

The Breath

In this chapter we will cover the importance of cultivating the breath. The first chapter covered the all-important principle of awareness. This, of course, is the corner-stone of everything we do. We can't employ any techniques of change without first recognizing the initial condition and then recognizing what we want, keeping vigilant in order to fine tune what we're doing and stay on track to our desired result.

Breathing is an issue where a small change can make a big difference over time,

To bring this home, let me ask you:

“How many breaths do you think a person takes, on average, per day? In a 24-hour period, counting an inhalation as one breath and an exhalation as another breath, how many breaths would you guesstimate you take everyday?

Whenever I ask this question in a group or at a workshop, almost invariably, everyone estimates a far lower number than the actuality. And I always enjoy asking this question because it drives home both the subtlety and impact breathing has because of its sheer numbers 20,000.

Yes, twenty-thousand breaths are breathed by each of us in a full-day!

Some of you may be working on deep-breathing, abdominal breathing, Yoga-breath work, etc. And some of you may have tried to work on your breathing to one extent or another, only to find it was difficult or too hard to remember to do regularly.

The Difference a Breath makes

I'd like to illustrate how little it takes to have a profoundly bolstering effect on all your body and health systems. And I think you'll find it motivating too.

Because of the huge number of breaths we all take in a single day, if you were to simply increase your inhalation just by **one percent** – not completely change your breathing pattern, not diving into a complex breathing program – just breathing-in 1% deeper than you normally do

That would be the equivalent of receiving **hundreds of extra breaths** in that day.

Imagine what that would do for you the positive health-giving effects of hundreds of extra breaths of oxygen to feed and nourish your body's tissues hundreds of extra breaths of oxygen to energize and support your brain, immune system, digestive system, glandular system, etc.

The Forgotten Half

Now keep in mind this is only half of the equation. Don't forget this also means that you are also receiving the benefits of hundreds of extra exhalations.

Something that is not well-known or remembered is that, besides sweating and elimination, exhalation is a major way we eliminate toxins and waste products from our body.

With each out-breath, we are releasing carbon dioxide and other bi-products of our metabolism from our system. We release up to 70% of our toxins through the out-breath.

By only breathing 1% deeper we literally receive hundreds and hundreds of extra breaths throughout our day. Again, just imagine the overall health benefits of hundreds of extra in-breaths nourishing and fuelling each and every cell in your body. Add to that the benefits of increased release of toxins and poisons from your system.

Now imagine the long-term, preventative and curative impact hundreds of extra, daily breaths would have over a period of years. It might not be a stretch to say that over many years, the difference could be good health or chronic illness.

And we're still talking about just improving our breathing by 1%!

What if you invested the time and effort to actually cultivate optimum breathing? What if you improved your breathing by **10** or **20** %? Imagine the immediate and long-term impact on your health then.

Just One Second!

So start now! Breathe in just one second longer than you normally do. And breathe out one second longer than you did before. Just doing this would ensure that you would immediately begin to receive the extra oxygen and support for all your tissues and health systems. And you would immediately reduce the toxic load suppressing your body's optimum functioning.

You are now also helping ensure a healthier future for yourself.

If you tune-in and really focus on what happens to you when you breathe in and out just a little longer than usual, you will directly experience the profound benefits. You will sense the extra energy coming into your body and brain as you breathe in.

And you will actually feel extra tension and stress leaving you each time you exhale a little more completely.

You will be cultivating your awareness along with your breath. By tuning into your breathing you become cognizant of, responsible for and able to nourish and replenish your body and health directly and at will.

Commit to this today! Notice how it feels, the sensations when you breathe consciously. Feel the power of this being totally under your conscious control. This may be the single most direct and easiest way to support, change and take charge of your health, short-term and long-term!

Remind yourself first thing when you wake up in the morning to breathe in just a little longer and to breath out just a little more.

Then you've set the tone and pattern for the day. Tune in several times throughout your day to fine-tune your breath and then again as you are lying in your bed before you go to sleep.

Use the same trick/technique mentioned in the previous chapter, where you set your watch or clock to beep every hour. This is an easy and automatic way to ensure you are impacting your health and developing new supportive patterns. Of course, we are all creatures of habit and this is an almost effortless way to establish new health-giving habits.

Important Times & Activities to Check in With Your Breathing Pattern

There are certain activities in particular that tend to create negative breathing conditions.

Namely, while driving the car, when at the computer and when in meetings. At these times in particular, our breathing tends to become tight, shallow and constrained. And our tension levels, in general, rise.

So at these times in particular, we want to check in with our breathing and adjust. For now that can simply mean to breathe in 1 or 2 seconds longer and breathe out 1 or 2 seconds more. Also, from time to time, allow yourself to take a few really big, exaggerated breaths to super-charge the effect.

We will go further and deeper into breath cultivation in future chapters, but this is the simplest and most direct way to start positively impacting your health, now and in the future through your awareness and breath.

Remember, we simply can't over-emphasize the value, importance and effect of just breathing in 1 second deeper and breathing out 1 second longer throughout your day.

The difference over time could be Night and Day!

Yours in Health & Harmony,

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