

MODULE 2: THE 'ART' OF BREATHWORK

LESSON 7: TRANSFORMATION

While any breathing technique, even simple breath awareness can be transformative, the practice of connected or circular breathing creates a powerful state of alerted consciousness where deep healing and transformative work can be done.

We are only beginning to understand this from a psychological and neurological perspective. This connected rhythm temporarily alters the physiology and chemistry, thus making subconscious patterns, suppressed memories and traumas available to be released.

The faster the rhythm and deeper the volume, the more quickly the sympathetic system is activated, and the quicker an altered state can be created. This may not be appropriate for everyone, especially initially, if the space is not held safe for the breather, but at the same time, it may be the very breakthrough for which someone may be ready.

The release breaks the psyche free, repatterns the body-mind system and frees up the breathing mechanism through the autonomic system. The increased lung capacity, the release of fascial patterns, all work together to repattern the body-mind system.

Up to now, we have explored conscious connected breathing in-depth.

The purpose of this lesson is to put this in context in terms of the spectrum of breathwork and to list the many variations of conscious connected breathing that are being taught and practiced around the world.

Holotropic breathwork

Holotropic Breathwork™ is a technique that was developed by transpersonal psychologist, Stanislav Grof and his wife, Christina Grof. The term "Holotropic Breathwork" is a trademark, and only those trained and certified by Grof Transpersonal Training are entitled to use it.

Deep, fast breathing, in a supportive context, is used as a catalyst for the experience of a non-ordinary state of consciousness. In a Holotropic Breathwork session, clients work in pairs, with one as the 'breather' and the other as the 'sitter'. The breather lies down on a

mattress, while the sitter ensures that the breather is physically safe and supported during the session. The instructions for the breather are simply to breathe deeper and faster, keeping eyes closed. This gradually brings on a non-ordinary state of consciousness - like a vivid dream - and the breather simply trusts the wisdom of whatever emerges. Breathers are free to make any motion, move into any posture, or make any sound they wish. The experience is supported by music, which begins with drumming or similar 'driving' music, reaches an emotional crescendo, transitions to 'heart' music, and finishes with meditative music. Sessions are scheduled to last for three hours. Later that day, or the next day, the breather and sitter swap roles. Sessions are followed by two optional activities: expressive artwork and small group sharing. Facilitators are always present to explain the method, create the safe setting, support the process, and work with people if they experience any difficulty.

Vivation

Vivation is a technique of conscious connected breathing originated by Jim Leonard. Developed as a physically pleasurable meditation and breathwork process you can learn to quickly and permanently resolve any kind of negative emotion, trauma or stress.

The focus of the technique is to help you experience the truth of your feelings as just physical patterns of energy in the body. By directly connecting with your feelings at the physical level, negative thoughts about those feelings are bypassed, resulting in a much more honest and pleasurable experience.

"Each emotion is made of energy, and the energy it contains is held away, as a separate entity, until you integrate it. Once you integrate the emotion, its energy merges back into your overall aliveness. In the same moment, you gain the lesson the emotion has for you".

The five elements of Vivation:

1. Circular Breathing
2. Complete Relaxation
3. Awareness in Detail
4. Integration into Ecstasy
5. Do Whatever You Do - Willingness is Enough

Classical Rebirthing

Developed by Leonard Orr Rebirthing Breathwork, aka Intuitive Energy Breathing or Conscious Energy Breathing, is the ability to breathe Energy as well as air using a conscious connected rhythm "It is the art of learning to breathe from the Breath Itself".

It is a spiritual breathing practice that uses every breath to induce relaxation.

Other variations, styles and schools:

- Transformational Breathwork
- Breathmastery
- Liberation breathing
- Integrative breath therapy
- Continuum
- Clarity breathwork
- Pnuema breathwork
- Alchemy of Breath
- Shamanic breathing

Exercise: Unblocking Creative Energy

This exercise is a powerful technique that can be used to unblock stuck creativity and manifest our ideas. It wakes up the creative force that for some reason we allowed to be shut down, either due to fear or criticism. When this happens, we tend to dissociate from our bodies, and the source of creative energy that resides within us.

It comes from Barnett Baine and is further described in his book, "The Book of Doing and Being".

This technique wakes up powerful sensations and feelings that have caused the disassociation and disconnection in the first place and provides us with the opportunity to work through those feelings and reconnect with the source of energy in our body and heart.

- Begin by setting the intention to open up to whatever wants to flow through you
- Either sitting up, or lying down, place your fingers on your collarbones
- Stretch your mouth and throat wide open and breathe deeply high into chest.
- Inhale and exhale through a wide-open mouth.
- Feel your heart opening and stretching as you do this.

- Start with 5 breaths
- The urge is to stop as the feelings get intense and uncomfortable.
- Try to stay in your body and relax and get comfortable with the feelings that would normally frighten you out of your body. The more you breathe through the intensity, the more you will reconnect to the source of creative energy within you.
- Once you have completed a round, keep your eyes closed and relax into whatever thoughts and feelings are coming up for you.

Uses and applications:

- if you are feeling stuck
- if you feel the pressure to write or create and simply to do have the energy and inspiration to get moving

Module 2 Assignment

Create own sequence that works best for you in the morning and evening. Describe why you put it together as you have and how it benefits you.

Recommended reading:

Yoga Nidra: The art of transformational sleep by Kamini Desai

The Healing Power of the Breath by Richard Brown and Pat Gerbarg

Heart Coherence 356: A guide to long lasting heart coherence by David O'Hare

Just Breathe by Dan Brulé

Holotropic Breathwork by Stan Grof

References

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