

The Power and Potential of Conscious Breathing

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Breathing is something that you do all the time, consciously or unconsciously. When you first learned to walk, you had to be very, very conscious about it. If you hadn't been very, very conscious about it, you never would have walked. You had to really focus on it. Watch a child when they are taking their first steps. Every ounce of their attention is in the process. They are fully committed with their awareness to doing what is required to get there. When you learned to breathe you didn't have that going for you. You didn't consciously learn to breathe, most people. You were forced into breathing: shook, slapped, or otherwise, made to breathe.

Your body did something, a stimulus occurred, something happened. You didn't have to think about "okay now, in with the good, out with the bad." But you did have to go through a process of clearing fluids, of adjusting to an atmosphere that was very different than the atmosphere that you just came from. For example, the temperature difference between the womb and the world is 30 degrees maybe. If the hospital delivery room temperature is 70 degrees, the womb is 100 to 103 degrees, or something like that. Thirty-degree temperature change, naked: that would send anybody into shock. That alone causes... something.

Add to that the journey through the birth canal, which is something that most people do not want to repeat. Given the opportunity, they would not want to repeat it. You think it is tough for the mother; if you could get in there with a microphone, and talk to the baby during that day, "Hey, how you feeling right now? Whoa! What's happening?" You know, the contractions, the whole experience... Coming out into the cold, cruel world... You know, in the womb you are filtered, the sounds are filtered, the textures. Your skin has only experienced moist, soft, warm... And then, you are out there with rough towels, stuff being stuck in your eyes and down your throat, you are shaken or slapped...

And in the middle of all that you have to learn to breathe. You learn to breathe enough to satisfy the guy who wants to make sure that you are breathing. Usually it is the scream: when the baby screams everybody goes "Yeah! Wonderful." Imagine what the baby must think. "What the heck kind of strange place is this? I am scared to death. I don't know where the heck I am. I am screaming in agony, and suddenly everybody is happy about that? What kind of weird place is this? I want to go back! Let me back!"

I was brought up in the Catholic Church. And it was many years into my programming that I realized that the early ideas of heaven that I was given as a child, actually came from the unconscious memory of the womb. Floating in a blissful place... all your needs are met... you are insulated, protected. It's heaven... And you know, a lot of people unconsciously want to go back, they're longing for that. It is interesting, I've been involved in this rebirthing movement. I was one of the early guinea pigs. Having nothing to do with that Colorado, Candice thing.

Rebirthing is a breathing technique. It is a conscious, connected, circular, rhythmic breathing technique. That's what rebirthing is. And, the theater that's set up around what some people call rebirthing: simulating the womb, and forcing someone to go through. I confess I have done that with adults, people that I trained to teach the breathing technique. We did that in the early years. But it really isn't rebirthing.

Rebirthing is strictly a breathing technique. And, Rebirthing was invented in a very interesting way. This breathing technique, which is the core technique that I teach everyone: which is conscious, connected, circular, rhythmic, energy breathing. That sums it up. This kind of breathing was the kind of breathing that a person clicked into spontaneously when they had a peak experience, an ecstatic experience, a major transformation, a dramatic healing, when they dropped some serious psychological baggage, and they felt free for the first time in their life. They felt "born again" in a way.

And when that person was observed during that transformative experience, the breathing changed. And, the early people thought, "Hey, if this is the breathing that gets clicked in when a person clears their birth trauma, when they release their psychic tension and this trauma that they have been carrying in the unconscious, and they are free of it, and suddenly their spirit is set free... and they breathe in a different way... maybe if we breathe this way we can trigger the experience." It works both ways. That came from an understanding of something that the yogis have known for a couple of thousand of years: that every psychological, psycho-emotional state is connected to a specific breathing pattern.

So, the way you breathe when you are afraid is very different than the way you breathe when you are angry, or when you are confused, or when you are relaxed, or when you are having an orgasm. Sometimes those are the same for some people, but generally speaking, each psychological state has a corresponding breathing pattern. Every emotional state has an

associated breathing pattern. So, when you get angry or when you become afraid, you're going to breathe in a certain predictable way. And those changes that come, when you go from being very relaxed and comfortable to suddenly becoming afraid and becoming more and more anxious. The change that happens in your breathing is very predictable and measurable and observable.

And it works the other way too. If you breathe in a certain way, you are going to change your physiological state, your psychological state, your emotional state, your chemical state. You are going to alter that by altering your breathing. That's the secret that the yogis have known for a long, long time. It is very easily confirmed by personal experience. You do not have to wait for some expert to convince you. You can play with your own breath and you can see very quickly that if you breathe in different ways, you feel differently.

Let me give you the first lesson or the first rule in this practice: that is awakening your awareness of your breathing. Wake up to how you breathe. Begin to notice, begin to observe, how you breathe, when you are doing something. Right now. Just tune in. What is your breathing doing? When it comes in, what does it feel like? What does it feel like when it goes out? What moves when I breathe? Does my chest move? Does my belly move? Are there feelings in my throat? Are there sensations at the tip of my nose? What is your awareness of your breath? The greater your awareness of your breath is, the more you are going to derive from the breathing techniques. If there is something in my way and I am not aware that it is in my way, I am going to trip over it. If I am aware of it, I am going to go around it. Awareness is a very simple and very important life skill.

I was an x-ray technician. In 1970, I was working as an x-ray technician at Boston City Hospital, BU Medical Center. I got onto the Crash Team doing CPR. I would wait and hope that somebody would arrest so I could go in their with the cart. It was so exciting, so... What's the word? You know, when you come upon somebody and they are clinically dead, they are not breathing, they don't have a pulse, and you blow into them, and a few minutes later they're blinking and thanking you! I said, "I am going to do this forever! Who's the next one? Let me at 'em!" But people were dropping like flies around me! So I had to get out of that business. I thought, "I must be attracting this!" I sit on a plane and somebody has a heart attack. I go to a restaurant and somebody has a heart attack. I've got to do a different thing here. I've got to get into something else!"

