

Spiritual Breathing: The Almaty Seminar

This is an edited transcript and excerpts of a Spiritual Breathing Seminar that took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan in the summer of 2006.

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Part One: Introductory Talk

Getting Comfortable With The Unknown

I read that in that big tsunami last year, most of wild animals survived. They all felt it coming, and they went to higher ground. They felt it coming because they live in connection to life and nature. They live in the state of not knowing.

And so one of the first things we need to do is awaken to our connection to life and nature, to live in the now, moment to moment. And that means getting comfortable with the unknown.

Most people are very uncomfortable with the unknown. They want to know what is going to happen, when it will happen, and how it will happen. And they think that once they know that, they can relax.

But animals in nature live totally in the ever-changing present moment of now: the unknown. They never know what will happen in the next moment. And yet, they are more prepared for it than most humans.

Everything that we don't have now but we want, is waiting for us in the unknown. Everything that we want but don't have is in the unknown waiting for us. The most wonderful and beautiful things that you can imagine are waiting for you right now in the unknown.

So we have to begin to embrace the unknown, to open to it. The biggest part of us—of who we really are—is in the unknown. The deepest part of you is in the unknown. The highest part of you is in the unknown. The most real, the truest part of you is waiting in the unknown.

And so, we have to teach the mind to get comfortable with the unknown, and we need to actually begin to invite and welcome the unknown.

That sounds simple, but our conditioned system automatically resists to the unknown. Our mind-body-ego is always looking to find its comfortable, familiar place. There it can be at rest. There is a feeling of security when we can predict things and control things.

And so the egoic system, left to itself, would never really grow or change. It would prefer to stay in the same known state. The ego has to be pushed and prodded into changing. You have to invite your system to grow out of its comfort zone. You have to get out to the edge of your comfort. In this way we grow.

From The Womb To The World.

You have to come out of the comfort of the womb in order to live and be in the world. The world is much bigger than the womb and it has so many more possibilities, but to a womb dweller, the world represents the unknown.

Left to yourself, you would most likely have chosen to remain in the comfort of the womb forever. And so life and nature saw to it that you were pushed and squeezed out of that comfortable place. How many people remember their birth? Not very many.

The womb was like a huge ocean. We were once little microscopic creatures floating in this infinite ocean-like world of the womb. In the womb, everything you needed came to you automatically. You didn't need to ask for anything. You didn't need to work for it. Whatever you needed just came to you. And you were changing and growing so fast.

If there was a mirror in the womb, and every day you looked at yourself, you would see someone different. Imagine if that were to happen to you now. You get up in the morning, look in the mirror and somebody else is there! You'd go crazy.

We don't develop a personality, an ego, until our body is generally complete. In fact, our personality, our ego is nothing but our crystallized past. Yet we want to move forward to something bigger. The ego is not enthusiastic about this process.

That's why in the east, in all the traditional eastern paths, they talk about dropping the ego: even destroying it, because they believe that ego is an obstacle to genuine transformation. Yet any obstacle can become a stepping step.

The truth is there is nothing in us that needs to be destroyed. There's nothing in us that is bad or wrong or evil. There are only parts that haven't completely matured yet. They haven't reached their full potential. They are in process. Perhaps they have stopped somewhere along the process toward completion.

Turning To The Source Of Your Mind

How many people here meditate every day? It's very important, very useful. Start today. It can accelerate you on the path of healing and growth like nothing else. Meditation opens the door or leads us to the source of our mind. It creates spaces between our thoughts. It slows the mind down. And you can fall into those gaps, those spaces between your thoughts—into pure consciousness.

Most people automatically turn to their mind to solve a problem. It seems so obvious. How else do you solve a problem? You think about it. You draw from past experience. You try to predict the future. And then you make a decision.

But you don't remember everything from your past, and you can't possibly imagine everything in your future. And so the decision you make is only the best your mind can do.

And consider this: why would you turn to your mind to solve a problem when you could turn to the source of your mind to solve a problem? Why buy something from a middleman when you can get it directly from the source?

It takes skill and practice to go directly to consciousness to solve a problem, and not depend on the middleman called the mind.

Our mind is a tremendous source of pleasure. And it is also the cause of our pain. The mind is very clever. It doesn't just give us pain; it also gives us pleasure. If it gave us only pain, we would have no problem dropping it.

