

The Power of Breathwork for Healing, Transformation, and Illumination

by Jim and Jennifer Kinney

***Would you like to experience more clarity, confidence and self-esteem?
Would you like to be more in touch with your emotions and feelings? Do you
sometimes feel lost or disconnected? Would you like to put your
past behind you and get on with your life? If so, read on....***

What is Breathwork?

Breathwork is a powerful healing tool that can help you gain clarity and insight in areas of your life that seem to be unclear or challenging. It also can promote a deep sense of well being and power over your life. It is a ***specific breathing pattern*** that is typically done in a private session lasting 1½ to 2 hours. Breathwork is highly experiential, and each session is different. The experience of Breathwork is different for each person, too, which makes it nearly impossible to adequately describe the experience of a Breath session until you experience it for yourself.

How does Breathwork work?

There are three aspects of Breathwork: ***illumination, integration*** and ***purification***. Each aspect works on the five different levels of being simultaneously: physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and psychic.

Illumination lifts you above the urgencies of your immediate situation and connects you with your super-conscious or Higher Self. This is where you receive the “ah-hahs” and the “That’s why I do that!”

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So with illumination providing a new perspective, how does that translate into action? You need to embodying the new perspective on a cellular level in order to be able to move through life differently. This is called **integration**. While Illumination provides the inspiration, it is only an idea, a two-dimensional thought or concept. Living in a *three*-dimensional world requires integration -- which is the active part. If we don't have that piece, we are destined to stay where we are at, repeating old patterns. This is typically where traditional therapy gets stuck. It is the process of integration that brings the new perspective into our three-dimensional reality. Integration is what facilitates our transformation.

The **purification** process enables you to uncover and release previously stored emotions, old patterns and unacknowledged feelings that prevent you from enjoying your life and relationships the way you want. In doing this, you are purifying your system of toxic materials and emotions. Through Breathwork, many people have experienced a regression of illness or disease because it was emotionally based. Even if there are not physical manifestations of distress, the purification process will enable you to feel more alive, and have more joy in your life. It is also common to see physical changes in a person's countenance after Breathwork. When the anger or pain is gone, a person's face looks lighter and softer. One person called it, "The best facelift method out there!"

Whether you are aware of it or not, your Breathwork experience will involve all five levels of being – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and psychic – as you experience illumination, integration and/or purification during a Breath session.

What are the benefits of Breathwork?

Breathwork teaches you to take your breath - the life force energy - deep into your stomach, releasing suppressed emotions and stored energy. You will learn that your feelings are your guides, not your enemy. With Breathwork, you will:

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- ◆ Experience an increase in your vitality and enthusiasm for life.
- ◆ Deepen your self-understanding, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- ◆ Increase your self-approval and spontaneous self-expression.
- ◆ Discover deep relaxation due to release of stress and physical tension.
- ◆ Achieve balance of your mind and emotions.
- ◆ Experience heightened intuitive abilities.
- ◆ Increase your problem solving and coping capacities.
- ◆ Improve your sexual response and enjoyment.
- ◆ Enjoy more satisfying levels of intimacy with loved ones.
- ◆ Resolve your major life issues and get on with your life.
- ◆ And much, much more...

What is the role of the Breathwork Practitioner?

The Breathwork Practitioner's primary role is to create and maintain the feeling of safety so that you can breathe through whatever comes into your awareness. Most Breath sessions begin with stating an intention of what you would like to get out of your session --such as the desire to move through a specific issue that has been challenging you. Thus, stating your intention starts you on your guided mission.

One of the things that a Breathwork Practitioner can do is to facilitate your connection with your inner guidance. This helps you remember that you have all the answers within yourself. It is your inner guide, your Sacred Self or your connection to Spirit, that ultimately leads you down the path of awareness and clarity. And, a gifted Practitioner intuitively knows when during the Breath session to offer some specific words of support that furthers you down the path to greater insight or a deeper emotional release.