But anyway, in 1970, I was an x-ray technician and I was on call. It was 2 o'clock in the morning. The emergency room calls me: "We need a KUB" (an x-ray of the abdomen). I pushed this lady on a stretcher from the ER to X-ray, and I was talking to her... trying to make her comfortable.

"So, how's it going?"

"Well, I started to have this pain in my stomach tonight?"

"Started tonight?"

"Yes."

"Not yesterday, not a week ago?"

"No, nothing at all. Everything was fine, and all of a sudden tonight I started to have a sharp pain."

When I took out the x-ray out and looked at it, she had a tumor this big [the size of a grapefruit], this big inside of her! And I thought: "Oh my God! She didn't feel that? This isn't going to happen to me!" I went back to bed, and I was laying in bed feeling inside of myself. "Anything happening in there?" Out of fear, I turned inward--which is not a good attitude to turn inward in with, because you can do a lot of damage. But at least the direction was good, turning your attention inward... starting to notice what is happening inside of you, the feelings and sensations in your body, your reactions to those feelings and sensations.

There are two levels of breathing. One is the level oxygen, carbon dioxide, and the whole mechanical and physiological aspect of breathing. That's one level of it. There is another level of it, and that's the level of energy. In China they call it chi, in India they call it ki, in India they call in prana. It is life force. The author of Genesis called it, what was it...? "neshemet ruach chayem:" the breath within the breath." So he knew that there was more to breathing than just air: that there's a spirit of life, that there is vital energy, there is a live force, that you can incorporate into you when you breathe, if you breathe consciously.

“Breath Awareness:” becoming conscious of your breathing, is the first step to growth and healing. If you just go home tonight and just go, “okay, from now on, for five minutes a day, I’m just going to watch my breath, just notice my breath.” Sitting, standing, laying, any old posture, you don’t have to get into pretzel positions, none of that stuff! I am the laziest guy on this planet. And the people who know me say, “What’s Dan doing now?” “He gets paid for breathing.” “You know, if anyone was ever going to get paid for breathing it would be that lazy bastard!”

If you just spend a few minutes a day observing the breath, you become a witness to yourself, an observer, like an objective witness. Not talking to yourself, not judging, not analyzing, not comparing, not associating, not remembering, not fantasizing, None of that stuff: just direct observation, just feeling, listening, looking inside yourself. That’s it. Your mind is going to want to do all that comparing, remembering, judging, and so on. And so you watch your mind. “Oh, look at my mind is judging, it’s comparing, and so on.” But, you maintain that posture of the observer. So, that’s a good first step. You don’t have to go any further than that because I’ll tell you honestly, you will learn more from the breath itself than you will from me or from anybody else.

The breath is a living force. It has intelligence. It is the life force. The same energy that built your body in the womb originally, is available to you to rebuild your body, to maintain and repair it. And the secret is in the breath. Just begin to notice your breath. What moves? Let’s take a couple of minutes right now, and we’ll just do a quick two or three, minutes of this process, so you understand what it is. I’ll guide you through it. Then you guide yourself through it from now on.

So just close your eyes because the breath is happening inside of you. And, when I close my eyes, the first things I notice are the sounds outside. So I hear the fan. And, I notice myself hearing the fan. Then I decide to focus on the next breath, and to feel and to pay attention to the details of the next breath. I wait for the breath to come in. I don’t do anything with the breath. I just wait for it to come by itself. It will come in by itself, it will go out by itself. It doesn’t need me. So I just try not to do anything with the breath and just watch it come and watch it go. If you notice at the tip of your nose, if you’re breathing through your nose, there are some sensations there when the breath comes in. And, when the breath goes out there are sensations there. And you might notice that those sensations are different. Maybe it feels a little warmer at the tip of your nose as the breath goes out than when it comes in. There’s a slightly different sound. If you could listen to the sound that the breath is making as it passes through the tip of your nose...

You can imagine that there’s a slightly different sound when the breath comes in, and when it the breath goes out. There are definitely different sensations, and there is a different temperature. These are little details you begin to notice. You also notice what moves when you breathe? How do you know you are breathing? What is it that is happening in your body that tells you from the inside that you are breathing? What sensations? What moves? In what direction does it move? How does it move? What you’re trying to do is find details in the breathing. Notice some subtle little things about the breathing that are happening all the time, but you just never noticed them because you simply never paid attention. And now you are paying full attention, and trying to get as many details as you can about how you breathe. Your mind is going to keep coming in. It’s going to remember things. You’re going to be talking to yourself: what you’re going to do when you leave here, a conversation you had with somebody this morning: like a tape playing in your head. You can hear the self-talk happening.

And, when you notice that you’re mind is wandering, and your attention is on something else, you simply notice: “OK, my mind is wandering.” Put your attention on back on the next breath and be fully present for the next breath that comes and goes. You also can begin to feel what is around the breathing? What are the sensations in you chest, in your back, in your abdomen, in your shoulders, in your neck, in your jaw... As you’re noticing your breath, you are also including that awareness any other sensations in your body. Anything else that moves anything else that you feel, or hear, or sense... You allow that to be part of your awareness.

This is meditation, a very simple form of meditation. There are a lot of benefits to this simple practice. They are well documented. I don’t need to go into them here... Meditation, now... A few Years ago, you could argue, “meditation, shmeditation.” But it lowers blood pressure. It does a lot of things. There are a lot of benefits to this simple meditative practice. Even five, ten, fifteen minutes a day, you will get benefits that will last for life. And you will also be developing something very crucial for skill at the breathing techniques, and that is sensory awareness: an ability to notice little subtle things in your body. So you can feel when things change, when things adjust, when something happens: your attention is alerted to it.

So, that’s the first exercise. This is the first part of my “Formula for Transformation.” Meditation will transform your life. I don’t know anybody who practices meditation that it hasn’t made changes in their relationships, in their life, in their health,

all kinds of things. The second part of this formula is relaxation. It is interesting that every spiritual path, every great master, every religion, at some point talks about relaxation: surrender, letting go. That's built into so many spiritual philosophies and practices. "Let go and let God." "Go with the flow." There are so many clichés. Somebody is upset. What do you tell them? "Relax, relax. Everything is going to be okay."