The problem is that we have become identified with the mind. When the mind thinks something, we assume that we are thinking it. Yet when you get up in the morning, you don't decide to think. You are already thinking. It's too late, thinking is already happening by itself. That's the mind at work.

You are not your mind. You can observe the mind. You must be something else—something other than your mind—if you can observe it. This observer, this watcher is awakened through meditation. It is strengthened in meditation. You can come to know who you really are, more and more, through the meditation.

Anything you can observe can't be you. You are the awareness. And so the closer we get to pure awareness, the closer we get to being who we really are, and knowing who we really are.

There are lots of ways to meditate. There are many traditional tried and true ways, proven to work. Yet what works for one person may or may not work for another. No one technique is for everyone. And so we use different techniques to get onto the path. But at some point you have to go beyond the technique.

Breath Awareness As A Form Of Meditation

This training is about breathing because breathing is a great form of meditation: a proven, effective method. You can meditate on your breathing, and it has double benefit. When you become more aware of your breathing you become more aware in general. When you practice conscious breathing, you become more conscious period. So breathing is a way to develop your awareness, to develop your consciousness.

So begin by becoming aware of your breathing. That is, don't do anything to it. Just observe it. Listen to it. Watch it. Feel it. Tune into the details. What are the little sensations caused by the air at the tip of your nose? What exactly is that feeling? Can

you feel the difference in temperature between the inhale and the exhale? Can you notice that the air cooler going in and warmer going out?

What moves when you breathe? What do these movements feel like? Where do these movements take place? What exactly are the details of them? What muscles do you use to breathe? Are there breathing sounds—internal sounds? Can you perceive something else?

The Energy In The Air

There is energy in the air. In East they call it Prana, Qi, Chi. The greater your awareness, the easier it is to sense that amazing energy.

If we become very quiet and aware, this inner awareness of the breathing gets very bright, very strong. When you put your attention on the breathing, and then after some time, put it on anything else, you will see more! When you become more aware the details of your breathing, you become more aware other details on other levels. You automatically feel more.

When people talk I hear them, but I don't only hear them, I feel something behind their words. I feel the subtle energy behind their words. It is quite useful to become aware of things on an energy level.

By doing that, we can stay ahead of many problems. We can become aware of things while still in formation, rather than only after they have fully formed into problems.

Consciousness And Evolution

In ancient times, and still today in the animal world, in order to survive, you needed to be fast or strong—or both. The fast survived, the strong survived.

And then something happened: humans! Being fast and being strong wasn't enough: you had to be smart. Being smart was the best way to survive. Now, in all of our schools you see that focus: education and sports. All of our social training is about develop those things—being smart and being athletic—education and sports.

Yet, we have reached another point in evolution. In the future, being smart will not be enough. And already today, it is not enough. Now, and into the future, do you know who will survive? Those who are most conscious, those who are most awake, most aware—that's who will survive

In the future only Buddhas will survive. You have to be a Buddha. You have to be a Jesus, a Mohammed, a Moses, a Lao Tsu, a Krishna. In other words, you have to reach toward your full potential—otherwise you are not going to survive.

Knowing And Not Knowing

You have feelings happening inside of you, but you don't even feel them. You aren't aware of them. You have emotions that you are not aware of. They are bubbling in you right now. You have thoughts that you are not conscious of.

See if you can follow this:

There are things that you know, and things that you don't know.
There are things that you know, and you know that you know them.
There are things that you don't know, and you know that you don't know them.
There are things that you don't know, but you don't know that you don't know them!
There are things that you know, but you don't know that you know them!

Consciousness opens all of this up to us. And meditation is a way to move in this direction. So you have got to begin this practice of meditation. Otherwise don't come back tomorrow. You will be wasting my time and you wasting your time. And you will be missing a great opportunity.

The more meditative a person is, the more they get from the breathing techniques. Meditation increases awareness—consciousness. The more conscious you are, the more power you will derive from the breathing exercises.

“When consciousness and energy come together something is created.”

This is the yoga of comfort and pleasure. But what you think or feel is comfortable might not be what is best or even healthy. It might be just the habit of your system. What feels comfortable may only be what is habitual.

Expanding Your Comfort Zone

Your system will naturally try to stay in its comfort zone. And so we have to learn tolerate a certain amount of temporary discomfort. And here is the first problem or paradox, because we naturally want to be comfortable all the time.

So, this is the first challenge. How to teach that? One thing is for sure: every time you tolerate a certain kind of discomfort, you increase your comfort range. You make your comfort zone bigger.

