

# ***Breath and Breathing: The Aurora College Talk***

*This talk took place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories of Canada. It weaves together basic and advanced teachings; it includes stories and lessons related to several styles and schools of breathwork.*

*This entertaining and educational presentation has been copied and plagiarized many times over the years. But here you have the original (slightly edited) transcript of the live recording.*

*This program is required reading for practitioners, coaches and facilitators, and a must for all breathing enthusiasts!*

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Breathing patterns are like fingerprints. Everyone's fingerprints are different and everyone's breathing patterns are different. Except that a breathing pattern is alive. It is always changing. Depending on what is happening inside of you, your breathing pattern will change.

Your emotional state, what you had for dinner, what you are thinking about, your posture, and just about everything influences the breathing. The yogis have known that for a long time, and in the East, they have developed breathing into an art and a science of regulating your breathing. Getting the breathing to be rhythmic, balanced, and in doing so, we find that all of our other systems come in to balance. We are just discovering that here in the West.

Breathing is a way to communicate. I can look at your face and I can get some idea about how you feel. I can look at your posture, and get some idea of what's going on inside of you. If I ask you questions, you can use words and tell me something about who you are and what is happening inside of you. The tone of your voice can give people an indication of your mood, your feelings, your energy level, and so on.

We all know this, and we take it for granted. And we are always getting those messages. But the breathing is also one of the ways that you express what is happening inside. The interesting thing is that we have all learned to disguise what is happening inside of us.

If you are a bank clerk, and it is your job to smile at the next person who comes to you, it shouldn't matter whether you're upset or you're angry at your husband, or you are thinking about something: you smile and you say hello... So there is a disparity, there's a disconnection between the look on your face and how you are feeling, your posture and what's going on inside of you, the tone of your voice and how you really feel.

We've learned to disguise those things in order to survive. For example, there have been times in your life when you were very angry, but you couldn't let the person know you were angry because they probably would have killed you! So you have to hide your anger. There were times when you felt sad, but someone told you "don't cry!" And so you had to find a way to keep the sadness inside and show them something else on the outside.

So the point is that you can't really trust those things any more. Just because someone is smiling doesn't mean that they are happy. Just because someone looks angry and aggressive, doesn't mean they are not afraid. Just because the person's tone of voice is one way or another, doesn't really indicate what they might really be thinking or feeling.

But there are very few breathing masters in the world, and I've met as many of them as possible. I can probably count them all on one hand! And so the average person doesn't realize how much their breath says about them. Your relationship to

breathing reflects your relationship to life. The way you breathe says a lot about the way you feel. The way you breathe says a lot about what is happening inside of you.

One of the things I have done for the last twenty years is I've studied people's breathing patterns at different times. So, the way you breathe when you are angry for example is different than the way you breathe when you are afraid.

The way you breathe when you are afraid is very different than the way you breathe when you are relaxed and calm and peaceful. The way you breathe when you are studying something is very different than the way you breathe when you are listening to music.

But most people have never noticed those things. When you are angry, the last thing that you usually pay attention to is how you are breathing. You're paying attention to who's making you mad, and what it is they did, or said, something out there... You're not focusing in here.

So, a lot of this stuff seems quite magical to people, because they have never noticed some simple things. For example, since the day you were born, you have something called the 'infradian' rhythm. This means that your breath switches back and forth from the left and right nostril every 45 to 90 minutes. And it's been happening to you ever since you were born.

So, if you check right now, you'll see that one of your nostrils is probably more open than the other. One side or the other is more open or more closed. Check it now and see... And if you check it again in twenty minutes, forty-five minutes, or an hour, you'll see that it has changed to the other side. This has been happening since the day you were born, and yet very few people know this.

Now, how can it be that something so obvious goes on yet no one notices? Well, there are some people who have discovered this rhythm. They happen to be playing with their breath and they stumbled upon it, or they read somewhere that it's so and they begin to tune in to it.

This is one of those secrets that you discover or is revealed when you study zen, yoga or meditation in the mountains of India or somewhere, or someone tells you about it. Then for the next week or month or year, you really pay attention to it and you begin to make some connections. For example, when one side is more open than the other, then it might be a better time to be engaged in one kind of activity or another.

The brain is split in half, and so the left brain and right brain cover very different functions. When one nostril is open, it is feeding one part of the brain more than the other. And so the yogis and some of the Eastern people are very strict about this. They will only eat, or meditate or do mathematical calculations when one or the

other side is open. There is a long list of rules and rituals, and they can be quite dogmatic.

When I first began to study this yoga, I thought: "Forget about it! You guys are too picky! This stuff can't be that important! It's never made a difference to me! But this rhythm is just one example. There are a lot of other secrets to the breathing.

I have always been one of those people who is looking for my keys and they're in my pocket, I'm looking for my pen and it's on my ear. I've always been one of those people.

And so when I started to really get into breathing, it was no surprise to people who knew me that I would be studying something that was right under your nose, something that was so obvious that you take it for granted.

You overlook it. You underestimate it. And what's the big deal about it anyway! Well, the big deal about it is that if you stop breathing, you're going to turn into dust pretty quick, just like the bible says!

To breathe is to live, and so if you stop breathing you are not going to live very long. And you breathe about 25,000 times per day. So if you can make even a tiny improvement in something that you do 25,000 times a day, it has to add up to a pretty big improvement! And sure enough if it doesn't do exactly that.

Athletes, opera singers, stage performers, public speakers... Those people, a lot of them have probably looked into breathing because it was directly useful and beneficial, or perhaps one of their coaches or teachers got them to look into it.

People who have had some kind of respiratory difficulties: asthma, emphysema, allergies or something like that... they tend to pay attention to their breathing out of necessity.

The monks... in all of the major religions, you have repetitive prayers. You have songs or you have chants. And what that does is it makes your breathing fall into a certain rhythm a certain pattern.

So if I say my prayer, say my prayer, say my prayer, then take a breath: say my prayer, say my prayer, say my prayer, then take a breath: say my prayer, say my prayer, say my prayer, then take a breath...

After an hour of saying your prayers, guess what you've done? You've put your breathing into a very regular, rhythmic pattern. And you begin to feel more something... more relaxed, more energized... And so people connect that to whatever they happen to be praying to.

You could be praying to a tree and get the same benefits as someone praying to the Buddha. And really, the benefits are coming from the regulation of the breath.

You see, right now, I am talking, and while I am talking, I am exhaling. You are sitting and your breath is sort of stuck. You don't have a way to keep your breathing moving, to keep it activated, to keep it flowing. If you were to start moving around... your breath would be activated...

