

## **Summer 2007 Breath and Breathing Report.**

I recently visited Leonard Orr and the Rebirthing Breathwork Center in Virginia. I was traveling with a friend Michael who was quick to realize what a powerfully healing place that really is. I spent time in Massachusetts visiting family and friends, and did two days of sailing with my old buddy Paul Gibbs. I made a stop in West Palm Beach to be with my sons. I toured New Orleans to visit Will Quenon and other friends there; and I got to see how the recovery from Katrina was going. I can say that some people and some sections of the city have recovered quite well, but others it seems, will never recover.

In June, I stopped in Paris for a few days where the breathing community keeps growing. I went on to do a ten day camp in Estonia. It was a spectacular time in nature, with so many beautiful people. Thank you to Talvi and to everyone who participated.

After Estonia, I went on to the Black Sea in the Crimea for another ten days in nature. People from five countries got together for our little “breathing festival.” So much love and gratitude goes out to Luba for her organizing efforts, and to Sergei and Lira, and to everyone who made the camp so much fun and such a pleasure.

From the Ukraine, I flew to Istanbul to the International Breathwork Foundation’s 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Inspiration Conference. It was great to visit this exotic and ancient land and to see friends in the breathing world. After two days, I checked out of the hotel where the conference was being held, to share an apartment in the town of Sile on the sea.

There I was able to get a real feel for the people and the culture. I stayed with Peter Murray and his lovely wife and newborn baby. They opted out of the conference, as many people did, because of the high cost of the event. By the way, Peter is organizing an International Holistic Conference in Thailand in February. The cost of this fourteen day conference is only \$49! Go to: [www.globalpeacefest.com](http://www.globalpeacefest.com) for details.

A real treat during the conference was meeting several authentic whirling dervishes and devoted followers of the mystic poet Rumi. I spent a day in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul with its 4,000 shops. But after a few hours, everything began to look the same to me. I guess I’m not a natural born shopper. But for those of you who are, it should be paradise!

Now I write to you from The Hill That Breathes near Urbino in Italy. This is my 4<sup>th</sup> visit. It’s a perfect place for going deep and getting high (naturally). And it’s an inspiration to see the improvements and developments that have taken place since my last trip. The big tipi is gone and instead, a huge dome has been built for group gatherings. There are many new walking paths and places to sit and meditate, or to take in the spectacular scenery.

The weather has been perfect all week; and a beautiful group of Italian, British, Irish, Turkish and American souls is diving into the power and potential of breathwork. The theme is “Feeling Good No Matter What!” But it’s really impossible not to feel good in this piece of paradise that John and Gaia have created. ([www.thehillthatbreathes.com](http://www.thehillthatbreathes.com))

And it's a great time to celebrate life because John Parkin's book has just been published. It's called "Fuck It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way." The first limited edition is available on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk). (When it is published in the USA, it will be called "F\*\*k It...") The book is inspired, brilliant, very witty, and filled with natural wisdom. And it comes from someone who has truly found his way out of a life of pain and suffering and into one of real peace and joy. My advice to all breathworkers is: buy this book!

### **Now on to more news...**

One of my earliest teachers said: "Daniel, if you are not disturbing a few people, then you must not be making much of a difference in the world." Well, she would be very happy to know, that based on how many people I have pissed off in the IBF, IBTA, BRS, GIC, and other breathwork organizations, I must be making one hell of a difference in the world!

Simply put, I have grown tired of people who insist on seeing themselves and others as anything less than free and whole and powerful and wise. I have very little patience with breathworkers who automatically assume that everyone who comes to them is a victim, or is ill, broken, limited, or needs to be cured or fixed, or protected from themselves and others. I am dismayed by those who think that the only context in which breathwork can be taught, learned, practiced, or shared is within the limited box known as "therapy."

Breathwork is such a powerfully therapeutic tool, so healing and curative. And so it makes sense that many people would turn to it, rather than to the medical community, to solve their psychological problems, clear their emotional issues, and heal their physical ailments. Breathwork is such a powerful alternative holistic self-healing and personal growth method. And I readily and gladly work with people every day who come to me with a therapeutic intent. But not everyone who comes to breathwork is interested in a doctor-patient, therapist-client relationship: many come as healthy, clear, strong equals.

