... It's like money... If you give me money, now you have less of it and I have more.

This makes giving a sticky issue, and it makes receiving difficult, because if I receive this way, then you will have less, and I don't want you to have less. I would like to have more but I don't want you to have less. So we're stuck in that realm of scarcity and lack.

*(Note: For the record, contrary to common belief, there is actually no lack or scarcity of money in the world. There is an infinite supply of it. In fact, money is printed on demand, and the supply of it is controlled.)*

If I can give this watch to somebody and not have it, then it is proof to me that it is not ultimately real. We have to look for those things that when we give them away, we have more of them for ourselves. The more we give, the more we have. Love is a perfect example of that spiritual reality. In the giving of love, we receive more love. In the giving, more is generated from beyond our limited ego.

**Most people learned to manage their energy when they were very small children...when they had both feet in the ocean...**before their ego had solidly formed... before a palpable sense of a separate self had formed in them. That's why some things in children are so much more beautiful than in adults.

Take the example of a tiny child who is expressing anger. It's so cute! You want to pick them up and hug them. You goo goo gaga them! But when an adult expresses anger, you want to turn away... ick... ugh...! You don't want any part of it or any part of them. There is something ugly about it: ego. When a small child expresses anger there's no ego in it: just pure energy. And there is something beautiful about it.

Look at the abundance of energy that children have. In fact they have so much energy it disturbs the people around them. It is unmanageable. Children cannot easily manage their energy. It takes a lot of practice and effort—and it takes punishment and reward—for a child to learn and develop the ability to manage their infinite spontaneous energy.

In fact the only way to manage your energy is to turn it down, turn it down to a manageable level. You can't manage infinite energy. However you can limit the supply of energy, you can manage it if you only allow a small amount to come through you. That's what children learn to do.

Adults teach them—force them—to do it. You know: “sit still, be quiet!” Do you know how hard it is for a child to sit still and be quiet? Do you know how much practice it takes to manage the kind of energy we were born with? Yet we somehow learn to do it.

So one way to prevent burnout is to go back and turn that original energy back up, so that you are not managing a diminished level of energy. Bring it back up to an unmanageable level. I think it has to be unmanageable. It's bigger than you are, stronger than you are. It manages you!

If you are managing it, you have somehow gotten on top of it. When you get on top of something, the weight of your ego suppresses it. Look at kids in a schoolyard. The big kid, the bully, who can lie on top of the little kid, can control the little kid.

We are using certain forces and dynamics in life that are useful: useful in the world, in certain circumstances, but in a way we are suppressing something bigger; we are limiting something grander, as a trade-off for feeling in control.

There are a few fundamental things that we have to get comfortable with. One of them is *pure spontaneous unmanageable joy*! We must stop blocking the natural spontaneous flow of energy that makes children look and feel so bright and beautiful.

We must get comfortable with the natural movements in us that spontaneously occur...pure expressions that just come through...feelings, emotions that spontaneously emerge and express. You can use the breath for that—to invite your life energy to flow, and then surrender to it...

**You can use the breath to open yourself, to create more space inside of you, so that more energy can come up and into and through you.** You can use the power of the breath to overcome the weight of the world that is pressing down around you, constricting and suppressing your life force.

Visualize a fountain, or a spring gushing up out of the ground, coming up thru your feet and legs and body, pouring out the top of your head, and showering down around you like a fountain.

Invite energy to rise up from within you with the in-breath, and flow out of you like a fountain with the out-breath. Visualize yourself filling up with love and light, peace and joy... and then visualize yourself overflowing with it.

If you can breathe that way and live that way, then everything you do, all your activities and all your efforts will come from that abundant overflow. And you will never get burned out; your energy will never be depleted.

In the two private sessions that I did this morning, I got a sense that it is not so much that you are drawing energy from outside yourself to lift yourself up: that's reinforcing the "I have more you have less duality separation" pattern.

If I am taking energy in from outside myself and filling myself up, if I get the sense that I am drawing the energy from around me, if I keep reinforcing the idea that my energy comes from outside of me, then it's a short leap from there to *needing* to take energy from others in order live.

However if you get a sense of the energy rising up from within you, coming from your source, from your center... this feeling of an ocean surging... Look at the power when a surge or a swell happens in the ocean... the power that it has.

Huge tankers and battleships have no choice but to ride that swell. There is real power in that—in what rises up from within—but there is also a natural softness to it. There is a suppleness, a subtlety to it.

The breathing practice is to somehow give ourselves the sense of a powerful surging from within... a rising up of energy from within us... The breathing is very powerful, but it also has this supple water-like softness to it.

What rises up from the source within can be freely given, no strings attached, no holding on, because right behind it comes more, and right behind that comes more. If you try to hold on to it, the holding on blocks and prevents the next “rising up from within.”

We have to eliminate a sense of scarcity, a sense of limitation. We must replace it with an experience of abundance. Doing this makes a lot of issues and problems simply moot. They aren't even issues and problems anymore. We have gotten under them. We have kicked the legs out from under the problems, and they just can't exist anymore.

**Learn to take “minute vacations.” Learn to take momentary breaks from all the doing in your life...**

When it comes to our individual creativity, we fill up our container and we give from that container; and then we re-fuel and re-charge so that we can give more, give again. There are lots of times and places where we can do that.

