

Breath Awareness: A Guided Meditation

(“The Famous Biloxi Transcript”)

This is a transcript of a guided breathing session that took place in at an advnaced practioner training in Biloxi Mississippi, in the spring of 2003.

More than a breathing session, this talk is filled with spiritual breathing techniques, exercises, and meditations. It also includes practical solutions to many everyday emotional and psychological problems.

It contains the core principles of breathwork as well as profound teachings on breath and life in general. It offers specific instructions and solid advice for breathworkers. And so it has been used as a mini-manual by practioners throughout the world, for guiding themselves thru sessions as well as for coaching others.

As you read through it, breathe, and let your breath take you on a journey. At any point, you can close your eyes, leave the transcript behind, and let your process go where it wants to go.

Here are just some of the CONTENTS you’ll find in this program:

Becoming the Watcher
Tuning into the Breath
Following the Path that the Breath Takes
Nose Breathing VS Mouth Breathing
Equalizing the Flow
Body Awareness
Expanding Yourself and the Breath
Applying Dynamic Relaxation
Letting Go Into Ecstasy
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Fire and Light in the Body
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Unconditional Love and Self-Acceptance
Connecting to the Life and Spirit in Everything
Linking Thought and Breath
Claiming Your Power
Time is Not a Factor
Blessing the World

Become The Watcher.

How do you know you are breathing? What sensations, what feelings in the body, tell you that you're breathing?

Just begin to notice those feelings and sensations... The natural sensations that come with the normal movement of the breath...

What does it feel like when the breath comes in? Can you feel sensations in the tip of your nose? Or if you breathe in thru your mouth can you feel the sensations of the air passing over your lips?

Can you feel movement in your chest, movement in your belly? Where does the breath go when it comes into you? What does it touch?

Follow the path that the breath takes when it comes into you. The first step in that path is the entry point, either the nose or the mouth. And so let's open both of those passages. Let the breath feel free to come in and out the mouth or the nose. Keep both of them open and available. And if you can, let the breath go in and out both at the same time.

Divide the stream of breath up, so that half the breath is going in and out the nose and half the breath is going in and out the mouth. So you've opened up both doorways, giving the breath the most opportunity to come and go.

You might take a few breaths thru your mouth, then a few breaths thru your nose. And feel what it is that you have to do, to open and close that little valve that determines where the breath is going to go: thru the mouth or thru the nose.

So if you leave your mouth open and let your jaw relax, you can breathe thru your nose with your mouth open. And then you do something to allow the breath to go in and out the mouth. What is it that you do? Something with your tongue? Something with the back of your throat? Something with your lips?

If you are breathing thru your mouth, and you want to switch to breathing thru your nose, and yet keep your mouth open, what little adjustment do you make? And just feel that. What do you have to do?

How do the sensations change...when you go from breathing in and out the mouth...to breathing in and out the nose?

You're letting the breath come and go, in its own rhythm and its own volume, and you're just playing with the entry point. Just playing with letting the breath come in and out the mouth, or letting it go in and out the nose. And just exploring: What's that slight little thing, that effortless little thing that you can do...?

Like on a train track, where there's a switch, some guy switches tracks, the train can go left or right at that fork. They come out and they shift something, they switch something. What is that shift? What is that switch between mouth breathing and nose breathing? How do you accomplish that?

Can you feel the breath coming in and out both the nose and the mouth at the same time? Can you open and allow both those doors to be available? And as you breathe in and out, can you feel any sensations in your throat? Any feelings caused by the wind, by the air?

Are you doing anything with the muscles in your neck when you breathe? What's happening to the muscles in your neck and shoulders while you breathe? What's happening to the muscles in your chest? What's happening in your belly when you breathe?

What we want to do is begin to create some spaciousness, create some opening. It's as if your body is a room and all the organs are in this room. And you want to make the room bigger, so all your organs aren't so congested: each organ has some breathing space around it.

Use your imagination, and use the breath, and begin to just create more room inside yourself. If you notice, when the breath comes in, it wants to expand you. As the breath comes in, you can feel yourself expanding from side to side, front to back, top to bottom.

Focus on the details of that expansion, and start to add a little breath on the inhale, just to help that expansion a little bit. So you are making the inhales a little deeper, a little bigger, a little fuller, a little longer... So that you can add a little expansion to what's already happening on the inhale.

Create a little extra expansion inside of you. Try to create that expansion in all directions. We don't just breathe into the front of the chest. We breathe into the back. We breathe into the lower spaces. We breathe into the sides.

And if you sense and watch carefully, as the breath comes in, it produces these sensations of stretching, of opening, of expanding. Notice the details of that. As you inhale, and you expand, really focus on those details.

Breathing is like listening to a symphony orchestra. Some people just hear a big noise when they listen to classical music or an orchestra. And other people can pick out a single flute. They can follow a single violin. In the midst of 150 musicians in the orchestra, they can find one tiny detail and enjoy it.

And the breathing is like that. There are lots and lots of details in the breathing that we just normally don't notice. So what we want to do now is to notice some of those details. And notice the sensations that feel good.

What are the normal, natural, organic, inherent sensations in the breathing... that are pleasurable? Find some aspect of the breathing that you can enjoy, some sensations, some movements... and enjoy them more.

On the exhales... Just begin to let the exhales go more consciously, more deliberately, as if you're sighing with relief. As if you've just finished some work, and you can finally relax and let go. Give each exhale that quality of release, of relief, of relaxation...

