

Conscious Breathing: A Path to Freedom

The Estonia Training

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Focusing on the Details of the Technique

I want people to have a really good understanding of the technique. And so for me the definition of the technique is also a description of the technique:

It is conscious, connected circular, rhythmic, energy breathing. It's also called the circular rhythm, the connected breathing rhythm, or conscious energy breathing.

The inhale is active, the exhale is passive. You consciously pull the inhale in, and you deliberately let the exhale go. There are no pauses or gaps between the breaths. The inhale connects to the exhale. The exhale merges with the next inhale. The next inhale just turns around and becomes an exhale, that exhale blends into the next inhale.

So each breath is connected to the next, and is connected to the last, in a continuous stream of breaths. At some point it's not so much of an "in and out," or an "up and down." It's more of a "round and round."

Why Rhythmic?

Rhythm is one of those universal forces. It's fundamental. The rhythm of day and night, the tides, the seasons, your heartbeat. Life functions in rhythms. So we build rhythm into the technique.

What we are doing with the breath should be in harmony with what is naturally taking place in life and in the universe. You are not doing anything artificial. You are making use of universal principles.

Why Circular?

Everywhere in life there are circles and cycles. Nature is based on them. There are up cycles and down cycles. Planets circling the sun, electrons orbiting a nucleus, your blood is circulating and cycling through your system...

Why Connected? Connections are vital to life. Ultimately, everything is one. Opposites merge into the same essence and being. We are all connected. Everything in life is connected. And so we eliminate any pauses or gaps or breaks or separations in the breathing cycle. We connect inhale and exhale.

Merging the Inner breath (spirit/energy) with the Outer breath (air)

Rebirthing is the merging of the outer breath with the inner breath. The outer breath is air, and the inner breath is spirit. When we connect the inhale to the exhale in a continuous rhythm; lots of other things come together. People report that their connection to life becomes stronger... they strengthen their connection to themselves and others...

The outer breath is air—atmospheric air; and the inner breath is spirit, energy, or life force. So we start out by breathing air, but when you enter this intuitive rhythm, the breath begins to flow in harmony with how the energy or spirit wants to flow.

A peak moment during a rebirthing session is when spirit or the energy of life takes over the process. The breath begins to breathe you! In the beginning you were breathing the breath, then when this energy is awakened, the breath breathes you. And that's when we begin to feel this deep connection, this oneness....

The mind and body come together. You feel your connection to life. You feel your connection to others, to nature, to God, to reality. And there is this unity of being that occurs. This principle of connection is so important. Because it breaks the disharmony between body, mind, and spirit, which is the main cause of most of our problems.

Active and Passive

And then there is this principle of the active and passive elements. Yin and yang, another universal principle: north-south, male-female, active-passive. That's one of the reasons that the technique is so powerful. It's because it's in harmony with these universal principles: yin and yang, circles and cycles, rhythm and balance...

Conscious Awareness: the First Step and the Constant Practice

So when breathing in this connected circular rhythm, you need to stay awake, to be as conscious as possible. You can sometimes see in a person whether they are conscious or not. But sometimes you can't tell. Sometimes they may be extremely conscious of something that is happening, yet it doesn't look like they are aware of anything. On the outside it can look like they are unconscious, yet on the inside, they are in touch with something deep and powerful.

Conscious Awareness has to be a constant element in the process. Watching your thoughts, paying attention to the sensations in the body. And it's pure consciousness: it's not judging or analyzing, or trying to understand. This is all mental activity, and conscious awareness is a level deeper than that.

Consciousness is able to observe this mental activity: thinking, judging, remembering, comparing...

The Energy Experience

After some time, the energy experience begins. A person is breathing in a rhythm and relaxing, and suddenly, or gradually, the energy starts to come.

Some people, as soon as the energy comes, they are fascinated by it. It is so interesting, unusual, and pleasurable. And for other people, it's frightening. It's so unusual, and they don't know what it is or what is happening. So their reflex is to contract.

And you can see that: their breathing gets interrupted. So you might get the person to explore their reactions at that point. Remind them of the basic elements of the process: smooth out the rhythm. Consciously expand and deliberately relax when the energy is awakened.

Allow this energy to move on its own. Allow it to take over your body. Actually invite it, welcome it. For many people, this is the opposite of their usual reaction. So it is really important that they notice that: that their reaction is to stop it, to control it, suppress it, avoid it. And instead, encourage them to surrender to it, embrace it. Say yes to it, allow it.