I am thinking of our farm in Mexico. We have a river running down from the mountains. There is a dam with an aqueduct, a channel system. All the farms take turns using the water. We have water tanks and storage. It is the same with all the other farms... we all have “pilas” cisterns, water tanks, for storage.

On your day to irrigate you flood the orchards; you flood the gardens; you do all that. You also top off all the tanks—all the storage containers. Now you can go another few weeks without needing more water. When the water comes in, we fill up all our storage tanks and we flood the orchards. That's managing water. It's water management.

But the system itself is limited. The water comes down from the mountains... there's a dam, you close the gates of the dam, the water builds up behind the dam. You come at night or at about 5pm in the afternoon and close the gate. Overnight the water builds up behind the dam. You come again in the morning about 5am and open up the gate; and the water comes through to the farm.

This is a limited system. In the old days there was no dam. The water just came down the river; you dug little trenches and you siphoned off water from the river, you diverted some of that water onto your property.

When we look at that example, we are looking at something that begins with an idea of limitation. If you start with an idea of limitation then certain things make sense. Things should be done, need to be done, because you have limited resources and you ration them, you intelligently distribute them, and so on.

But the source up in the mountain is endless. The spring is up there. It is constantly putting out water. The idea of limitation is a game. We get burnt out when we forget that it is a game—when we take things too seriously. We forget: “Hey this is just a game, after all, we're playing here!”

**Seriousness is a disease. What can I do, how can I bring more playfulness to what I do? How to bring a lightness into what I do?** It's not going to sacrifice the outcome, or limit the benefits of my work. By bringing more lightness, I will be more creative.

People who burnout are taking something seriously that they shouldn't. They need to bring more playfulness to their work and to their life. That is a great antidote to burnout. That's a good start. How can I bring more playfulness, more lightness into what I do?

When your creative juices are naturally flowing, you never burn out. When your connection to the source of your creative energy is blocked and you have no choice but to draw on your limited container: that's when you set the stage for burnout.

Rather than scooping from my limited container in order to give, to be a unique individual, I can create a new way of being. I have actually created something like that, and out of that something I am giving. I make sure that every time I give from that limited container that I have an automatic inlet to immediately restore and replace the energy that I put out.

Once that system and process is established, I don't have to be in charge of it. As I scoop water out of my container, more automatically comes in. It is just like a toilet that has a valve in the tank. As soon as the water level drops, a lever turns it on again. When it gets back to the full level, the inlet valve closes. The next time you flush, it triggers the inlet valve again.

We can use our breath to create that kind of a system, so that we are being refueled or recharged with energy automatically, continuously, as you expend it. That solves the problem of burnout.

What we do is we develop the ability to pull in energy with our breath. And we do it a hundred times a day, a thousand times a day—the more often the better—until it becomes a unconscious habit of our system, until it becomes automatic.



Then if you forget, that automatic connection is working for you. You're giving, and giving, you're working and working. And as you are giving, your system is restoring itself. It is automatically plugging you back into your source. As you put out energy, a valve opens in you to allow more energy to come into you.

You can train that into your system to prevent burnout. But you have to do it consciously and deliberately, and often enough so that it becomes unconscious and automatic. [Demonstrates Breathing] Every one of those breaths were very conscious.

**The full yogic breath is a perfect expression of that movement.** I am deliberately experiencing—or creating the experience—of filling myself from the bottom up. Just like when you fill a glass with water: it fills from the bottom up. It is the full yogic breath. When I breathe, when I draw energy, I want to make sure that it's coming from a very deep source, down deep within me; and it is rising up.

It's just like filling a glass with water: it fills from the bottom up. I consciously fill the bottom breathing space, then the middle breathing space, and then the upper breathing space. It creates a wave of energy rising up through my body.

If you have any blocks in your system, any air pockets, barriers, borders or suppressed stuff in your system, then when you pour in more water is not going to go all the way to the bottom.

Maybe there is a lot of muck at the bottom of the glass, and it is hard and it's caked (like things pressed and buried down in your subconscious). If that is the case, when you pour the water in, you will only partially fill. Each breath gives you a very limited supply, a very superficial supply of energy, which is very quickly depleted.

But if I can allow the energy of the breath percolate down, all the way through my being, and make use of my entire breathing cavity, make all the breathing spaces available... from my root chakra—my perineum—all the way up to my chin, then I have tremendous capacity.

In this case, I have a huge tank, so that even if it is not filling as I empty it, it's going to take a much longer time to deplete my tank, because I have created such a huge capacity for energy. We use the inhale to create more space in us.

One of the Eastern ideas about God is that he deliberately forgot who he was, and divided himself into an infinite number of pieces. Then the game was to return back to wholeness.

You take a little supply of water from the source and then you go off on a mission and you have your canteen, a jug of water with you. You deliberately cut yourself off from the source, just for the experience of being an individual self sufficient all unto itself entity. But soon you are looking to return to the source.



Since the source is ever present—omnipresent—you can wander off anywhere into the desert and still find water. You can connect to the source anywhere, anytime; you do not have to go anywhere if you have this sense—this ability—to tap your source everywhere, all the time. You can find water in a rock.

That seems to be one of the games: we charge ourselves, we fill up our tank, and then we go off on our own and we live off of what we take with us. And that is a really cool game. Even the experience of burning out is part of the game. So it is not a problem.

The feeling or belief is that “I am running out of juice!” That must mean that at some point, here and now I guess, I wonder what will happen if I become completely depleted. You can be curious. It's not serious because you know it is part of the game. So certain problems aren't problems at all: they are just interesting experiences.