Normally, when we are faced with an emotional roadblock, our fear stops us from moving through it. The Practitioner is there to maintain the space of safety so that you

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can breathe through whatever would normally stop you. As individuals, we can only go as far as our fears will allow us to go. The Practitioner is there to help keep your fears from becoming your driver. You are in control. You are not your fears!

As Breathwork Practitioners, we often see a vision of your experience in a situation. This piece of information may be the missing piece that your fears have been blocking, preventing you from moving through this issue. We use our insight to guide you through whatever you are experiencing, to achieve illumination and purification and help you integrate your new perspective.

Breathwork Practitioners also sense energy. Emotion is energy, and we can feel where the energy is not flowing in your body. During a session, we may have you focus your breath in that specific area of your body and ask you, "What are you feeling here?" In doing that, an opening is created for you to get an insight about something that you weren't looking at, or maybe discover a missing piece of the puzzle that you needed to see. By guiding your focus to an area that you were unaware of or avoiding, we can aid you in removing the emotional block and allow the energy to flow freely again.

What happens when we don't express our emotions?

An emotion, such as fear, anger or hurt, is formed energy or matter. If it is not released, the energy is stored in your body. For example, when somebody scares you or you get frightened, what is the first thing you do? You hold your breath.

However, this blocks your fear from being released. Energetically speaking, you have suppressed your fear. This suppressed fear must find a place to go within your body. You have essentially told your body: "Okay, I am going to hold on to that emotion. I don't want to think about it, feel it, or deal with it so I will place it over here where I can keep a tight lid on it!" And the next time something comes up, and you feel afraid, your body-mind system, like a computer, goes, "Oh, fear - that goes over here."

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Over time, you may not even realize when your body is experiencing fear or any other emotion, for that matter. You have become emotionally numb! The more that you suppress your emotions, the more numb you become to *all* your emotions - positive and negative. The greater the ability to feel your anger, fear and hurt, the greater your ability to feel and express your joy, happiness and love.

The building of stored emotions or energy is toxic to the mind-body system and it reacts accordingly. Depending on the length of time and severity, suppressing your emotions can manifest physically in the form of aches and pain, sores, excess weight, illness, addictions, cancer and general dis-ease.

If you have a weight problem, for example, and have tried over the years to lose weight, you may want to consider that your excess weight is actually the weight of your unresolved emotional baggage. "It's not what you are eating, it's what's eating you!" If your physical body is not large enough to contain these emotions, then it has to increase itself in size. Releasing your stored emotion will release your stored weight.

Why is breathing deeply so important?

You can go months without food. You can go days without water. However, you can't go more than a few minutes without breathing. Your breath is your life force! You determine the quality of your life by the quality of your breathing.

Typically, people tend to be very shallow breathers, especially if they are anxious or under stress -- which seems to be almost an every day occurrence! But what really happens is the cumulative effect of sustained stress and shallow breathing causes you to experience feelings of uneasiness, being lost and disconnected, out of control, less alive and emotionally numb.

You try to take a deep breath but as soon you do, you start tapping into those feelings that you unconsciously or consciously were trying to suppress. Hence, more fear is created. You don't want to feel this, so you take shallower breaths. You are

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thinking, “If the world would just slow down, then I could catch my breath!” But the world seems to only spin faster and faster.

And, consequently, your breath gets shallower and shallower as you continue to brace yourself against life. You are living in fear - fear of life and what will come at you next. Your strength and will are dwindling. Your breath continues to get even shallower which deepens the feeling of fear and panic. Again, you try to catch your breath and the vicious circle continues. Does this scenario sound all too familiar?

The power of breath works the other way, too. When you breathe deeply and are doing this consistently, you feel more connected, more open and calm. You know your truth and express your thoughts and feelings easily. You do *not* react to situations. You are able to *respond* to them with insight and clarity. This is what Breathwork can do for you!

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About the authors:

Jim and Jennifer Kinney are co-founders of the Santa Fe Harmony Center, providing experiential approaches to healing and transformation for over 20 years, using mind-body integration approaches and spiritual practices from indigenous cultures, western psychology and neuro-linguistic programming, along with sound healing, music and drum circles. More information available at www.santafeharmonycenter.com