Yawning. Thank you. Yawning is very important. Put that on the list of things to talk about! I may even forget about what I was saying. I am going to jump to yawning! Here is a natural thing that every animal that breathes does. Look at cats, look at dogs, look at rabbits, squirrels, parakeets. Every animal yawns.

What happens when you yawn? The body is telling you something. The body, the chemistry, the physiology is stimulating, activating a reflex in you. And it accomplishes a great deal. It releases excess carbon dioxide. Usually, if you really take a good yawn...

(And for your yawn, on a scale of 1 to 10, I'd have to give you a 5, I'm sorry to say! But by the time you leave here, by God you'll be up to a nine I'm sure!

I don't usually teach yawning on the first date! But this feels like a really advanced group and I might even do advanced yawning before we are done! Here is a normal reflex that we've been trained to suppress. Out of politeness: "oh, it's not polite to yawn when someone is talking!" Oh my God how dare you!

You know, it's the best compliment a person can give me, is to yawn while I'm talking! Oh, thank you. I mean you are alive! Don't apologize for being alive! People need to yawn.

But we've been taught that it's not polite. You should only do it quietly, and so on. And so as a result, we stifle a very healthy thing. And maybe it takes years off your life!

In trying to be a "good" person, in being polite, you may be killing yourself! Is it worth it? I don't know. I've done studies of yawning on elevators, and I'd be willing to bet here...

You've all been on an elevator. Have you ever seen anyone on an elevator (demonstrating) do a big dramatic yawn? Can you imagine someone stretching and yawning loudly, and enjoying it totally? I doubt it. No one would dare do that!

So, if you want some homework... If you want to continue with these seminars this week, and you want to do some homework, go find an elevator, wait till its crowded and give yourself the most luscious yawn you can imagine! I mean theatrical! I mean Shakespearian! A yawn that will make everybody else go "Oh my God! I'm jealous!"

So, the first thing that people do is they block the yawn in some way. As if they are trying to keep who they are from being known. "I am alive, but I don't want anyone else to know it." If you watch an animal yawn, they never just yawn. They always stretch and yawn. Watch any natural animal.

(Someone yawns) Oh, thank you! Hey, that was good. We're moving up the scale! We're up to a 6 on the yawn meter here! Toward the end, she sort or realized that she was yawning and tried to cover it over, but you'll get over that before we're done!

So that yawn was a 6. If you want to get up into the 7's and 8's, you'll have to do some stretching along with the yawn. Something has to stretch. And it feels good. It's just one of those simple pleasures in life that feels good. And it's very healthy.

The body is trying to do something for itself and you shouldn't interfere with it. And society and culture shouldn't interfere with it...but it's too late for that! Yet, you can try to correct it.

Did you ever notice that when one person yawns other people start to yawn? What is that about? When one person farts, everyone else doesn't fart! Well maybe they do. I don't know! I'm sorry.

I was in the navy, and you know, the military is full of gross and crude people. In fact, the grosser and cruder you are actually, the more beneficial you are to the military often times!

Well, maybe I'll skip my military stories for now. Never mind. Okay, we'll move along after this quick one.

I had a friend Ron Hill, it was his hobby: grossing people out... One of his favorite things was in a crowded restaurant, or bar or at some social occasion, to fart as loud as possible, so everyone in the room could hear it, and... well... smell it... He had already prepared by positioning himself near some beautifully unsuspecting woman. And so he would then turn to her and shout: "Jesus Christ lady!"

Where was I? How about laughing and crying? Those are two other very healthy things. Laughing and crying are very healthy things. Also things we've been taught to control, to suppress.

In church, I was kicked out of the alter boys! It was one of the most terrible days of my life at that point: to get kicked out of the alter boys! I thought: "Is God going to kill me now? Everyone was talking about it. "Did you hear, Danny Brulé got kicked out of the alter boys!" "He must be such a terrible person!"

It was because everything made me laugh in church. I don't know what it was! Certain things just seemed so funny in church. The slightest stupid thing would happen and I couldn't control my laughter! And laughter of course is contagious. So they said "you don't belong here. Get out of here! You're supposed to be serious in church."

But how do you stop yourself from laughing? You hold your breath. How do you stop yourself from crying? You hold your breath. How do you stop yourself from talking? You hold your breath. How do you keep yourself from running around and jumping up and down? How do you contain your spirit? You hold your breath. And, we've all been taught to do that.

If you tell a kid "don't cry!" He's going to figure out himself how not to cry. If you tell a little girl: "Sit still and be quiet!" She has to figure out herself how to contain her energy and keep it bottled up so she doesn't get punished, or disturb the people who as children, our survival depends on.

So, as children we learn very early that it's more important what the adults around us think and feel than what we ourselves think and feel. And as a result, we stifle our spirit, our natural spirit. And when you hold your breath, you are physically stifling your natural spirit.

So, without realizing it, everybody's breathing has become quite screwed up. It's become jammed up and blocked. It's become inhibited. And it's functioning at a very low percentage of what's possible in the breathing.

Notice what children do. The things that children love most, are things that make them breathe: running and jumping and yelling and screaming and laughing and crying. Every one of these things stimulates and activates the breathing. And the process of becoming an adult is in just the opposite direction: learning to sit still. Learning to shut up, learning to pay attention to other people's needs; learning to control yourself.

In doing so, you have unconsciously controlled your breathing. Without realizing it you have inhibited your breathing. So, I have discovered this over the years, and a lot of what I do is about waking up the breathing, getting it flowing again, opening it up, setting it free, so that it can really spin in a healthy way.

People use breathing, like in the Lamaze birth method for example, you do breathing exercises. Whenever you are going to go thru intense pain, breathing helps. It helps you handle the energy. And it doesn't even have to be painful. Joy. You see people cry with joy, and you get all choked up. When you get "choked up," it's the breathing that's getting choked up. Literally its the breath.

Look at someone when they are crying. And when they are really weeping and wailing, you can see what is happening to the breathing. It's getting shaken and its



getting moved. And that's why people feel so good after they cry. The just set free a whole lot of energy. The releases a lot of pent up tension, vented a strong feeling.

And the same is true of laughter. That's why it's so healthy. That's why jogging is so healthy. It makes you breathe! Exercise makes you breathe. Look at all the things that are healthy and see what the connection to breathing is.

When you listen to a beautiful piece of music, and you relax completely... when your body relaxes the muscles get out of the way and the breath is able to move more smoothly and more freely.

The military posture is: "stick your chest out, tuck your stomach in, throw shoulders back." When you do that, you automatically hold your breath. I gave it away already, but if I was to ask you all to stand up and quickly stick your chest out, tuck your stomach in, throw shoulders back, everyone of you would take hold of your breath while you were doing that. It's a reflex. It goes with it.