**One of the meditations, a spiritual breathing practice that we learn and teach is called “De-Reflexive Breathing.”** There is a certain phenomenon that occurs in that practice: when you are exhaling, giving off, pouring out, there is a filling up that occurs simultaneously. As the air is coming out of you, there is energy coming into you. That is a wonderful experience.

If I am stuck on this level of duality and limitation, then my only experience is that when I breathe in I am filling myself with energy and when I breathe out I am emptying myself of energy. On the level of duality that is a very interesting and fun game, and that is how life seems to work.

However if I can get the experience—a real living experience—that as I am giving out, putting out energy, at the same time there is energy coming into me... Ahhhhh... That is a great meditation or exercise to do, and a great experience to have, especially if you want to avoid burnout.

Practice that meditation until you have a real sense that as you are breathing out, energy is coming in... and as you are breathing in, energy is pouring out. Feeling energy come in when you inhale is easy for most people to imagine and sense...As we pull in air, we pull in energy...

But if we can have that same sense of energy pouring into us as we exhale, and energy pouring out of us as we inhale... Then we neutralize a certain limited experience, the feeling of separation: “there is me and there is you; you have more and I have less.”

If the giving and receiving—the putting out and taking in—is simultaneous, then our experience of life goes to another level. We have all had that experience at certain times. The more love you give, the more love you receive. The more love you feel, the more love you give, the more you give the more you generate, and the easier it is to give more and more love.

That is another solution to burnout: the ability to generate energy at will. Becoming depleted is never an issue if you master this skill—this ability—to generate energy. When air is coming out of me,

energy is coming into me. That is a wonderful experience. You don't have to go anywhere to find energy or to access it: you generate it.

You can become the source of energy. You become an ever-flowing source of aliveness. If I have confidence in this skill to generate energy, I don't need to stay close to the river; I can wander off into the dessert without a jug of water. I can generate energy wherever I am, in the middle of whatever I am doing.

So all of this—what I am talking about—means there is something on the level of consciousness that needs to shift. We need to find another way—a new way to look at something fundamental—and to make a change there. And we can be creative about it. There are an infinite number of solutions.

**Another deep connection is this Buddhist idea of "Right Livelihood."** If you are not doing work that is truly in line with your purpose, then you will be constantly facing burnout because the universe will not fully support what is not for your highest good.

If you have gone course and you are not in harmony with life, with the betterment of yourself and everyone... if what you are doing does not resonate with your purpose... well then you have set yourself up for a serious downfall, for constant stress and inevitable burnout.

If you are living and working and your activities and actions, what you do and say are in line with and coming from your purpose, then burnout is totally impossible for you. You're a channel for the energy, a vehicle for the delivery of something, and you are not that something, so there is nothing to run out of.

Identifying your purpose in life... making sure that what you are doing, where you are going and how you are using your energy is in line with fulfilling that purpose, realizing that purpose, expressing that purpose...It's a very important process to investigate that.

### COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

**Ela:** *I think there is a lot of pressure on people to find what their purpose is. So if they are in a particular job, say for example they are working in the corporate world and there is this pressure or judgment that they have of themselves that they are not really living their purpose. They have a judgment, a sense of failure.*

**Dan:** Which is a good cause of stress?

**Ela:** *But in my own life I have come to realize that it doesn't matter what job we are doing, and we all have the same purpose. The person who is sweeping the streets... his purpose is sweeping the streets. We all have the same purpose: to know ourselves.*

**Dan:** We can express our purpose through any job, activity or role; and that is the creative part.

**Jenny:** *That's the motivation for how you go about doing things. To me that's where it all starts...*

**Ela:** *So if we do this corporate work or whatever... If you use it as an opportunity to get to know yourself, you are fulfilling your purpose.*

**Dan:** If you look at your passion, if you look at what you are naturally good at, you are looking at your purpose. You are defining your purpose in that inquiry.

*More discussion between the practitioners regarding having to work to pay the bills.*

**Dan:** If you look at it that way, and many people do: they go into their job every day to pay the bills. But then there is something they do after work, which totally recharges them. In that case, going to work everyday is not a problem.

The feel: "Okay so this job is not really why I am here, this is not really my passion, but it is paying my mortgage, and so afterwards I go ride my motorcycle, I dance, I paint, I do what I love and I am totally restored and renewed." They can live their entire life like. There is no problem. It's easy. They have a comfortable solution for it: end of story.

For some this does not work, so you have to redefine the problem. Okay, so it's a choice. If I am doing this then I am responsible. I could look at it differently, but I am choosing to look at it this way. Now what makes the most sense? How can I satisfy this need, this obligation, and still fulfill my purpose?

If we breathe and connect with our intuition, if we connect with our creative energy, our source, then we will create a solution. It might work for us, it might not work for anybody else: but who cares, it works for us, it works for me. You almost take it for granted. Once you're connected to your intuition, it's not something that you "do" or think about anymore. It's always working for you.

*More discussion around choosing... that life is a series of choices. Some are "lesser choices." They are still choices... that when you acknowledge and appreciate the "service" of others, you change the energetic paradigm for yourself and them.*

We are acknowledging the fact that we are given energy. If you acknowledge that you are constantly being fueled: "I am constantly receiving energy." When you do that, you are acknowledging that you are being given energy—that life constantly fuels and feeds you, then life is a breeze... a joy...