So you are beginning to conspire with the breath, cooperate with it, work and play with it. Beginning to breathe consciously, deliberately, with a certain intention. And the intention is to create more space inside of you, more room, more openness.

Relaxation is a big part of that. When you relax and let go, something softens, something opens, something releases, something lets go. And that allows more expansion, more opening. So we're using the inhale to create more expansion. And we're using the exhale to create more relaxation.

So as you pull the breath in, notice those boundaries in your body. Notice what the breath has to push up against in order to produce more expansion. As you breathe in, breathe in slowly, inhale slowly, feel the sensations of expansion, and notice where the breath begins to push in order to create more room for itself. And those are places that you begin to bring relaxation to, softness to, more attention to those places.

And how can you create more opening? Can you create more opening in your throat? Using the inhale, using the exhale... can you create more space in your throat... so the breath doesn't have to squeeze thru any tight passages? Invite it by opening. If you create an opening, the breath will come in. And if you pull the breath in, the breath will create more opening.

So it's a little dance that we're doing with the breath. The breath itself wants to expand us. If you pull in a long inhale, you can feel yourself expanding. The breath wants to open you. And when you relax, you create some softness, and so the next breath doesn't meet with as much resistance.

And this way of breathing is really important because it's beginning to point to a way of relating to yourself, a way of relating to life. It is beginning to create a physiology of embracing, rather than defensive posturing or guarding. It's the opposite of fear.

When you can expand and relax, that's the opposite of fear. Fear is when you close and contract, you withdraw... And the opposite of that, love, is expanding, opening, embracing, welcoming...

So begin to welcome this breath as if it's life, because it is. Breath is life. These games that we begin to play with the breath... it's just a reflection of our relationship to life. Can you breathe fully and freely? Can you live fully and freely?

Can you accept yourself unconditionally? Can you allow life to pour into you, as it will? Without needing to control it, or hold it back... What can you add to your process right now to create a little more relaxation... a little more opening... a little more expansion... Some little adjustment in your posture... Maybe relaxing some muscle or muscle group.

What's happening to your forehead? Relax the muscles in your face, in your forehead, around your eyes, your jaw... Deliberately spend a few moments sending the message to relax to those places. And as you do, imagine breathing into those places.

As you focus on your jaw or your face, the muscles around your eyes, your forehead... As you focus on those with the intention to relax, you are breathing into those places. As if you are actually trying to breathe with the flesh and bones in this area. Breathing with those places, breathing into them, breathing from them.

One of the great secrets in the East, in China, is this idea that consciousness and your chi or your energy are meant to be married, are meant to be together. Where consciousness goes, chi flows, energy flows.

So wherever you bring your attention, you are aware that not only are you bringing your mind's eye or your awareness to that place, but energy is beginning to move to that place where your attention is going—Life Energy.

And you want that life energy to have a certain quality: A quality of unconditional acceptance, a quality of love, a quality of softness, of relaxation, of aliveness, of embracing...

So breathing takes place on several levels. The first level is sort of the mechanical level. We're just getting air in and out of the lungs. Let's begin to explore: how do you do that?

How much do your lungs hold? Fill your lungs completely. Try to pull in as much air as you possibly can. How empty can you make them? Empty your lungs completely. Squeeze every last drop of breath out.

What muscles do you have to use in order to pump the air in and out? Can you do it with your diaphragm? Can you breathe just from your belly? And let all the muscles in your chest and neck and shoulders relax and do nothing? Can you accomplish all the breathing just by moving the belly.

Breathing low. So as you exhale, you draw the belly button in and up toward your spine. And as you inhale, your belly fills up like a balloon. Exhale: your belly travels toward the spine, you pull in on the belly as you exhale...

And then as you inhale, your belly gets big. You expand from side to side, front to back. As if there's a balloon in your belly and you're filling and emptying the balloon.

And the chest is still, the chest is relaxed. The muscles in your shoulders and neck are relaxed. You're breathing into all the lower spaces, breathing with the diaphragm and the belly. Can you create extra expansion in those lower spaces?

When you inhale, can you send the breath very low? All the way to the perineum, to the genitals...? It's as if you're pressing or packing the inhale low into those places. Sending the

breath down into your hips, down into your lower belly... All the way to the bottom of your torso, to the perineum.

And then when you exhale, you are drawing up on those places. So as you empty yourself, you're pulling up on the perineum. The belly button travels toward the spine.

When you inhale, the belly gets big, An expansion takes place in a downward direction. Play with the movement in that direction. Expansion in the direction of the lower spaces... and then as you exhale, you're pulling up on the perineum... pulling the belly button toward the spine...

As if you're squeezing a sponge in your belly... and that squeezes all the breath out. Then you relax your belly, and the breath goes down and fills the belly again. See if you can get a sense of that... Breathing in the lower spaces.

Bringing your awareness, your attention, an invitation, relaxation to those lower places... Inviting the breath to fill those lower spaces. And then empty them. Squeeze all the breath out of those places

Just play with those lower spaces. There's some muscles that you hold tight in your hips or in your belly. Allow those muscles to soften and loosen. Is there any adjustment you can make in your lower back, or your hips... to create more openness... more room for the breath... Less resistance.

Now let's shift to the higher spaces, up under your collar bones. When you breathe in, feel your sternum, your breast bone rising up, And your collar bones... the breath going up under your collar bones...

