



Remembering To Exhale

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Don't you just hate it when you're upset, and someone tells you to take a deep breath and exhale? I know for myself that used to be the last thing I wanted to hear. I remember thinking yeah right, what is breathing going to do! When we are sick, hurting, or lonely all we want is to be soothed. Being an adult means taking care of our selves. Remembering to breathe is just one of the many things we can do when we're feeling bad. One thing I've learned about breathing is that if I don't exhale, I begin to lose control of my life. By just remembering to breathe (in and OUT) I can do just about anything!

When we are surprised, shocked, panicked, stressed, or have flashbacks -- we automatically inhale fast and deep, but usually forget to exhale. When we don't let our breath go out, our body toxins and the attached feelings to the stressor get stuck inside. After several years of keeping our breath inside, our feelings also build up and we begin to feel stuck. When this happens we begin to feel like we can't do anything.

Why is it so important to breathe? When you stop breathing, your brain stops receiving oxygen. When that happens, you can't think clearly, and you can't solve problems. I know for myself when I can't solve problems I start to feel stuck, helpless, unable to move beyond the point that I'm at.

If you stop and think about it there are several types of breathing. One important type is the kind women learn in Lamaze classes. They teach mothers-to-be to reduce labor pains, with two short breaths out, and one long, deep breath in. Remember the key word to relieving pain -- breathing OUT!!! This is true for both physical and emotional pain.

When we go to the doctor and need to have an X-ray taken, the technician always reminds us to take a deep breath, right before they take the picture. But

how many of us forget to let go of the air and exhale? What kinds of feelings do you have when you are breathing in before an X-ray? I know for myself when I'm going to have an X-ray taken, it's because I've fallen, or am sick and are trying to find out if something more serious is wrong. If I don't remember to exhale, I am once again breathing in anxiety, panic, stress, etc.

When most of us are on a roller coaster and about to go down hill, we take a deep breath in. Do we remember to exhale? If the answer is NO, once again we keep in the stress. The same thing happens when we are about to take a test at school, for a job, confronting someone about something that bothers us. We all take a deep breath in, but how many of us remember to let it go. I wonder how many deep breaths are stuck inside each and everyone of us? How many of those feelings attached to those breaths are also stuck inside us? I also wonder how many of us develop stressed related illnesses because we forget to let go of our breath? Breathing (in and OUT) can help us think more clearly, elevate stress and anxiety. Paying attention to our breath can also help bring us back to the Here and Now, when we are having flashbacks, or when we are frightened by a memory and/or thought.

I think the two most important things about breathing is we all know how to do it, and IT'S FREE! You don't have to go to the doctor to get a prescription to breathe. It's innate, we are born already knowing how and when to breathe. I think another important thing to remember is that I've never heard of anyone overdosing from taking slow, long, deep breaths and then exhaling slowly. I don't think I've ever heard of any one dying from it either. So the next time someone reminds you to breathe, remember they are trying to help you learn to live!