**Do you know the Deeksha people, the Oneness University people? They teach a very beautiful meditation.** I was in Louisiana once and the Deeksha people were organizing for me; and at the same time they were organizing for a monk named Krishnamurti... we were each leading a weekend retreat.

The same community group was organizing and overlapping both of our events; so they thought maybe we would be willing to work together... so as not to have competing events. They asked if I was willing. I said sure. It sounds cool to me.



I didn't know anything about the Deeksha people or the Oneness University. But I found Krishnamurti to be so delightful; he was so open and willing, and it worked out really beautifully. We worked together for a weekend. He introduced a beautiful process, one that I have integrated into many group sessions.

Close your eyes and imagine a time—remember a time when someone was expressing love to you... Bring up a moment when someone was expressing love to you. Now draw in a breath to receive and acknowledge the love that was being given to you in that moment.

As soon as you extract the love from that moment, go to another moment when someone was expressing love to you. Draw in another breath to receive and acknowledge again the love that was being given to you in that moment. As soon as you take in that love, remember another time and take another breath.

It is like looking through a photo scrapbook: Oh here is a moment, a gentle touch, a kind word, a small gift, a cup of tea. Here is another moment: someone opened a door for me as I was walking into a bank. In that moment that person was expressing love to me.

The clerk at the counter, just smiling: that person was expressing love to me! I'm driving and I'm lost driving thru the streets... there is a person there, they say: "Go that way, turn left at the corner, then take your first right." They were expressing love to me!

Start to see all the times in your life when people were expressing love to you. Do it as a real feeling exercise. Bring to mind that moment, that time, that event. Begin to see that even strangers in everyday interactions... people were actually, genuinely, extending love to you. Then you can take this exercise to whole other level...

First you recognize it in someone close, usually a partner or someone else close to you who was expressing love, giving you a gift, holding your hand, hugging you...offering gentle words, loving words...all those experiences. You draw in a breath to receive and invite and acknowledge the love that was being given to you in those moments.

Jump to another moment, then another, then jump to another moment—each time taking a breath. As soon as you complete that breath, you go to another moment. Then remember strangers on the street, someone opening a door, someone just saying "have a nice day." They smiled as they cashed you out at the supermarket. Realizing that in all those moments, someone was expressing love to you.

Then you take this meditation/exercise to another very interesting level...

Bring up a time when someone was scolding you, shouting at you, offending you, judging you, or making you feel guilty... Realize that even in those moments, that person, in their own weird way, was

extending love to you! By criticizing you, wanting you to be better, or whatever...That also was an expression of love.

If you look closely and deeply, you will see that even in those moments when a person was offending you or when you took offense at something they did or said... that person was awkwardly, weirdly—in their own way extending love to you! Extract the love from that event... because at the time, it didn't occur to you that love was actually being expressed

Begin to realize that everything is love! Now we are back to that spiritual fact ultimately in reality, everything is love!

One of my early teachers was Ken Keyes. He wrote the *"Handbook to Higher Consciousness,"* and *"A Conscious Person's Guide to Relationships."* He founded the Living Love Center... an extraordinary man. He pointed out that even violence is an expression of love.

Violent people are trying to beat someone into something they can love. They are literally trying to beat you into someone they can love! Wow! When he said that, I didn't really get the truth of it. But after some time, it percolated down and penetrated to my core.

Think of a parent who believes that the most loving thing—the best thing they can do—is to spank their child. In that moment the child would not feel that they are being loved...It would never occur to them to think: "my mother or father is loving me right now."

But if you were to probe the parent's motivation, their intention, you would find that they were coming from love; they believed that it was necessary, that it was important that the child learn something... blah, blah, blah... whatever. The point is that in their own way, they were being loving! The child didn't experience it that way, but as the child matures, they may come to realize it.

We have all had experiences like that. Our parents did something, and in the moment we may have hated them for it. But as we grew up, we could look back and say: "They had our best interest at heart." We recognize the energy of love behind it.

Life becomes very miraculous when you begin to see that behind everything is love. Look at all the times in your life when people were extending love to you. Wow! How can you get burned out living a life like that? How can you burn out when you perceive life in that way? When you are giving this kind of meaning to events, how is it possible to suffer?

I am working with this situation right now: I have my Mac Book up and plugged into this charger. I met a guy in Romania, a computer geek. He pointed out an interesting thing about the battery in a Mac. Maybe it is also true of batteries in PC's. He said you should never charge it 100%. He said charge it to like 90% and then run it down to 5%, then run it back up to 80%, then run it back down to 4%.

He said if you keep charging the battery fully, it might last 2 years. If you never charge it fully, and run it down to under 5%, then run it back up to about 80%, the battery will last 4 years. It doubles the life of the battery, by not topping it off. That's what I did with my old laptop. I always wanted it at 100%, but that actually takes life away from the battery in the long run.

So how can that analogy get transferred over to breathing? Let me think a moment and see. If you... if I have a full tank all the time... take a balloon for example... If I blow up a balloon and it is fully inflated, the balloon stretches. It loses its elasticity if it is stretched to the extreme all the time... Which is what emphysema is.

Emphysema is when these little microscopic air sacs are hyper-inflated all the time. They lose their elasticity... That's why emphysema people have these big barrel chests: they can't empty their lungs. Air is trapped in the little air sacs because there is no elasticity left in them to deflate.