In general, if you are only comfortable when it's between 68 and 72 degrees, then whenever it is warmer or cooler, you will suffer. What a miserable life we lead when our comfort range is narrow and limited. You have to be controlling the temperature all the time—avoiding this, avoiding that. All your energy is used up, wasted, trying to control the external environment.

Better to put that energy into changing something inside of you. If you could be comfortable at any temperature... say between 28 and 108... imagine how full and free and easy your life would be!

Temperature is just one small example. I am talking about being comfortable with your own feelings—not just certain limited feelings.

Who says you can only be comfortable with comfort, but not with discomfort? Who says you can only be comfortable with certain emotions and not with others? Who wants to always have to escape when certain emotions come to us? Why hide under a blanket and avoid the edges of your comfort zone?

Some thoughts are pleasant, and other thoughts are not. Some thoughts are comfortable and others not. Just the thought of something can create comfort or discomfort. This points to the real cause of suffering: the mind!

Opening up, expanding our comfort zone helps on many levels. You can begin the practice with little things, for example an itch. You have an itch. You can automatically react to that itch and scratch it away. But then you are doing what everybody does, including every dog and every cat. Or you can practice awareness. That's what the Buddha did.

You can simply relax and breathe, and observe those feelings. You can become conscious of the details. Don't just make the feelings go away. Explore them. What is the shape of that feeling? What is the temperature of it? Maybe there is a color in that feeling? Maybe there is a thought behind the feeling?

Maybe under the physical feeling is an emotion trying to come up. And if you don't do anything about the feeling, then maybe what is under it can come up. And you can learn something important.

You can observe the feelings as well as your automatic reactions to the feelings. This is a very valuable practice. You are often doing something with your muscles that you don't even know you are doing.

For example, most people carry tension in their jaw all the time. And because it's there all the time they even don't notice it. Becoming aware of your unconscious habits is a step in the process of enlightenment. The more conscious you become of your automatic and unconscious habits the more enlightened you become.

What Is Spirituality?

Now the work I do is psychological work. It is physiological work. It is emotional work. And all this is interesting to me. But the most interesting part is the spiritual work.

I have observed that the most spiritual people I ever met in this world have also been the most conscious. And the most conscious people I have met on this planet have also been the most spiritual. So for me being conscious is being spiritual.

Meditation is a spiritual practice that leads to enlightenment. It's a consciousness practice. And it is so practical. If I am aware that something is in my way, then it's no problem, I can go around it. But if I am not aware of it, then it could be a problem. It may be trouble.

There are things about you that you are not conscious of. And the things you are not conscious of can hurt you, and they can hurt other people. And that's why there are so much violence and suffering in the world. It's not because of bad or evil people. It is due to unconsciousness. That's the only problem: unconsciousness. So, that's the first step: become more conscious, aware, more meditative.

And you don't have to wait. You can begin to observe your breathing right now. And keep observing your breathing. Keep returning to the awareness of your breath. Don't wait. Start now.

A lot can happen in a very short time if you practice. If you just want another philosophy, if you just want to know more stuff, to become smarter, then you are wasting my time and yours. It is in the practice that miracles happen. And it's in the actual practice that true knowing occurs.

For example, you know that we are all connected. That's a spiritual idea: "we are all one." But how many people have that experience? How many people live that philosophy? It's not just a pretty idea in my mind. It's a way to live every day. That's practice. And the more you practice the more alive it becomes in you, and the more real and true it is to you.

Beginning The Practice

Let's start now. Just close your eyes. You don't need change anything. Where you are is the perfect place to start. This is the next most important thing. Nothing has to change before anything else can happen.

For example, you want to be totally in peace, totally happy, totally free, and totally joyful. Nothing in the world has to change before that can be so. No long difficult process is needed. No complicated exercises have to be done. You can just go instantly right into those states.

But if you think it's going take a long time, and you think it's going to be difficult, then you will get what you think. So here's something, an idea you can take in, swallow it deeply into your consciousness:

“Something that I thought was going to take a long time or require a lot of effort can happen in a flash!”

Open yourself to that idea, because the opposite idea might be the only thing that is keeping you from this reality. You may only need to change one thought. Change one thought and everything happens. So, what is that thought for you? I wonder. Maybe there are different variants. But you discover that thought by practicing awareness, by developing your consciousness.

So we use the breath as the object of our meditation. And it has a double benefit. By meditating on the breath we get better at meditation. And by becoming more aware of the breath we are becoming more aware of everything.