Get a sense of your shoulder blades in the back. And when you inhale, the shoulder blades should come apart, creating more space in the back... As if you are spreading your wings... You are breathing into the upper spaces, creating some aliveness, some movements and activity up high in the top spaces of the lungs... under your collar bones.

Create some hollowing under the arm pits... so you can expand from side to side in that area under your arm pits. So as you inhale, it's as if you are spreading wings. Your shoulder blades come apart, as if you are trying to fill your shoulders with breath. Fill those top spaces under your collar bones with breath.

So your chest expands upward and outward... your sternum, your breastbone rises up to meet your chin... Your collar bones rise up... Your shoulder blades spread and move apart. The expansion takes place in all directions in those upper spaces.

And then when you exhale, it's like a sigh of relief. You release all those muscles. You relax all those places... And the breath pours out by itself...

Playing with the upper spaces in the breathing... you need to relax the muscles in your shoulders. Relax the muscles in your chest... and in your neck... to allow that subtle energy, to allow that breath to get up into those cracks and crevices.

If you use a lot of force, if you strain your muscles, you create contraction, and that tension blocks the subtle flow of energy. So we are trying to accomplish the movement of the breath without creating muscle tension. Any muscle activity, and muscles you use, eats up the energy, it uses up the prana , the chi...

And so if you can breathe without using a lot of effort, you will get a net gain in energy. You're not wasting energy in the process of breathing itself. The process of breathing itself is effortless, and its not costing you any energy. So that extra energy can do its work, can do healing work: purifying, cleansing, releasing...

So how much room can you create inside your self? In the upward direction... In the downward direction... Front to back... Side to side... And invite the breath to fill that space. And help the breath fill those spaces.

Another level of the breathing, is getting the oxygen, the gas, from the lungs into the blood. Can you feel your heart beat? Can you feel any pulses in your body? The pumping of blood thru the body... Can you get a sense of that? Thru your heart beat, thru any feelings of pulses, thru any wooshing sensations...

You get the air into your lungs... And the lungs are surrounded by all these blood vessels. And the air makes its way from the lungs into these blood vessels. And then these blood vessels take this air to every cell of the body. It circulates...

The breath comes into you, and then that breath, that energy is circulated throughout your body. Can you get a sense of energy or blood, or anything circulating... thru your body? Picture it. Imagine it...

Most of the time, when people think of imagination, they think only in terms of pictures. But you can imagine a feeling. You can imagine a sensation as easily as you can imagine an image. Use your imagination...

The third level of breathing is getting that air, that energy, that oxygen... from the blood into every single cell. And vice-versa: letting the cells give up their carbon dioxide and their waste products... And that exchange that takes place... It takes place between every one of the trillions of cells that we have. In every given moment, there is that exchange taking place.

That's a mass of sensations occurring in your body. Trillions of cells... electricity... energy... going back and forth... It's like every cell is a little combustion engine, and it's burning that fuel. It's producing. It's doing its work. And the breathing is helping these trillion little combustion engines do there work. That's a lot of fire! That's a lot of light. Those are a lot of sparks...

A lot of energy happening in the body in any given moment. And most of us have lost our sense of this. Children feel it. Cats... You can sense that cats are feeling “something.” So we want to wake up that sense... the feeling of subtle energy, which is actually very powerful. It’s life itself, and its happening everywhere inside of you.

Your whole body is breathing. So get a sense of that... When you breathe, its your body, every single cell that is breathing. You can imagine that every cell is a lung. When you inhale, every cell in your body expands... And when you exhale, every cell in your body relaxes. Try to create a sense of that.

As you inhale, your whole body swells and expands... As you exhale, everything recoils and relaxes... Help the process a little more by making your breaths a little bigger, a little deeper... Get a little more volume on your breaths... Just to sort of turn up the process a bit... Intensify it, magnify it. Kicking the breath up a notch.

We are sitting at rest, and so the body’s normal breathing mechanism says: “Oh, we don’t need to breathe. We’re sitting at rest. There’s no work happening. No effort is required.” And so the normal chemical triggers in your body will keep the breath quite small, quite shallow, because it’s simply not required. So you have to consciously intervene, and invite extra breath.

You have to over-ride those unconscious chemical triggers, as you consciously decide to breathe more fully. Bring in more energy when you breathe. And watch how that changes the sensations in your body.

For about a minute... or even less... let’s say 20 or 30 breaths... Breathe a bit deeper, a bit faster than normal... And watch and feel and sense, as you do that... How do you accomplish it? What muscles do you use?

What does it feel like? And after that 30 seconds or minute of deeper, freer, fuller breathing... Take an inventory of the sensations in your body.

Can you see any sparks? Can you feel any vibrations? Are there any parts of your body that suddenly come into your awareness? Are there any new movements? Any new pulses? Any added sense of something circulating? Does tension come to your awareness? Muscle pain, or stiffness? Does that become more obvious?

Fuller breathing is going to activate and intensify whatever is in place. It gives us a chance to open and soften and adjust... to release. Maybe stretch... Maybe some natural movement that wants to happen with the body.

Begin to let every breath be a big “Yes!” Yes to life. Yes to yourself. Yes to what is. Yes to all your problems. Yes to all that’s happening in the world. Just a giant Yes!

You’ll notice that this “yes” supercedes or by-passes our judging mind. “How can we say yes to war and rape and murder, and all those terrible things? That comes later. Discrimination,

judgments, discernment... All of that stuff comes later. We want to first build a big “yes.” A yes to life.

