



Path to Wisdom Foundation

Welcome to our newest podcast. In this podcast we will be presenting a simple but effecting breathing technique for improved well-being.

Breathing, essential to life, without it we do not survive, but it is much more than just a survival technique. It is intricately connected to very essence of life itself. It is fundamental for all living thing. As our form of respiration, it brings the much-needed nutrient, oxygen and releases the waste matter Carbon Dioxide from our Community of cells.

Breathing is interconnected with many physiological functions and there is clear concrete scientific evidence that controlled breathing also has a direct effect on our emotions and mental processes as well. If you're interested further, there is an infinite amount of material online. Beware, not all of it substantiated, so search with alert awareness and a critical eye towards legitimacy.

There are so many different breathing traditions and techniques that it would take weeks if not more to go through them all. Every one of them offering their unique methods and results. I have learned and practiced many and regularly practice those that feel appropriate to the situation. In this podcast I would like to introduce you to one, which I have experience with and believe is a great place to start in the art of breathing. It is not the most complex nor the fanciest but the one I teach to all my friends, patients and students at the beginning..

For those of you who have not listened to any of the previous podcasts, some background on myself and breathing, I began studies at a very young age with my teacher in the Ch'an Buddhist tradition. During my formative years he encouraged me to study other methods and traditions as the opportunity arose and so I was also exposed to Taoism, Native American Shamanism and Jewish Kabbalistic studies. After Ordination and receiving



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transmission at the age of 25 I and became involved more deeply in the Oriental Healing traditions of Acupuncture, Qi Gong, Chinese Medicine and Shiatsu. Through the years many of the practices I encountered had various breathing techniques for different purposes. It also was clear to me that breathing was an essential tool to facilitate knowing oneself.

In my pursuit to broaden my experience I came across the Heartmath Institute and did their training and learned their practices. The emphasis was always on Heart Coherence, which is not the subject of this podcast but if it interests you, I suggest you visit their site, www.heartmath.org. I will post it on our website. After practicing for several months, I realised that here was a simple breathing method which not only encouraged heart coherence but was also very similar to the methods taught in essential Vipassana and Ch'an training. I integrated it and began to practice myself to test it out. After several months I began to suggest it to friends, patients and students and the results were very positive.

It is easy to learn, and has wonderful results if done diligently and sincerely. However, I want to make it very clear that nothing I am presenting here should be construed as medical advice or as a solution to a medical problem. If you are having a medical problem, be it emotion, mental, physical or psychological then please, I encourage you to consult a qualified practitioner in the appropriate field for advice and assistance.

Let's begin with a brief introduction about breathing. We all know that breathing is essential for life. The act of breathing brings Oxygen into our lungs so that it can be transferred from our lungs to our blood and then pumped throughout the body by the heart to facilitate cellular function.

From the earliest times various different traditions from different parts of the world discovered the power in breathing and adapting it for various



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outcomes. In Sanskrit the word Pranayama, is used to refer to the art and practice of specific breathing techniques for specific effects on body and mind. Similarly, in the Chinese Taoist practices there are also many different breathing practices to effect certain goals. Shamanic practices from various traditions often utilize breathing as a part of their ceremonies for healing and spiritual revelation.

Recent scientific research as shed even more light on the various effects of different methods and modes of breathing. The HeartMath Institute, that I have already mentioned, has been at the forefront of some of this research. Their emphasis and focus is on 'Heart Coherence'. In a very simplistic sense, we can say it is when the body- that is the Heart, Brain, Respiratory system all become in synch and Heart Rate Variability (HRV) is in balance, what follows is that functions-- such as endocrine, hormonal, neurotransmitters, and others align and harmonise with each other creating a more harmonious environment in our bodily functions. For a more comprehensive explanation and understanding of Heart Coherence, please visit their website.

One of the wonderful results of Heart Coherence is also a sense of peace and calm and very quick reduction of stress on all levels. In their research the found that breathing as close to 5 breaths per minute was the quickest breathing method to induce coherence. There are other aspects to the HeartMath methods which if you are interested you can also find on their website. I can only say that I have used their methods both personally and with Px for many years with good success.

So now on to the method. How does one arrive at breathing 5x per minute?



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First and most importantly it is important that it does not involve stress, that is after all what we would like to reduce. First, we start with finding a comfortable position that allows easy breathing and does not require strain or stressful effort to maintain. It can be sitting cross-legged or lying on the floor, or on a comfortable chair that allows the back to be aligned or even on a bed which is firm enough so that the spine is not excessively curved but not so hard that the lower back goes into reverse curvature (this is also a point to watch if you are lying on the floor).

Once you are comfortable close your eyes and place your tongue up to the roof of your mouth with your mouth closed, as you will be breathing with through your nose. Then begin to breathe comfortably and naturally in a relaxed manner. After 3-4 breaths you will begin to pay attention to the air moving in and out through your nostrils. See if you can feel the flow of the air, either on the upper lip, at the edge of your nostrils or just inside your nose as it passes in and out.

We will continue this for about 3 minutes and then we will begin to breathe at the pace of 5.45 breaths per minute. We will do this for 5 minutes. We will have a soundtrack which you can follow. Upon the end of the five minutes, allow your breath to return to normal relaxed breathing and once you are comfortable, take 3 relaxed deeper breaths and then bring your attention back to your surroundings and slowly open your eyes.

Once you are back, begin by moving your fingers and toes and then the rest of your body and finally return to present attention.

At first the transition to the 5-breath pattern may feel a bit uncomfortable as it may be either too fast or too slow depending on your normal breathing pace. However, with practice it will become more comfortable. You should begin to notice the results quite soon after beginning to



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practice. If you have any questions please feel free to email us at info@path-to-wisdom.org and we will respond as quickly as possible.

As I've already mentioned it might take a little bit of practice to get the rhythm correct but it will come fast. If you have an interest to go deeper into the science of Heart Rate Variability and Heart Coherence, then I can highly recommend the HeartMath Institute at www.heartmath.org.

Thank you for listening and I hope you find the practice helpful and beneficial. Take Care, Stay Safe and in touch with Your Heart!