So not charging the battery up all the way is like not blowing the balloon up all the way. It preserves the elasticity. (Ha, thank you Dan, you made a connection! When something comes to you out of the blue, you have to hurry up and make sense of it; otherwise people will say, "What the hell is he talking about!")

It is a sign of fear, of insecurity: this thought that you always have to have "all your tanks filled up," your refrigerator full, your freezer full, and your bank account- that is a real sign. Fear of lack is an energy sucker, and a real cause of burnout.

*Dialog continues with practitioners regarding real experiences of limitation/lack, life experiences that indicate limited possibilities, and people who have no tools with which to begin a transformation in consciousness... from their current view of a situation to a better view of the situation*

If we get the experience of abundance on any level, it sets a pattern. Now we've got a template.

*More sharing among the participants*

**One thing that contributes to burnout is resisting down cycles.** Down cycles are as much a part of growth as up cycles; and we waste a lot of energy resisting down cycles in life. If we stop doing that, we are going to conserve and preserve a lot of energy; we are going to stop wasting a lot of energy.

It is normal to have ups and downs. If you get into resistance to a down cycle, you will lock yourself onto that level of resistance... You'll become like a stone in a river. The water is passing by and it will wear you down... you are stuck there resisting the natural flow of life.

Being part of those cycles, allowing the up cycles and the down cycles... and realizing that they are both necessary for growth. People have up cycles and down cycles, in their moods, in their energy



levels, in their creativity. So what? That's normal. Let it be. The quicker and sooner you allow and don't resist a down cycle, the sooner it turns into an up cycle.

*Suggestion from Jenny...to reframe the down cycle in some other way... such as a regenerative cycle... a renewing cycle, etc. And then you won't resist it. Reframe it in a way that you can then allow it.*

Yes, sure, exactly!

**Another way to deal with burnout and to manage energy is to identify all the things that are sucking your energy, that are draining your energy in a chronic way:** muscular tension for example. If you are walking around with chronic muscular tension, it's zapping your energy constantly. That means less energy available for creative work, for healing and rejuvenation, or whatever.

It's important to identify those energy suckers. It's like going through your house and shutting off electrical devices to conserve energy. Be conscious of the places and times and ways in which you carry or create tension. Identify them and eliminate them. You will have a lot more energy available to you when it is not being sucked and drained constantly by physical tension.

*Naynesh: How do you let go of that?*

Dan: We use the breath. We get really good at letting go of the exhale. Master the ability of setting your exhale free, letting your exhale go. Learn to exhale quickly and completely. Look at this [modeling a slow exhale]. It seems that I am letting go and relaxing: but actually I am holding on while I am letting the breath out. I am holding some of it back. If I just release it, I am setting it free.

And you can see that it doesn't matter how big, or how deep my inhale is, how long the inhale takes: if the exhale is complete, it takes one or two seconds maximum. Look at this. [demonstrates different length inhales, long, short, then very long] The duration of the exhale remains the same because I am setting the exhale free.

When you set the exhale free, you set it free. End of story. It is over with in a moment. That's it. You master this ability. [Demonstrates releasing the exhale] That's what must happen inside of you, a total release, when you set the exhale free.

If you observe yourself, or you observe someone else, you may notice this phenomenon on the exhale. [Demonstrates how the body holds back as the breath comes out] You can see that something is definitely out of synch. When I let the breath go, you should see my body let go at the same time, right?

Done artfully, I am letting go of muscles, letting go physically at the same time that I am letting go of the breath. I am bringing that together every time: as I let go of the breath I let go of some muscles somewhere. That way, I am constantly draining off tension with each breath.

If I am producing physical tension by some unconscious fear, which is what happens. If I have an unconscious fear, I am not aware that I am afraid. If I have fear that is constant, chronic but unconscious: that fear is constantly causing physical tension. It does, it must.

If I am afraid, I am going to protect myself, I am going to armor myself. I am going to hold on, I am going to contract. It is a normal reaction to fear. The fear is unconscious, but the symptoms of it can be observed in armoring, tensing of muscles, and holding or blocking of the breath.

**If I can identify unconscious fear, I can kick the legs out from under the table of chronic tension.** When I eliminate that fear, the physical tension goes away: I have identified the source or the cause of the physical tension. If I don't identify the source or the cause of the physical tension, I can at least identify the place where the tension is held, and temporarily work with that place. But then the physical tension will intensify again.

I relax it and the tension comes back; I relax it and the tension comes back. Now I know that I am dealing with something on the wrong level. I need to get "under it." So instead of working to relax physically, I need to explore my consciousness.

I need to get under the physical level to the emotions that I am afraid to feel or express, or the thoughts that are limiting or negative and are causing the fear. When I work on that level, the release of physical tension happens by itself. And as it turns out we can learn to do that with the breath.

We use the breath to actually relax physically. I can move through my body using each exhale, focusing on a particular muscle, or a muscle group, or my entire body, and use that moment of releasing the exhale to release the physical tension along with the breath. It comes together: you can't really let the exhale go quickly and completely if the body is holding on.

That's what I was demonstrating here. The body is not letting go even though I am letting go of the breath. Not until the body lets go can the breath release. And the breath cannot release until the body lets go: a Catch 22 situation—a chicken or the egg thing.

Practicing with awareness puts us into a very powerful process where we can unravel and untangle the emotions in the body: let go of the thoughts and the emotions that are underlying the physical tension.