If it’s happening, God, life, existence, has already made it happen. So we are just saying yes to “what is.” Because saying no to “what is” creates conflict, creates suffering. When you fight with reality, you lose. Reality doesn’t wait for our permission before it is what it is. So we start with a big “yes.” This is the yes of existence itself. It’s the yes of life itself.

And are there parts of yourself that you have said “no” to? Are there parts of life that you continually say no to? Those things cost you energy. Those things create separation and division inside what should be an organic whole.

Unconditional acceptance... Unconditional love: this is that “Yes!” Let that at least begin inside of you. Say yes to everything that happens inside of you. Say yes to all your feelings, all your emotions, all your sensations.

There’s no good or bad, there’s no right or wrong. There’s just: yes to what is. And bringing this sense of embracing, of expanding, of relaxing... Meet everything inside of you with that quality.

It’s a miracle that we’re here! To be alive, to be able to feel, to be able to breathe, is a miracle. And it’s the result of millions of years of evolution. It’s an awesome, awesome thing. Regardless of the content of our life, life itself is extraordinary! Get a sense of that. Get a sense of how extraordinary it is to simply exist! And bring this sense to a moment-to-moment process.

Feel every detail as you breathe in. Notice every tiny detail as you breathe out. Bring your attention fully to the present moment, and experience this moment, each moment, fully. What’s the maximum potential in your life?

What’s the maximum potential in each moment: that should be our direction. To squeeze all the juice, out of every drop of life. To live as fully as possible. Feel as fully as possible. Love as fully as possible. Breathe as fully as possible.

Is there anything you need to let go of... in order to make room inside of you for more life, for more love? Is there anything that you have to soften or loosen in your view of yourself? The stance you’ve taken, or the role you are filling...? Is there something you need to soften or loosen or release, in order to make more room for you to be?

You can begin to use the breath in conjunction with a thought. You work with the mind and the breath at the same time. You pick an idea, like “peace.” And you begin to breathe that idea. You pick an idea, like “openness,” and you breathe that idea.

Breathe in a way that brings you the most pleasure. Breathe in a way that makes you feel alive! Breathe in a way that makes you feel enjoyment. Intensify and magnify that enjoyment. Celebrate the life that’s bubbling inside of you.

You can imagine the breath like light. So when you breathe in, you are breathing in light. And that light gets circulated to every cell in your body. So your body becomes light. And then it's like a glowing ember. When you blow on it, it gets brighter.

So with every breath, as you inhale, it's like blowing on an ember. Something inside of you gets brighter. And when you exhale, you radiate that light. You just release that light into the world. It's the light of life, the light of love.

Feel yourself expand and fill with love and light on the inhale. And then as you exhale, let go and relax... And imagine that energy continuing to expand. So you breathe in on the inhale, and you feel the actual sensations of expansion. And when you exhale, you imagine the expansion continuing.

So you're getting bigger. You begin to breathe not only in your body... but outside and around your body. Something is breathing with you, around your body. You're breathing into the spaces around you, and not just into your body. So when you breathe in, it's not just your body that expands, there's a bubble of energy around you that also expands.

And then when you exhale, you can imagine that bubble bursting, And that light escaping like a sun. Radiating in all directions. You fill yourself with light on the inhale, and on the exhale, it's as if a bubble bursts, and that light is released, and it radiates in all directions. So you expand on the inhale, and then you continue to expand on the exhale.

And everyone is doing that. It's like waves on an ocean. Each of us is a wave, making our own ripple. And our ripple bounces off the ripples of others. And the ripples of others come thru and into us. So we are not just breathing our air, we are breathing the essence of the people around us.

The air that's inside of you now, was inside of someone else a few minutes ago. The air that's inside someone else now, will be inside of you, in a few minutes from now. The air that's inside of you now, was in Buddha, Moses, Jesus, a couple of thousand years ago. The same air is still connecting everyone and everything. Try to feel that connection.

The breath connects us, to each other, and to the Source. Everyone on this planet is sucking off the same big bubble of air! It's feeding all of us. It's connecting all of us.

When you breathe in, you are breathing in information. It's like seeing something or hearing something. You are pulling in information with the breath. And that information is read by parts of you that maybe you are not in touch with... Those messages go to parts of you... they are decoded, and they are used. So with every breath, information is coming in from the universe and from others.

And when you breathe out, a portion of your essence is released into the world. Something that came from the deepest part of your physical being, from the center of each cell... And we are sharing that with the world whenever we breathe out.

Now just focus on some intention, some goal, some desire, some prayer... What is it? What is your intention? What does the world need more of? What do you need? What's important? What's most important? What can you offer the world? What can you bless the world with? What do you need to receive? What do you need to become more of? What do you need to let go of?

Focus on some intention. And then imagine that intention fulfilled... And then how would you be? How would you look at yourself? How would others perceive you? What would the world around you look like? That intention fulfilled... How would you be different?

Begin to claim that. That's you. Time is not required in the real processes of life. Time is not required. A moment, a year, a thousand years, it makes no difference on the deepest levels of our being. Everything can change in a flash. What do you need to do in order to make that possible? For things to change in a flash?

Maybe something you thought would require a lot of work, a lot of effort... something that was difficult or complicated... and suddenly you bring this idea in that: "It's not hard! It's easy!" "It's instant. It's natural. It's automatic. " Just begin to enjoy the results of the fulfillment of that intention.

So, we'll take a few minutes, to stretch, to move... and to open our eyes...

On the following pages, you will find a summary of this guided breathing session, written out as a list of coaching points and bits of teaching.

