

Breathe *for relief*

Breathwork uses the breath (full, conscious, connected breathing) to clear unresolved issues, limiting beliefs and past events in our lives that are standing in the way of us reaching our full potential. Liz Nowosad explores this powerful process that is said to alleviate emotional pain and help us to gain insight into why we behave and react in certain ways.

WHAT IS BREATHWORK?

The interrelationship between the breath and the state of our physical and mental health has been recognised for centuries in Eastern meditative and medical practices. These ancient cultures have long recognised the breath as a primary vehicle for prana – life energy, and believe that the breath is one of the most powerful transformative tools we have to access our essence and potential.

Breathwork is a breathing technique that is said to cleanse, purify and harmonize the mind, body and spirit. Proponents believe that alternate states of consciousness can be achieved and that sustained practice of breathwork techniques can result in many spiritual, physiological and/or psychological benefits. It is a tool for inner work using full, conscious, connected breathing and a technique that can provide resolution and clearing of issues, patterns and beliefs on a cellular level. “The breath is one of your greatest gifts,” says Melbourne based Practitioner and National Breathwork Trainer (ABA), Christine Heart Savage, www.breatheforlife.com.au. “Learn to respect and use it wisely, and it will not only release you from your past and bring you into a state of internal peace and freedom, it will also feed the cells of your body – bringing balance, aliveness and rejuvenation.”



BREATHWORK BENEFITS

Breathwork can bring about changes in a number of areas, including:

The physical body – aches, pains, contraction, stress, illness' can be released and/or awareness brought to their existence

The emotional body – deep feelings, which drain the body of energy when suppressed/repressed can come to the surface to be cleared and their cause resolved

The mental body – beliefs, decisions and conditioning (conscious and unconscious) can be reprogrammed to allow the client to live more fully in the present

The spiritual body – deep connection/reconnection can be made with the Self, soul and universal energy.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A SESSION?

Breathwork can be done as a one-on-one session with a practitioner or in a group setting. A typical session will run for two to three hours, during the first hour of which, the practitioner asks a variety of questions surrounding your life from conception and birth to life experiences and relationships. Apparently, the circumstances of our conception, our mothers pregnancy and our birth all play a significant role on our thoughts, beliefs and how we go on to live our lives. For example, Christine says that if we were born later than our due date, we are quite likely to have a tendency to be late for appointments in adult life.

After the question part of the session – which is as cathartic as a counseling session – the practitioner will ask you to lie down and the breathing process begins, lasting anything from 60-90 minutes. The practitioner will sit beside you and encourage you to let go of mind chatter, remind you to focus on your breathing and bring awareness to body sensations, words, memories or images that are present in your mind.

I had a session with Christine, who asked me to breathe through my mouth with an open mouth and open throat. She explained the method of 'circular breathing', also known as conscious connected breathing, where the inhale and exhale are connected without a pause or lock in between. The breathing process lasted over an hour, during which, I experienced some incredible insights – bringing to light some limiting beliefs I have been carrying through my life to date. I had moments of clarity regarding certain relationships and became acutely aware of the way I talk to myself on occasion and how damaging it is to my self-esteem. I also experienced some physical discomfort at times, including

intense heat and a prickling sensation – which was quickly followed by a beautiful and serene feeling of relaxation and total stillness. It really was quite a powerful experience!

Following the breathing process, the practitioner debriefs you. This is a vital part of the process as it allows you to reflect, ask questions and relate your session to your present day life.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

“The life-force built up by breathing permeates deep unconscious cellular patterning which literally generates movement in the cells of the body,” says Christine. “This increased cellular movement unravels and dissolves old, unresolved issues caught in the body and starts an alchemical process which creates a feeling of space, stillness and peace in the mind and body.” Christine describes breathwork as a journey into the deeper aspects of ourselves, which in turn can lead to the unfolding and revealing of our greatest, inherent, human potential.

It is recommended that new clients have a sequence of sessions to begin with to learn how to use the breath effectively. Another reason for session cycles of 3, 5 or 10 sessions, is to have the continuity to work on deeper issues as not all issues can be dealt with in the one session. **NH**



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