But a funny thing happened in the breathwork movement on the way to today... Thirty years ago, when breathwork was first introduced to the world, the mainstream medical community, the professional therapy community, and every formal organization from the American Psychological Association to the American Medical Association scoffed at it. They labeled it silly new age flaky foolishness at best, and at worst: dangerous and evil.

But just as rain and wind can wear away the mightiest rock, breathwork has made its way into the mainstream medical and therapeutic communities. Several years ago, the cover story in Reader's Digest Magazine was about breathwork, and the New England Journal of Medicine reported that forty percent of American health care dollars were going into the "alternative" or "holistic" market. And so many mainstream medical and therapeutic practitioners decided: "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"

And so today, hundreds of American hospitals have "complementary care" departments and "alternative healing" programs Massage, reiki, yoga, meditation, and breathwork—the most powerful of all holistic methods—are now being taught, practiced and promoted by the very same group that resisted it and objected to it so fiercely in the early days.

This is both good and not so good. It's good that professional medical people are waking up to the obvious. (A psychotherapist who incorporates breathwork into their practice is infinitely more effective and valuable than one who doesn't.) It's not so good because mainstream medical people cannot innovate or experiment. They can only apply well established, generally accepted methods. They must conform or risk being outcasts.

Profound transformation, genuine breakthroughs, and creative developments will never come out of a mainstream "follower's" mindset. New paradigms always emerge out at the cutting edges. They always come by way of rebels and those marching to a different beat, a different drummer. The mainstream functions to preserve and maintain the status quo: by definition it must avoid independent thinking, and it naturally resists change.

Well, for good or not so good, the breathwork movement has grown to such an extent that it too now has a mainstream element. And it is being taken over by clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and "wannabe's." Their aim is to force breathwork to conform to their ethics and standards. They feel that it is their right and their duty to regulate it and control it, so as to "protect" the public—the same public that dared to explore breathwork long before they approved of it. And now they are beginning to openly criticize and condemn, silence and ostracize anyone who does not agree with their narrow mainstream views.

In order to make breathwork respectable, more palatable, acceptable and more appealing to the masses, it is being stripped of its most transformative elements. In order to make it something that can be standardized and professionalized, it is being watered down and gutted of its most profound and liberating aspects. People who are not in need of therapy, or who don't appreciate being patronized by moralists are being turned off to breathwork.

I do not want breathwork to be just another version of the same old thing. Breathwork is unique. It evolved because the therapeutic model was not helping us to reach our ultimate potential. I don't want to see breathwork held captive by the psychotherapy community. And I will not support them in regulating it or controlling it. In fact, I will not support any group, no matter how good their intentions are, if they aim to dictate what must be done or what cannot happen in the breathwork community, or during a breathing session.

The greatest leaps and advances in breathwork took place in the early days when there were no signposts to rely on, no rules to memorize, no instructions to follow, no experts to turn to, and no dogmas to guide us. The community was made up of ordinary people, who were extraordinary in that they dared to trust their intuition, to listen to the voice of their spirit, to rely on their own internal authority, to follow their heart. And we supported and trained everyone who came to us to do the same thing. It was called empowerment.

I am passionate about this work. And I've been doing it longer than almost anyone on the planet. I more than anyone else want to see it keep going: but I also want to see it keep growing. This art is still in its infancy. (OK, maybe it's in its adolescence!) But in any case, it is way too soon to confine it to a box; or to bind it with rules and regulations and limitations that choke and suppress the very spirit that it is meant to awaken and liberate.

At the recent conference, I did a rather poor job of making my case, because I allowed the “officers and officials” to title, frame and time the forum to suit their interests. My only wish was to widen the scope of breathwork, or at least reestablish its original core values. But the conversation focused only on “therapists having sex with their clients.” (As if this is the only thing, or the worse thing that can happen when people come together to breathe!)

In fact, a romantic sexual relationship is only one possibility among an infinite number of things that can naturally develop when mature healthy adults come together for any reason. The “sex with clients” rouse is a non-starter because of course a therapist should not have sex with their clients! It goes against professional ethics and generally accepted standards; and it goes against common sense. But who said that breathwork—teaching it, learning it, practicing it, or sharing it—can only occur within the strict context of a client-therapist relationship? And who said that Breathwork was therapy?

Breathworkers are just ordinary people who have derived tremendous personal benefit from the practice, and so they are inspired to share it with others. Good breathworkers need only be conscious and loving, and open to each individual as an equal. They need only be willing and able to respond to the energy of the moment with courage and grace. We don't need breathworkers who vow obedience to a dogma or to an elite ruling class.

