

CANADIAN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

with Dan Brulé



**BREATH
MASTERY**

BREATH ENERGY TRAINING
With Dan Brulé

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Laurie:

Hi there everyone, uh, welcome to the latest version of our interviews at the Canadian Holistic Directory. Today we have Dan Brule with us.

He is a modern day teacher and healer. He is renowned pioneer in the field of breathwork and a leader in worldwide spiritual breathing movement. Dan is one of the originators of breath therapy and among the first group of internationally certified rebirthers.

He is a member of the Inspiration University, the International Rebirther Association and the International Breathwork Foundation. And Dan there's so much other stuff, I couldn't possibly tell it all. You did everything. Welcome to the show.

Dan:

Yeah, well, life is full of... sometimes your plate is just so full, you wonder how you can tolerate the joy of it, you know?

Laurie:

That's awesome, awesome. So tell us a bit about how you came into this field and how you became a practitioner.

Dan:

Wow! I can remember in Catholic school, in the first grade, every Friday the priest would make a tour through all the classes. And it was the only time that the nuns, who were our teachers, would actually sit down with the kids. And we felt like, "wow, she's one of us!" All of a sudden, because the priest, you know, the pastor of the the parish... he was like so... like a God!

I can remember the very first time that he came and started talking about Genesis, and how *"God breathed into the nostrils of man, the breath of life, and man became a living soul."*

Something about that was so exciting to me! I, couldn't let it go. I couldn't put it down. I thought: "Wow! the next breath is God breathing into me?" "Why isn't everybody excited about this?" Something just clicked. Maybe there was a seed in me waiting for something or someone to provoke it.

And then lots of experiences: getting the wind knocked out of me in sports a few times; a near drowning experience. Then in the military, I was a deep sea diver, mixing gases, doing underwater rescue, and practicing breath holding records. Breathing has always been a passion of mine. I can't really put my finger on when it started.

When I got out of high school I went to Boston City Hospital and New England Medical Center and took a CPR class. And the first time I resuscitated somebody, I was, I was hooked more than ever.

You come upon somebody who's clinically dead, you breathe into them, and then they blink and wake up. I just couldn't wait for the next person

to crash so I could rescue them! It seemed like there was something magical... There is something really, amazing about the power of breath.

I just kept digging and I ended up going to India and China and studying with everybody who said they knew anything about breathing. I was either kissing their feet or breathing down their neck, one or the other until I kind of ran out of people and uh, started inventing things myself. So, it seems I can't even find when it started anymore.

Laurie: Wow. I think it's something we just take for granted, right? Unless you're in a situation where you don't have that breath, whether it's, uh, water or you know, something traumatic that happens to you. We really, you know, we just take for granted the fact that we don't have a choice but we have to breathe, right?

Dan: Oh, you're exactly right on. It's, it's literally right under our nose. We, we overlook it, we underestimate it. We're off looking for various solutions when something so powerful and yet simple is right there waiting, That's exactly how it works. And unless you have a problem with it, you basically don't give it any attention. So it's like a huge untapped natural resource.

Laurie: Right, right, right. On reading your website, I saw that you have this very, very simple question, it's: "why do we breathe?"

Dan: Yes, right, why breathe at all?

Laurie: Right!

Dan: You can go weeks without food and days without water, but go a few minutes without breath, and suddenly the importance of it reveals itself! I don't know if you've heard, there's a guy by the name of Stig Severinsen who recently, a few months ago, broke his own Guinness Book record by holding his breath underwater for 22 minutes.

Laurie: Oh, wow!

Dan: Twenty two minutes holding your breath underwater. Now, when I was first training in medicine, we were taught that four to six minutes without breathing and you have permanent brain damage. So, human potential is mind boggling. We seem to be accelerating towards some real leaps in human potential. And breathwork, or breath awareness and conscious breathing is a big part of that.

Almost everyone who has broken through to some level of excellence, if you probe, and if you pull it from them, you will find that they are more conscious of their breathing than the average person, and they actually practice some form of conscious breathing. So it's an element in anyone who has achieved greatness in any field.