The physical tensions are connected to the psychic/psychological fears; the physical tensions are tied to the emotional contractions. Breath awareness and conscious breathing puts us in a process where we inevitably and unavoidably end up working everything out on all those levels.

The release of physical tension is either a direct deliberate focus or a side effect of letting go on another level. But it is dependent upon the breath, because the breath is the one thing that is linked to all those other levels.

Physical tension is connected to fear or guilt or shame or embarrassment. A brilliant inspiration could rise up from within me, but the fear of looking stupid or being wrong keeps me from expressing it, and acting on it. And so it is important to identify those emotions that are causing me to hold my breath, and my physical tension and muscular contractions.

Once I identify them and let them go, I can express my creative energy freely. We need to get to the point of: "I don't care!" So what if I am embarrassed? That's a great lesson. It's okay to look like a fool, it's ok to make mistakes, it's ok to do things wrong.

We need to do that consciousness work, and it allows a certain letting go... the free expression of a thought, a feeling, a movement, an action, or an emotion. Then any physical tension that was a result of that fear becomes a moot issue. You don't even have to know how to relax your muscles. They will let go by themselves when you let go of your fear of... whatever.

*Jenny shares about her clients and letting go and what that looks like to them when they have no real experience of awareness, of truly letting go.*

Yes. Beautiful!

**I start many sessions by telling people to take some big luxurious sighs of relief.** Then I watch what they do. Do they take little timid sighs? Do they take big breathy ones? Do they use a lot of muscular effort? What do they do? How do they do it? This gives you a starting place. It tells you where to begin, and where to go with the session.

I tweak their sigh of relief. I work with the expression of the breath itself; then all the other connections are going to be made automatically. Just by working on their breath they are going to relax physically, and they are going to get in touch with their psychology and their emotions. It's inevitable. Everything is going to start to untangle, to emerge, to reveal itself.

That's the beauty of breathwork. By observing how they let go of their exhale, you can move into psychological coaching, bodywork, or emotional expression. You have a plate full of options in front of you. Their breathing pattern reveals big things and little things: you know what to do, what choices to make with that particular person.

If they do this [demonstrates hesitation, controlling], then you say to the client "let's play with this." You model a different breath, a more resourceful or free breath, and then an organic process can begin.

We can have an intellectual understanding of something, but when you have an actual experience of it, it is so much more valuable. That was a brilliant question! Look at how much it activated.



It begins with what I call a very basic life skill: "the ability to let the exhale go quickly and completely." Once you can do that, you have a basic life skill. When you have the ability to release the breath, you can apply that skill to releasing physical tension, suppressed emotions, painful or negative thoughts. You can let go of the past, an outdated sense of yourself. You can let go of old grudges, old traumas, and suppressed or unconscious psychological stuff.

Now you have a real tool you can take and work on many levels with. Without that tool, without that skill, inner work can be really difficult and really painful! And you can get stuck. But with that tool, by returning to it again and again... something will open up in you. You will be flooded with something beautiful, you will be filled with something very precious.

Life! It is a treasure! And if we can somehow play a part in helping people to connect with that... Wow! What a great job we have as Breath workers! What a great role we play in life!

Let's practice that now:

Give yourself a big sigh of relief. Let the elastic tendency of the muscles do the exhaling for you. Take a breath in and expand... then let go. Let gravity, atmospheric pressure, and the elastic tendency of the muscles do the work of the exhale for you.

Most people have not given themselves that experience. They are always doing something on the exhale [demonstrating a controlled exhale]. They are 100% involved in the exhale when they don't need to be. Get out of the way and let something else do the work of the exhale for you.

You don't have to be in charge of your healing process. You don't have to be the one to control everything, to keep everything in order, to make everything work.

You have a chance to let go, to get out of the way, and have the experience of something beautiful and natural happening without your effort, without having to understand, without having to be in charge.

Wow! What a relief! What a liberating experience! I simply let go. I do nothing and a wonderful benefit comes... Wow! I don't have to work! I don't have to use any effort!

We do need to be proactive. We need to be a conscious, active participant in our own process. We can't just be lethargic, and have somebody else do everything for us. If so, we will be disconnected from our power and our creativity. So there is this idea of balance.

We focus on the inhale. We bring in that extra stretch. We do something that allows a nice release, a total letting go. We can trigger the exhale by pulling in a little more breath than usual. That extra stretch, that extra expansion will create the force to produce the release. And when that is happening by itself, I can focus my attention and can do some work on another level: the level of consciousness.

The breath is working by itself. I draw it in and then just let go. And it is happening...the letting go of the breath. Now I can use my consciousness to focus on... tension in my shoulders. I can use my consciousness to relax my shoulders. Now whatever tension I focus on in my shoulders is taken up by the breath and released along with it.

I have to be conscious and careful not to produce new tension on the next inhale. If I produce tension... which is a popular exercise, a progressive relaxation exercise... where you tense everything and then relax. You breathe in, hold your breath and tense everything, and then relax and breathe out. It is a useful exercise because you begin to train yourself to recognize the difference between tension and relaxation.

There are a lot of people who use it. The Buddha taught it; because people can be filled with tension and not even know it. It is not even registering in their awareness. So that's a good exercise: to tense and relax, tense and relax, tense and relax. However that's not going to take you in the direction of deeper, more profound relaxation.