We know that relaxation is important, but it is not taught in schools, at least not in a mass way. And most people have simply not practiced relaxation. So, you need to begin to do that, and there's a wicked short cut! There is a very common relaxation practice using the breath and that is a slow exhale. So a person breathes in, and lets the breath out slowly through pursed lips... And I can feel myself just sort of settling down. As I let the breath out slowly... I feel this settling down feeling... A very good technique...

What some people do, is they combine muscular tensing with that. So they would breathe in, tense their muscles, then relax the muscles as they let the breath go. So now they are combining two things, which is very powerful: awareness of the breath or movement of the breath, and doing something with their body. So, if you make a fist and it's tight... Then you relax it, and you feel... You are teaching yourself the difference in the feeling between tension and relaxation. Most people carry tension, chronic tension. I don't see anyone in here who I don't see chronic tension on. We all carry chronic tension. The reason it is chronic is because we don't feel it. If we did feel it, we would dump it. We would release it in some way. But it has become a part of how we feel all the time and it doesn't seem unusual. Only when tension builds to such a level that it becomes pain, we give it some attention, or if the tension starts to interfere with our movements, or with our speech, or our ability to succeed, or be in a relationship: then we realize that the tension is a problem. Or if the tension is so tight that it starts to obstruct various circulations or energy flows... All kinds of things can happen. Then the tension becomes a problem.

But usually by then, the medical community has a target that you can go to cure. And the cause, which is this accumulated tension is left un-addressed. And so something else will happen, and then something else will happen. And until the person learns that stress is their main problem, it is going to keep popping up in different ways.

And stress and anxiety are married to tension. It is impossible to be anxious and have all of your muscles soft and loose. It is a physical impossibility. Something is going to be tight when you are uptight, when you are anxious. All you have to do is find what that is in you. Everybody has a favorite place that they carry tension. The jaw is a really strong place, neck muscles, shoulder muscles. You know where people carry their tension. That's where it is. You know you can feel it. See Jack and get a massage for crying out loud!

That sigh of relief right there... When you get home from a hard day at work: hectic day, the traffic, the people. When you finally get home in your favorite chair. Ahhh!! That might happen by itself. You don't have to make it happen. It just like when you go "Phew!" How many people just do that?

Wow! Yawning. Thank you very much. God, it is the greatest compliment a person can pay to me is to yawn when I am talking. You know, please do! And, the more dramatic you can make the yawn, the happier guy I will be! Yawning is yoga. Yawning is yoga. It involves stretching, it involves lots of things... It is yoga. Use it. Practice it. Build on it. Get good at it!

You know when you yawn, people should be jealous! And if you yawn, soon, very soon, someone else is going to yawn. Unless they are deliberately trying to hold it in, which is what we have all been taught: is to hold in the yawn. It's not polite. I did an experiment... I'm getting off track... But I did an experiment. I have never seen anyone yawn on an elevator. I'm still taking this survey. You've got six people on an elevator... Has anyone ever been in an elevator and seen [dramatic yawn]? No! I thought not. I'm still looking. It must be a rule. Maybe there is a chip they put in us, do not yawn on elevators... something

Yawning is like your body is saying: "Hey, shit (excuse my language) is building up inside of here! You need to stretch! You need to vent! You need to move, to do something! Let's get some circulation happening! Cobwebs are starting to happen in here! Wake up!" So we wait until the body makes us yawn. We wait until the body demands that we yawn. And then we may still stifle it because someone is talking, and God forbid you yawn when someone is talking! We have been taught... I call it the adulteration process: becoming an adult. You know you start out as a perfect Buddha, a Jesus, a Moses, Lao Tse, Mohammed, Confucius... Every child born into the world is a master, is a divine being. What the heck happens? What happened to us? We get adulterated, that's what happens!

We get civilized, we get programmed and conditioned. We start trying to do what somebody says is right. We start trying to be the way people say we should be. Then your twenty, thirty, forty years old and you don't even know what your heart's desire is anymore. You are in a habit. You have a role in society; you have a position. Your ego might be quite happy with where you are, but your heart... your spirit... is aching. You know, people say, "How are you?" and they go "fine." And in that word fine, I hear this aching in people. It's the spirit longing to be... "Hey, remember me? You know, the one you

gave up years ago so that you would get fed, so you'd get approval, and so you'd graduate and all that stuff. "You said you'd come back to me. Well, I am still here... You forgot about me, and I'm still here."

So, that sigh of relief... and the yawn... are two things that your naturally do. But you only do them when your body demands that you do it. You don't do that with food, you don't do that with brushing your teeth, you don't do that with bathing, you don't do that with sleep. You don't wait until you are starving before you feed yourself! You don't wait until you are so exhausted that you just drop before you go to bed! So why do you wait until your body to demand that you yawn before you yawn? Why not yawn for the heck of it? Because it's fun! Because it feels good! Because it's good for you! Why not sigh? A big sigh of relief, a pleasurable sigh of relief, just because it feels good... The animal, the soft animal of your body needs it. The soft animal of your body loves it. It can't survive without it. That's why it makes you do it.

But if your dog wants to go outside, you don't wait until they're... you let them out before... they... really need it. But our [mind set] and medical system is geared to [correcting things]. I guess it comes from the old days when if everything was going fine, there was no problem. It was only when something terrible happened, and that's how medicine was invented. When somebody was sick, was ill, somebody came in and tried to help them, and make them better. All of our medicine is based on that. It is not based on prevention. It's not based on staying ahead of illness. And it certainly it isn't based on developing a lifestyle that's aimed for optimum health. It's cleaning up the mess after the things happen. That's what our medical system does. You screw yourself up and you go to the doctor and say, "Fix me." He fixes that, then you go screw up something else, and you go to another doctor, and he fixes that. And since insurance covers it, it's a great system.