Early 80's I actually made that... it was kind of a passion in me: I tried to get in front of anybody who had achieved any kind of real, you know, elite excellent status. I don't care if they were an elite criminal, It didn't matter to me. If they broke into the one percent in some way, I wanted to see how they breathed, and did they breathe differently than other people.

Were they more conscious of their breath? Did they take control of their breath at times when other people couldn't focus or find their center? And it kept proving itself out again and again. So I became more and more convinced and confident that I was on to something by digging deeper into the power and the potential of breathing exercises and techniques and breath awareness and, and the whole game of breathwork.

Laurie: Mmm, wow. That kind of twigs to me that I maybe should spend a little bit more time on that for my swimming, you know, I train for the triathlon.

Dan: Ahh.

Laurie: So, my breathing can always be improved upon, you know.

Dan: Oh, definitely, yeah. And you know... sports induced asthma is an epidemic on the planet. If you look at the top 20 swimmers in the world, take a guess at how many of them have asthma.

Laurie: I have -- I wouldn't have a clue.

Dan: How about half!

Laurie: Really?

Dan: Yeah.

Laurie: Wow.

Dan: Overbreathing is a real physiological problem. And so breath control... Somethings are counter intuitive and sometimes what feels comfortable to us is actually dysfunctional.

And so anyone interested in sports and peak performance, you can tweak your breathing. You can explore some changes in your breathing patterns and quickly see some physiological benefits in power, endurance.

I love working with athletes, and I've spent quite a bit of time, especially in Russia with Olympic athletes. It's an education... to see and work with somebody who's already achieved something great; and then make some connections between how they breathe, to catch flaws in their

breathing habits, and find unconscious patterns that might be limiting them. I love exploring all that.

Laurie:

Wow, wow. That is amazing. Can you talk to us a little bit about what breath therapy is?

Dan:

Yeah, breath therapy, I invented in a way. There are some other people who are using the term “breath therapy,” but I think I predate anyone using the term. I started in 1976 calling it breath therapy, and there’s two parts to it.

One is that the breathing mechanism in most people, is not functioning at full capacity. It, it’s not working as nature completely intended.

We have [limited] breathing habits and patterns that we’ve picked up because of shock or trauma, or in trying to inhibit our communication, or trying to avoid pain, trying not to cry, trying not laugh... withholding communications...

In all those kinds of emotional and psychological events, without realizing it, we control our breath in those moments. So, if I don’t want to laugh or I don’t wanna cry, the way I stop myself is by holding my breath.

And every time I’ve had a pain or a shock or trauma to my system, the breathing, the flow of breath, was interrupted and disturbed in some way. And repeated patterns of emotional or psychological traumas cause chronic pattern—inhibited breathing patterns.

So, that’s the first part of breath therapy: it’s that we realize that the breath is not functioning at it’s full potential. And so we work on freeing up the breathing mechanism, making it more efficient, economical, more full, more free.

And when that happens, when you free the breath from any inhibitions or flaws or bad habits, the breath itself becomes a therapeutic tool. So then you can use the body and the breath to heal the mind. And you can use the mind and the breath to heal the body and emotions.

So breath therapy is a breath centered approach to triggering or helping or supporting growth: either emotionally, physically, or psychologically.

Laurie:

I love the idea of this. I mean for me the whole holistic part of the mind, body and spirit... and all that stuff being connected. People don’t realize how interconnected all of those bits are. And that they are impacting either negatively or positively... sometimes we don’t know which...It’s sort of our job to learn, to become aware, and to make the pattern changes that we need.

Dan:

Exactly. And one of the things that we've discovered is that every emotional state, every psychological state, every physiological or chemical, or spiritual state, has a corresponding breathing pattern or quality.

And it's really obvious on some level: when you feel happy and relaxed and peaceful and content, you naturally breathe differently than when you're afraid or upset or in pain.

And when fear takes over the system, the breathing changes in a dramatic way. When pain takes over the system, the breath pattern changes in very obvious ways.

