



Conscious Life presents

Breathwork & Non Ordinary States of Consciousness

Guest: Michael Stone

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[00:00:11] Meagen Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, your conference co-host. Today, I'm speaking with Michael Stone. Michael attended his first breathwork session in 2005 and was blown away by the power of the breath. It was such a life-changing experience for him that he decided to focus his life around breathwork in support of world healing.

In 2018, he created NeuroDynamic Breathwork Online in order to achieve this vision of allowing anybody in the world who wants to experience the benefits of expanded states of awareness to be able to do so safely from the comfort of their own home.

In the last three years, he has facilitated over 800 online sessions of NeuroDynamic Breathwork Online with participants from over 120 countries. Stick around until the end when Michael is going to give us an experiential taste of what you can expect from a NeuroDynamic Breathwork session. Michael Stone, thank you so much for joining me today.

Michael Stone

Thank you for having me. I've been looking forward to this conversation.

Meagen Gibson

I understand that over 15 years ago, you had an experience with plant medicine that led you to discovering the benefits of breathwork. So can you tell us a little bit about that?

[00:01:22] Michael Stone

Yeah, sure. So just to give you a bit of color on the experience, when I was growing up, I always was very good at doing things that were left brain oriented. That was figuring things out. I was great at school. I was great at anything that needed logic, I was good at. But when it had to do with more heart-centered things, not so good.

I struggled with relationships, and it was really frustrating because it was one of my priorities in life to have a successful relationship just like my parents did. They were my model. I was frustrated because I couldn't figure it out because I'd always been able to figure everything else out. But that, it just wasn't happening. I ultimately just came up with, "Okay, I just haven't met the right person".

Looking back at that, obviously, since it was happening over and over, I just wasn't at a place in my personal development where I could clearly see that it had nothing to do with the other person. Obviously, it was coming from me. But at that time, it didn't seem like that. I kept struggling and struggling and struggling.

At a certain point, I met a woman that I thought maybe this is the one, but she was still living with her ex-boyfriend. And at a certain point... But they'd broken up. So she said, I want to go down to Peru. I'm going, "Okay, let's go". I figured I can get her away for a week and we'll see what happens. So we went down to Peru, and while we were there, I ended up having an experience that I was not planning on.

It was like a little shaman went out with us that didn't speak any English and was about 5 feet tall. And at one point, he asked us, "Do you want to do a religious ceremony that we do down here?". And left brain me, immediate reaction is, "I have to know what this is all about. I don't just say yes". And then he explained, "Well, I go out in the woods and pick up these vines and leaves, boil them all up, and you drink them up, and you have this religious experience".

My initial reaction would be no freaking way. It's like I'm in chemical engineering, man. You don't just grab stuff out of the forest and drink it, especially when people don't speak English, you have a translator, and you're a four hour canoe ride from anywhere.

But the woman I went with, she's going, "Oh, we got to do this. We got to do this". I went, "Awesome..." So ultimately, it was a big breakthrough for me, actually, because I actually decided, Okay, just go for it. If I die, at least it's in the rainforest. It's beautiful here. I've had a pretty good life.

And so it turned out to be ayahuasca, which you may have figured out by now. And it was really my first experience with psychedelics of any kind. And I had this amazing experience, and it was really the first time that I felt safe in the world, like the world was happening for me, not to me.

After this experience, when I got back to the United States, I said, okay, if I can have that experience on a substance, on a psychedelic, the receptors are there in my brain. There must be other ways of accessing that experience. I'm not going down to Peru every weekend. It's not going to happen.

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And that ultimately brought me to breathwork because I started looking at all kinds of different things. But when I landed on breathwork, and especially Stan Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, he developed Holotropic Breathwork through his many years of work, working with people with LSD psychotherapy. And then when that was banned, he himself searched for another way to allow people to have these healing experiences without the substance.

When he started looking at these ancient societies, he saw that breath was one of the key factors that virtually all ancient societies used for personal development, for accessing these states. So he did some research and ultimately developed Holotropic Breathwork. So I said, "Okay, I'll give this a try". And I had actually some very similar experiences as I did with the ayahuasca. I go, "Oh, my God, this is amazing. How come I didn't know about this before?" I had already gone through four decades or almost 50 years of not knowing anything about breathwork.

I kept going, and at a certain point, I did ultimately find out what the issue was with relationships, where I dove back into a childhood experience and saw some stuff that went on where my child mind made a decision that the world is an unsafe space. And so then I could start working with that. And ultimately, I resolved the relationship issue and had all kinds of other amazing experiences, too.

