

EIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT BREATHING

**An interview
with Dan Brulé**

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This Interview with Dan Brulé was conducted via Skype on June 25, 2014. Lithuanian journalist “Ieva Pieva” sent these 8 questions in advance of the interview. And what follows is the transcript of their conversation.

1. What is the effect of Conscious Breathing? What difference does it make in life?

2. What Breathing Techniques do you teach?

3. How do we control our emotions by controlling our breathing?

4. What is the influence of Conscious Breathing on Health? What is the impact? How does it relate to health and healing? What diseases or illnesses can it heal or prevent?

5. What is the influence of Conscious Breathing on sport performance, on Aliveness and energy? What can be controlled through breathing? How does breathing relate to job performance at work?

6. How does Conscious Breathing influence creativity? How is breathing is related to freeing our mind, and to making our thoughts and ideas more pure, and our goals and intentions more realizable?

7. How do we utilize breathing in managing stress, anxiety, or nervousness? How should we breathe in those moments?

8. How should we breathe in the morning to make waking up easier? How should we breathe before going to bed at night to fall asleep more easily and sleep more peacefully?

Ieva Pieva: Hello Dan, I've already read your interview in *Raktas Magazine*, and heard about you from our mutual friend Vidunas.

Dan Brulé: Great! Thank you for your interest in Breathwork!

So I have about 8 questions. I plan to combine the answers with information from your earlier interviews, and together with other information I have, create a piece for the press and for news outlets.

IP: OK, the first question:

What are the effects of conscious breathing?

DAN: When we become more conscious of our breathing, we become more conscious in general. And consciousness is the highest human capacity. It is our essence. And so conscious breathing helps us to contact our essence, to connect with our spirit, with our source, to become more whole.

By being conscious of our breathing, we can control our emotions, our chemistry, our behavior, and our psychology.

Breathing connects our unconscious mind with our conscious mind. It connects the most ancient part of our brain with the most advanced, or the most recently evolved part of our brain.

And so with conscious breathing, we can influence our evolution! We can accelerate it!

With conscious breathing we can influence our immune system, our endocrine system, our nervous system, our circulatory system, our digestive system.

It is actually amazing what we can accomplish with breath! We can become more relaxed, more energized, more balanced, more alive!

Breath connects body and mind. It helps us to become more whole, integrated. We can use the breath to perform better, to be healthier, to achieve our highest potential, to reach ultimate human potential!

Are you ready for the second question? Or would you like to ask something about what I just shared?

IP: Ready for the second one:

What breathing techniques do you teach?

DAN: I teach so many breathing techniques, breathing exercises, and breathing meditations. But there are some basic or fundamental things that I teach everyone.

And there are specific things I teach to people depending on their individual level of health, degree of skill, and purpose or goals in practicing.

For example, I would teach different things to a world class athlete in perfect condition, compared to an old ill woman in bed.

The basics of Breathwork are: Breath Awareness and Conscious Breathing. These are the two main aspects.

Breath Awareness means watching, observing, sensing, or following the breath: not doing anything to it or with it.

Conscious Breathing means breathing deliberately, in a certain way, with a certain intention. It means giving the breath a certain quality or rhythm, pattern or feature.

And there are Three Convergences in Breathwork:

1. I teach people to combine breathing and consciousness, since most of the time people are not conscious of their breathing.
2. I teach people to combine consciousness and relaxation, to use the breath to relax more deeply, more completely, and in more situations and circumstances.

3. We combine deliberate relaxation and conscious breathing to achieve a certain "energized calm," a certain "dynamic peace." This is difficult to put into words, but it's an experience that changes one forever. It's beyond understanding!

I teach Transformational Breathing Techniques and Exercises!

IP: *Why don't we breathe naturally as it is needed, and when we are born?*

DAN: Interesting question. It is always said that babies breathe naturally or perfectly... In fact a small baby has not yet completely developed all of his or her breathing muscles. But yes, they do breathe naturally.

In other words they have not learned to interfere with their nature. But as shocks and traumas and fears and pains begin to happen, changes begin to happen: inhibitions, blocks, etc. occur in the breathing.

Tensions restrict the breathing. Fearful or painful emotional, physical or psychological states interfere with the natural flow of the breath.

Thus begins a process that can develop and worsen thru life. As adults, we try to regain or reclaim that original purity and perfection, that natural ease and flow.

We use breathwork to do that, to release traumas, to heal and recover from early childhood events that inhibit our spirit.

Things like guilt and shame can restrict breathing. And if a child holds back an emotion or their expression, they do so by holding their breath.

And so the habit of "breath-holding" can be set up—unconscious holding of the breath—in order to hold back emotions or expressions. We use breathwork to heal that.

IP: *You said that you teach transformational techniques. What do you mean? Transformation from what into what? Do you mean from an unconscious person to a conscious one, or other things?*

DAN: Transformation means change, but change so deep and permanent that it affects others. We are capable of so much more than we realize, or have been taught, or believe is possible.