Breath Awareness
Becoming the watcher of the breath
Focusing on the entry points
Equalizing the Flow between nose and mouth
Opening and softening the throat.
Creating space in the chest and abdomen
Breathing as an orchestra
Maximizing your enjoyment
Engaging the exhale
Softening the boundaries
Consciousness and chi
Circulating breath energy
Exploring the different Breathing and Spaces
Breathing mechanics
Cellular Respiration
Saying yes to life
Thought and breath
Breathing essence
Breathing others
Breathing light.

So let's start with this little breathing meditation.

Just become the watcher of your breathing.

Become the watcher.

How do you know you are breathing?

What sensations, what feelings in the body, tell you that you're breathing?

Just begin to notice those.

The natural sensations that come with the normal movement of the breath...

What does it feel like when the breath comes in?

Can you feel sensations in the tip of your nose?

Or if you breathe in thru your mouth can you feel the sensations of the air passing over your lips?

Can you feel movement in your chest, movement in your belly?

Where does the breath go when it comes into you?

What does it touch?

Follow the path that the breath takes when it comes into you.

The first step in that path is the entry point, either the nose or the mouth.

And so let's open both of those passages.

Let the breath feel free to come in and out the mouth or the nose.

Keep both of them open and available.

And if you can, let the breath go in and out both at the same time.

Divide the stream of breath up, so that half the breath is going in and out the nose and half the breath is going in and out the mouth.

So you've opened up both doorways, giving the breath the most opportunity to come and go.

You might take a few breaths thru your mouth, then a few breaths thru your nose.

And feel what it is that you have to do, to open and close, that little valve that determines where the breath is going to go: thru the mouth or thru the nose.

So if you leave your mouth open and let your jaw relax, you can breathe thru your nose with your mouth open.

And then you do something to allow the breath to go in and out the mouth.

What is it that you do?

Something with your tongue?

Something with the back of your throat?

Something with your lips?

If you are breathing thru your mouth, and you want to switch to breathing thru your nose, and yet keep your mouth open, what little adjustment do you make? And just feel that.

What do you have to do?

How do the sensations change...?
when you go from breathing in and out the mouth...
to breathing in and out the nose?
You're letting the breath come and go, in its own rhythm and its own volume,
and you're just playing with the entry point.
Just playing with letting the breath come in and out the mouth
or letting it go in and out the nose.
And just exploring:
What's that slight little thing, that effortless little thing that you can do...?,
Like on a train track, where there's a switch, some guy switches tracks,
the train can go left or right at that fork.
They come out and they shift something,
They switch something.
What is that shift for you?
Where is that switch in you?
How do you accomplish that?
Can you feel the breath coming in and out both the nose and the mouth at the same time?
Can you open and allow both those doors to be available?
And as you breathe in and out, can you feel any sensations in your throat?
Feelings caused by the wind, by the air?
Are you doing anything with the muscles in your neck when you breathe?
What's happening to the muscles in your neck and shoulders while you breathe?
What's happening to the muscles in your chest?
What's happening in your belly when you breathe?
What we want to do is begin to create some spaciousness, create some opening.
It's as if your body is a room and all the organs are in this room.
And you want to make the room bigger, so all your organs aren't so congested;
Each organ has some breathing space around it.
Use your imagination, and use the breath,
and begin to just create more room inside yourself.
If you notice... the breath when it comes in... it wants to expand you.
As the breath comes in, you can feel yourself expanding
from side to side, front to back, top to bottom.
Focus on the details of that expansion,
and start to add a little breath on the inhale,
just to help that expansion a little bit.
So you are making the inhales a little deeper, a little bigger, a little fuller, a little longer...
So that you can add a little expansion to what's already happening on the inhale.
Create a little extra expansion inside of you.
Try to create that expansion in all directions.
We don't just breathe in the front.
We breathe into the back.
We breathe into the lower spaces.
We breathe into the sides.
And if you sense and watch carefully, as the breath comes in,
it produces these sensations of stretching, of opening, of expanding.
Notice the details of that, the feeling of it.
As you inhale, and you expand, really focus on those details.
Breathing is like listening to a symphony orchestra.
Some people just hear a big noise when they listen to classical music or an orchestra.
And other people can pick out a single flute.
They can follow a single violin.
In the midst of 150 musicians in the orchestra,
they can find one tiny detail and enjoy it.
And the breathing is like that.
There are lots and lots of details in the breathing that we just normally don't notice.