And since the breath is such a basic and vital part of us, we are meditating on something that is really important. It is something that is happening in us all the time.

As Osho/Rajneesh once said: “There are points in the breathing that you have never observed. And these points are like doorways, the nearest doors to you, through which you can enter into a new reality, a new consciousness. But they are very subtle.”

So, how do you know that you are breathing? What feelings, what sensations, what movements happen that tell you that breath is coming in and breath is going out? Start to observe those feelings and sensations and movements. Where do you feel breathing? What moves when you breathe? What are the feelings and sensations in your nose, your throat, your chest, your belly? And what exactly do those feelings feel like?

Observe these feelings directly with complete awareness, with detailed awareness, with focused awareness, with constant awareness. You will focus on your breath for one moment and then see that your mind will want to move to something else. Observe that movement of the mind, and return your focus to the breath.

Your mind is going to wander, for sure. Whenever it does, simply bring it back to the breathing. That is the practice of meditation: again and again returning your attention back to the breath.

If you get distracted a thousand times, that's a thousand opportunities to re-focus, to meditate again! Some noise in the room comes, and your mind gets distracted – perfect, fantastic! You observe that it happened, and you gather your attention back up and you put it on the breath again.

You have a feeling in your body and it takes your attention away from the breathing – fantastic. You are aware of your breathing and you are aware of your feelings. You can include everything in your meditation. And the breathing is simply the centre,

the focus. Everything else is included in the meditation; everything else is included in your awareness.

Follow the path that breath takes when it comes into you. Open the way, and clear the path. Put a space between your teeth: it's like opening a gate. Don't allow your jaw to set or lock in the same habitual place. Keep it soft and relaxed.

You see how little babies open and relax their jaws? Let your jaw be relaxed like a baby, and let your tongue be relaxed. Relax your throat. When you relax, something opens. And when something opens, something can move: your breath! And something in addition to the breath can come and go. What is blocking your breath? Open those places.

You can open your throat by yawning. Make yourself yawn. What do you do with your jaw when you yawn? What happens in the rest of your body when you yawn? Your whole body wants to stretch and open and relax. Your body wants to receive, and it wants to release. You have to be able to yawn until your eyes water. Yawning is a spiritual exercise. Yawning is yoga.

So, invite yawns. Welcome them. Be enthusiastic about them. Enjoy them. Yawning changes the energy state in your body. And when something changes, you know it. When something moves, you know it. When you get energy moving you feel it. So, enjoy it. Welcome it. Celebrate it.

Animals have not been taught that yawning is impolite. Animals let themselves be natural. Maybe that is why they felt the tsunami coming? And maybe that's why all the polite, socialized, suppressed unnatural people did not!

Don't become disconnected from the energy of life. Don't remain unconscious of the subtle energies that fill and surround you, that flow thru you with every breath you take!

Breathe and feel the subtle details involved in breathing. Stay with this process. It is the way to awakening. It is a way to self-realization. It is a way to enlightenment!

Part Two: The Practice

Yawning Is Yoga

We want to bring these three things together: awareness, relaxation, and breathing. And one way of bringing together breathing, relaxation and awareness is with yawning. You get to practice all three of these things at the same time when you yawn.

You are aware what you're doing with your jaw, you're aware of what happens by itself. You are doing something, and something is also happening by itself. You relax, you enjoy. You are active and yet allowing. You are yawning enthusiastically.

It's not even a technique; it's a reflex, a very healthy reflex that has been suppressed in just about everyone. We are taught that it is not polite to yawn. And so, when it comes, you cover it. When the yawn comes, you stop it. And, if you can't stop it, you inhibit it.

You never fully yawn, because everyone will notice you if you do. The professor is talking, a teacher is telling you something very important, and you go... (Demonstrates loud luxurious yawn). You would never let yourself do that. "How dare you yawn when I am talking to you!"

When our spirit, our nature wants to move, society and culture say "No!" not here, not now, not OK. "Yawning can be considered an insult! And by yawning fully and freely, you attract attention. And that can be very dangerous. You don't want people to notice you. You want to be invisible.

Let someone else draw the attention... because with peoples' attention, comes their judgments, their expectations. They project their desires onto you, they project their needs onto you, they project what they think is right and wrong. And who wants all that?

If they just give you pure awareness, that's ok, that's life energy, that's love, that's like nectar. But people have other things mixed with their attention. And we naturally try to protect ourselves from all that baggage.