But when you're busy fighting illnesses, and when you busy dealing with stress, that little quiet voice inside of you is never really heard. You never meet that spirit in yourself. When you are in a crisis, you are not interested in spiritual pleasures. You never really get around to that stuff if you whole life is based on cleaning up the mess after it is made all the time. And, breathing for me... I am only interested in working with people who want to stay ahead of it. Not only stay ahead of it, but also go in a different direction: towards optimum health, towards peak performance. And towards something I consider even more important, which is Ultimate Potential. I wasn't kidding when I said, I believe, I firmly believe that every child born into this world is a master of some kind, is a genuine spiritual master, a Yogi, a Moses, a Buddha, an extraordinary, unique being. I mean, all of evolution led up to this birth. That's not... to just... hang around at a desk for sixty or seventy years and then disappear. That cannot be the plan for the universe!

We need to begin to focus on that process... of waking up, and letting go of what we have accumulated: starting with physical tension. So, the sigh of relief... We are going to do it now. Everybody is going to do it, so you don't have to be embarrassed about looking like a fool. What you want to do is imagine this: You are in a Shakespearean play, and you have no words in the play. You just have to come out on the stage, and you have to give a sigh of pleasure, a soothing sigh of relief... so that the audience will be convinced that it feels good... that you are enjoying it. So it can't be just acting. You have to really enjoy the pleasure of the release, of the relief, of the stretching, of the sound, of the movement of the breath.

If you do that two or three times, and focus inside. And notice that it's going to leave you in a different place (state) than when you started. You are going to feel something happening inside of you. You are going to notice something that wasn't happening before you did that two or three times.

Now, I want you to yawn. It is okay to fake the yawn... because if you fake the yawn... two or three times of faking the yawn, and a real yawn will definitely come. If it doesn't, then you have some serious problems! And I need to know about it! Do a yawn. There are a few elements to a yawn. Something different must be happening inside of you after you do that. And if we could set you up with all kinds of monitors--chemical and blood monitors and stuff, you would be able to make a list of all kinds of things that are now different, just from that.

I don't normally get into advanced yawning on the first date, but I am going to make an exception in this case! There are a few elements of yawning, because I would like you to master yawning. Do not cover your mouth when you yawn. That is the first rule. It is polite, yes. But a lot of things are polite that... It was polite to salute Hitler! It was considered a courtesy. So, politeness is way down on my list of things that really, really, really matter. I don't know any other reason [other than politeness] for covering your mouth, except that you might be this close to someone else's face. That could be an excuse. I am not saying I would allow covering your mouth in such a case. In such a case I would look up because ... who cares up there, right?

Have you ever watched a dog or a cat yawn? Watch what they do to their spine. Watch what they do to their jaw. Watch what they do to their neck. You have to do those things. Your spine, your neck and your jaw have to be involved in your yawn. You can't do one of these [demo]. The nuns loved when we did that in school, you know. But they also slapped my hand every time I tried to write with the left one. None of that stuff... You need to open your jaw, and you need to open it

in a way... This is my jaw here... So, you can open your jaw this way. So, my teeth open. But you can also open your jaw this way, so something here opens. Not just in the front. But something here opens [in the back of the jaw].

[Comment from audience about jaw:] "It hurts when I do that"

"Then, don't do it so much."

"No, I just did it and it really... like it clicks ..."

"You must have a lot of tension in your jaw, habitually. You probably have a lot of tension in your jaw." "What you want to do is create just enough... If you catch yourself when you yawn accidentally... and you realize what is happening then... and catch it. Just duplicate that. Duplicate what naturally happens." "You don't hurt your jaw when you yawn by accident or unconsciously. It's just that when you start to do something, you put more effort into it than you need to, and things jam up. But that's normal. That means that you are trying. But you can't 'try' to relax. It's a kind of catch-22."

But, you can fake a yawn. So, we need to fake a couple more yawns. I'll give you the advanced yawning. People know me all over the world now because of this... You'll meet somebody... You'll be in London some day, and you'll see somebody do this yawn, and you'll go, "Oh my God! I know you!" The thing was this. I caught people... I make everybody yawn. I think I've made 30,000 people yawn so far, maybe more than that, I stopped counting.

I watch and I catch. So, when I first started doing this a few years ago, we were having fun, and I was pointing out different people's yawns. And we developed this advanced yawn you see. Normally, if I was an old Chinese Taoist monk, I would make you live with me in my monastery for twenty years, do my dishes, paint my house, and then I would give you this secret! But, since I am a lazy American and I assume everyone else is, we'll get right to it!

I caught people doing this. [demonstration] Great. The stretching is there. The jaw is open, but nothing is moving, nothing is flowing. No energy. What the heck? So, we invented this yawn. It goes kind of like this... [demonstration] So, when the yawn comes... while you are stretching... while everything is open... Try to get a little [air in and out]. Get a few breaths in quick while all the doors are open. While everything is there, sneak a few breaths in and out... If you combine that with yawning... combine that with stretching... You should make your eyes water after a couple of yawns. That means, hey, it's working! If your eyes are watering, a lot of other things, good things, are happening inside of you.

And the sigh of relief. When you get home tonight. Sit in a chair. Don't tell people what you are doing, because it is going to drive them bonkers. No matter what they say, no matter what they do, just stay with it. Do it [the sigh] again and again. Because I will tell you, that practice is amazing. You have been taught not to be yourself because of what other people think. You have stifled things in yourself because your mother didn't like it, your father didn't like it, the schoolteachers don't like it, the police don't allow it, and a lot of other things! And that's become a habit. So, as soon as someone else has put their energy on you, you change how you are.

When I first got into emergency medicine, I was... You know you take a person's pulse, their blood pressure, and you count their respirations. But if I say, "OK, breathe naturally now." It is almost impossible. As soon as the person knows that you are going to see how they breathe, they breathe differently. They suddenly, they are not normal any more. So, you can't let them know that you are counting their breaths. They think you are taking their pulse, or you are talking to them, and you are really counting their breaths, seeing how many breaths they take in ten seconds, multiply by six, and put it in their chart. If I told them I was doing that, who knows what they would do, but it wouldn't be what would happen naturally by itself.

That sighing exercise brings that up in you, it brings up that conditioning in you. Somebody is going to say, "What are you doing? Am I boring you? What's happening?" And, when you hear them say that, you'll feel something inside of you move in turn, and the need to respond or to explain or to defend or to teach or whatever. Something in you is going to be moved by the other person's response to you. And I will tell you, it is freedom, when you can be who are, no matter what the people around you think, do, feel or say.