So, a lot of the things we have been trained to do, get in the way of the natural flow of breath. Back to yawning:

If you are going to yawn, by all means exaggerate it. It's like eating. You don't wait until you are starving, until you are so weak, your body is screaming: "Feed me! Feed me!" and then eat. No, you eat because it feels good, it's fun, it's pleasure, and you know that it's something you need to do, everyday.

Yawning should be the same thing. Don't wait until your body screams and forces you to yawn. (And then when it is forcing you to yawn, you're actually fighting it, because it is not polite!) First unravel that. And start to yawn on purpose. Don't wait until you have to yawn. Just for the heck of it, you can do something in the back of your jaw and throat... and as soon as you do that something back there, the yawn happens.

If you don't know how to make a yawn happen, you're in serious medical trouble! If you have lost that natural reflex, you're really in trouble. Just to check—I want to find out if everybody still has that reflex, because of you don't, I may have to back up and do something else.

Do something to the back of your jaw and throat that makes a yawn happen. And then listen to the sound of the breath as you are yawning. Don't put your hands in the way. And listen to the sound that the breath makes.

So you stretch your jaw open. Open your mouth. Don't cover your mouth. You are far enough away, that you don't have to worry about giving somebody your germs... Is that why we learn to cover our mouths? You can look up and yawn at God. He loves it!

Some people yawn fairly well. They get the stretching in, and their yawn might look like this: (demonstrating). Nothing is moving. They sort of get it. The stretching is there. The mouth is open. But where's the breath in the yawn? The breath is supposed to be there!

So, what you want to do, when everything is open, move the breath. Just do this: (demonstrating rapid in and out breathing). And just get the breath moving. Your eyes should water a little bit. If so, you are doing something right. You're still pretty healthy!

If you yawn a few times and your eyes don't start to water, it shows you that you have some tension in your system. And the juices in your system aren't flowing as easily as they could or should.

So, there's a basic exercise. You can all go home now, and just practice yawning! You might have to do it in private, when no one is looking, then graduate to doing it in the mirror so that you your self can put up with looking foolish, and then do it in front of people who love you, and then start to yawn in public!

I'll tell you this: if you yawn once or twice an hour, or ten to twenty times per day, periodically during the day, within a few days, you will be feeling very different, very different. I've tried it. I've had hundreds of other people do it, and not a single person has failed to experience a benefit.

That's how powerful breathing is. That's how powerful our unconscious inhibitions are. That's how powerful society and culture is: that we could actually get so stifled that all you have to do is yawn a few times a day.

You'll start to feel more energy. You'll have less fatigue. Your vision will improve. The list of things that people report to me is incredible—Will you stop covering your mouth when you yawn! I'm going to have to just kick you out of here! I don't know what my choice will be!

Yawn now. Make it dramatic! I'm not going to let you go till we get one enthusiastic, theatrical Shakespearian yawn! I might even give a financial prize to the person who does it the best! We can make it a competition! I have 20 Canadian dollars and I'll put them up right here! \$20 dollars to the best yawner in the house!

So here's the thing: you are in a Shakespearian play. You don't have any words in this play, but you have to go out on stage and you have to yawn, to yawn in such a way that the audience will think: "wow that must have felt good!" You know that a yawn feels good. No one has to tell you that. When you really yawn, it feels good.

What is it doing? It is moving energy. Here's a secret from the Chinese tradition: where consciousness goes, chi flows. "Chi" is the energy. In Japan they call it "ki," in India they call it "prana," in Latin it's "spiritus" or "ruahk:" the breath within the

breath. In Africa it's called "num," Egyptians called it "ra," the Hawaiians called it "ha." Here we call it energy.

Yawning gets energy moving that has built up in the system or become blocked or stagnant. Like a stream that stops flowing, and someone comes and clears the debris from the stream and it starts flowing again. That's what yawning does, it removes subtle blockages in your energy passages, in circulation, in lymph glands...

When you stretch, you have lymph glands here (in your neck) and here (in your arm pits), in your belly... and so when you stretch, you are literally squeezing and stretching these tissues, and that helps secretion. It gets juices flowing that strengthen your immune system, that balance chemistry. So that's what it does.

And on a psychological level, it is saying to you "I am ok. It's ok for me to be alive." It's ok for me to be normal, healthy, to let the soft animal of my body do what it loves."

And so it's a good subconscious message to program into your psyche, your system: that "hey you are ok. You don't have to worry about how you look, about controlling yourself and everything in you."

If other people get upset because you yawn, that's their problem! Maybe they will yawn, and they'll thank you because you triggered a yawn in them. If you really yawn (in a group) someone else will yawn every single time! And they'll thank you for it.

Why is that? It's permission. It's like when a little kid sees somebody driving a car, you picture yourself driving a car. If you see someone picking something up and looking at it, you pick it up and look at it.

It's a subtle message of permission for you to also do it. Someone yawns and you go: "Oh, I guess it's ok to yawn!" Thank you I just needed permission. I think it has to do with a subtle modeling of "ok-ness" of permission.

And we've been taught [to take cues from each other]. Now, we are all sitting down. No one is laying on the floor. But if one person were to lay on the floor, there might be one other person that goes: "Yeah, that's right, I think I'd like to lay on the floor." And you open the door for someone else to follow his or her natural urge. I think that's part of it.

A couple of more things I wanted to say and then I am going to let you tell me where we should go from here.

Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. And just feel. When you breathe, breathe a little bit deeper than normal so that you can sort of magnify

what's happening in your breathing. So just turn up your breathing a little bit so that it's bigger, deeper. And then notice and tell me what moves when you breathe.

Does your belly move or does your chest move? Do both of them move? Does one move first and then the other one move afterwards? Do they move together? What happens with the breathing?

What happens in your belly and in your chest when you breathe? Is there anybody whose belly doesn't move at all right now when you are breathing this way? Is there anybody whose chest doesn't move when they breathe?

When you just breathed in, did you breathe in through your mouth or through your nose? What muscles did you use?

If you put one hand on the back of your neck, and one hand on your shoulder, this place [between neck and shoulder where everyone carries tension] Then take three deep fast breaths, and feel. Did anything get tight in your neck? Did anything get tight in your shoulders?

If you take in a deep breath now, as deep a breath as you can... And let it go. What happens in your body? Does this happen (Raising of shoulders, bracing of torso)? Does something happen in your shoulders? Does something happen deep in your belly?

I can breathe very deep, and the only thing that's moving is my belly right now. My chest is still relaxed. So there is one of the first secrets to beginning to change your breathing.

You want to be able to breathe deeply without activating the muscles high in your chest, in your neck, and in your shoulders. So these muscles should be relaxed: in your neck, upper chest, shoulders. Everything should be loose and soft, and still you should be able to breathe deeply.

