

## Breathe and Relax

### Introduction

This article explores my primary practice which is to breathe and relax. I find that this primary practice of breathing and relaxing supports being more present.<sup>1</sup> People in the Thursday group have also brought more attention to breathing and relaxing. As part of our group work we explore this practice of breathing and relaxing.

### Overstimulation and Understimulation

When I was a child we had the three network TV stations and two UHF stations. This was Detroit Michigan; not rural America. We had to watch TV in real time; no recorders to store the shows. Of course, no cell phones and no internet. We looked in the encyclopedia or we went to the library if we needed more information.

Life offered plenty of ways to be stimulated when I was a child. Today the ways of being stimulated have greatly increased. The human brain is changing (not for the better) in response to the increase of stimulation that it receives.

An article was recently written about overstimulation of our body, mind and emotions.<sup>2</sup> The essence of the article is that *the more that we're overstimulated in any or all three parts (body, mind and emotions), the farther we are from living as who we really are, and the more that we're living with stress.*<sup>3</sup>

When we're understimulated (less stimulated than usual), it's possible for us to be more present. It's also possible that we'll become more uncomfortable. When we slow down, whatever is inside us becomes more obvious. If we're carrying a lot of mental and emotional baggage, then, without the distraction of being overstimulated, we may become more uncomfortable rather than more peaceful as we slow down. This second possibility of feeling our mental and emotional unrest is why many people avoid slowing down.

There was a time in the Thursday group where people were giving themselves advice for whatever dilemma was there. The advice was the same: Chill out. People in the group were seeing that if they could just relax more, then they'd better handle whatever was happening.

## Relax With Our Mind

Our thinking can drive us crazy at times. We may say to our mind: “Can you just stop thinking for a while?” When our mind is overstimulated with runaway thoughts there usually is no cooperation from our mind to this request/demand for our thinking to slow down.

To fight our mind or to criticize our mind to stop its thinking is as effective as fighting with and criticizing our spouse when our spouse is saying something to us that we don’t want to hear. It doesn’t work. Criticizing and fighting with our mind or with our spouse will only escalate what we want to stop.

Instead of crying out for our mind to stop, what if we just relaxed in response to the mind’s thinking and to its verbal directions?

## Relax With Our Emotions

We can do the same experiment when our emotions are running rampant. Can we relax rather than fight with, condemn, criticize or want to run away from our emotions?

## Overstimulated Mind And Overstimulated Emotions

What I’m purposing is very hard for a human to do – to relax when our mind or when our emotions are overstimulated. Our body will add to the ongoing overstimulation by tightening our muscles and by our breathing becoming more restricted.

The overstimulation of our mind, emotions and body have an energy, a momentum. Relaxing in the midst of the momentum of an overstimulated mind or in the midst of overstimulated emotions can be very difficult to do.

An overstimulated mind and overstimulated emotions go hand-in-hand; they feed each other to keep going. As one escalates, the other can escalate. As one calms, the other can calm. For an overstimulated mind and overstimulated emotions to calm, a lessening of the energy of the mind and of the emotions needs to take place.

*The energy of our overstimulated mind and emotions is in our body. We can feel this energy as tension and as restricted breathing.* There is a three way reinforcing of overstimulation through the overstimulation of our emotions, our mind and our body. As one of the three parts becomes overstimulated, the other two parts can join in. As more parts become more

involved, we get into 'crazy land' where we don't feel at peace; we don't feel ourselves. If this cycle escalates, we can think, say and do things that are the opposite of love.

## Ways To Decrease Our Overstimulated Body, Mind and Emotions

### Abdominal, Deeper and Slower Breathing

*The easiest (and it's not necessarily easy) of the three overstimulated parts to relax is our body. We can have conscious influence on our breath. We can breathe with our abdomen (belly) moving. We can deepen our breathing. We can slow down our rate of breathing. Again, this may not be easy to do, though it can be done.*

*The more that we practice deeper and slower abdominal breathing, the more that we'll become skilled at breathing in this way during the time when our emotions are overstimulated and when our mind is overstimulated. Breathing abdominally slows down our overstimulated emotions and overstimulated mind.<sup>4</sup> With abdominal (also called diaphragmatic breathing), our belly moves out when we inhale and our belly falls in as we exhale.*

*Abdominal breathing can be our 'default way' to breathe throughout the day; not just in times of mental and emotional overstimulation. This will take some training on our part because our breathing will automatically go toward shallow chest breathing when we mentally focus/think. And we do a lot of thinking throughout the day!*

### Relaxing Tension In Our Body

We can scan our body for muscles that are overly tight. After we notice the muscles that are overly tight, we can abdominally breathe a little deeper and/or move that part of our body and/or vocally release with some gentle sounds (sighs, slight groans) to help the muscles to let go of their overstimulated tension. When our muscles relax, our mind and our emotions also relax. You've experienced getting out of a jacuzzi. The heat has relaxed your muscles, and your mind and emotions also feel noticeably more relaxed.