Every breathing technique in yoga, in the marshal arts, in Tai Chi, in all that... somebody invented those things. And, everybody here needs to invent their own practice. If you become conscious of what is happening inside of you. If you begin to relax, you will be inspired. And it won't be a coincidence what you invent for yourself. It will be perfect. But it has to be you. This also is the rule of the Spiritual Path. If you are walking someone else's path, you are walking the wrong path. You cannot follow anybody to yourself! So, you need to invent your own breathing techniques. I am just giving you some underlying principles that if they are in harmony with these principles, whatever techniques you invent are going to be great. So, put the three things together: Awareness, Relaxation, and Breathing.

I feel a little something in the back of my neck right here. So, that is a good place to start. My attention is goes to the back of my neck. Fine. So now I am going to focus there with my attention as I breathe in. And a certain amount of this Chi or this Prana or this energy, is going to go there. Because my attention goes there, the energy goes there. The air is still going to go into my lungs and all that is going to happen, but the chi, the Prana, some of that is going to go to this place I am focusing on. And the more I practice meditation, and the better my focus, the more chi or the more energy is going to go there. So, the more times I practice this, the quicker it goes there, and the more it goes there. So, I am focusing on this place in the back of my neck... It could be any place.

As I inhale, I imagine the breath going there. As I exhale, I deliberately relax that place as if there is a joint there and I just loosened the joint; as if, there is a muscle there and I just let the muscle get soft; as if something was closed and I just let it open; as if something was tight and I just let it be loose; as if something was stuck and I let it be free. I just use my imagination and my inner sense and I produce some feeling of relaxation, or some imaginary symbol of relaxation there.

Now for me...the habit...the next thing... I'm just giving you a blow by blow of my personal thing in the moment... I just remembered to put the tip of my tongue on the roof of my mouth right behind my front teeth, which is one of the Chi Kung principles. Just let the tip of your tongue rest on the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth. There are good reasons for this. It is just a good habit to develop when you are breathing consciously. So, I just remembered to do that.

And now I just got a sense of my whole body. I can visualize the position that my body is in. I have a sense of my energy in the form of my body, in the shape and the posture of my body. Now a lot of my habits are starting to just click in. I just relaxed my belly, my abdomen. I just relaxed my shoulders a little bit more. And this is just because I practice a lot, and now these things... just... habitually... I begin to do it. There is a little bit of tension there, so I deliberately send a little bit of energy, a little attention... I relax... and I watch and feel....

Then I begin to breathe consciously. And if I start with the inhale, I'm going to sense the expansion, the physical sensations of expansion: the physical sensations of the breath coming into me. And I magnify those sensations. I multiply them. I exaggerate them a little bit. So, I expand a little bit further then I would have had I not put my attention and my intention there... Then I give myself this [hahhh... sigh of relief].

Now if you listen to this: [haahhh] and listen to this: [hawhh]. One sounds tight [haahh, haahh]. The other [hawhh, hawhh] sounds softer and lighter. You know it is like that balloon. When you take a balloon. [Eeeck, eeeck] right? The tighter it is, the more noise it makes. So, I use the sound of my breath to give me an indication of any place that is tight.

Because here's a question: "How many people ever heard the wind?" "How many people have been outside and heard the wind blowing?" Nobody has ever heard the wind. What you hear is when the wind hits something. What you hear is when there's something in the way of the wind, and it has to go around it. Then the noise is created.

So, if you are making noise when you breathe, it's because the breath is hitting something. It is because it is being forced through a narrow channel; something is in the way, it is being blocked. So, you can use the sound of the breath to fine-tune your relaxation.

One good exercise is to practice breathing deep and fast and quiet. So at first, to breathe silently [demonstrating], you have to breathe [little small breaths]. If you start to breathe faster, it will start to get noisier, unless you also relax. So, there is a game that you can play with yourself. Start to breathe faster and deeper. At the same time make whatever adjustments you need to make to make it quieter.

You don't have to teach a little girl and you don't have to teach an antelope that when they want to hide, they make their breath small. It's an instinct. No one has to be taught that. If you are hiding from the enemy, your breath is going to be very quiet and very small. They don't teach you that in boot camp. Everybody already does it. You don't teach an animal in the wild. They know. For every bit of breath that goes out, that's their odor, their essence, a sound. And the predator is going to tune into it. So, when the animal freezes, the breath gets very quiet.

If you look at most people that is how they are going through life. They are hiding. They are hiding. Because if they were to go like: ["Haaaaa, Haaaaa"] everyone would notice them, and might notice the bad things about them, or whatever. So, we are hiding, and because we are hiding, we have inhibited our breathing. And because we have inhibited our breathing we have take years off our life. And we loose our ability to feel. And we disconnect from our spirit. And we loose our grace and our rhythm and our balance.

So, you should invent your own breathing technique. And here are the rules: It has to be conscious. You have to put a lot of attention the details of it. Only you know those details... You know when you are sitting on the bus or waiting in line at the

grocery store, you don't know what is happening inside of the other person. There are these so-called psychics. Where the hell were they on September 11th. ?

I can figure some things out about you when I look at you. You know, by the expression on your face, by your posture, and especially by how you breathe: which is a whole other talk that I am really going to go into this weekend. Because...Breathing is a language. I look at the expression on your face, and I can guess what a person might be feeling, some emotional state... You can tell something about a person's inner world by their posture, by the expression, by the tone of their voice, or by the actual things that they tell you. These all give an indication of what is happening inside of other people. But we've all learned to disguise these things. If you are a bank teller and the last customer was a pain in the... The last customer was just a jerk! The next customer is in your face. You are still a little upset at that last customer, but you can't be rude to the next customer. So, you smile... and inside... you want to... !@#\$. And we have all learned to do that. We project what we want people to get, but the really what is happening inside could be very, very different.