Breathe in a way that expresses a "yes" to the energy. Breathe in a way that sounds and looks and feels as if you are welcoming the energy, allowing it, surrendering to it. Let your instructions be direct and specific: "Don't do anything about the energy." "Don't try to control what's happening inside of you." "Don't judge anything, don't censor anything"

Observing the Reactions of the Mind

If you have an emotional reaction to this energy, or a physical reaction, allow them to happen. If the mind reacts, turn every thought into another breath. Turn every reaction into another breath. Bring your attention and your intention to giving yourself another conscious inhale and another relaxed exhale.

All these various symptoms can come during the process: dizziness, dry throat, shaking, vibrations, sensations of heat, cold, tightness, heaviness, lightness; spontaneous laughing, spontaneous crying.

Most people's mind jumps right at that point. They react: "Is this ok?" "Is it safe?" "Is it normal?" "Should it be happening?" "Do I stop myself? I shouldn't cry." "I want to laugh but I don't have a good reason, so I guess I shouldn't laugh."

So I encourage any primal sounds. Encourage any emotional releases. Memories will come, images will come. People have insights: "Ah ha! Wow!" Simply observe all these things along the way. Encourage this as an inner journey. You are letting all these things come and go like scenery from the window of a train.

It's like moving through the countryside. You move past mountains, past rivers, over hills. And you just watch: "Oh here comes a hill. Oh, there goes a hill." Just being an observer, but keeping the movement of the breath constant. Let the momentum continue. It's very much like trying to stop a train at some point: it takes tremendous effort. And you can see it in people: they are struggling to stop the train.

So you encourage them: "Just keep relaxing." "Use the exhale." "Notice what you are doing with your muscles." "Relax your jaw." Release the tension from your shoulders." "Keep expanding with each inhale." "Breathe into each new sensation." "Relax with each new passing feeling."

Making Use of Breath Sounds

I encourage people to breathe thru the mouth and give the inhale an "oooh" shape, and to give the exhale an "ahhh" shape. [demonstrates breathing] It gives them a sense of actively inhaling, like they are feeding themselves. Picture sucking through a straw. And the exhale is an "ahhh..." the sound of letting go.

And then I have them thinking: "soft and open, open and soft. Open and soft, soft and open." "Expand and relax, expand and release." "Pull in and let go. Pull in and let go." I give them those phrases, when they get lost or stuck. And I remind them to say "yes" to whatever is happening in their process!

I loved it when I first came to Moscow and I learned that "dah" means yes. How perfect that is! It fit the sound of the breath just right. And the same word in Estonian? "Yahhh!" Right, that "D" isn't there. Nothing has to open, it's already open... yes... yahhh...

I want to mention about listening to this thing that happens in people's throat. I didn't mention it earlier. [demonstrates] Do you hear that? You'll hear that often. So what's happening with their energy in that case? Something closes, then it opens, closes, then opens.

That sound is the sound of opening, which means something must have already closed. We need to find what that is and keep it open. So then it's more like this [demonstrates breathing] instead of this [demonstrates breathing]

So saying yes, yes to everything. All your feelings, all your reactions, all the sensations, all the emotions, all parts of yourself. Yes is like love.

Forgiveness and Gratitude

And remember the two healing emotions: forgiveness and gratitude. They are two of the basic aspects of love. Both of these emotions create a heart opening. And when your heart opens, something beautiful always flows to you and flows from you.

I give people very specific applications for forgiveness during a session: “Forgive yourself—for being so hard on yourself. Forgive yourself for being lazy... Forgive yourself for the pain that you’ve caused yourself... Forgive others...”

When people are breathing in this rhythm and the energy is flowing, it’s a perfect time to bring to mind certain uncomfortable events, painful situations, or disturbing experiences, maybe some current issue they are working on...

Just bring that problem into the light of love, acceptance, open hearted awareness. You don’t have to do anything else. The way that you are breathing, the way that you are expanding and relaxing... the way you are saying yes to everything: you are exposing that problem to this light, this energy, this loving forgiveness, gratitude... and very often the problem simply dissolves.

They’ve been holding back their love in that case. And now they are focusing on that situation, while they are feeling the flow of their own love, and they have an insight. They heal something.

Tracking tensions and Contractions

I keep my attention on the breather’s face and body: their forehead, neck, jaw, shoulders; watching for tension in the spine, in the belly. When they are having different memories, different parts of their body will contract. So I am encouraging them to relax and keep their throat open. When a strong feeling comes, the throat tightens right up. And if they are aware of it, they can stay ahead of it, and then it doesn’t contract as much.