If I produce tension on the inhale and then relax, then produce tension on the inhale and relax: the only tension I am releasing with the exhale is the tension that I just produced on the inhale. I am not getting anywhere!

If I produce tension and then relax it... produce tension and then relax it, I am not getting anywhere. I'm not getting *more* relaxed at all. My tension level or baseline is still the same.

However if I relax on the exhale and then inhale without creating more tension, then exhale and relax; and then inhale again without producing more tension... then relax again, relax more on the exhale... I am getting somewhere. If I can breathe in without disturbing the relaxation—without creating new tension... Now I am getting somewhere!

My relaxation is getting deeper and deeper with each breath. I'm not just creating surface tension and then releasing it, creating surface tension and then releasing it. Now, with each exhale I am actually going deeper into relaxation.

If you continue relaxing on the exhale *and* the inhale again and again without stopping, an interesting phenomenon occurs. If you continue to relax more and more deeply, you will reach a point beyond which you cannot relax. And as you approach that point, a deep unconscious fear or block is going to express itself very forcefully. It is difficult to approach that place, never mind pass through it.

It's like a secret government laboratory... You are wandering around in the desert and you don't know you are approaching this secret government laboratory. They are going to send a jeep out to meet you and to keep you from getting too close to the wall or the gate. And if you happen to get to the wall or the gate you are going to find that there are guards there.

This represents our unconscious mind, our subconscious mind. As you approach something in your subconscious... it is like approaching a high security prison... where you have locked up all the creepy, scary, dangerous thoughts and feelings. The subconscious is going to guard itself to keep those things from escaping.

You put them there. You imprisoned them there to keep you safe—to keep them out of your awareness, to keep them from interfering in your life, from sabotaging your relationships. You have buried things deep in your subconscious in order to live without interference from them.

And here you are relaxing more deeply, softening the walls... threatening to break into that prison and let everything escape. You can't expect your system to go along with the program. It is going to resist any relaxation beyond a certain point.

But if you can relax beyond that point, you will break into a deeper level of yourself, and the experience will be liberating.

One of the first things that will be liberated is the energy that you have been using to keep those things locked inside. People who think it is not ok to cry will cry. People who don't think it's ok to be angry will rage... They locked that rage up because they were afraid that it was dangerous. They are going to experience the releasing of all those things that they have held in... all the things they have put energy into suppressing... They will experience a surge of energy.

That is a big cause of burnout: the wasting of energy that we are not aware of, energy that is being unconsciously spent on keeping emotions suppressed... Once you stop putting energy into keeping emotions suppressed, you have an abundance of energy available to you... Suddenly all this creative and healing energy is liberated! It was going to keeping things chronically suppressed.

That is deep psycho-spiritual work. When you do this deep psychological and emotional work, you free up energy. You don't have to put energy into keeping this stuff locked up. You realize it is safe and ok to express it; it's ok to feel it. Now all the energy you have been wasting is available to you.

If you have reached the point of burnout, and if you can find some point where energy is being used, wasted, drained...and you can liberate that energy... then woof! You move to another level of aliveness. That is where the breath comes in.

If you keep breathing and relaxing... keep relaxing and relaxing... as you approach that place, you create more momentum with the breath... you can have a breakthrough! You crash thru the walls of that prison. Everything gets liberated, and you get this glorious enlivening rush of energy...

The breath will take us there. The breath will stir up and bring up and release all that stuff. Once you have stirred it up and brought up all that stuff, there is no point in defending yourself against it, suppressing it, or keeping it locked up... All that energy is available.



The breath is really magical in that it will take us to that place. And with the breath, you relax beyond that point where you couldn't relax before. You can touch this ocean, this infinite source of energy! There was something that was blocked up between you and it. There was no way to pierce it except by going through this subconscious layer of fear and suppressed energies.

Mike White at [breathing.com](http://breathing.com)... I think I may be the only Rebirth in the world that he trusts. I don't know why; we just have a natural rapport. He's been doing breathing work for a long time... breath training... his style... He's a mechanic, a very good breathing mechanic.

He's somebody who can work with a person's breath—with their musculature, their structure, and their diaphragm. He knows how to free up the breath on a mechanical level, on the physical level. He's a brilliant breathing mechanic.

His idea is that if you get the breath mechanically, structurally, physically sound and in perfect working order, then spirituality evolves and emerges naturally. He doesn't do spiritual work per se.

We do spiritual work, which then heals the breathing mechanism, the physical body. He does physical bodywork, which releases or opens the person to their spirituality. But he doesn't really talk in those terms.

So in rebirthing, with conscious connected energy breathing, we are talking about unlocking deep things in the psyche, in the unconscious. When Mike first looked into rebirthing, he was totally repelled by what he found. He said: "This is freaking dangerous! You people are crazy!"

His idea of rebirthing was like setting off a bomb in your basement! That is how he described rebirthing. Would you'd go into your basement and set off a bomb? His opinion was/is that people who access these deep subconscious fears and work with them—they need to have a lot of specialized training—even be certified psychotherapists.

"What if something comes up in the session and you don't know how to deal with it? And the client doesn't know how to deal with it? What have you done? You have let this beast loose and they end up in an insane asylum because you encouraged them to let this beast out of prison. What's wrong with you?"

For whatever reason, with me, he got that it doesn't have to be so dangerous. We did a session together. It was the first time he ever surrendered to the rebirthing process. He was quite pleased and thrilled and said: "I guess it is not quite as bad as I thought, or as bad as it looked. The release can be very gentle." But I think he believes that everyone else is setting off bombs in their basement!