And the magic is, it works in the other direction: by changing the way you breath, you can change your state. Change your breathing pattern and you can move from one emotional or psychological, physiological state to another.

So breathing gives us a handle on how to actually shift out of various emotions, or change your psychological state, or change your chemistry... so with physical illnesses, you can kick the legs out from under them.

One of the lessons is that if you cannot change something as deep and primal as the way you breathe, then you're going to have a lot of trouble changing anything else. Because breathing is such a deep and primal action, if you can change it, then changing other things is easy.

If you can't change the way you breathe, don't be surprised if you can't get rid of pain. If you can't let go of the breath, don't be surprised if you can't let go of fear. If you can't let go of the breath, don't be surprised if you can't let go of thoughts that are ruminating and bothering you.

Once you get really good at letting go of the breath—and that's one of the basic exercises we teach—is engaging the exhale... using the breath to release physical tension, disturbing thoughts and so on.

Once you get really good at releasing the breath, you find that letting go of other things, suddenly is a lot easier. So it's very empowering.

Laurie:

Right. Well, with this, with this sort of modality, do people really have to dig into why they're in that state? So, for example, if they have some emotional pain and they were using breath therapy to work through that, do they have to kind of dig back into why that was there? Or can they just go from where they are and move forward?

Dan:

Oh, I think, one of the beautiful things about breathwork is that you can bypass the mind. You can get under it, you can let go of stuff, and you

don't even know, you don't have to know, where it came from or why you got it. All you know is you got free of it, and who cares!

So, yes, it's actually a shortcut. And very often, or sometimes, it takes doing some work on consciousness or doing some bodywork to help the breath release itself. And vice versa, if you can manage to work with the breath, other things fall away by themselves.

Because of the link between breathing and those things. It's like oil and water: they don't mix. Certain emotional states or psychological problems cannot maintain themselves in the presence of certain dynamic breathing patterns.

The breath dissolves them, it burns them away. They can't exist... they rely on certain breathing patterns to stay in place. And when you change the breathing patterns, you shake loose the hold that those other things have on you, even without having to understand them.

Laurie: Right, right, yeah. I really like that, you know, sometimes you don't want to go back to that place, right? You need to be able to move forward. So that's excellent.

Dan: Well, yes, and sometimes growing and healing means looking at things that are scary and doing things that are uncomfortable. Very often, that's the only way to grow.

Laurie: That's true. Yeah, yeah. Can you tell us a bit about spiritual breathing or conscious breathing?

Dan: Yes, breathwork... the way I teach it, has two parts. It's like yin and yang aspects of a practice. Breath awareness is the first step. We teach people and encouraging people to practice observing their breath: Just like the Buddha did.

That's what he was doing when he actually became enlightened. That was the exact process he was involved in. He was simply being a witness to his breath. "Oh, breath coming in, breath going out. "

The practice of "meditative awareness:" observing your breathing, sensing it, tuning into the details of it; and observing how you breathe in different situations.

Watching that you breathe differently when someone's insulting you... that your breath releases and flows in certain moments... it gets constricted and you're holding it at other times.

And so this is the first part of the practice: developing the skill, the ability, the habit, of observing your breathing... being the pure watcher.

Not breathing any particular way, not doing anything to the breathing: simply being the witness.

That puts us into a state or a space where there's a lot of possibility and freedom. It's like: "Oh, it's not happening to me, it's just happening. Here I am, free as the witness." We move towards our Buddha nature in a way, when we practice breath awareness, just being the observer, the detached witness.

And the other part of it, more of the yang aspect, isconscious breathing. That's where you breathe in a certain way, you give the breath a certain pattern or a quality, you breathe with a certain intention and you begin to deliver the used breath in some way.

Those are like the bookends of breathwork or breath therapy: breath awareness and conscious breathing. And there are so many different conscious breathing exercises, you know, thousands of them. Yoga is filled with them, and the Taoist practices, and the Sufi practices, and modern practices.