I remember that first.... the Texas tower guy... that first guy who started this sick fad of, you know, shooting people by in large numbers. Remember that? It was in the early 70's. I discharged guys just like that from the military. I did their final physical exams. He was a nut. But he shined his shoes. He showed up on time. His neighbors said, "Gee, he was a quiet guy. He seemed like a nice guy." On the outside he looked perfectly natural. He did all the right things. He acted the right way, but on the inside he was a seriously hurt guy. And it came out in this twisted way at some point. That's because we have a break between who we really are and how we really feel and what we let out into the world. So, we smile even though we are hurting. We laugh because it is polite. We don't cry because we don't want to embarrass ourselves. And so, there's this break between what's real and how you behave in the world.

So, you can control your facial expressions, you can control your tone of voice, you can control your posture, you can project how you want people to think that you are. I can remember in high school, a nun gave me this book on "Handwriting Analysis." And I went home and I looked at my handwriting and I went through the book, and I said, "Gee, it's real!" I was looking at the things I did with my handwriting, as I read.... And, I changed my handwriting! The next day I was back at school and I was deliberately changing my handwriting. So, we do that. We... if people figure out something about us... we start to change. It is a way of surviving.

Nobody, or very few people, realize that the breath is like that. It tells people what is happening inside of you. The way you breathe says a lot about you. Your breathing patterns, your habits of breathing, the way you breathe in different certain situations give away the deepest things about you. The core issues in your personality are revealed in the way that you breathe. But you haven't disguised your breathing because you didn't know that some of us could see that!

For me, I need permission to tune into a person's breathing, because it is like asking them to undress. I wouldn't just take your clothes off. And so, I don't feel like I have a right to really focus on a person's breathing, except in just sort of a peripheral way, and for moments when I am making a point. I don't tune into a person's breathing I ask them or unless they pay me. Then I know we have an agreement, so whatever happens, they asked for it, and I am going to be honest about it... I guess I did get off track...

So, inventing your own breathing technique for yourself has to have these elements: Consciousness. Deliberateness. It has to have a very powerful aspect of relaxation involved in it. You have to be engaging the breath for the purpose of relaxation. Some aspect of the breath has to be dealing with letting go. That is why the first technique I teach is letting go of the exhale. Because anatomically, physiologically, and chemically, and with the nervous system, the inhale is already the active phase of the breath. The diaphragm contracts, things happen, and the breath comes in. And then the diaphragm relaxes and rises back up [to allow the exhale]. The exhale is already passive, a naturally passive thing.

The first technique you teach yourself should be in harmony with what is already natural. So you are not putting some artificial thing onto your breathing mechanism, which is what a lot of people do when they start to practice breathing. They start throwing artificial things on top of an already screwed up breathing mechanism, and the whole mechanism locks up, gets jammed up, and they are further away from where they wanted to be than if they had not done anything. So, the first exercise is to include relaxation in the breathing. And I would include it on the exhale and, specifically practice it on those two points: where the inhale turns into an exhale, and where the exhale turns into an inhale. And, feel the difference between the tension and then the movement that happens with relaxation. And learn that on a cellular level. Not just intellectually, but get it physiologically.

Get the feeling of squeezing the breath out... getting very empty... then relaxing... and feeling how the air comes into the body itself. And really get that feeling. Know it inside and out. Do it often enough so that you just know that feeling, so

that it will come in handy when you need it. You will be able to find it when you need it. And the same thing with filling yourself up, expanding... and then just letting go... and letting the breath flow out of you. Snapping it loose, dumping it out, so it is just a passive exhale. Practice those two things.

The third thing is rhythm. You know, nature is built on rhythms: the seasons, the tides, days and nights, cycles. You name it: the universe functions on rhythms, cycles... circles and cycles. So, breathe in a way where you experience a cycle. An active phase and a passive phase in a cycle, where it is rhythmic where there is some rhythm involved. Now you are in harmony with some universal principles that exist in nature. And you are building them into your breathing techniques. So it is safe. You are not doing anything artificial, or manipulating. You can get onto the manipulation later.

The first thing I teach people in breathing is to develop a relationship with the breath. When you first start a relationship with somebody you don't start pushing them around, telling them what to do, controlling them, manipulating them. No, you listen... What do they like? You get to know them...

In the first few moments you are absorbing the person. Right? Just taking them in... What are they like? What do they do? How do they smell? You are just learning about them, from them. You are not leaping into the relationship and the first thing you do is manipulate. But yet, when people begin the breathing practice, the first thing they do is start to "do" something with the breathing. No. No. Just let the breathing happen.

Start to learn from the breath. Develop a relationship with the breath. See how it goes by itself, then start to play with it. And then start to work with it. But, follow that order, and then you don't need anybody. You can go off on your own, and invent something that will work for you. It might not work for anybody else but, by God, it will work for you.

At this point does anyone have any questions, wise cracks, jokes? We'll just end it with some questions and stuff.

[Question: What's going to be in the workshop?]

The workshop I call "Going Deep, Getting High." I have been talking. We have been doing stuff. Breathing is like balance. I can't teach you balance. I can show you "ok this is balance." [demonstrating] I can't teach you balance, but you can learn it. Balance is something that you can learn, but can't be taught. And breathing is like that. You can't teach breathing but it can be learned. The weekend is about me doing everything I can think of to get you to learn something about how you function in relationship to your breath. And that relationship to your breath is the most vital relationship.

From the first breath you took when you born to the last breath you take, you are married to the breath. And so, the better relationship you have with the breath, the greater the potential you are going to have on all the other levels. So, I have a lot of different things, processes and tricks and things, and exercises that we do... I never know what I am going to do in the weekend. Honestly, I do not. I wouldn't be happy working if I did the same thing all the time. Fortunately, since everybody is different, the way you breathe is unique. It is like a fingerprint. Nobody else breathes like you do. It's very unique. And the way that you breathe is like a living fingerprint: it changes.

So, what I try to do over the weekend is to create enough different situations so that you wake up to how you breathe in different moments, in different ways, in different times, during different things. And, so, it is like a puzzle, it snaps together. You know when you are doing a puzzle and that last piece comes together, and suddenly the picture just snaps together. Ahha! That's the image. So, I just keep working until you have those "Ah Ha!'s" And, I don't let you out until you a couple of those Ah Ha!'s. And I have a couple of things that guarantee that you have an "Ah Ha!" And a few "Ah Ha!'s."