And so, if our spirit, our nature, wants to move in us, first we want to make sure is it OK. Is it allowed? What will other people think? What will they say? What will they think about me, if I let myself be natural?

Negative judgments, negative reactions, resistance, rejection, criticism... We fear these things, we avoid these things... And we need an antidote! So, there is another thing on the subject of yawning, which I haven't mentioned. And that is enthusiasm.

When you yawn, you need be enthusiastic. Squeeze all juice out of it. Give yourself as much pleasure as humanly possible when you yawn. Exaggerate it. Make it dramatic, theatrical... We are talking a Shakespearian yawn here!

See, as a child you were taught to sit still and be quiet. And everybody is so good at that. Look at how everyone here is sitting still, not making any noise, not moving. So, you are all well trained here in Kazakhstan.

But, that was not easy to learn. It took years of the carrot and the stick to train you to control yourself so much. And when you learned to control yourself so much, they said “What a good girl! Look how quiet she sits. What a good boy! Look how quiet he is!”

Someone comes to the house, and the parents jump on the child: “Sit still! Be quiet!” And so child gets feels that pressure, and so a natural yawn cannot happen. Others put pressure on you until you learn to put pressure on yourself.

Then they say: “What a good boy! Look, how still he sits. He is not running and jumping anymore. He is not laughing and shouting. Now he is very still, very quiet. He is almost dead. What a good boy!”

We reward children when they choke off their spirit, when they inhibit the natural flow of life in themselves. And then we wonder why they shrivel up and die after only 60 or 70 years!

And when they are finally die, everyone gets together and says wonderful words about them. So, people can’t wait to die, so that others will finally stop bothering them, will finally leave them alone, or will finally say something nice about them!

Imagine: someone’s telling you about his or her problems: “My dog died. My son is on drugs. The doctor just told me my hair is going fall out. And you yawn. You wouldn’t do that. You wouldn’t let that happen. But maybe in that moment, that is exactly what needs to happen! It allows the release of energy. It prevents the taking on of energy.

When you yawn, that’s life happening, that’s energy moving naturally. So, our practice starts with yawning. Or just a sigh of relief: that’s good. Unconsciously it means: “I can relax.”

The Coming Home Breath

I don’t have to worry about what somebody else thinks, feels, wants, needs. I can just breathe. It is OK to just be who and how I am.” Give yourself a sigh of relief right now as you think and feel this: “Finally, I am at home. At last, I am at home.”

That feeling of coming home makes a certain breath happen by itself. You don’t do it; you don’t make it happen. Because of that state, that feeling of coming home, the breath happens. Or, you are afraid or there’s danger, and then the danger goes away or the fear passes.

In those moments, you breathe in a certain way. A certain quality of breath expresses. It happens because of the change in your state. And it works both ways.

You can wait until these situations arise in your life. For example, you've been on a long journey... seven weeks of traveling around the world, seven different countries, seven hundred people telling you about their problems, venting their emotions, projecting their thoughts...

And, finally you arrive home, feeling success, completion. The work is done. It feels so good! Well, why wait until such unique or rare situations occur? Why wait for this beautiful natural breath to come by itself? Why not invite it? Why wait?

Just, start to breathe that way! Your body is like dumb animal. Your nervous system is ancient and primal. It is easy to fool. You can easily train it. If you breathe as if you are feeling tremendous joy, your mind and your body will think and feel that you're experiencing joy!

When you breathe this way, changes will happen in your body. Different thoughts will arise in your mind, different images, and different pictures will appear... because of the kind energy that you're generating with that breath.

Thoughts that resonate with the quality of that breath will express. Feelings of the same frequency will be generated by that kind of energy. Emotions that match the quality of that breath will begin to express themselves. But you have to start the process.

Combining The Yawn And The Sigh

So, the technique is a deliberate sigh of relief: a pleasurable, soothing, luxurious sigh of relief. And it's also a yawn: a pleasurable, juicy, full-bodied yawn. So, you put a yawn and sigh of relief together. It is part yawn and part sigh. Is it yawn? Or is it a sigh of relief? It's both! And there is no "right" way to do it. You already know how to do it.

Practice it now. Make yourself yawn. Anyone can make himself or herself yawn. You can fake, or imitate it. Act as you're yawning, and suddenly a real yawn will come. Everyone can do that. Do that right now. Pretend you're yawning. Act like you're yawning until real yawn comes.