Do a count: a whispering count into your cupped hands. Take in as deep a breath as you can, and then count: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve... until you run out of breath.

So you just count and whisper the breath away until you run out of breath. Then relax, breathe in, and do it again. Count and see how high you can count to, and on a scrap of paper, make a note of that: you got up to number 45, or 110, or 26, or whatever you can count to.

Count again, count as fast as you can while still pronouncing each number, but whispering.... One, two, three, four....etc. Remember the highest number you reach, take a couple breaths and do it again, and try to get to a longer count. I will watch and listen while you do it, so I can get some things to talk about later.

You are counting just on the exhale, only the exhale. It is a way of counting how long you can make your exhale last. See how far you can go on one breath, exhaling one breath...

There is a standard medical test called FEV-1: forced expiratory volume in one second. It's a lung capacity test. If ever you have any lung testing in a hospital, they'll do it. You blow into this device, and see how much you can blow out in one second.

They make a note of it. There is a piston in this device that rises up and the cylinder has measurements. So if you were going in for heart surgery for example, they would take that test before, and then after the surgery, they would want you practicing to get back that capacity.

It's a marker. It's a marker for life expectancy. It's a marker for longevity, predicting how long you are going to live. The best way to improve that score is by extending your exhale. So, if you can get up to a count of 100 or 150, your FEV-1 will be much higher than average.

In the Framingham Heart Study, one of the most famous heart studies in the USA, they tracked some 5,500 guys for over 30 years. They came in twice a year, they had various tests, and they were followed thru life. They were researching the causes of heart disease, the lifestyle factors, and so on.

One of the things that came about thru that study is that your lung capacity is the single, strongest marker for general health. So if you can improve that marker, you're going to improve your chances of living longer. It's a no-brainer! It's guaranteed!

The results of the study, and other studies since then, have given us this information: you reach your peak lung capacity, your peak respiratory function, between the ages of 25 and 30. And after that your respiratory function declines between 10% and 27% for every decade of life.

That decline is across the board. It includes athletes; it includes everybody. Of these five thousand guys, some of them were athletes, some of them were golf players, some of them were swimmers, and some of them were computer people...

I mean they covered all lifestyles. And every one of them lost between 10% and 27% of their lung capacity for every decade of life, beginning somewhere between 25 and 30 years old.

So, do the math. That means that by the time you reach 60 years old, you've lost 30, 40, 50, 60 percent of your lung capacity! That's why people go down hill so damn fast after they hit 60, or when they start approaching that age. Because their lung capacity is no longer strong enough to maintain their existence, except for another

ten or twenty years. Then you're down to 10, 15, 20, 30 percent of your lung capacity. You might as well have taken out one of your lungs when you were twelve years old! And you would have the same chance of surviving.

So, if you extend your exhale, practice making your exhale long as possible.... [counting out loud and then as you run out of breath the count is whispered] Just do that as an exercise, once a day.

Maybe do three counts in a row. If you don't call me or write me within a month, and say "oh my God Dan, I had no idea that this thing would do so much for me!" I'd be shocked. I'd really be shocked.

The only people I don't hear from, who don't send me letters, are people who just didn't do it! And that's it. But the people who practice it, even once or twice per day, experience incredible benefits.

That's why I'm so amazed that this hasn't made its way into the mainstream yet. That's why I am such a missionary about this. And that's without even improving your breathing!

All I am talking about now is making your exhale longer. Making your exhale longer, extending your exhale so that it can last longer and longer. If you do that, you'll find that you'll have an ability to blow out more air in the first second.

So, in other words, if I can make my exhale go to a count of 100, if I need to, I can blow out all of that air very quickly—in one second. And it impresses the heck out of the doctors: "Wow, you are way above average on your respiratory tests!" No kidding!

Everybody can do that. The scary thing is that I can work with you for ten or fifteen minutes, and you can improve your score. So, someone can go to a doctor. They can take this test. The doctor will prescribe them certain medication for their asthma, or for whatever, based on that test.

But with five or ten minutes of practice, they can improve the test score, and the doctor would have prescribed different doses! That's what's so scary about this. The pharmaceutical industry is contributing to the suppression of our own natural healing abilities.

Starting with the breath...the breath is the most basic thing. If you can get the breath full and free and functioning at good capacity, your endocrine system, your circulatory system, all the other systems, your nervous system, are also going to improve: because they are all tangled up with the breathing.

When you exhale, and you are practicing making the exhale longer, here's what you have to think about: your belly button travels toward your spine. Your belly button

travels toward your spine. The more empty you get, the more breath you blow out, the closer your belly button gets to the spine.

And when you breathe in, your belly pops out. So, your diaphragm is here. If you put your hands like this... the diaphragm is shaped like a dome... Find where your ribs are...

When you inhale, this is what the diaphragm does this [demonstrating]. And when the diaphragm moves down, it pops the belly out. So when you breathe in, your belly should pop out.

[Working with a pregnant woman] So, what you have to do, is you have to relax and let the expansion come up here higher. So, put your hands here, and even though you are aiming the breath low, you feel this open up and stretch up in here. Don't use muscles to do it.

The mistake people make, is that when I say take a deep breath, they force and use unnecessary effort [demonstrating]. All these muscles (chest neck, shoulders, back...) contract.

While you contract your muscles, how can the lungs expand? The only way that the lungs can expand is if the muscles in the chest relax and expand around them and make more room.

But most people use their chest muscles to breathe in and that actually creates a wall that the lungs have to push up against. So the game is to make all these muscles very relaxed up in here, so that your chest can expand without encountering any tension.

So, when you inhale, the diaphragm goes down and the belly pops out. When you exhale, the belly goes in and the diaphragm goes up. So the breath comes in, it pushes the diaphragm down, and when the diaphragm goes down, it pushes everything: the stomach, intestines, all the abdominal organs get displaced and the belly pops out. That's a healthy thing.

Watch a little baby breathe. Watch their belly go up and down, and you can see how natural breathing should happen.

So, when you breathe in, it is as if your lungs are in your belly, and you feel your belly expanding. Really, your lungs are expanding, but because your lungs expand, your diaphragm goes down your belly pops out.

But you can imagine that you are breathing into your belly. And feel it. Put your hands here (above your waist on each side). Squeeze your thumb and fingers together, and then breathe in so that you are pushing against your hands. Breathe so

that you are separating your hands. You have to be able to do that. It is one of the basic exercises. And you should be able to do that.

If you blow out all the air, making yourself very empty, your belly button traveling toward the spine...then when you breathe in [demonstrating] I feel myself pushing against and opening up my hands, and pushing my hands apart. So that is a basic exercise for abdominal breathing.