### Slowing The Speed Of Our Talking

If we're talking with someone else as our mind and emotions are overstimulated, we can slow our rate of talking to help our overstimulated mind and emotions to slow down. This usually takes a very focused effort. Our talking will want to go fast when we're talking while our mind and emotions are overstimulated.

### Decreasing The Loudness Of Our Voice

We can also lower the volume of our voice. Usually we'll talk louder (to the point of yelling) as our mind and emotions become more and more overstimulated. Not talking loud will help our mind and emotions to become more calm.

You may feel more relaxed after you yell at another person. An energy has been discharged when you yell. Though the discharge of energy when yelling at another person is destructive; not good. Look at the consequences, look at the other person, after you've yelled. You may feel less of a charge, though the other person (usually someone you love) has taken in your harsh energy. Yes, an energy discharge has happened, though at a very high price.

When you yell at another person, you're training yourself to yell again in the future when a similar charge builds in your emotions and in your mind. This leads to increasing a dysfunctional pattern of expression.

### Walking As A Way To Decompress From Our Overstimulated Mind And Our Overstimulated Emotions

Many people, including myself, have strained some part of their body when they've used exercise as a way to disperse the extra energy that drives their overstimulated mind and emotions. Walking is the safest exercise to help lessen our overstimulated mind and emotions. When we walk, we can gently focus on the act of walking. This gentle focus on how our body moves while walking can help calm our mind and our emotions. You can include abdominal breathing and relaxing your muscles while you walk to further reduce the overstimulation of your mind and of your emotions.

### Moving Your Body By Shaking Or Shimmering

The intelligence in your body can find ways to move the overstimulated physical energy in your body. Your body may want to shake in different parts of your body. Your body may want to shimmer or quiver. These movements, along with breathing and allowing sighs and groans to happen, can help your body productively discharge the overstimulation that is in your body and in your muscles. You can be lying, sitting or standing as your body moves, shimmers or shakes.

### Yelling At No One

Discharging the overstimulated energy through yelling with no one there can discharge the over amount of energy in your body, mind and emotions. Once you've calmed down enough to stop yelling, you can focus more on your body by deepening and slowing your breathing and by relaxing overly tight muscles.

### Crying

When our mind and emotions are overstimulated, we can feel sad or frustrated. Crying can release the overstimulated emotions and thoughts.

### Talking With A Friend

*The more that we talk about 'the story' of he did this or she said this or I did this or I said this, the more we can reinforce the overstimulation. When we talk about our feelings of what happened, then our overstimulated body, mind and emotions have a better chance of calming down. Staying with 'I' statements and talking about your feelings can be productive when talking with a friend.*

### Journaling

Writing down our thoughts and feelings is another way to help our overstimulated body, mind and emotions to calm down. Again, breathing deeper and slower and relaxing muscle tension as we write will help reduce the overstimulation in our body, mind and emotions.

### Getting Under The Anger Of Any Situation

*Underneath anger is that we've been hurt.* The more that we stay in the anger, the more the anger can grow. When we get to the hurt under the anger, we start to loosen the foundation of the anger. When we get to the hurt, we're becoming more vulnerable and we're able to be in our pain. Being in anger keeps us out of our pain.

Staying with the feeling of hurt can help the feeling lessen.<sup>5</sup> Staying in the story of why we hurt can keep us in overstimulation. 'She (or he) done me wrong' is not staying in the hurt. This is staying *in the story* about being hurt. Staying in the story reinforces our overstimulated mind and emotions, and doesn't resolve the feelings of hurt and anger.

### Our Breath Is Our Direct Life Line

*Breathing connects our body and our Spirit/soul. If our breathing stops, our life stops. The more restricted our breathing, the more restricted we are to our Spirit becoming more alive in our body, in our life. The fuller and freer our abdominal breathing is, the more that Life comes in. Deeper (into our belly) and slower breathing promotes more relaxation. Faster and more shallow breathing promotes more tension and anxiety.*

### Two Key Suggestions About Breathing

For our body to release the overstimulated energy of our mind and of our emotions, it's very helpful to have an easy passageway for the exhalation of our breath. *In breathing slower and deeper, try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.* Breathing out through your nose doesn't allow as full and as easy an escape of your breath from your body. Breathing out through your mouth really lets the release of the breath move more fully and freely. *This way of breathing can be done throughout the day; not just in times of stress.*