They can easily become lost in their thoughts, emotions, or feelings, and not notice that tightness has come in, that contractions are occurring. And by the time they realize it: “khhggg!” They’ve close right up. That’s like putting a kink or twist in a fire hose. The flow is interrupted, pressure builds up, and the process becomes painful.

The person thinks that the pain is coming from the memory, or the feeling, or the emotion, but it is really coming because of the reaction—the contraction. You can observe them holding their breath, and tightening their body in some way.

The breath-holding and tension is the cause of the discomfort—or at least it aggravates and magnifies it. And so at that time it is very important to keep the breath moving and to deliberately relax those places. And if you can stay ahead of it, all the better. Once you are stuck in the middle of it, there is no way out except to breathe and relax. Fighting, forcing will not help.

Instructions and Advice During a Session

We need to remember not to be afraid of the unknown. Don't be afraid of losing control. Surrendering is the short cut. So you tell yourself or you tell your client whatever they need to hear to allow them to relax and surrender.

They might need to hear that they are ok, that they are being healed, that a higher part of them is taking over... Use whatever will allow them to surrender to what is happening in them. Sometimes giving them specific instructions: "relax your jaw, relax your tongue, relax your throat."

When they are totally overwhelmed, they don't know what is in and what is out. They are stuck. So just breathe in their ear. And you remember that during intensity, a little gentle rhythm is very useful. [breathing] And then a cleansing breath. [breathing] Help them get through by guiding them back into a smooth gentle rhythm.

Again, you can encourage them, telling them whatever they need to hear that will help them. I remind them that, "under every emotion is love, behind every emotion is peace." "So just keep moving, until you get thru to the other side."

So in the first session, I'll bring everything together, teaching them this cleansing breath. I might have them put one hand on their chest, one hand on their belly. Get them to focus on the expansion from front-to-back, side-to-side, top-to-bottom. Take in a full inhale, a give themselves a big sigh of relief.

And watching that when they take a deep breath, that they are not doing this with their shoulders [raising them up toward ears]: not using muscles that they don't have to, working harder than they need to.

When I am guiding them into the session, I may have them focus their awareness and follow the path that the breath takes when it comes into them: relaxing and expanding those passages.

Creating a space between the teeth, which opens the jaw a little more... Finding and activating the yawning reflex in the back of the throat, to open and soften it...

Allowing the breath to open and expand the chest to create more space for itself: and at the same time, opening and expanding the chest so the breath can come in and fill that space.

So when you pull in, the breath itself will open you. And if you open yourself, the breath will come in. It's like this beautiful dance. You are opening yourself, allowing the breath to come in: and you are pulling the breath in, allowing the breath to open you. Allow that opening to take place wherever the breath can go. And allow the breath to go wherever there is an opening.

Creating Pleasure

That cleansing breath sort of pulls everything together in the technique. You let them find an enjoyable sound, an enjoyable shape: focusing on a place where they enjoy the feelings of expansion, where they can create a pleasurable feeling.

And this becomes a really powerful resource. Just one or two of these cleansing breaths, and you can let go of something, you can change your focus, you can refresh yourself, release something, intensify a positive feeling, or just create pleasure.

One of the things that people come out of a session with is this ability to create pleasure in the middle of any situation. Regardless of what's happening, they have this ability to contact organic pleasure.

So in the end of the session, I'll tell them: "forget about the breathing." Or at different points during the process, I'll tell them to forget about the breathing, and: "just focus on feeling and relaxing."

After they have been actively breathing for a while, I'll encourage them to "Let the breath come and go the way it wants, when it wants, how it wants. Just forget about it." And then, very often, then the person will relax more deeply for the first time! Without realizing it, they have been trying too hard, and when they back off on the breathing, bliss comes.

When they forget about the breathing, when they get out of the way of the process, something in them will let go, and you can hear and see a big breath come by itself. When that happens, make sure that they notice it. Point it out: "Ahhh, that was a good deep breath!"

And the person feels: "Hey, I didn't even do it. It happened by itself! So then they get a sense of it, and then they can repeat that breath with the same quality. And they can accomplish more with less effort.

You can also begin to get them to explore as many aspects and levels of the breathing as possible. So I'll instruct people to find some pleasurable aspect of the breathing: something that they naturally enjoy, some particular point in the breathing cycle, a particular feeling at some point in the phase of the inhale or the exhale.

I encourage them to explore some pleasurable sensation connected to the movement, the expansion, the release of the breath... And then to magnify it, intensify it, exaggerate it. I encourage them to maximize their enjoyment of each breath. I instruct them to breathe in a way that's most pleasurable, most interesting. In this way, we get them to trust their own intuition, their own natural instincts.

How much pleasure can you give yourself with each breath?

