

Breathing Fill up your bucket (list) from the well

Well of wisdom for greater wellness

Many of you think that you are breathing well when in fact you are nigh on gasping for breath.

The out-breath is as important as the in-breath, as is the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide and you need to balance both. What happens when you don't? You hyperventilate, go blue in the face, get disorientated, your thoughts get muddled, your cells don't get the oxygen they need, you get moody and your behaviour and choices change, which as you know can have a positive or negative impact on your relationships, on your body, on your health and on your experience of life.

When you breathe well, your body quite simply functions better, your mood can become brighter and your mind calms down from its frantic pace. You connect more with your soul. In a nutshell, you connect into yourself more fully, and it is in that space, that you can draw from the well of your own wisdom for greater wellness.

Drawing from the well – breathe life into your body

Notice your breathing. Are you breathing through your nose or your mouth? How shallow or deep is your breathing? Focus on breathing in and out through your nose and breathe in from right down in your diaphragm and sacral area (your reproductive and sexual organs) - from what I call "the well", not just from your chest. You get the "water of life" from the bottom of the well, not from quarter or half way down! By breathing deeply, you are actually breathing in "life" and vitality into the core of your sexuality, sensuality, creativity, self worth and identity.

If I continue with that analogy, you should exhale or "empty" your breath fully before you inhale or draw up more "water". Without water we die. Without air we die. So draw in a deep breath and release the bucket fully down so you can draw the bucket up again to fully replenish and revitalise yourself with a fresh supply of life force.

Breathing physiology

Notice what happens to your breathing when you are fearful, anxious, tense, unconfident or angry, or conversely when you are feeling, calm, safe, confident, happy and loving. Notice how you are breathing, how your body is aligned or positioned, how tight you are holding on to your muscles and what facial expression you have.

If you want to feel calmer and happier, relax your facial muscles. Stop doing the botox, high-brow lift and let it all relax! Smile. It takes fewer muscles to do that than to frown, and smiling is an instant mood changer. Breathe deeply and imagine yourself like a piano accordion stretched out and full of air, and then release the air out as the musical notes are played. Sit, lie or stand comfortably in a "non-stand to attention" position. Let your shoulders drop, unlock your knees, hips and other joints which you may be tensing. Unclench your muscles one by one. You can start from head to toe, or vice versa or alternatively start with the muscles that are obviously clenched up. Be like a soft rag doll rather than a plastic Barbie doll!

Breathing – a great filtration system

Louise Hay*, who is well acclaimed for her book, “You can heal your life”, helps people address their health and wellness issues from the underlying emotional patterns and thoughts that can contribute to their particular problem.

Anxiety, asphyxia attacks, asthma, bad breath, breathing difficulties, bronchitis, emphysema, grief, hyperventilation, tuberculosis and even snoring – all associated with breathing and lungs – have similar fundamental, emotional aspects to them. Those being:

**LACK OF TRUST NOT LIVING LIFE FULLY STUCKNESS AND SUPPRESSION SELF WORTH
RESISTING CHANGE DIFFICULTIES WITH SELF EXPRESSION ANGER AND REVENGE**

Breathing is a great filtration system. You can actually determine for yourself what you allow through your filter and what not to. Start consciously filtering out thoughts that lead you to experience the aspects above. Only allow words through your filter, which support you feeling good about yourself and give you the confidence to be able to cope and enjoy life fully. Sift out the rest. Take active steps that require you to trust more, live life more expansively, gain momentum, honour yourself, support yourself through change and transition and express yourself in healthy ways. To do this you will be asked to go outside of your comfort zone, look at new ways of relating to yourself and to others and start sifting out the “crap” to get you from stuck to unstuck.

Thoughtful breathing

When you think thoughts that put you into panic mode, your breathing becomes quick, shallow and short. Change the thought and consciously breathe deeper, and the panic attack can disappear, if not reduce itself. When you are nervous about an interview, change the thoughts and words you are thinking and saying about yourself and about the interview. Combine that with good breathing, and the outcome will be different. If life isn't panning out how you would like it, check out what you are thinking. If you want to be calmer with your children at the “5 o'clock in the afternoon difficult hour”, try breathing differently, as well as turning off the “off-switch” in your brain to the noise and mayhem. Attending to your breath in those moments of madness can calm you down enough to cope with the next situation that arises on your plate.

What is on your “plate of life” at the moment? What would you like to be different? What thoughts are you having that could be contributing to your present situation? What other thoughts could you entertain instead?

RELAX...even the word sounds nicer than the word STRESS

Try out pilates, yoga, tai chi, walking or any exercise that promotes good posture and breathing patterns. They work wonders to make your body more supple, strong and flexible, they can ease and calm your mind and they can feed your soul in the process.

I have memories of starting pilates classes. I hardly made it through the first class because I was so stressed that the pace wasn't "fast" enough and we didn't seem to be getting much done! Boy did I need that class! Within a few short weeks, I looked forward to my hour of "no thinking" and "no doing" and more importantly to really "being" in my body.

Try relaxation techniques – even the word "relax" sounds more inviting than the word "stress"! Try using certain words, musical tones, sounds or mantras to de-stress your mind and use them when you are relaxing or meditating, or better still whenever you want to feel calmer and less stressed. Traffic lights or waiting in line at the supermarket are perfect places, but you may want to say them in your head if you feel somewhat embarrassed to speak them out loud! Try out words like TRUST, COURAGE, CONFIDENCE, LOVE or FREEDOM and notice the difference in your body.

Inspired and Inspired

"Inspire" not only means to "breathe in" but it also means "inspired". When we are in Spirit, we are inspired. Allow "spirit" to be with you when you breathe. To access your intuition and divine guidance, connect and commune with Spirit, with nature, with God or whatever and whoever you wish to connect with. As you walk the beach, wander through a forest, exercise, pray or sip your cup of coffee, be present with the experience. Sense it, feel it, quieten your mind, breathe well and be inspired.

Your personal bucket list - Be inspiring before you expire

Many of you take breathing for granted. With life, sometimes it is only when you get a wake-up call with ill-health or impending death (expiration), that you may suddenly take a big breath and take stock of your life and write your very own bucket list. What a fabulous opportunity to do just that, but why wait till then?

I was thinking this morning, what else expires. The parking meter came to mind. When you don't keep feeding it with the money it wants, it expires – it no longer works or is no longer valid. Take a note from this analogy and feed your body with what it requires to keep going well. When I say feed, I don't just mean sustenance in the form of food. I also mean people, experiences, thoughts, roles, work, hobbies and support services for example, which nourish and sustain you. What, and who, are they?

When you literally "expire" or die, how would you like to be remembered? Live your life and leave the legacy you wish to leave. Do this by taking a breath now and taking stock of your life – what is and isn't working, what you love doing and what brings you joy. Don't just do the superficial "bucket list" of surface, material or "busy-ness for busy-ness-sake" activities. Fill your bucket (list) from deep down in the well – living out behaviours, personality traits, interests, passions, values and goals that are truly yours, express you honestly and fully and that truly reflect your purpose. Get inspired and be inspiring before you expire!