

MODULE 3: CONDUCTING A CONSCIOUS CONNECTED BREATHWORK SESSION

LESSON 2: DETAILS OF THE TECHNIQUE

In this lesson, we will go into more detail of the technique of conscious connected breathing.

Description of technique:

- Active Inhale
- Passive exhale
- Use the same channel
- Continuous Connected Circular Breathing
- Breathing Rhythms

1. Active Inhale

The inhalation is expanded and long and opens through three breathing spaces. Diaphragmatic breathing is encouraged. The key is to invite the breath in from inwards and outwards by creating space in the body. A common habit is to use too much muscular effort in the attempt to take in a breath. Create an awareness and experience of softness at the back of the neck, the jaw and the shoulders. More breath energy will flow through a state of relaxation than through muscular effort. The slower the inhale, the more opportunity there is for the intercostal muscles to stretch and expand. Use the inhale to expand the body in all dimensions - from bottom to top, from side to side and from back to front.

You can guide the breath from the feet all the way to the top of the head or focus on the belly or the heart and spread the breath out in all directions. You can also double up the inhale to draw in more breath and energy and then exhale. That means taking two inhales, one on top of the other, and then let go, relax and exhale.

The inhale awakens energy and activates a sympathetic nervous system response. Try to stay relaxed, focused and alert to everything that you are sensing as you pull the breath in without triggering tension.

The inhalation also represents taking in life, self-support, and self-nurturing. You are taking action. You are focusing. You are directing your energy and your life in an upward and forward direction.

Visualise drawing energy in, and filling the body, every cell, with the breath

2. Passive Exhalation

The exhale is a reflex, not an action. There is no doing involved on the exhale, it's simply letting it go softly and completely. Many people who feel the need to be in control or have practiced other breath control techniques find this letting go difficult. Often you can detect an element of control, either dragging the exhale out, or forcing or pushing it out. To encourage a complete letting go on the exhale, use the imagery of 'puddling out', melting and softening.

The ability to relax on the exhale is where the magic of this technique resides. Encourage relaxation and softening of specific muscles and muscle groups. With each exhale, let the body release tension, allow it to flow out with the exhale. Relax the jaw, the back of the neck, and the shoulders.

Use the imagery of something rewarding, relaxing, blissful. For example, slipping into a hot bubble bath, cuddling with a loved one. Think of a time when you felt completely free and safe, a time when you could let go completely and be yourself, with no masks, no pretence, no "should and should not's, no musts and must not's, no responsibilities, no obligations, no agenda".

The exhale is about reaping the rewards of your actions, surrender, trust, ability to let go, and release fear.

3. Using the Same Channel

The same channel is used for the inhale and exhale, either the nose or the mouth. This creates a closed energy circuit. Breathing through the mouth creates a more energising and activating experience whereas breathing through the nose is a more subtle and relaxing energy experience. There are other techniques where it's useful

to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth, but for the purposes of this technique, we use the same channel.

You can start the session with simple awareness, letting the breath come and go by itself naturally. It's ok to let the client connect with their breathing in whatever way is most comfortable. However, once you get into the actual technique, coach the person into using the same channel, either breathing in and out through the nose, or in and out the mouth.

4. Continuous Connected Circular Breathing

The breaths flow in a continuous connected circle: inhale connected with exhale, exhale connected to the inhale; with no pauses or gaps or holding between the breaths. This creates a powerful energy charge in the system, where suppressed tension and holding patterns come up for release and integration.

5. Breathing Rhythms

Changing the breathing rhythms is a creative way of creating different energy states to move through tension, generate more energy or to integrate an experience.

A simple way of approaching this practice is to play with these three breathing rhythms:

- **Fast and Full:** A fast and full rhythm is encouraged to activate energy, or when there is a disassociation/ spacing out occurring or if it seems that nothing is happening in your session.
- **Slow and Full:** Use slow and full breathing to integrate something beautiful, pleasurable and to maximize enjoyment of something.
- **Fast and Shallow:** Use fast and shallow breathing through an experience of something intense or uncomfortable, or simply to play and get creative with the energy.

Exercise

Play around with all three rhythms and document your experience.