One way to practice that is to lie down, and put a book on your stomach. And when you breathe in, you pick the book up (with the breath) [demonstrating] So, when you inhale, you're picking up the book that you put on your belly. A heavy book is good. A brick is really good! It gives you the feeling better.

You could just have someone hold your belly, pressing [demonstrating]. Breathe against my hand. Breathe in against my hand, picking it up, and on the exhale, my hand goes in.

In chi kung, I was in China, I went and studied with a chi kung master. And you know how in karate, they have black belts, green belts, red belts, blue belts and all that stuff... Well in chi kung, the way that they determine your level of skill is by how low you can send the breath. He would put his fingers way down in here, and say breathe, and until I could push his hand away, I had to practice and practice until I could send the breath really low.

In the martial arts, that's very important, because to keep your feet firmly on the ground, your center of gravity has to be very low. Somebody who's afraid [demonstrating]. They are up here. They are off balance.

And you can say that they are "up tight." That expression uptight. They are up and everything is tense. And what do you say to someone who is uptight, who's afraid? "Calm down!"

In someone who is afraid, the breath is up high, it gets sticky, choppy. When someone is very afraid, it's jittery up there. If you tell the person: "don't be afraid." They'll go: "Sure, it's easy for you to say!" "I'd like to not be afraid, but what can I do?"

If you get a hold of the breathing, if you send the breath down into the belly in a long slow way, the fear will dissolve. You'll get your balance back; you'll get your confidence back. So it is a matter of breathing slow into the belly. Slow long exhales.

The same is true for people with asthma. If you have asthma, you have probably been taught do "pursed lipped" breathing. [demonstrating] This is a way of making the stream of breath small. If you make a little hole here, the breath takes longer to come out. If you make a big hole, all the breath comes right out.



You could practice with a straw. That's a good way to practice. You take in a breath and blow out thru a straw. Because it's a little opening, it takes longer for all the air to come out. So, in the process, your exhale gets longer.

With an extended exhale, you'll start to affect your chemical balance. Let's talk about fight or flight: the symptoms of fight or flight. Everyone has heard of the fight or flight mechanism.

A couple of thousand years ago, or a couple of million years ago, whenever it was, when our nervous system was being developed and wired, we had a saber tooth up in a tree, about to leap on top of our great great great great caveman grandfather, we needed adrenaline. We needed to be able to fight, to do something, or to get the heck out of there as fast as possible! And to do any of those things, you needed to muster up a whole lot of energy, to deal with the situation.

What happens in the fight or flight mechanism? First of all, your peripheral circulation gets shut down, so the blood can go to the vital organs: the brain, the heart... The digestive system practically gets shut off completely. Why do you need to digest food, if in the next ten seconds you are about to become someone else's food?

So, we don't need a digestive system; but we do need to muscles, we need a brain, we do need to have our heart up and pumping energy. So, the body goes thru this little thing. It shuts down certain systems, it turns up other systems.

It makes your eyes open wider. It makes your hearing more acute. Your senses are heightened. And then you deal with the threat. You kill the tiger, or you escape. And then after that, [you calm down, the system re-adjusts itself, and you are back to normal.

So that is our biological urge. It is built into us. We need it to survive. But nowadays, we don't have tigers about to leap on us. What we've got is bosses that are yelling at us, what we've got are traffic jams making us nervous, what we've got are kids that we're worried will get into drugs, we've got jobs we're afraid we'll get fired from. We have all these things that give us stress, but we have no way to vent the stress.

And so as a result... What are the results of stress? Ulcers. Ulcers are part of the digestive system. And when you are under stress, your body doesn't care about feeding the digestive system. And there is the issue of high blood pressure.

There's so much energy going into your survival system to keep you ready: What if I have to escape? What if someone tries to kill me? We may not be thinking those things, but our body is reacting as if there was that real threat.

So, we have two parts of the nervous system: the sympathetic and parasympathetic side of the nervous system. And this sympathetic side of the nervous system is

getting activated every time you worry about something, you watch a scary movie, you repeat something in your mind that's bothering you, obsessing over it.

Your body doesn't know that there's no real danger. It responds as if there is an actual threat, a danger. Your heart speeds up, and the all the rest of the fight or flight responses are triggered. So what happens is, that over a long period of time, your systems begin to break down: because they are on "overtime" all the time.

Learning to counter the fight or flight response with the relaxation response is vital. It is something that everybody has to do. You have to get just as good at triggering relaxation as you are at triggering anxiety.

We are all very good at triggering anxiety. Read the newspaper and you can trigger anxiety. Watch the news on TV. There's the war in the Middle East, terrorism at home, locally, someone was killed in a bar, kids kill other kids. You don't have to look far to find things that upset you.

But to find ways and means of stimulating the opposite effect, producing a very deep state of peace and relaxation, in your psyche and in your body, that can create balance...

That's so important, but no one learns that. They don't teach it in school. It's like the emperor with no clothes, the naked king: everyone is suffering from stress, so no one notices! Nobody thinks it's a big deal, because everybody else is the same.

But it's possible to break free of all that. And the breath is the most powerful way to do that.

So, let's go around. We have a solid hour and there are several breathing exercises that I want to teach you. But before I do that, I want to hear and get a sense of why you are here.

What was it about the flier, or something in the newspaper, or something that Ardith said... How did you get here? What did you have in mind? If you could accomplish anything, what would that be? Give me an idea.

*(Cross talk among group, and a question: "How did you get started? Why are you interested in breathing?")*

Thank you. I am interested in breathing for the ultimate potential of it, which I am still looking for. I haven't found the end of the possibilities of this yet.

I did an interview this morning with Michelle, and she asked me: "How did you get started in this breathing thing?" For me it was a spiritual experience.

I was awakened to spiritual breathing as a little kid in Catholic school, in the first grade, with the nuns and the priests. The priest (Father Shabot) came to the class and talked about the book of Genesis.

And on the first page, it says: "God took the dust of the earth, and formed the body of man. Then he breathed into the nostrils of man, and man became a living soul."

And I suddenly became so excited! I didn't know what was happening. I didn't know what was going thru me. The thought of it, the image...With a child's imagination, I got so excited!

I couldn't understand why everybody else wasn't excited. I wanted to talk about it! "Sister, sister! You mean God is breathing into me now? The next breath comes from God?" Wow! And the next one? Wow!

Finally, she calmed me down, patted me on the head, and said "Ok, ok, let's go on now. Let's talk about something else!" We turned the page to the next topic, but part of me just never went back to sleep after that.