So what we want to do now is to notice some of those details.
And notice the sensations that feel good.
What are the normal, natural, organic, inherently pleasurable sensations in the breathing?
Find some aspect of the breathing that you can enjoy:
some sensation, some movement...
and enjoy it more.
On the exhales...
Just begin to let the exhales go more consciously, more deliberately,
as if you're sighing with relief.
As if you've just finished some work,
and you can finally relax and let go.
Give each exhale that quality of release, of relief, of relaxation...
So you are beginning to conspire with the breath,
cooperate with it, work with it and play with it.
Beginning to breathe consciously, deliberately, with a certain intention.
And the intention is to create more space inside of you,
more room, more openness.
Relaxation is a big part of that.
When you relax and let go, something softens,
something opens, something releases, something lets go.
And that allows more expansion, more opening.
So we're using the inhale to create more expansion.
And we're using the exhale to create more relaxation.
So as you pull the breath in, notice those boundaries in your body.
Notice what the breath has to push up against in order to produce more expansion.
As you breathe in, breathe in slowly, inhale slowly, feel the sensations of expansion,
and notice where the breath begins to push in order to create more room for itself.
And those are places that you begin to bring relaxation to,
softness to, more attention to those places.
And how can you create more opening?
Can you create more opening in your throat?
Using the inhale, using the exhale...
Can you create more space in your throat?
so the breath doesn't have to squeeze thru any tight passages.
It is being invited by an opening.
If you create an opening, the breath will come in.
And if you pull the breath in, the breath will create more opening.
So it's a little dance that we're doing with the breath...
The breath itself wants to expand us.
If you pull in a long inhale,
you can feel yourself expanding.
The breath wants to open you.
And when you relax, you create some softness,
and so the next breath doesn't meet with as much resistance.
And this way of breathing is really important
because it's beginning to point to a way of relating to yourself,
a way of relating to life.
It is beginning to create a physiology of embracing...
Rather than defensive posturing or guarding.
It's the opposite of fear.
When you can expand and relax, that's the opposite of fear.
Fear is when you close and contract, you withdraw...
And the opposite of that: love,
is expanding, opening, embracing, welcoming...
So begin to welcome this breath as if it's life,
because it is.

Breath is life.

These games that we begin to play with the breath...

it's just a reflection of our relationship to life.

Can you breathe fully and freely?

Can you live fully and freely?

Can you accept yourself unconditionally?

Can you allow life to pour into you, as it will?

Without needing to control it, or hold it back...

What can you add to your process right now to create a little more relaxation...

a little more opening... a little more expansion...

Some little adjustment in your posture...

Maybe relaxing some muscle or muscle group.

What's happening to your forehead?

Relax the muscles in your face,

in your forehead,

around your eyes,

your jaw...

Deliberately spend a few moments

sending the message to relax to those places.

And as you do, imagine breathing into those places.

If you focus on your jaw or your face, the muscles around your eyes, your forehead:

As you focus on those with the intention to relax, you are breathing into those places.

As if you are actually trying to breathe with the flesh and bones in this area.

Breathing with those places, breathing into them, breathing from them.

One of the great secrets in the East, in China, comes with this idea that consciousness and your chi or your energy, are meant to be married, are meant to be together.

Where consciousness goes, chi flows, energy flows.

So wherever you bring your attention, you are aware that not only are you bringing your mind's eye or your awareness to that place, but energy is beginning to move to that place where your attention is going.

Life Energy.

And you want that life energy to have a certain quality:

A quality of unconditional acceptance

A quality of love

A quality of softness

Of relaxation

of aliveness

of embracing

So breathing takes place on several levels

The first level is sort of the mechanical level.

We're just getting air in and out of the lungs.

Let's begin to explore: how do you do that?

How much do your lungs hold?

How empty can you make them?

What muscles do you have to use in order to pump the air in and out?

Can you do it with your diaphragm?

Can you breathe just from your belly?

And let all the muscles in your chest and neck and shoulders relax and do nothing?

And accomplish all the breathing just by moving the belly?

Breathing low.

So as you exhale, you draw the belly button in and up toward your spine.

And as you inhale, your belly fills up like a balloon.

Exhale: your belly travels toward the spine,

you pull in on the belly as you exhale...

And then as you inhale, your belly gets big.

You expand from side to side.

As if there's a balloon in your belly and you're filling and emptying the balloon.

And the chest is still, the chest is relaxed.
The muscles in your shoulders and neck are relaxed
And you're accomplishing all the breathing with the lower spaces,
with the diaphragm and the belly.
Can you create extra expansion in those lower spaces?
When you inhale, can you send the breath very low?
All the way to the perineum, to the genitals...
It's as if you're pressing the inhale low into those places.
And sending the breath down into your hips, down into your lower belly...
All the way to the bottom of your torso, to the perineum.
And then when you exhale, you are drawing up on those places.
So as you empty yourself, you're pulling up on the perineum
The belly button travels toward the spine.
When you inhale, the belly gets big,
An expansion takes place in a downward direction.
Play with the movement in that direction.
Expansion in the direction of the lower spaces,
And then as you exhale, you're pulling up on the perineum.
Pulling the belly button toward the spine...
As if you're squeezing a sponge in your belly,
And that squeezes all the breath out.
Then you relax your belly, and the breath goes down and fills the belly again.
See if you can get a sense of that...
Breathing in the lower spaces.
Bringing your awareness, your attention, an invitation, relaxation
To those lower places.
Inviting the breath to fill those lower spaces.
And then empty them.
Squeeze all the breath out of those places
Just play with those lower spaces.
There's some muscles that you hold tight in your hips or in your belly.
Allow those muscles to soften and loosen.
Is there any adjustment you can make in your lower back, or your hips...
To create more openness...
more room for the breath...
Less resistance.
Now let's shift to the higher spaces, up under your collar bones.
When you breathe in, feel your sternum, your breast bone rising up,
And your collar bones... the breath going up under your collar bones.
Get a sense of shoulder blades in the back.
And when you inhale, the shoulder blades should come apart
Creating more space in the back...
As if you are spreading your wings...
You are breathing into the upper spaces,
creating some aliveness,
some movements and activity up high in the top spaces of the lungs.
Under your collar bones.
Create some hollowing under the arm pits.
So you can expand from side to side in that area under your arm pits.
So as you inhale, it's as if you are spreading wings.
Your shoulder blades come apart
As if you are trying to fill your shoulders with breath
Fill those top spaces under your collar bones with breath.
So your chest rises up to try and meet your chin...
Your breastbone rises up to meet your chin...
Your collar bones rise up...