So, guess what that means. Everyone can generate the feeling of peace, of joy, love. You act like you're doing it. You pretend you're doing it, and that really starts happen. It's so easy. It's so simple. But people are busy doing other things, faking other things, practicing other things.

All your thoughts from the past are trying to express themselves. All the emotions inside you are trying to express themselves. It's a competition. So, which do you want to win: the old habits and unconscious patterns, or your conscious present moment choices?

So, thinking about this is not enough. You can't just decide to be happy. You have to breathe too. You have to relax and let go of the old stuff. So the practice is breathing, relaxing and conscious focusing.

And you do all this around the yawn and the sigh of relief. Start now. Don't stop. Yawn and sigh continuously. Your mouth is open. You are stretching. You're making noise. You are breathing. You are relaxing. Don't stop. Open your mouth wide when you yawn.

What happens with cat or dog when they yawn? What happens with their spine? What happens with their jaw? These same things should happen in you. Stretch your jaw. Open your throat. Expand your chest. Stretch your spine. Breathe. Don't stop. Do it more.

The only way this works is with deep practice. But it works with everyone who practices. I have not found any exceptions.

After five minutes, forget about yawning, forget about breathing, and meditate on the feelings of energy in your body. Feel the aliveness in your body. Look for vibrations, electricity, energy, streaming or flowing sensations, bubbling or tingling feelings. Melt into those feelings. Relax into that energy.

What part of your body do you feel now? Where is the strongest, most obvious feeling? Bring attention to that place. Breathe into that feeling. Invite that place to open and relax.

The Rebirthing Technique

We are preparing to practice a core breathwork technique. It was originally called "rebirthing." I have studied and practiced every breathing exercise and technique that I've ever heard about. And without doubt, the rebirthing technique is the single most powerful and effective breathing technique there is.

It works on every level of our being. And it contains a number of vital universal principles, like yin and yang, active and passive, inflowing chi and outflowing chi. The way of breathing in rebirthing is an expression and a reflection of a universal principle. You make the inhale active and the exhale passive.

You do the inhale, but you let the exhale happen itself. You control the inhale, but you don't control the exhale. You set the exhale free. The inhale is long and slow but the exhale is quick and short.

Pull the inhale in actively, consciously, and let the exhale go like sigh of relief. You don't blow the exhale, don't push the exhale. Let it go, set it free.

The other important aspect of the rebirthing technique is that there are no pauses or gaps between the breaths. Don't inhale then stop, and then let the exhale go. Don't create any pause between inhale and exhale. The inhale turns and becomes the exhale. No hesitating, no pausing between the in-breath and the out-breath.

Inhale and exhale come together. They merge. The inhale becomes the exhale. Don't hold the breath in before you let it go. Let it out right away. Fill yourself up, and as soon as you are full, let go. As soon as you finish the inhale, the exhale happens immediately by itself.

The next thing you do is eliminate the pause after the exhale. So, as soon the exhale is finished, you start the next inhale. The inhale turns and becomes exhale, then the exhale merges into the next inhale. You bring the breath into a connected circular pattern.

It's like a wheel is turning. It can turn quickly, or it can turn slowly. But there are no pauses, no gaps, no stopping between breaths. It is a connected circular rhythmic breathing exercise. The inhale is active, and the exhale is passive.

That's the core technique. That's what we will be practicing. And if you master this technique, I can assure you that miracles will happen. You will heal things, you will discover things, you'll release things, you'll receive things; you'll wake up unknown parts of yourself.

You will awaken and strengthen the deepest parts of you. You'll experience a new quality of thoughts, feelings, sensations and emotions.

There are three basic breathing rhythms in the rebirthing technique:

- 1) Fast and full—very active, very powerful
- 2) Slow and full—powerful and gentle, active and soft
- 3) Fast and shallow—quick small breaths, like panting

Note that what feels fast and full for one person, might feel slow and full for someone else. So, experiment and find the edge of your own ability.

Start breathing faster and faster, until it becomes sticky, irregular, chaotic or difficult: then back off a bit to a manageable speed. If you experience stress, or have uncomfortable feelings in your head, ribs or side, or your throat gets dry, it means you are going too far out of your comfort zone.

If that happens, don't stop breathing. Adjust the breathing rhythm. Make it a little slower, or a little deeper. Lengthen the inhale a bit.