We start with some basic exercises... controlling our breath—certain core exercises and techniques. Once you have a foundation, then you can begin to move. If you're an athlete or if you're a psychotherapist or if you just want a better relationship, to feel more connected in relationship, then you can begin to intuitively move, using the breath.

I encourage people to invent or create their own breathing exercises and their own breathing meditations once they integrate the fundamentals.

Laurie:

Right that's amazing. For me, meditation, that's really the only way it happens. That I'm concentrating on my breath, otherwise I get too distracted. So that's the thing that keeps me going when I'm meditating.

Dan:

It's a perfect way to return to your center. You see every athlete, before they dive off the diving board, before they lift the weight, they stop for a moment, they take a conscious breath—because it helps them to focus.

We can too. You don't have to be an athlete to make use of those same methods. We can apply them to whatever we happen to be dealing with in our lives.

Laurie:

Right, right, for sure, for sure. Are there any other important principles in breathwork?

Dan:

I see breathwork as the tool of our day. As I look at the thousands of people that I've worked with, and consider who—what kind of people

come to me... Who is attracted to breathwork? What are some common things?

Quite awhile ago, I arrived at an obvious realization, and it's connected to change. People who are going through change... breath, breathing, is a great tool to help you manage change, any kind of change, internal change.

And so, if you're about to go through a change, or you're recovering from a change, or you're in the process of change or transformation, then breathing is a no-brainer companion tool, to help you deal with change.

That was an "ah ha!" If you want to trigger change, then breathwork is really powerful. If you want to experience something you've never experienced before, if you want to feel something you've never felt before, all you have to do is breathe in a way you've never breathed before .

It's that simple. It's a catalyst for change and it's a supportive tool for managing change. And, so that's one of the important common denominators.

As, as far as today goes, there was a time in history when being strong and being fast is how you survived, you know? And then along came humans and suddenly, or not so suddenly, being smart was the way to survive. If you're smart enough, you don't have to be strong, you don't have to be fast.: you can outlive the fast and the strong, if you're smart.

If you look at a basic school system, that's what they're teaching kids, how to be strong, how to be fast, how to be smart. But now, and into the future, that's not enough. Some of the biggest devastation on the planet has happened through some of the smartest people. Some of the smartest people have wreaked the most havoc.

Dan:

But now and into the future, it's who is most conscious, that's who's gonna survive. And so when you practice conscious breathing, it's like... "the more conscious I become of my breath, the more conscious I become of everything. The more aware I am of my breath, the more aware I am of many other things."

And so it's a great tool for anyone interested in expanding consciousness, which expands our potential. It makes us safer. So that's a key focus for me these days.

I think everybody's noticing it, something's happening, there is an acceleration on the planet. Things are getting intense. And if you can't handle intensity, you're going to be crushed by it. You're not gonna

survive. And so I'm teaching people... we are using the breath to get comfortable with intensity.

So if life throws something really intense at you, instead of crushing you or causing you to be overwhelmed: you use the breath to develop an ability to get comfortable with acceleration, with intensity. And then that serves us in our evolution.

Laurie: Yeah, that's amazing. I couldn't agree more. For sure. It's been awesome talking to you. Where can people learn more about you and connect with you?

Dan: Well, www.breathmastery.com or www.danbrule.com. You can find my website, there are lots of articles at Breath Mastery dot com, and my schedule is there. I traveled ten months last year. I was in twelve countries. This year I'll be in nine countries. So, my schedule is there, people can find me on the road.

By the way, if I haven't been to a country, I'm wide open to go there for the first time. So, people can go to Breath Mastery dot com, read the articles.

If you subscribe to my newsletter, you can download my e-book. It's free. It's a collection of articles on lots of different ways to approach breathing.

So that's the easiest way: just go to www.breathmastery.com. Surf through the site and find articles you like. Download the e-book.

Every month or so I send out a newsletter. I send out a report about new developments in the state of the practice. That's probably the best way to keep in touch with me and to stay connected.

Laurie: Awesome, perfect. Thank you so much for being with us today.

Dan: Thank you, Laurie.