Your shoulder blades come apart.
The expansion takes place in all directions in those upper spaces.
And then when you exhale, it's like a sigh of relief.
You release all those muscles..
You relax all those places...
And the breath pours out by itself...
Playing with the upper spaces in the breathing.
You need to relax the muscles in your shoulders.
Relax the muscles in your chest...
and in your neck...
To allow that subtle energy, to allow that breath to get up into those cracks and crevices.
If you use a lot of force, if you strain your muscles, you create contraction,
And that tension blocks the subtle flow of energy.
So we are trying to accomplish the movement of the breath without creating muscle tension.
Any muscle activity, and muscles you use, eats up the energy,
it uses up the prana , the chi.
And so if you can breathe without using a lot of effort,
You get a net gain in energy.
You're not wasting energy in the process of breathing itself.
The process of breathing itself is effortless,
And its not costing you any energy.
So that extra energy can do its work, can do healing work.
Purifying, cleansing, releasing...
So how much room can you create inside your self?
In the upward direction...
In the downward direction...
Front to back... Side to side...
And invite the breath to fill that space.
And help the breath fill those spaces.
Another level of the breathing,
is getting the oxygen, the gas, from the lungs into the blood
Can you feel your heart beat?
Can you feel any pulses in your body?
That pumping of blood thru the body...
Can you get a sense of that?
Thru your heart beat, thru any feelings of pulses, thru any wooshing sensations...
You get the air into your lungs...
And the lungs are surrounded by all these blood vessels
And the air makes its way from the lungs into these blood vessels,
And then these blood vessels take this air to every cell of the body.
Circulates...
The breath comes into you, and then that breath, that energy is circulated throughout your body.
Can you get a sense of energy or blood, or anything circulating... thru your body
Picture it. Imagine it...
Most of the time, when people think of imagination, they think only in terms of pictures.
But you can imagine a feeling.
You can imagine a sensation as easily as you can imagine an image.
Use your imagination...
The third level of breathing is getting that air, that energy, that oxygen...
From the blood into every single cell.
And vice-versa: letting the cells give up their carbon dioxide and their waste products,
And that exchange that takes place...
It takes place between every one of the trillions of cells that we have.
In every given moment, there is that exchange taking place
That's a mass of sensations occurring in your body.
Trillions of cells... electricity... energy...

going back and forth...
It's like every cell is a little combustion engine,
And it's burning that fuel
It's producing, it's doing its work.
And the breathing is helping these trillion little combustion engines do their work.
That's a lot of fire!
That's a lot of light.
Those are a lot of sparks...
A lot of energy happening in the body in any given moment.
And most of us have lost our sense of this.
Children feel it.
Cats...
You can sense that cats are feeling "something."
So we want to wake up that sense.
The feeling of subtle energy, which is actually very powerful.
It's life itself, and it's happening everywhere inside of you.
Your whole body is breathing.
So get a sense of that.
That when you breathe, it's your body, every single cell is breathing
So, you can imagine that every cell is a lung.
When you inhale, every cell in your body expands...
And when you exhale, every cell in your body relaxes.
Try to create a sense of that.
As you inhale, your whole body swells and expands...
As you exhale, everything recoils and relaxes...
Help the process a little more by making your breaths a little bigger, a little deeper...
Get a little more volume on your breaths...
Just to sort of turn up the process a bit...
Intensify it, magnify it.
Kicking the breath up a notch.
We are sitting at rest, and so the body's normal breathing mechanism says: "Oh, we don't need to breathe. We're sitting at rest. There's no work happening. No effort is required."
And so the normal chemical triggers in your body will keep the breath quite small, quite shallow, because it's simply not required.
So you have to consciously intervene, and invite extra breath.
You have to over-ride that unconscious chemical trigger,
and you consciously decide to breathe more fully.
Bring in more energy when you breathe.
And watch how that changes the sensations in your body.
For about a minute... or even less... let's say 20 or 30 breaths...
Breathe a bit deeper, a bit faster, than normal...
And watch and feel and sense, as you do that...
How do you accomplish it?
What muscles do you use?
What does it feel like?
And after that 30 seconds or minute of deeper, freer, fuller breathing...
Take an inventory of the sensations in your body.
Can you see any sparks?
Can you feel any vibrations?
Are there any parts of your body that suddenly come into your awareness?
Are there any new movements?
Any new pulses?
Any added sense of something circulating?
Does tension come to your awareness?
Muscle pain, or stiffness?
Does that become more obvious?