It gets pretty exciting. Because I'll tell you... Life is not weirder than we think; it's weirder than we can think. And you are capable of not only more than you can imagine, but more than you imagine that you can imagine! We have potential that we just have not tapped. The weekend is about just getting people to open up to new possibilities. And also, to dump a lot of baggage... Most people go through life, you know [chair hanging off arm as baggage demonstration], with stuff from childhood, and the last relationship that they were in... And they go:

"Hi. I would like to get into a relationship with you."

"No thank you!"

"What's the problem? What's wrong?"

“Now if you meet somebody who has a chair on the other arm...” [Laughter]

So, it is like that fan... which we forgot about... but has been going constantly. There are a lot of things in your life that are driving you crazy, but you just don't notice them anymore. Because the world is so full of things to do and see and look, that you just don't notice that the fan is running inside of you, wasting electricity, burning up your energy. And if you can find that internal mechanism, you are going to free up some energy, creative energy.

I used to call this workshop “*Awakening Creative Energy.*” Now I call it “*Going Deep Getting High.*” Because this chi, this prana, this ki, this life force, this spirit... you can wake it up in you. And it will motivate you, it will animate you, it will inspire you, it will heal you. And I don't really have much to do at that point. When you touch this essence in yourself... Phew! It is an amazing, amazing, wondrous thing. There's going to be a lot of hysterical laughter, and there is going to be a lot of... all kinds of stuff... because you come with all kinds of stuff.

Every shock you have ever had, every trauma you have ever had: you did something with your breath at that moment. When you are afraid, you do something with your breath. If you are about to receive an injury, a pain, an assault, you do something with your breath. If somebody says “don't cry,” you do something with your breath. If it is not polite to talk, to say your peace, you do something with your breath. If you are told as a child to “Sit down and shut up:” which is what school is all about, you have to do something with your breath. You hold your breath. And the minute you stop holding your breath, lots of things happen. Because you are walking around holding your breath and you are doing it unconsciously, as a habit. Everybody is doing it. Nobody notices. But as soon as you start to get the breath moving and flowing all kinds of things start to move and flow.”

[Question: “I teach special needs kids from age 3 to 6. How can I help them breathe?”]

“You make a game out of breathing.” I do puddling out. I teach kids to “puddle out.” The rag doll exercise, where I lay them down... and I just [demonstrating on person in audience...] And I just play with this... I see where and how relaxed is he. You know, some people, you hold their hand up, [let it go] and it stays up in the air. And they say “I'm relaxed! Perfectly relaxed.”

So, you play with relaxation with kids. Being a rag doll, get them to puddle out. And you do blowing out a candle, doing the counting, imitating each other, and copying each other's breath. You just invent games around the breathing. And, I would say that what you need to do, is you need to find an aspect of your breathing that you can enjoy. This is a great exercise for anybody. It is a great way to start your relationship to your breath. You just notice, “How do I know I am breathing? What do I feel that says I am breathing?” And you start to focus on the sensations, the real sensations of breathing, and you find some aspect of it that you can enjoy. Some certain point in the breathing, some certain movement, a sound, a feeling, and you focus on that aspect that you enjoy.

You find an aspect of the breathing that you enjoy and you focus on it. Then you start to build on it, you play with it, you expand it, and you experiment with it. And you do different things around that central aspect which is an aspect that you can enjoy. And if you find that in yourself, because you enjoy it in yourself, it will be very easy to get the kids to play with that aspect of it.

It might be a certain sound, [whuuuuuuuuossh] You know, anything. And over the weekend, people will be going through a lot of things, inventing all kinds of different things. But if you start with what you generally enjoy, instead of something that you are passing on that you have heard, the kids... they get that. They recognize that. When it is coming from you, it is real, and it has got more juice in it. It will touch something real in them. If you are just repeating something that you heard... kids get that all the time, and it only goes so deep. And so it has to be something that you, you really can have fun with, and they will have fun with it.

And, you have the rules: Does it involve relaxation? Does it make you more aware of the details of the breathing? Does it awaken your consciousness? And is there rhythm involved? Is there some cycle, is there some regulation, some rhythmical regulated aspect to it? If it's got those three things it's going to work, and kids will take it themselves. Kids play with their breath. How many kids practiced holding their breath? You know, hyperventilating, and someone would squeeze you. When I was a kid we did that, and all kinds of things... I don't think I was the only kid who did it. How long can you hold your breath? Practice that, start with that. Start with that. That builds up breath awareness.

Then you point out the relaxation. So, if you say, “everybody take a deep breath.” And you watch the kids do this: [pulling shoulders up]. So, then, you point that out the next time. And you show them: “Now I'm going to take in a deep breath,

very deep. Watch this [demonstrating]. Nothing happened up here. My shoulders didn't go up but it was still a deep breath. Then the awareness gets magnified and multiplied and they start to make connections.

Somebody else? A question? A comment? She has a question:

[I was wondering if there are any breathing prescription you can provide for someone who has panic attacks and hyperventilating?] “Yeah!” Are you coming to the weekend? Was your hand up for the weekend? The question is about panic attacks and hyperventilating.

You know I have a good friend, who wrote a book called Finding Serenity In The Age Of Anxiety. Robert Gershon: a potent psychotherapist. Lives in Boston. Practices in Brookline, Massachusetts. Beautiful book. He's been on Oprah. He's a really a neat guy. Finding Serenity in the Age of Anxiety. He has a very good take on this, probably the best I have ever heard. He says there are three forms of anxiety. There is toxic anxiety, which is that voice inside of you that says “be careful, watch out, you can't do it, you are no good, what's wrong with you, bada ...bada... bada:” that critical voice that is a substitute for some early parental figure... that voice that is in your head that's on your case all the time... It says: “You idiot! Why did you do that? You are so stupid! Be careful, you are not going to make it! You are not smart enough. You can't do that. Don't do that! Sit still!” That toxic voice... That is toxic anxiety.