So something inside of me has always wanted to dig deeper and find out what's there. I went to India, to China. I studied with anyone I could find who knew anything about breathing, about life and energy and life force

And so I am interested in the highest possibilities of this, but for a few years, especially in the early 80's when I got back from India, I was interested only in the spiritual part. And then in the late 80's, I went around to nursing homes with a portable x-ray machine. I did chest x-rays on 3700 elderly people.

I don't know if anyone has ever had a chest x-ray here, but when you go for a chest x-ray, the x-ray tech tells you: "Take in a deep breath and hold it!" Click: you take the picture.

Well, I did that in the early 70's before I really got into the breathing, and x-rayed thousands of people, then I went into the navy, and got away from x-ray. Then in the late 80's, I thought: "God, I am going to go back and re-visit this."

I renewed my license, I got an offer that I couldn't refuse, to do this mobile x-ray job. I went into nursing homes and private homes, taking x-rays. And I began to really watch what happens when you tell someone to take in a deep breath and hold it.

And so I started to look at what are the muscular patterns that people set up, and just how much breathing capacity people have, and so on. So, that part of it felt a little like backing away from the spiritual stuff, or coming down from the high spiritual stuff into the more practical: asthma, emphysema, high blood pressure, headaches, stress-that kind of stuff...

And, so in the early 90's I did a lot more of that. Then I went over to Russia, the Soviet Union, when it collapsed. 1990 I was there, and then I was there for several months of every year until 1996.

I was there when the Communist system collapsed, and the whole place shut down. People were forced to go inside for the first time in a long time, to look for new resources and to re-define their identity.

They were going through a lot of... sort of mass social changes... tremendous changes: and still are. And that cued me back into how the spiritual stuff caused changes in me, changes in my lifestyle, changes in the kind of books that I read, the people that I hung out with, I mean the things that I did every day.

So, I found that I'd been sort of swinging, like a pendulum, and maybe its not a pendulum, but more like a cycle. I happen to be in Yellowknife just as one of those cycles is coming to completion again. So, at this point, I could go in any direction.

But I am feeling that the spiritual energy part of that is really important. If you are touching people...I mean it is impossible to touch someone and not receive something from them, or for them not to receive something from you.

Whether you deliberately send them something, or draw something or not: something's going to move. Something is going to change and exchange. It's like you have two batteries, you have a positive and negative, and zzztt, the electricity automatically goes from one to another. It's a natural thing that happens.

So if you are touching people, if you are involved with people in their emotional life, psychological problems, in their physical health, in their spiritual quest, you are absorbing from them things, and they are absorbing things from you. So, all of this is happening without your awareness most of the time, but it is still affects you on subtle levels.

And what I would like to do is wake up those subtle levels so that you begin to notice and feel what's happening at those times when you are exchanging energy with a person; and how to begin to build up your own energy, so that you start to overflow with it. So that when you give something to someone, you don't have less.

As a healer, and I've done lots of work: bodywork for years, deep tissue massage, and all kinds of counseling... and I would get tired, I would get exhausted after a long day of seeing people, because I was using my own energy in a way, and I would have to re-fill myself, and then the next day I could give more, then re-fill myself again, and give more, until after a while, I just got burned out.

Until I really started to get from the breath the really important stuff, and now it's more a matter of really taking care of myself and teaching other people to really take care of themselves. And then they start to help people from the overflow. So, then

what goes to somebody else doesn't detract from you. It's just overflowing, and you are still full. You can give and give and give and you are still full. That's when I know that I am into something!

Because now you can really begin to do what Jesus and Buddha and Moses and Lao Tse and Confucius and Mohammed, and all the great masters of the world tried to teach us. We are all connected. No one of us is going to get free until all of us are free. We are in this together.

We're all sucking off the same air. The same bubble of air surrounds this planet, and we are all sucking off the same bubble of air. The air that's in me now was in you a few minutes ago. It's going to be in her a few minutes from now. It's going to be in her dog tomorrow, just as it was in the birds flying over yesterday. Air really does connect us.

It's spiritual yes, but spiritual in a very real way. It's not just philosophy. The breath is an actual physical manifestation of spirit in our bodies. It's not just symbolic, it's real.

And all of ancient languages in the world talk about it---the word for air and the word for spirit is the same word. It's the life force, the vital energy. To be "inspired," inspiration, respiration. The root of that word is spirit, spiritus: the animating principle of life. The basic life force.

When you begin to play with your breath, you are playing with the most subtle form of matter. So, you have solids, liquids and gases. Air the least dense aspect of physical being. So when you get good at handling the breath, you are developing spiritual skills.

Without even focusing on the spiritual aspect, as you increase your power to breathe, your sensitivity to breathing, the energy in the breath, you are developing spiritual capacities without even trying.

Your psychic capacities will get better, your intuitive capacities, your sense of compassion: all of these things grow with your breath mastery. And that's why I have settled on to this path of breath mastery, because I find that by working on this, all of the other levels, no matter how deep or how superficial are also influenced and affected.

So, let me give you a couple of breathing exercises. Here's a question people ask: as if there is a right way and a wrong way to breathe. There are some general things that make sense, but in each situation, your body, your physiology, your chemistry, your emotional state, your psychological state, should determine how you are breathing.

If your breath is free and it can respond to the body's needs, it will take on a quality and a pattern and a rhythm and a depth that is perfectly suited to what is happening in you in the moment. So the first and most obvious thing that I want to focus on is this awareness of breathing. It's what the Buddha did.

So, I will give you a formula for transformation. There are three parts to it: Awareness, Relaxation and Breath Control. Awareness: the Consciousness factor, Relaxation: the release factor, and breathing, the energy factor. You put those three things together: awareness, relaxation, and energy, and something else starts to happen.

It's like the old aikido masters, the kung fu masters: you see these skinny little guys throwing these big 300 pound muscular bound guys all over the place. You see them breaking 17 inches of concrete...

There was a guy Leonard Mills Jr. who lived in a town near me many years ago. He was in the Guinness Book of World Records. He broke 17 1/2 inches of concrete with his head! That's not something that I long to do, not something that when I grow up, I want to do!

But it tells you what's possible. If that is possible, what else is possible? If one person can do this, what else can someone else do? That's where I get excited about some of this stuff.

The basic thing in martial arts... there's this principle of "one-pointedness." That means that your mind and your body have to come together at one point, and when that happens, a force emerges that doesn't emerge at any other time.

If your whole focus and your whole attention plus your physical body... it all comes together in that one moment, you have this tremendous explosive force that you couldn't get if that awareness and focus wasn't there.

Now if you add to that the third ingredient, which is breathing, another even greater force emerges. So, I like working with martial arts people, especially old crusty warriors who have been doing martial arts for years and years. And they have a good sense of chi, they have a lot of energy. They can accomplish some dramatic feats. Because with those people, it's very easy...