If you go to his website you will see you that he doesn't teach Rebirthing-Breathwork. Mike will say: "one of my guys teaches that. If you want to do that then go to him. Don't go to any one else because I don't know what they do!"

I love him, and I feel that there is a certain “lack of faith in life” in his idea. I just don't believe that there is anything that will come up that we can't deal with. If I can't deal with it, then it's not my job to deal with it anyway. I believe that life wouldn't let it come up if it wasn't meant to come up.

What's to be afraid of? If it's really something dangerous and neither of us is prepared to deal with it, then life isn't going to allow it to come up. It will wait until someone is present who can deal with it. For me, it's just a trust in life.

Isn't lack of faith or trust in existence just another energy sucker? If you don't have that faith or trust then you are going to be protecting yourself, using up energy unnecessarily. You are going to be wasting a lot of energy defending yourself against yourself, and against life, and against many things that you really don't need to defend against.

One of my early teachers, I think when he passed on he was called Adi Da, or just Da. When I knew him in the late 70's when he was called Da Free John. There were a lot of stories about him, rumors, and unsavory reports. I thought he was brilliant.

He gave us a mantra “I am always already free.” That was just... Phew! For me, amazingly liberating!

I am always already free. I **AM** always already free. I am **ALWAYS** already free. I am always **ALREADY** free. I am always already **FREE**.

Work with that. Work with it! If that is your deepest subconscious thought... if that is your deepest consciousness factor... If all your other thoughts are built on top of that, then guess what! **You are always already free!**

I used that affirmation, which is a seed thought... And damned if it didn't work! If you can remember that in different moments, it will work for you. “I am always already free! Ah yes...!

You can fill in the last word in whatever way you want: “I am always already safe” WOW! Phew! When you let that thought in, it lets you take a fuller breath... When you let that thought seep deep down... “I am always already safe:” it triggers a certain releasing breath.

You can end that sentence in ways that serves you the most. I would start with “free and safe.” And you can go anywhere from there. “I am always already capable of...” “I am always already filled with...” What a great little device, a consciousness device.

It starts with breathwork: a breathing exercise, meditation, technique, a breathing practice or method, right? Then get creative around the breath. You have the breath as a central core thing, and then you get creative with it, using it, applying it... on the level of consciousness.

**I love this meditation or exercise of using the breath to create more space inside of me.** I am making my container bigger. I have more reserve capacity. I have more space. I am creating a space, a field that can then be filled with energy. I am actually drawing in energy in. With each breath I am giving myself the experience of more and more energy.

It's ok in the beginning to start with the sense of bringing the energy in from around me. Look at all the space around me, if I can increase my space, my inner space, by pulling energy in from around me... what a great place to start! But at some point you also want to be drawing the energy from within, to be generating energy within you...allowing the energy to rise up from within.

You can become very conscious of spreading that energy throughout your whole body. I pull the energy in and I distribute the energy to my whole being. I accumulate energy, let's say in my heart, and then I spread that energy out everywhere within me.

I could draw the energy into my belly, then on the exhale, allow that energy to move out through my fingertips, to spread out through my legs, to spread out through my whole body.

I get creative with each breath and I trust my intuition. This is interesting, this is fun, and this is enjoyable. Go that way! Play with the breath in that direction.

There are certain exercises, which have worked for lots of other people. They had a belly button: you have a belly button. It worked for them. It might work for you.

You can use exercises and techniques that have already been invented and applied by other people, and use them for yourself. You can also create or invent your own techniques, your own exercises, and track the results and the benefits.

There are two things that we want to do simultaneously. We want to let go of things that are sapping our energy: physical tension, muscular contractions, suppressed emotions, fears, inhibitions, psychological contractions, which are limited ideas, negative ideas. We want to be working on that level, releasing all that stuff that is sucking energy, draining energy from us.

We also want to be tapping the source of our energy. We are doing those two things at once. We are being economical and efficient; we are not resisting things in us; and we get better at drawing in energy.

Develop a way of breathing that does both those things at once: that works on both those levels... Increase your capacity to pull in more energy and also improve your ability to let go. Now you have two things working for you in unison.

You want to breathe in a powerful way, breathe in a lot of energy but without a lot of effort —without producing a lot of muscular tension. You want to relax completely, but also draw in a lot more energy at the same time.

Relaxing is great... we get more and more relaxed. However we are also taking advantage of that relaxation by drawing in more energy. Draw in more energy while you are relaxed; and relax while you draw in more energy. In this way, you make burnout impossible.

If you master the natural skill to generate or recharge yourself with energy at will, breath by breath, at any time, in any situation... Wow! You have a stress burnout prevention tool that really works.

If you have the ability to let go, to stop wasting energy, to free up energy that is being used to block and hold, you have an amazing tool, you relax and more energy is available to you.

If you can do both, if you can put it all together into one practice, then you can be overflowing with energy. And this puts burnout outside of the range of possibilities!

After lunch we will practice this basic life skill. We will work on relaxation: the letting go part. And we will work on breathing: the expansion part. Then gradually it will all come together.

Someone observing you can point out tensions that you are not aware of; they can see spaces you are not making use of; and so we will partner up and help each other to develop this skill.

Good luck in your practice!

BREATH ENERGY TRAINING  
With Dan Brulé