Fuller breathing is going to activate and intensify whatever is in place.
It gives us a chance to open and soften and adjust...
To release
Maybe stretch...
Maybe some natural movement that wants to happen with the body.
Begin to let every breath be a big "Yes!"
Yes to life
Yes to yourself
Yes to what is
Yes to all your problems
Yes to all that's happening in the world
Just a giant Yes!
You notice: this "yes" supercedes or bi-passes our judging mind.
"How can we say yes to war and rape and murder, and all those terrible things?
That comes later.
Discrimination, judgments, discernment...
All of that stuff comes later.
We want to first build a big "yes."
A yes to life.
If it's happening, God, life, existence, has already made it happen
So we are just saying yes to "what is."
Because saying no to "what is" creates conflict, creates suffering.
When you fight with reality, you loose.
Reality doesn't wait for our permission before it is what it is.
So we start with a big "yes."
This is the yes of existence itself.
It's the yes of life itself.
And are there parts of yourself that you have said no to?
Are there parts of life that you continually say no to?
Those things cost you energy.
Those things create separation and division inside what should be an organic whole.
Unconditional acceptance...
Unconditional love: this is that "Yes!"
Let that at least begin inside of you.
Say yes to everything that happens inside of you.
Say yes to all your feelings, all your emotions,
All your sensations.
There's no good or bad, there's no right or wrong.
There's just: yes to what is.
And bringing this sense of embracing, of expanding, of relaxing...
Meet everything inside of you with that quality.
It's a miracle that we're here!
To be alive, to be able to feel, to be able to breathe, is a miracle.
And it's the result of millions of years of evolution
It's an awesome, awesome thing.
Regardless of the content of our life, life itself is extraordinary!
Get a sense of that.
Get a sense of how extraordinary it is, to simply exist!
And bring this sense to a moment-to-moment process
Feel every detail as you breath in
Notice every tiny detail as you breathe out.
Bring your attention fully to the present moment,
and experience this moment, each moment, fully.
What's the maximum potential in your life?
What's the maximum potential in each moment:
that should be our direction.

To squeeze all the juice, out of every drop of life.
To live as fully as possible.
Feel as fully as possible
Love as fully as possible.
Breathe as fully as possible.
Is there anything you need to let go of?
in order to make room inside of you for more life, for more love?
Is there anything that you have to soften or loosen in your view of yourself?
The stance you've taken, or the role you are filling...?
Is there something you need to soften or loosen or release?
In order to make more room for You to Be!
You can begin to use the breath in conjunction with a thought.
You work with the mind and the breath at the same time.
You pick an idea, like "peace."
And you begin to breathe that idea.
You pick an idea, like "openness,"
and you breathe that idea.
Breathe in a way that brings you the most pleasure.
Breathe in a way that makes you feel alive!
Breathe in a way that makes you feel enjoyment.
Intensify and magnify that enjoyment.
Celebrate the life that's bubbling inside of you.
You can imagine the breath like light.
So when you breathe in, you are breathing in light,
and that light gets circulated to every cell in your body
So your body becomes light.
And then it's like a glowing ember.
When you blow on it, it gets brighter.
So with every breath, as you inhale, it's like blowing on an ember.
Something inside of you gets brighter.
And when you exhale, you radiate that light.
You just release that light into the world.
It's the light of life, the light of love.
Feel yourself expand and fill with it on the inhale.
And then as you exhale, let go and relax...
And imagine that energy continuing to expand.
So you breathe in on the inhale, and you feel the actual sensations of expansion
And when you exhale, you imagine the expansion continuing.
So you're getting bigger.
You begin to breathe not only in your body...
but outside and around your body.
Something is breathing with you, around your body.
You're breathing into the spaces around you, and not just into your body.
So when you breathe in, its not just your body that expands, there's a bubble of energy around you that also
expands.
And then when you exhale, you can imagine that bubble bursting,
And that light escaping like a sun.
Radiating in all directions.
You fill yourself with light on the inhale,
and on the exhale, it's as if a bubble bursts,
and that light is released, and it radiates in all directions.
On the exhale.
So you expand on the inhale, and then you continue to expand on the exhale.
And everyone is doing that.
It's like waves on an ocean.
Each of us is a wave, making our own ripple.

And our ripple bounce of the ripples of others.
And the ripples of others come thru and into us.
So we are not just breathing our air, we are breathing the essence of the people around us.
The air that's inside of you now, was inside of someone else a few minutes ago.
The air that's inside someone else now, will be inside of you, in a few minutes from now.
The air that's inside of you now, was in Buddha, Moses, Jesus, a couple of thousand years ago.
The same air is still connecting everyone and everything.
Try to feel that connection.
The breath connects us, to each other, to the source,
Everyone on this planet is sucking off the same big bubble of air!
It's feeding all of us. It's connecting all of us.
When you breathe in, you are breathing in information.
It's like seeing something or hearing something.
You are pulling in information with the breath.
And that information is read by parts of you that maybe you are not in touch with...
Those messages go to parts of you... they are de-coded, and they are used.
So every breath is information coming in from the universe, from others.
And when you breathe out, a portion of your essence is released into the world.
Something that came from the deepest part of your physical being, from the center of each cell...
And we are sharing that with the world whenever we breathe.
Now just focus on some intention, some goal, some desire, some prayer...
What is it?
What is your intention?
What does the world need more of?
What do you need?
What's important?
What's most important?
What can you offer the world?
What can you bless the world with?
What do you need to receive?
What do you need to become more of?
What do you need to let go of?
Focus on some intention.
And then imagine that intention fulfilled...
And then how would you be?
How would you look at yourself?
How would others perceive you?
What would the world around you look like?
That intention fulfilled.
How would you be different?
Begin to claim that. That's you.
Time is not required in the real processes of life.
Time is not a factor in awakening.
A moment, a year, a thousand years,
it makes no difference on the deepest levels of our being.
Everything can change in a flash.
What do you need to do in order to make that possible?
For things to change in a flash?
Maybe something you thought would require a lot of work, a lot of effort,
Something that was difficult or complicated...
And suddenly you bring this idea in that: "It's not hard! It's easy!"
It's instant. It's natural. It's automatic.
Just begin to enjoy the results of the fulfillment of that intention.
So, we'll take a few minutes, to stretch and open our eyes...