It strikes me as incredibly arrogant that a small group of people have banded together and claim to be the “global authority” over the breathwork movement. Tens of thousands of breathworkers have never even heard of their little group or anyone in it. And ninety nine percent of the breathworkers in the world have yet to attend a single conference, or sit in on a single task force or committee meeting, or vote on a single rule or regulation!

I am one voice that will not be silenced. I am devoted to awakening people to the power and potential of conscious breathing. And in the performance of this sacred mission, I will not give up any of my human rights, especially the right to make my own choices: nor will I demand that anyone else do that. I am free and I want everyone else to be free—especially everyone who comes to me for breathwork!

OK, enough ranting! I leave the current ruling crop of “therapeutic breathworkers” with this anonymous poem:

*They drew a circle that shut me out.  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout....  
But love and I had the wit to win.  
We drew a circle that took them in!*

### **On Breath Mastery and the Practice of Breathwork...**

In the beginning, you may want the support and assistance of a good breathing coach. Or you may want to explore and experiment on your own before choosing someone with

whom to go further. You don't "need" a breathworker, but a good breathing coach can save you a lot of time and lot of effort, and keep you from having to re-invent the wheel.

Breathmastery involves breathing alone, breathing with a partner, breathing in pairs, and in three's, in small groups and in large groups. And so if you have not done breathwork in all of these contexts, then by all means, make it a point to do so.

Breathmastery also involves breathing in nature, in forests, by rivers, lakes, and the sea. It includes breathing in warm water and cold water. Practice it in sacred places and at social gatherings, at home and at work, in private places, and in places where there are lots of distractions (for example in shopping malls, train stations, and amusement parks).

Breathing range and flexibility make for good gauges in your practice. A healthy person should be able to breathe quickly and to breathe slowly; a healthy person should be able to breathe high in the chest and low in the belly. Explore and experiment, and determine for yourself what comes naturally and easily, and what requires effort, intense focus, or regular practice.

You will be quite surprised to find that if you dedicate a bit of time everyday to playing with your breath—increasing its range and flexibility—that it will result in more all around comfort and pleasure in life; more emotional, psychological and physical ease.

There are actually two aspects to breathwork: breath awareness and conscious breathing. Get good at both of them. Go back and forth between the two. Follow one with the other. Precede one with the other. Keep them in balance. And ultimately bring them together.

Breath awareness is the passive aspect. It means letting the breath come and go by itself. Don't do anything to the breath. Just observe it, watch it, witness it, in a detached way, without controlling it at all. Don't breathe in any particular way. Let the breathe you.

Conscious breathing is where you come in. You do the breathing. You determine the quality or pattern or rhythm, the depth, speed, volume, etc. You bring a certain intention to the breath. You are no longer just the detached observer, you are the active participant.

Imagining that the breath is a language; and deliberately use the breath to communicate things to yourself and others (In fact, you are already doing that unconsciously.) For example, if you need more strength, breathe in a way that looks, feels and sounds strong. If you want to more peace, then breathe in a peaceful way. It's as simple as that!

There is no right and wrong way to breathe. You make it up! If joy is important to you, then ask yourself: "how would a joyful person breathe? What would it look like? What would it sound like? How would it feel? And then just make it up! Trust your intuition. Imagine that you are an actor on stage. You have no words in the play, but you must breathe in a way that communicates to the audience how you feel. Invent your own exercises and techniques and meditations. Take time everyday to breathe consciously.

Focusing on imagery and affirmations, movements, or sounds, along with breathing is a very good practice. Repeating a word or a phrase, making pleasurable or interesting sounds, imagining light or healing energy flowing with the breath, moving your body in some pleasurable or spontaneous way, generating powerful emotions: doing these things while you breathe can make your breathwork practice even more powerful and effective.

Use the 10 + 10 + (10 X 2) formula: ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes at night, and ten times during the day for two minutes. Those forty minutes of breath awareness and/or conscious breathing will have life changing benefits: but only if you actually make the time to practice! Good luck, and let me know how it goes.

### **Mexico Update:**

The core value of the community that is forming in Mexico was summed up best by Will Quenon, one of our original founders: “The big ‘I’ (God, Source, Nature, Life, Divine Spirit, Infinite Intelligence, etc) has all the answers and all the solutions to every social, economic, and environmental problem on the planet. And the big ‘I’ can only be heard when the little ‘I’ gets out of the way.”