Relax your throat. Maybe you are tensing your shoulders. Maybe your jaw is tight. Maybe your forehead is strained. If you notice any of these things, relax and soften them. Then your breathing will move more smoothly, more easily.

If you continue the same rhythm, but without creating stress or tension, the breath will open up and flow more easily. Don't use any muscles you don't have to. If you relax more, you can breathe more quickly.

If you try too hard, you lock up your system. And you will not be able to breathe short quick breaths. You have to find the balance between effort and relaxation, between doing it and letting it happen. You must be relaxed, but yet you cannot be lazy.

You can't just breathe in the same old way that you have always breathed. If you do, you will just continue to feel all the same things that you always feel. So, experiment. Breathe fast, then breathe slow.

Some of you are only breathing into your belly. You need to breathe into your chest. If you notice yourself only breathing into your belly, then change that pattern and breathe into your chest. Send the breath high up under your collarbones. You might have to change speed of your breathing in order to change the location of your breath.

Some of you are only breathing into your chest. You need to breathe into your belly. The idea is to notice your habitual or unconscious way of breathing, and see to it that you are not locked into a limited pattern.

Of course certain ways of breathing are familiar, of course you enjoy them, of course they feel comfortable. That's because it is a habit, an ingrained pattern. If you change the pattern, you will wake up new energy. Something new will happen inside you.

After a few minutes, forget about breathing. Let the breath come and go itself. Focus on pure relaxation, and feel the energy in your body. Feel the electricity, the vibrations. Enjoy them. Melt into them.

Say "yes" to whatever happens in your body. Don't do anything about it. Don't react. Don't try to change it. Breathe into the feelings. Relax into the feelings. Relax your jaw. Relax your tongue. Relax your shoulders and your neck.

If you are lucky, you will have some interesting feelings in your fingers, your hands, around your mouth and your face, your belly, your chest, your legs. Explore these feelings with awareness. Don't judge them. Observe them. Enjoy them. Let them be.

Your body knows what it needs. Let your body feel what it needs to feel. Don't let your mind interfere with the process. Don't try to control the process. Practice non-resistance, non-attachment, and non-judgment. Let whatever happens, happen.

Practice unconditional acceptance. Enjoy any unusual feelings. Enthusiastically say 'yes' to the new, to the strange, to the unknown. These are your natural feelings. This is your energy. It's perfectly safe. These feelings are there all the time, but normally you are not conscious of them. Breathing and relaxing brings them to the surface, brings them into your awareness.

Meet the feelings with open awareness. Let consciousness and energy come together. Let breathing and relaxation come together.

Applying The Formula For Transformation

Now you are practicing the Formula for Transformation:

- 1) Awareness: the Consciousness Factor. The message is “wake up!”
- 2). Relaxation: the Release Factor. The message is “let go!”
- 3) Breathing: the Energy Factor. The message is “Take Charge!”

Let your whole body breathe, as if every cell is a lung. Feel your whole body expand when you inhale, and feel your whole body relax when you exhale.

You can always pull in more. You can always relax more. There is always some little place, some muscle, some joint that you can relax, release, soften. Bring more awareness to the details of your experience.

You are breathing in a steady rhythm, a connected rhythm, a circular rhythm. And now and then, give a long smooth inhale and a big luxurious sigh of relief. Then let go if as if it is the first time. Then return to the rhythm.

You should be breathing into both the belly and the chest. Feel yourself expand from front to back, side to side and top to bottom when you inhale. Everything expands and relaxes at the same time. The Inhale is active, and the exhale is passive. Pull the breath in, and let the breath out.

You can use breath sounds—wind noises—when you breathe. Breathing in thru the mouth, make an “ooh” shape and sound as you inhale, as if you are sucking through a straw. Make an “aaah” shape and sound as you exhale. Ahhh is the sound of letting go. Remember to yawn. Do something with your spine. Stretch and move in some pleasurable way as you breathe and awaken the energy in your body.

Advanced Yawning

Now I will teach you “advanced yawning.” The idea is to engage in circular breathing while you yawn. The yawn opens your mouth, opens your throat, opens your jaw. Take advantage of that natural opening: breathe in and out quickly, during the yawn. Advanced yawning means combining circular connected breathing with the yawning reflex.

As you do this, feel the energy in your body. Say ‘yes’ to this energy. Relax more. Trust the process. Trust life. Trust your body. Trust your feelings.

Affirmations To Support The Process

Use these affirmations while you breathe and relax and feel and move:

“I am safe no matter what I feel.”