*The second suggestion is to have a longer exhalation than inhalation. When we're overstimulated/stressed/tense we want to let go of more than we take in. By lengthening our exhalation we give more opportunity for more to let go. A longer exhalation than inhalation helps to release stress.*

### **Taking Time To Breathe And Relax During The Easy Times Of The Day**

To have a habit of shallow breathing throughout the day and then wanting to change that pattern to deeper and slower abdominal breathing during a peak stressful time is very hard to do. The more that breathing abdominally with some depth (depth will automatically slow your breathing rate) is done during the day, the more that it'll be possible to breathe abdominally during times of peak mental-emotional stress.

By repeatedly coming back to consciously breathing a bit deeper during the easy times of the day, you'll not only be lessening the overstimulation of your body, you'll also be lessening the overstimulation of your mind and of your emotions.

Most people want more peace in their life. Peace is hard to feel/be when we're overstimulated in our body, mind and emotions. As written earlier, we have more conscious influence in calming overstimulation in our body than we do in our mind and in our emotions. As our body calms, our mind and emotions follow. More peace is within reach by breathing deeper during the easy times of the day.

Over time, this change in breathing will become more natural and will begin to have a momentum of its own. Then in peak times of stress there will be greater possibility for us to breathe deeper, to be more relaxed and to become less stimulated in our body, mind and emotions.

### **Breathe and Relax and Presence**

There is a lot of talk these days about being present. If we're not present, what can we do to be more present? I didn't know that I'd be 'throwing my two cents' into the arena of being more present when this paper began. Breathing (deeper into our belly) and relaxing are direct ways to support being more present.

To be more present, I'll also add to gently shift our attention from our head-mind-thoughts to our body sensation. Becoming aware of the (usually tingly) energy of our body can bring us more into this moment in this body rather than having our attention on whatever thoughts our mind is thinking.

*Presence is always available.* By breathing, relaxing and dropping into the sensation of our body, we slow the overstimulation of our body, mind and emotions. In this slowing, more presence can appear.

### **Living From Our True Nature**

Mostly, we're living in overstimulation and not living as who we really are. The result of breathing and relaxing is that we fall deeper into our True Nature; not being pulled away from who we really are by the overstimulation of our body, mind and emotions. Who are we really? If we're not in overstimulation, who are we? We've all experienced the deep peace, serenity and wisdom of our True Nature. When overstimulation decreases we live, act and speak more from our True Nature; from peace, love, compassion and wisdom.

### **Living From Intuitive Guidance (a.k.a. God's Guidance)**

As we fall into understimulation (from our usual level of stimulation/activity of mind, emotions, body tension and restricted breathing), we also become more receptive to intuitive guidance. Intuitive guidance is not guidance from our mind and is not guidance from our emotions.

Intuitive guidance is always available. The question is if we're able to receive the always available intuitive guidance. Overstimulation of our body, mind and emotions hinders our receptivity to intuitive guidance. Understimulation provides an automatic allowing for us to be more receptive to intuitive guidance. Listening to intuitive-God's guidance brings us into a deeper state of presence.

The purpose of this article has been to give the reader practical ways to explore how breathing and relaxing supports us to live more as who we really are, to live with more presence and to be more receptive to intuitive guidance.

May all beings live in their natural presence.

### **Footnotes:**

- 1 My practice also includes meditation. A foundation of meditation is to breathe and relax. A result of meditation is that our body, mind and emotions slow down. In this slowing down, then it's possible to be more present.

- 2 [Click here](#) to go to my website and read the four page PDF article titled Overstimulated Body, Overstimulated Mind and Overstimulated Emotions.
- 3 An exception to being overstimulated and being more present can be at the time of an immediate crisis. We can be very stimulated and also be at our best. Times of immediate crisis are rare.
- 4 If you're not familiar with breathing deep into your belly, you can put one or two hands on your lower belly above your pubic bones. Can you feel your hand/s rise up on inhalation and fall down on exhalation?  
Some previous articles address why abdominal breathing (compared to breathing where our chest primarily moves) calms our mind and our emotions. The previous articles, with the specific pages referring to abdominal breathing, are [Processing](#) (pg. 4), [Being Triggered](#) (pg. 5) and [Moving Forward When We're In Reaction](#) (pg. 4).
- 5 Previous articles address how to be with, stay with and even come closer to the uncomfortable emotional feelings and coming closer to our overstimulated mind. These articles are [Five Steps To A Freer Life](#) (the entire six page article) and page 3 of [Uninhibited Vulnerability](#).