

Breathing: considering the effects of our breathing on our physiology and psychology

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Breath is a bridge between mind and body. When you breathe, the action of the diaphragm (breathing muscle) stimulates all the surrounding organs. It is like they are massaged by this muscle and by your breathing rhythm. These organs, all of them very important, are relaxed and can be encouraged to detox a little. There are also corresponding changes in glandular activity, so our hormone levels more easily come to a place of optimal functioning. In this way, among others, your emotions are subdued, and you will feel more calm and balanced.

This point, regarding emotional changes and breathing, is quite critical. Although we know that our body and our emotions are very closely linked, the breathing rhythm can actually promote certain feelings while diminishing others. I'm sure you have noticed a more rapid, agitated breathing pattern when you are angry, under pressure, or scared perhaps. Likewise, you have surely noticed that your breathing is more settled and easy when you are feeling calm, peaceful, and agreeable. If you create a breathing pattern that's easy, then your feelings and also your body will become tranquil as well. Furthermore, your mind set will also undergo changes along these lines.

*As previously mentioned, **the breath is a bridge between mind and body.** Maybe you feel like you can't control what's happening in your body, especially when there are symptoms of tension and so on; or, your thoughts are a blur of hectic and panicked "what ifs" or rather stuck on past events, people, or things. However, you can control your breathing, and as a consequence, your thoughts can be brought into clarity and serenity. You can become detached from past or future, and settle more fully into the Here and Now.*

Imaging that your breathing rhythm is wavelike, you can allow yourself a moment to experience the tides of inhale and exhale. Breathe at a comfortable pace, free any tension in your diaphragm with each successive exhalation. Allow yourself to go deeper into a settled, more balanced place on body, feelings, thoughts... You can inhale and gather tension or any anxiety into your diaphragm and then release it with your breath. Gradually free yourself and your relationships with those things. Notice how your thoughts and feelings, like choppy water in a bath tub, begin to find a still, tranquil place. Imagine your breathing, and all other aspects of yourself, settling down just like these barely perceptible ripples. Now, naturally and spontaneously, you'll become meditative, in the quiet, open space BETWEEN thoughts.

Just breathe....