Transformation can mean changing from someone who feels like a victim, into someone who feels they are the master of their reality.

It can mean awaking human potentials, for example powers and abilities we read and hear about in the great mystics, masters, gurus, saints. We all have those same potentials.

Transformational breathing can change us from "ordinary" to extraordinary!"

IP: Wow! Got it. Yes. So clear.

And so the third question:

How do we control our emotions with breathing?

DAN: If you observe yourself and observe your breathing, you will notice that you breathe differently when you are at peace, rather upset. You breathe differently when you are happy than when you are sad, afraid or calm, angry or not.

Every emotional state has a corresponding or correlating or associated breathing pattern or quality, rhythm or feature. When your emotional state changes, your breathing changes. And it works both ways: when you change your breathing, you can change your emotions!

That's why the yogis practiced regulating their breath: in order to regulate their mind and emotions. If you are in a panic, you can control or change that emotion by controlling your breathing.

And there are certain breathing patterns or rhythms or qualities associated with high ecstatic blissful states; and when you learn those and practice them, you can reach those high peak states at will! Pretty cool, eh?

IP: Yes! So you mean that if I am angry, I can start to breathe as if I am calm, and then my anger won't affect me so negatively?

DAN: Exactly!

Of course it may take practicing a few times to really get your energy to shift. But yes, if you know how you breathe when you are calm and happy and at peace... and if you breathe that way when you are angry or upset, you will absolutely change your emotional state.

IP: Ok! Question number 4:

***What is the impact of breathing on health?
What diseases or illness can be healed with breathing?***

DAN: Ah, the influence on health... Blood pressure can be lowered... very useful if high blood pressure is a problem! Stress: this is a killer. It causes many illnesses. This can be eliminated with breathwork.

Asthma is directly connected to how we breathe, and so it is an easy one to help and heal. Anyone can be trained to lessen their symptoms, or even eliminate their asthma all together.

Certain breathing exercises can influence production of hormones. That is a big effect, on the chemical level. Remember that oxygen is the basic fuel for the body, so the better you breathe, the healthier you will be.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) plays a very important part in our health. The proper acid base balance in your body is crucial to good health. "Runaway" breathing can upset your pH balance. And it follows that by controlling your breath you can restore your pH balance.

Certain diaphragmatic breathing exercises can support digestion and elimination. Breathing exercises help with intestinal problems and gynecological problems.

The massaging action of the diaphragm helps all the abdominal organs. The heart sits on top of the diaphragm, and so you can also support the heart with focused breathing.

Here is a cool fact: Every living organism must eliminate waste if it is to survive. In humans, 70% of metabolic waste is eliminated thru respiration! So breathing is more than important to health—it is vital!

IP: *So breathing helps balance pH?*

DAN: Yes, it helps with the regulation of pH—directly. The lungs and the kidneys work together to maintain the perfect pH balance. We can't control our kidneys but we can control our breath. Are we ready for next question?

IP: Yes. The next question:

***How does breathing relate to exuberance and energy?
How does it influence performance on the job and in sports?***

DAN: First, about performance... Notice, what does every athlete does just before they dive, jump, throw, kick, etc.? They breathe! They take a breath. It helps with focus; it helps with energy; and so it helps with performance.

Conscious breathing helps us regain balance, helps us to become more centered and focused. It is a way to settle our stomach, to clear our head, to calm our nerves... And so breathwork is directly used to enhance and support performance.

It is used in the same way in marital arts, in singing... and many creative endeavors. The connection of breathing to energy is direct. This energy has many different names in different cultures: prana, chi, ki, life force, spirit... It's all about breath!

The next part of your question is, *“What can be controlled thru breathing at work?”*

Conscious breathing can get energy moving when we become dull or tired. It can relax us and help us recover if we get upset at our boss! We can use it to pause before speaking or reacting.

Breathing affects our posture, and when take time to breathe consciously, we find ourselves sitting and standing straighter. This improves work performance and it reduces fatigue.

The connection between breathing and creativity is simple. The creative process involves bringing together energy and consciousness. Both are needed in order to create anything, and both come together in breathing.

Whatever we focus on while we breathe, we give life to it. We manifest, materialize, or crystalize things into reality thru the power of breath. The mind gets its energy from the breath. It is pure creative energy—the energy of life itself.

Thru breathwork, we are able to generate more energy, to accumulate it, channel it, and distribute it... And so when we breathe consciously, we become more powerful and creative!

We also use the breath to let go of tension, and release blocks to creative energy. And we can use the breath to release limited and negative programs and conditioning.

Remember, that for the first few years of your life, you were basically in a hypnotic trance. You had no discriminating consciousness. Everything was directly downloaded into your subconscious mind.

As a child, you received programs that limit who you are. And breathwork helps to dissolve and drop those programs. It helps us to upgrade the software in our bio computer. When your breathing becomes freer, your thinking is freer.