There is a natural anxiety. On a first date... just before you lift off when you are at the top of a mountain when you are skiing... when you get a promotion in a job...you experience anxiety. This is healthy, normal, natural anxiety and needs to be dealt with in a different way than the way you deal with toxic anxiety. You actually want to encourage this kind of anxiety. It is fuel, you want to use it, you want to transform this energy into accomplishments and progress, and so on.

The third thread of anxiety is sacred anxiety. It is connected to the big questions in life. Who am I? Why am I here? What is life about? here did I come from? Where am I going? You know, the big spiritual questions that we all have, that sometimes we get answers for them, that come out of a book. Or somebody else says: “This is the answer, now don't think about it.” Then we go a few years in our life but it didn't answer the question, and our spirit is aching...

So, I sense sacred anxiety connected to yours, and I sense a lot of natural anxiety that has gotten tangled up with this inner voice that sabotages and changes the energy into a toxic kind of thing. On a physical, practical level, you need to breathe low and slow. Low and slow. If you watch me breathe right now... If you all put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest... Now I am going to take in a deep breath, and feel what moves. A lot of volume [Demonstrating] So this hand didn't move [over chest]. I can make this hand move [demonstrating] But that shouldn't be the habit. That is your habit! When you breathe as a habit, your chest has been moving with almost every breath that you take. Even when you are at rest. Breathing like this triggers the fight or flight mechanism. It triggers the sympathetic nervous system.

This reflex/response goes back to a time when you were in the jungle, or your ancestor was. And there was a tiger about to leap from the tree, and suddenly you were charged! You know, you needed to fight or run: the fight or flight mechanism. This is a biological reflex and you wouldn't be here if our ancestors didn't have it. It is responsible for our survival. If there is a sudden crisis, a real direct threat, you need to be able to run, to fight, to think, to move.

And so your system goes on alert. For example, the peripheral circulation is shut off, in case you get cut, you won't bleed. The digestive system is shut down, because who needs to digest food if in the next minute you are going to be food for somebody else. Through evolution we have learned this. So the body starts to go through all these changes. It shunts blood to the big muscles, it speeds up the heart, your eyes open wider, your senses get heightened, tension comes into the muscles, your charged, your ready. So then you can fight or you can run. Then when you survive: “phew! Your system clicks back into normal mode. The parasympathetic side of the nervous system clicks back in, and the sympathetic side shuts off. The adrenalin shuts back down, and all these chemical changes and everything goes back to normal.

That is healthy. We need that. But you live in a life now where those threats are not so real and direct. They are chronic and aching. It is paying the bills, and “Are the kids okay? and “what is going to happen to my job?”

It's every day stress that triggers the fight or flight mechanism, but there is no resolution that allows the body to go “okay the threat is over, and phew...! Everybody go back to normal.” That is why digestive problems are so strongly linked to stress-related disorders, digestive disorders are right in there. Because when you are under stress you stop sending blood to the digestive system. Things just turn off because it is not needed for immediate survival. And so your body is responding as if there is a direct, imminent threat, even though it is connected to, you know, four years of college...

So you have to train yourself to turn your parasympathetic side of the nervous system back on. You have to train yourself to trigger the relaxation response. And you have to do it when you are feeling good. It is like getting thrown in the water for the first time without warning; it is hard to learn how to swim. It is a good idea to voluntarily go into the swimming pool, play around, get some practice. And then if you fall in the water you can handle it.

You need to practice the relaxation stuff when you are feeling wonderful. Then when you are struck with a crisis, you'll be able to do something. You get an inner sense, and you develop certain habits. For example, breathing low and slow. So you slow your breathing down. You are breathing 24 times a minute, I am guessing. You should be breathing 12 times per minute. But it is only when you are very relaxed and probably unconscious...[when the breath slows down]. But even then, probably your mind is busy in dreams.

And if you watch somebody sleep, sometimes they are busier when they are sleeping than when they are awake. Their muscles are moving, things are happening. They don't even relax when they are asleep! So you have to really practice the relaxation, and you have to monitor your self-talk. You have to catch yourself when you start to say things to yourself that aggravate the situation. So you attack it on the level of mind and body at the same time. You do that as a practice. And then what happens is that the panic attacks don't come as often and they are not as strong. And, when they come you find you can get through them. The other thing is, my favorite thing is, come to the seminar and you have a panic attack. It will be the last one you ever have. And if not, you can have your money back. That is how sure I am, because the link there is so real and so unarguable. You are doing something to cause your panic attacks. You just don't know what it is you are doing. But in the practice of Awareness, Relaxation, and Conscious Breathing, you bump up against what you are unconsciously doing, and work it out.

Dan Brulé is a former US Navy Deep Sea Diver and Medical Rescue Specialist. He is a master of Prana Yoga (the Hindu Science of Breath) and Chi Kung/Qigong (Chinese Medical Breathing Exercises). He founded The Growth Center, Inc. and One Sky International Life Skills/Healing Arts Institute. A pioneer in the field of Breathwork and one of the originators of Breath Therapy, Dan was among the first group of Internationally Certified Rebirthers. He is a member of the International Breathwork Foundation and the International Breathwork Training Alliance Dan has taught more than 40,000 people in over 30 countries to use the Breath and Breathing as a Tool for Health, Growth and Change, in Spirit, Mind and Body.

What people say about the training:

"Not a day goes by that I don't use a Dan Brulé taught breathing thing or wake up routine." D.B. (Attorney)

"I got so much out of such a short time! I felt both relaxed and energized, and connected with others." C.O.
(College Professor)

"A change in my life - more organized in thoughts and actions: a very different experience... Delightful!" R. C. (Art Director)

"Wow! My feet haven't touched the ground yet! Thanks for your undivided focus in your work." J. K.
(IBM Exec. Asst.)

"Lightness, creativity. I felt high and energetic throughout the whole day following the session!" A. S.
(programmer)

"I am a healthier and more wholesome being thanks to your efforts and considerable talents." S.S.
(Youth Director/Substance Abuse Counselor)

"More centered and focused in my approach, and I have increased my ability to be assertive." J.H.
(Mother/Housewife)

"More self-esteem" A. H. (Retired Army officer)