

Integrative Breathwork: A transformational journey within By Faith Burrington Jones

Now that we have entered the Aquarian age, many of us are seeking a deeper connection with the higher Self, or the Spirit within. The importance of working through what blocks us from moving forward and fulfilling our dreams is being realized to a greater extent than ever before. I have found in my experience that the answer to creating your dreams is to awaken to the truth of who you are. Once you understand your connection to a divine order you must begin taking responsibility for your life and your purpose. Integrative Breathwork is one of the most powerful ways I know to open the heart and release negative imprints that keep us from realizing our full potential as spiritual beings having a human experience.

Accessing non-ordinary states of consciousness for healing and connecting with the universe is an ancient spiritual practice in both Eastern and Western traditions. This idea is central to the mystical branches of traditional religions such as: Sufism (Islam), Yoga Practice (Hinduism), Buddhism (Zen), Christian Mysticism, and Kabbalism (Jewish Mysticism) and Shamanism. Deep breathing and rhythmic vibrations were used as catalyst to access altered-states in a variety of ways in many cultures. Ceremonial dancing, drumming, singing, chanting, yogi breathing, were all used not only to receive guidance, but to celebrate life and relationship to the universe. Like many inner practices, Breathwork helps develop our multi-sensory abilities and opens the door to unlimited potential and possibility.

Integrative Breathwork is a transformational tool developed by Jacquelyn Small after 6 years of working with Stan Grof, a scientific researcher and psychiatrist who developed Holotropic Breathwork. Ms. Small found it was important to help individuals deepen into the necessary therapeutic aspects of their healing that each Breathwork experience reveals, and she created a psycho-spiritual group work process that meets this need. Ms. Small says, We cannot work on what we are not aware of, and what we are not aware of can prevent us from healing and knowing what is true.

Integrative Breathwork uses rhythmic breathing induced by evocative music that flows through the energetic system of the body. The sonic waves of the music help open the chakras and make conscious what needs to be healed at the time. The combination of the deep breathing with the musical vibrations aids in altering consciousness. This sacred process is like conscious-dreaming. It is a musical meditation that quiets the mind enough to journey to transpersonal realms of consciousness; your willingness to let go deepens the experience. The main thing to remember is that this process is invitational and you are always in control with your readiness to let go or not.

There are four possible journeys, or realms of consciousness, that can be experienced while doing the Breathwork. During the process you may enter one or more

of the following bands of consciousness: sensory, biographical, perinatal, or transpersonal. The sensory band of consciousness is entirely physical and invites the body to release on a cellular level through the five senses. In the biographical band one can view anything that has happened since childbirth. The perinatal band experience is comprised of four stages of the birth process, this can be either your personal birth, or it can be you giving birth. In the transpersonal band one experiences anything beyond the physical or ego reality including: archetypal, mythical, shape-shifting, or a spiritual awakening. This entire process is professionally facilitated in a sacred space of unconditional love and support.

Following the two-hour inner journey you are invited to journal your experience by drawing mandalas. Mandalas are pictures of Indian origin in which a mystical experience is drawn within a circle. This process helps integrate the experience in a way that brings at least part of the journey to physical form. The mandalas are used for sharing in group process to help integrate your experience. This symbolic artwork helps to capture a snapshot of your soul that can keep speaking to you long after the workshop.

As one of my Breathwork participants said, "Being someone who carries much anxiety and is afraid to try new things, I was so proud of myself that I took the risk and did this transformational workshop. I finally used my own intuition and found from this experience that everything in my life both good and bad has happened to help me SEE that I am a part of everything in the universe and all is well." This certainly rings true for me, with what I have learned from my training, and by having the opportunity to facilitate these workshops. The only person in your life that can truly make you happy and fulfilled is you, by taking responsibility for your life in cooperation or co-creation with the God of your understanding.

The Breathwork experience helps to move us from the external world (relative truth) to the internal world so we develop inner-sight and connection with all that is (ultimate truth). We are creatures of both ego and soul and we crave balance, connection and love in our lives. A question we must ask is: have we become so focused on the external world that we have forgotten our very own soul? I am inviting you to wake up and take the journey back to your truth! I view this process as an evolutionary psycho-spiritual therapy that doesn't conflict with any belief system. It complements any other method of therapy people are practicing. It is universal and all loving.

This process benefits us all. It is a wonderful way to open the heart and awaken the spirit within. It is especially important for those who have chosen to guide others during these turbulent times of rebirth. It also is for those who are experiencing blocked creativity, depression, grief or loss, life transitions, stress related symptoms, loss of meaning and purpose, addictions, or repressed trauma. I believe that this sacred work energetically and collectively heals not only the group, but the lineage of all the individuals who participate, and ultimately the entire planet. It is during group experiences that we begin to see we are all fingers of the same hand, and in realizing this truth, judgment of self and others fall away.

It is now more important than ever to clear out our negative habits towards ourselves and others. I believe if we could each take responsibility for our own darkness and reclaim our soul purpose, collectively, we could transform the world. To take the shadow of judgment and blame on and embrace it with love and forgiveness; this would truly be an act of unconditional love. There are no greater powers than the powers of love, compassion, and authenticity. Let it begin with you! Many Blessings!

For more information contact Faith Burrington Jones, MA, LMHC at Innerfaith - Integrative Healing Arts, 236 Lilliput Road, Ashfield, MA, 01330 - (413) 625-9770, or email ~ faithjones@verizon.net. Faith is certified in Integrative Breathwork and Psycho-spiritual Integration through the Eupsychia Institute, founded by Jacquelyn Small, and conducts ongoing Breathwork workshops and individual sessions as well. She has had a private practice for 20 years as an Integrative Acupressurist. In 2006 she graduated with a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology with a concentration in Addictions. She also facilitates groups and individuals in Psycho-spiritual Integration, Intentional Communication, and teaches Energetic Movement.