We can expand our consciousness with breathwork. Breathing helps us make the longest journey in life: from our head to our heart—about 15 centimeters I think!

When you can come from your heart, you have much greater human potential, much more creative potential. And by using the breath to open our hearts, our thoughts become more loving, more pure, more in line with the divine mind!

IP: Thank you! Now, jumping to the next question:

How can we utilize breathing to manage stress and anxiety?

DAN: We utilize breath to manage nervousness and stress in one general way: “low and slow.” That is, focus your breathing low in the belly, and breathe more slowly.

This is the anti-stress/anti-anxiety breathing formula: low and slow. Breathe in thru the nose and imagine "sucking" anxiety out of your body... Then breathe it out of your system thru your mouth.

IP: *You mean also that women should breathe with the belly?*

DAN: Oh yes, breathe in your belly woman! Many women think they need a flat belly, and so they block the breath by freezing that area... forcing the breath high into their chest, where it activates the fight or flight response!

Breathing into your belly puts you in touch with your power. This is also the center of gravity in the body. Breathing into your belly makes the body feel safe.

Breathing into the lower belly also activates sexual energy. Many ecstatic, orgasmic, tantric experiences can be reached thru breathing! Breathing consciously can heighten sexual the experience, taking it to a higher level.

And many women are afraid of this power, this energy. If you have too much sexual energy, other women react negatively toward you. And it can also activate animal instincts in men, and attract unwanted attention—another reason to block this energy.

IP: Interesting thing you said that if a woman has a lot of sexual energy, other women behave not nicely toward her.

DAN: Yes. "Who do you think you are?" "How dare you attract my man!"

Society, culture, religions lay heavy judgments and controls on this vital life force energy. But this loving, creative, healing energy needs to be gently awakened and allowed to flow thru us fully and freely. And this is one of the main benefits of Breathwork.

IP: I think women breathe with chest not just because of flat belly; there should be other reasons.

DAN: Yes, there are many possible reasons. Women are more emotional, and many emotions live in the chest! Sometimes to avoid certain energies or feelings... Sometimes to make them feel more alive... What other reason do you think?

IP: People are lazy, and its less work to breath with chest.

DAN: Actually, using chest muscles wastes energy. It is more economical and efficient to use the diaphragm, which contracts and relaxes by itself with each breath. This means we don't need to expend any unnecessary energy. When we breathe in the chest we often use chest and shoulder and back and neck muscles.

IP: *Should a person control their breathing while having sex?*

DAN: Not so much "control." That might not be the right word. Move the breath, yes. Don't hold the breath. Breathe fully into the feelings. Breathe together with your partner.

And there are many other specific tantric exercises using the breath to enhance the experience, to spiritualize it...

I bet that you can already answer the last question:

How would you breathe to wake yourself up in the morning, and how would you breathe to better rest and relax at night before sleep?

To wake up in the morning, breathe in fast and powerful way for a few minutes. Charge yourself with energy. Breathe consciously into every cell of your body.

To help with sleep, breathe slowly and smoothly, giving yourself gentle sighs of relief while relaxing your body.

IP: So, before sleep I should breathe low and slow, to get rid of any bad emotions.

DAN: Yes. And when you let go of the exhale, let go of all your muscles. Don't rush into the inhale... Deliberately enjoy the feeling of relaxing on the exhale... Make soothing noises like pleasurable sighs of relief...

IP: Like an exhale with a sound: Hmm... Ahhhh...

DAN: Yes, use the sound of pleasure... as if you were soothing a child. Your brain and nervous system will get the message.

Breathing is like swimming or riding a bicycle. You have to jump in the water or jump on the bike. You can't learn breathing from a book or a conversation. It requires practice. But like balance or swimming, once you "get it" you never lose it. You've got it for life!

So, I guess we are done for now. I hope to see you at the seminar. It will be good if you can write from your own personal experience!

IP: Yes. Wait! Can I ask you my favorite question?

DAN: Sure.

IP: *What are people doing wrong nowadays in their lives? There is so much stress, cancer, other health problems; especially psychological problems. People do not know what they want, or who they are. Or does it just seem so? Did earlier people have these same problems?*

DAN: It's the same old problem: Unconsciousness. People don't have a conscious connection to their spirit. The limiting, negative thoughts and forces around them influence them.

And these days people are not as in touch, connected with nature as in the past... They are in a way, disconnected from life, from God you could say. They are not conscious of their divine nature.

And the ego—the sense of a separate self—has become quite big and powerful, captivating and dominating these days—enhanced with all kinds of technology.

And people are not so in touch with their bodies or their feelings, or their intuition these days either. And this keeps them struggling, suffering.

But all this can be changed with conscious breathing, breathwork, with spiritual breathing. It can be eliminated with transformational breathing techniques.

That's why I am so passionate about it! (passion = pass-I-on)

IP: Thank you!

DAN: Thank you.