“All my feelings are safe.”

“It is safe to feel all my feelings.”
“I am ok, no matter what I think.”
“Everything is going perfectly.”
“I welcome all my emotions.”
“I say yes to all my feelings and sensations.”
“I give my body permission to feel what it needs to feel.”
“If I need to laugh, I let myself laugh.”
“If I need to cry, I let myself cry.”
“I don’t need a reason to feel anything.”
“If I want to move, I let myself move.”
“I love and accept myself completely.”

Every breath should feel like a big ‘yes:’ yes to all your feelings, yes to all your emotions. Don’t judge your emotions. Say “yes” to your energy, say “yes” to unknown.

After some time, just breathe in a way that is interesting. Breathe in a way that is enjoyable. Give yourself pleasure with every breath. Relax your forehead. Relax your jaw. Breathe fully and freely. Don’t work. Let it be easy and effortless. Let it be pleasure, active pleasure.

If pushing yourself gives you pleasure, then push yourself. If breathing quickly gives you pleasure, then breathe quickly. If breathing slowly gives you pleasure, breathe slowly. Move while you are breathing. Move in some pleasurable way.

The “What’s Important” Exercise

Ask yourself this: What’s important? What’s really important? What’s the most important thing in life? What’s the most important thing for you at this time of your life?

Breathe and let the answers come. What do you need to give to yourself? What do you want to give to the world? Breathe and relax as you explore these ideas.

Relax more. Let your whole body breathe and relax. Even your bones can relax and breathe. Your toes can breathe and relax. You can breathe through the pores of your skin. You can breathe in and out through the top of your head. You can breathe in and out through your hands. You can breathe through your eyes. You can breathe through your heart.

Explore. Experiment. This is a creative process. Welcome whatever happens. If anything is happening, it’s because you are creating it—either consciously or unconsciously. Choose. Melt into the experience you are creating.

A Spiritual Breathing Session

What do you want to feel? What pictures go with the feelings? What words or phrases can you attach to the experience? What can you tell yourself? What beautiful words or

phrases can you feed to yourself? What is your favorite mantra? Repeat it while you breathe and relax.

What do you wish for the world? If every breath were a prayer, what would your prayer be? You can invite something into yourself with every breath. If every breath were a blessing, what would you bless the world with?

If you could send something out into the world with every breath, what would it be? Generate that intention, generate that energy with the inhale. Fill yourself with it and overflow it out into the world with the exhale.

What beauty is there in the world that you can breathe into yourself? Is there some great saint or some great teacher whose qualities you can breathe into yourself? Breathe that energy. Invite those qualities.

Is there some quality or talent that you want? Be like a child. Use your imagination. Your imagination is your creativity.

You can always relax more. Give yourself a big sigh of relief. Open and expand your breathing cavity. You can always open more to the breath, to the energy, to the experience. Breathe into the lower part of your belly. Breathe into the higher part of your lungs, up under your collarbones. Expand from side to side, from front to back, from top to bottom.

No matter what was true about you in last moment, anything is possible in the next moment.

What can you open yourself to? What possibilities? What powers? What pleasures? Use the breath to open yourself.

The more you breathe, the more you need to relax. It's not just about breathing. It's combining relaxation and breathing. Find a perfect balance.

After some time, let the breath come and go by itself. Leave the breath alone. Don't do anything with the breathing. Let it go, let it be. Just open and relax and feel. Just make everything open, everything soft, everything relaxed.

See how the breath wants to come and go by itself, and simply let it. Allow. Don't make it do what you want. See what it wants, then cooperate with it. Treat the breath like your lover. Open to your lover.

Enjoy each breath; enjoy all the details. Don't force. Don't manipulate. Enjoy, embrace, and celebrate. Explore the subtle details of every breath. Say "yes" with every level of your being, physically, emotionally, images, words, movement, sounds.

Make wind noises. Imagine a cosmic wind, an eternal wind. Play with your your breath. Breathing is a sacred, divine experience. Enter into the experience fully, moment to moment. Disappear into the breathing. Become the breathing.

Be grateful that you can breathe. Be grateful that you can feel. Be grateful for every breath. Gratitude is the one of the highest frequency emotions. Bathe every cell of your being in the energy of gratitude.

Take all the time you need. And when you are ready, stretch and move. Stay in touch with your breathing. Return to the awareness of it from time to time, and when you do, awaken these feelings, remember the blessing.

That's all for today.