When members of our new community meet concerning anything important about the project, we leave our egos out of the room. And so when the highest thought is expressed, it is evident and obvious to everyone. So there is no need for an authority figure, no need for a leader, or a set of rules, or a contract, or any of the other old paradigm structures.

Our goal is to create a Garden of Eden, a natural paradise... a model for living in self-sustaining community, in harmony with life, nature, and each other. WE are building a teaching and learning center, a healing resort and spiritual retreat. (Psychologists and psychotherapists are welcome! Despite what I said earlier, some of my dearest friends are therapists.) In fact, it is not up to me to decide who gets to be in our community. It is as if life, spirit, nature, or the earth herself is calling all the right people to support the vision.

The first 15 acres are now owned outright by Baja Bio Sana: paid in full by the Mexican non-profit organization that was formed to make all the legal and financial logistics work. The land belongs to God, and it can never be sold! It is an eternal home for the founders and for our community. We will secure another 5 adjoining acres within the next 90 days.

To date, we have 7 founding members. Our plan is to create a core group of 12 or 13 founders. And so we are open to 5 or 6 more people willing to invest \$15,000 USD each, and to also bring their talents, skills, creative energy, and good ideas to the project. We especially want to attract someone who has a lot of experience in organic farming.

Soon, we will open the project up for world-wide participation. To do that, we plan to create a model similar to [www.tribewanted.com](http://www.tribewanted.com).

Tribe Wanted is based on an island in Fiji. It is a large virtual on-line community linked through an internet chat room to an actual on-the-ground community. They collect about

\$350 per year from their basic members. Everyone gets to participate in the vision, and to contribute to the development of the community. Members vote on what gets built and what takes place; and they are entitled to spend three weeks per year living and working on the island. It's a simple but brilliant model for allowing thousands of people to take part in the community, while limiting the number of those who actually live on the island at any given time, and can be supported by the natural resources there.

Our model will take the best ideas of Tribe Wanted, and we will also gather knowledge and skills from other experts around the world. We will organize and host a monthly training course in life skills and the healing arts, community building, organic farming, water and natural resource management, alternative energies, and other innovative methods.

Our plan is to invite world renowned experts in all these fields to come and teach us; and we will open the programs up to community members, local farmers and residents, and to the world at large.

We have created an initial list of structures to be built:

1. Multi-use space, for meetings, healing groups, workshops, yoga, etc.
2. Camp kitchen, food preparation area
3. Showers and compost toilet
4. Office/Administration
5. Library/reading and research room
6. Machinery/tool shed and laboratory space
7. Industrial scale food processing
8. Greenhouse/nursery
9. Covered potable water storage tank
10. Composting and special soil preparation area
11. Covered water tank for drip irrigation

Trino, who worked for the original owner (Guadalupe Miranda) is now working full time for us: tending the orchard, irrigating, composting, clearing brush, etc. He is spending one day a week at Buena Fortuna in La Ribera, learning organic farming techniques from our supporters Gabriel Howearth. Gabriel is one of the founders of "Seeds of Change." He is growing more than 3500 edible botanical species on ten acres of down the road from us!

I'll be moving to the farm in November to start work on the herb and vegetable garden, and construction of the initial living, working and meeting spaces. I will be there through March. And so, you are invited to come to our Baja paradise! You are welcome to camp on the farm and hike up into the mountains. You are welcome to work and play, to study and learn, to heal and grow, and of course to breathe and relax! If you'd like to see pictures of the farm, read more about it, or review the founder's invitation, go to [www.breathmastery.com](http://www.breathmastery.com) and click on the "Mexico Community" link.

**New Breath Mastery Program**

The new Breathwork Training will take the form of a one-year work-study program: the core of which will be a one-month residential intensive on the farm in Mexico. Training will be on-going, and will be open to both new and experienced breathworkers. The program can be taken for personal growth or professional development. Tuition is \$2700.

**Breath and breathing Schedule**

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: August 17-27

Moscow, Russia: August 28-September 4

Windham, New York: September 7-11

Sedona, Arizona: September 20-26

Barcelona, Spain: October 6-14

Vilnius, Lithuania: October 16-26

Mexico: November-March

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