You see, the same energy that I can break a brick with, the same energy that I can knock someone to the ground with... I can use that same energy to build up my immune system. I can use that same energy to repair an internal organ, to recover from an illness, or to prevent an illness or an injury. So that part of it really excites me.

And the key to all that is Awareness: it's what the Buddha taught. Here's the story of the Buddha: He was a wealthy prince who lived a life of luxury and happen to look

out his window one day and discover that there are people out in the world who really had it tough.

Growing up, he never knew this. He had everything, but he never left the palace. All he saw was the best food, and the best of everything. His parents never let him see any of the pain and suffering of the world, any disease or any poverty: and so he no idea about it.

Until one day he snuck out of the palace, and he went into the city and came back and thought: “oh my God, what is happening?” So he dropped everything. He left his money, his wife and kids, his father and family, and he went off in the search of the cause of suffering—to find what is the cause of suffering in life.

It can't be this now and something else later. He thought “there must be some deep, underlying cause of suffering, and I want to find out what that is.” And that was how the Buddha came to be. He practiced every religion, every technique, studied with every master, traveled all over the world. He became quite famous and a very potent healer, very spiritual, quite a master himself. But he still hadn't gotten it!

At some point he figured that he had done everything that was humanly possible. There is nothing else he could do, so he sat under a tree: the famous Bodhi tree. And some people say that you can still go to that place, to that same tree where the Buddha actually sat! But he sat under that tree and he watched his breath.

He practiced what is now a very popular Buddhist tradition called Vipassana Meditation: Insight meditation, where you just take your attention, you gather up all your attention and you place it inside of you on something: that is the breath.

And you watch the breath, just like a witness, an observer—not a judge not an analyst, not comparing, not talking to yourself—just a witness, pure detached awareness. You are not doing anything to the breathing, just noticing it, and feeling it, and sensing it, and listening to it, and watching it. And that is the basic part of this practice, the first part of this formula: it's meditation.

And the better you are at meditating.. first of all you will begin to relax. Meditators are in general more relaxed than people who don't meditate. Meditators who also breathe, are more relaxed than anybody! So you put those two things together and you get a kind of quantum leap.

So, here's the practice, and I'll do just a quick five minutes of breath awareness. We just want to do a bit of breath awareness.

Close your eyes, and get into a position so that your spine is fairly straight—not stiff or rigid. And your feet are flat on the floor, and not crossed. You can let your hands rest on you lap, you can cross your hands on your lap and just let them rest on your

lap. Close your eyes, and just notice when the next breath comes in, and feel when it comes in.

You can notice at the tip of your nose... and see if you can feel the difference when the breath comes in and when the breath goes out. You notice that the breath is a little warmer when it goes out than when it comes in.

Try to feel the details. Fine-tune your awareness so that you are starting to get more details of the breathing. What moves when you breathe? Can you notice your chest or belly moving when you breathe? And when it does, what does that feel like? What are the sensations? Really notice the sensations.

Now your mind is going to wander. It might wander to the fan in the room. You might hear that fan. It might wander to something that you are telling yourself. You are thinking about something you have to do later, or you are talking to yourself, or remembering something.

So there are a lot of other things happening, but throughout all those other things happening, the breathing is happening. So every time that you notice that your mind wanders to a thought, or to something else, just return your attention to the next breath. Feel the breath come, feel the breath go. If there is a pause between the breaths, feel that pause. Notice the pause.

You see, the mind wants to go into the future and into the past. The mind is always going back and forth, here and there, up and down, but the breathing happens right here, right now. So, when the mind gets focused on the breathing, you get focused on the here and the now. And this is where life happens!

If you want to change your future, you've got to change your present! It starts with the present moment. So notice anything else that is obvious. You might notice the weight of your body on the chair. Feel where your body makes contact with the chair. You might feel the air on the skin of your face. You might hear or notice your heartbeat. There might be a ringing or buzzing sound in your head. There might be a pain or some muscle ache somewhere. You might notice your saliva.

The idea is to notice what is happening inside of you and to be aware, simply aware. Just noticing, just observing: impartial, objective observer. This is how the Buddha became the Buddha. It was while he was doing this meditation that he became enlightened. Just focusing on the present moment, what is real, what is happening moment to moment inside of you, and around you.

One of the great spiritual principles is that there is no difference between what is inside of you and what is around you. There is one being in this universe, one life, one energy, and you are part of it. And the separation is an illusion.



Think about what is important. What's the most important thing in life? What's the most important thing for you? What do you need to learn? What do you need to practice? What do you need to improve in yourself? What do you need to let go of?

What talent or quality do you feel is important to develop? A way of being? What's important? What's the most important thing? And if you have an answer to that, ask yourself this: What's so important about that? And why is that important?

Health. Happiness. Being loving, being compassionate, learning, growing... these are all possible things. And if you zero in on any of those, ask yourself: Why is that important? What is important about that? And see what answer comes to you.

Next thing you want to do is take a sigh of relief. Give yourself a big exaggerated sigh of relief. After a long day of work..."aahhh..." You get home to your favorite chair. All the work is done, and you give yourself a luxurious sigh of relief. It should be shaped like an "aahh." Aahh is the great let go sound. Notice that it feels good.

If you feel like laughing, you feel like crying, you feel like moving, say yes to those things. With that "aahh" build into it a certain feeling of yes. So that when you do it, inside yourself, you are saying yes: yes to who you are, how you are, yes to what is. Yes to the perfection of life, yes to your dreams, yes to your emotions, yes to your urges, yes to your problems, yes to everything. A great big yes!

In order to get a really big sigh of relief, you need in front of it a really big inhale. The bigger and deeper the inhale you take, the greater the sigh of relief will be that follows it. So, on the next inhale, pull a little bit longer, pull slightly past what feels full, fill yourself up a little bit more, then give yourself a big sigh of relief.

If you want to feel something you've never felt before, you have to breathe in a way you've never breathed before. If you want to know something about yourself that you've never discovered you have to breathe in a way that you have never breathed before, and you will discover something new.

So you want to take another long inhale, and what you want to do is make the inhale last as long as possible, and give the inhale an "oohh" shape as if you are sucking through a straw and you are feeding yourself. So, you are breathing through your mouth, it's shaped like an "oohh," [making this sound....]

Take your time as you inhale as if you are sipping very expensive wine—we're talking a thousand dollars a bottle here. You don't want to just gulp it, you want to taste every single drop of it. You want to feel every detail of the breath.

You want to inhale slowly and you want to expand from side to side, front to back, top to bottom. And feel the expansion. What are the physical sensations? As you fill yourself up on the inhale, and you expand, what are the physical sensations that are

involved in the expanding? Explore the details of those sensations: expanding on the inhale and then a sigh of relief and relaxing on the exhale.

Expanding on the inhale long and slow, shaped like an “ooohh” and then “aaahh” on the exhale. What happens in your body when you do that? What are the details?

And then try to accomplish a deep breath without using any muscles you don't have to. You want to fill yourself up, expand completely, but don't make any muscles tight. No muscles in your neck get tight. No muscles in your shoulders get tight. Deliberately be relaxed as you inhale.

So, the exhale is like this [demonstrate lifting shoe] and the exhale is like this [releasing and dropping shoe] You don't blow or push the exhale. It doesn't take any force. You just pull in, and when you are full, you stop pulling in and you let go, and the breath comes out all by itself.

You want the exhale to be very passive. No effort, no energy required. You want the inhale to be active, but you don't want to force it or use muscles. [demonstrating] And as you are inhaling, feel: what are you doing in your body?. Is anything getting tight?

The longer you inhale, the more you can magnify what you are doing with your muscles. As soon as you begin to notice muscular effort (contraction, tension, etc), you let the exhale happen—let the breath go. You focus on those muscles, and you inhale again without activating them.

So, gradually what you are doing is you are being able to breathe more and more deeply with less and less effort. That's one of the secrets!

Many people practice deep breathing and they actually get tired. If you get tired from breathing deeply, it's because you are working too hard at it. You are using more energy than what you are getting. It's costing you more energy than what you are getting, so the net gain is negative!

But if you can breathe deeply with no effort, all that energy will go into feeding you, nurturing you, opening things up, cleaning, purifying, invigorating... But if the energy is being used up by the muscles, then the energy has nowhere else to go. It is wasted—not wasted, but it's burned up by the muscular activity.

One good exercise to do is run, go out and run, and then when you are breathing heavy, lay down and relax completely. And continue to breathe as if you are still running, except let all your muscles be totally soft.

When you were running, all that energy was going into running, it was going into your muscles. Where do you think all that energy is going to go if your muscles don't need it?

It's going to open up new levels of yourself! It's going to crack open higher psychic spaces, intuitive abilities, energy channels. And if you combine relaxation with it, then the thing multiplies even more!

So, you want to relax so much... Sitting down, for example, you cannot relax completely. Because you are holding yourself erect. If you were to relax completely while sitting down, you would collapse and crunch up your breathing cavity, and wouldn't be able to breathe fully and freely.

If you lay flat on your back, you can relax completely. Then it doesn't matter if you get dizzy. You don't need any muscles. You are already laying down, so all of the muscles can relax and all the energy from the breath can be used in a different way other than muscular activity.

What I am going to do is long slow inhales because I want to feel the details, and I am using my imagination: pulling in light, pulling in love, I'm pulling in life, I'm pulling in energy.

And If I decided that peace was very important in my life, r that health was very important in my life, I am going to think about that while I breathe. I might even repeat the word "peace" "peace" "peace." Or I might get a picture in my mind that is related to peace, or whatever I think is important.

On this, I am going to pull in slowly, and shape my lips as if I am sucking through a straw, and I am going to feel myself expand from side to side, front to back, and top to bottom. [demonstrating]

It's easy to do when you are laying down, because you can let all your muscles relax. There are a couple of principles that I am using here that I have not mentioned. You want to invent your own breathing exercise.

And that is really what I want to do, as I conduct these seminars over the next few days: we are going to do a two-day workshop where we can really go deep and accomplish a lot, and we'll do a one day workshop and three or four other evening sessions.

When I work with people more than once, maybe around the second or third time, I start to be able to really zero in on what will help them most, and what they could practice in order to get the most benefit out of, immediately and in the long run. So the more I breathe with somebody, the more obvious that is.

But there are certain principles here, and one is rhythm. If you want to practice any kind of breathing, invent any kind of breathing technique, make sure that it has rhythm involved. It could be any rhythm, and you can play with different rhythms. [demonstrating]

Now what is hard for you is no coincidence. If breathing very slow is difficult and breathing fast is easy, that means something. If breathing fast is impossible—if you get all jammed up and the breath gets sticky, there's something there.

It means something: tension, something emotional, something psychological, something mechanical, physiological. On one of those levels, you've got something that the breath can fix. If you have trouble breathing long and slow....

You should have a range... a healthy person should be able to breathe fast, should be able to breathe slow: 2 3 4 breaths per minute, or 60 or 120 breaths per minute, and they shouldn't get all flustered about it. That shows you how much you can expand your health and comfort range, and the breath is a very good gauge for that.

You should be able to breathe high in your chest, low in your belly. You should be able to maneuver about that, and the better you are at maneuvering about that, you are going to find that you are good at doing other things. In the process of developing those skills in breathing, you are going to develop other skills that are quite exciting, benefits will sneak up on you!

So, rhythm: practice different rhythms. Listening to music: instead of tapping your feet, breathe in rhythm to the music. You are walking along, breathe in rhythm to the footsteps—anything to play with certain rhythms. If you get your breath into a real steady rhythm, everything else starts to organize and fall in to order, and to regulate itself.

Your rhythm is different than someone else's, so you have to find your own rhythm. And the rhythm that you find most "comfortable" now, is no coincidence. It is connected to your chemical, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual state. And as those states change, a different rhythm will be most comfortable. So, you can make those connections.

One of the secrets that the yogis have learned is that since every emotional and psychological state has a specific breathing pattern, a quality, a certain specific breathing quality—connected to every different psychological state. They go together. One creates the other.

So that means that if you get into a certain emotional/psychological state, your breathing is going to click into a certain pattern, a certain quality, a certain high, low... it is going to take on a certain pattern. And vice-versa: if you breathe in a certain way it is going to produce a certain chemical, psychological, emotional state.

So one of the things I want to do while I'm here this week—I'll be here for two weeks—is give as many people as possible an experience of ecstasy, of heavenly joy. And then I am going to wake you up and say "look how you are breathing right now, and remember it, because the next time you are upset or afraid, breathe this way!" And you will have magic in your hands.

You will be able to feel wonderful no matter what's happening around you, no matter what's happening inside of you, no matter where you are... You will have found a key in the way that you breathe, to produce, to actually cause a certain psycho-spiritual-emotional state. And it works like a charm, every time.

Armed with that, you will be able to go comfortably into more and more different situations.

You will be able to be comfortable at times when before you couldn't be comfortable.

You will be clear and centered when before you would be upset and confused.

You'll know the secret of how to breathe to live in a state of peace and joy and ecstasy

You will realize and embody what all the saints and mystics and gurus and teachers have been talking about in all the religions, throughout the ages.

Welcome to the Path of Breath Mastery. Welcome to the Art of Spiritual Breathing!