So for breathwork, I said, "Okay, this is it. This is for me". And I personally really like breathwork because it's organic, it's natural, I felt more in control, and I didn't have to put substances in my body. That was the pathway that... And even though I did do a bit more psychedelics afterwards, but my major focus was on breathwork for that point on.

Meagen Gibson

It's such an interesting story, too, because there are so many people for whom psychedelics are an option or are not. There's accessibility issues, affordability issues, legalities. There's a lot of blockades. Knowing that there are ways to create non-ordinary states of consciousness and access that same experience and state without having to entertain any of that is something that I definitely wanted to talk to you about.

I love your science brain, too. That analytical science brain, you're like, "Okay, so if this was possible with this, it's got to be possible without it because all of that's there".

What do we know about the way that psychedelics work in the brain and the way that breathwork works with the brain?

Michael Stone

Originally, this was back in the '60s and the '70s, when this new wave of breathwork started with Dr Stan Grof and also Rebirthing Breathwork, there wasn't a lot of science behind it back then. They just knew it worked. But the science stuff, it just hadn't been studied.

When psychedelics started coming out, more and more science started to start happening, where they started doing neuroimaging and that type of thing in your brain when people were in these expanded states. One of the things that they found with psychedelics is that there's a part of your

brain that's called the default mode network, which is the part of your brain that's active when you're not focusing on something specific. It's just more when you're just walking around the world.

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When they do neuroimaging with psychedelics, they find that there's less activity in that part of your brain, less blood flow, less oxygen. It's partially deactivated. And that seems like it's a big part of the reason why people can have these expansive experiences where the ego mind is shut down. Part of the default mode network is part of the frontal cortex, where the concepts of self and ego, a lot of that stuff happens.

You have this ego dissolution experience, or can, as a result of less activity in the default mode network. And then later, more recently, They also did a few studies with breathwork, and they saw some very similar things happening in the brain.

So there is some science behind it now, but ultimately, the bottom line is that does it work or does it not work? I've worked with tens of thousands of people now in breathwork, and many people have very similar experience to psychedelics, so it clearly does work. Sometimes people even say they have more impactful experiences with breathwork than with psychedelics. It also allows them to feel more self-empowered because they're more in control and it's more organic and they feel safer.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And we were talking, actually, before we started recording about the safety of both tools and how the importance of having a facilitator, having somebody with you, and we were talking about breathwork. Tell me why supervision, because if people are hearing about breathwork for the first time, they would be like, "Why would I need supervision and support when it's breathing?". Tell us what the experience can be like and why facilitation is important.

Michael Stone

First of all, there's different types of breathwork. For instance, if you just get up in the morning and close your eyes and do some slow deep breathing for a few minutes, you don't need a facilitator for that. It just grounds you for the day. But in breathwork that's more focused on these deeper experiences, like in Holotropic Breathwork, where I was originally trained in, and then I developed my own breathwork, NeuroDynamic Breathwork.

It's designed to allow people to really dive in and have potentially very deep experiences. When you go into these spaces, you have to feel safe or you won't go in. Like your psyche will not let you go unless it feels safe that you can handle it. And having a trained facilitator there gives your inner being, your psyche, confidence that you can go in there. And if you do need support, you can reach out. Because sometimes you do.

Just as an example, you can have very blissful experiences, but you can also have very dark experiences where the shadow comes up for you to experience and release. It's like it wants to be integrated. Or you may go back into childhood trauma and where it comes up to be fully felt and released.

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Sometimes it really depends on what your own resources are. You can go through it, but sometimes you do need support. And that's true in psychedelics and in breathwork, really for the same reasons, because many of the experiences are the same in both types of work.

In breathwork, it's a little bit different in that, with a psychedelic session you take the psychedelic, you're in. For three, four, five, six hours, you cannot escape. If you say this is too much, too bad, you're going through. In psychedelics, it's even more important. In breathwork, you slow down the breath, you slow down the experience. So it's more like you really are in much more control. In psychedelics, there's more of a possibility of really having an experience that you're not necessarily ready to have at that moment because it's chemically induced.

Versus in breathwork, like the underlying principle is that everybody has what I call this inner guiding intelligence. Some people call it higher self, or I think Joe Dispenza calls it the connection to the field, so to speak. But it's this deeper part of our psyche that already has all the answers that we need, and also will only bring up something that you're capable of handling in that moment.

That's why in the NeuroDynamic Breathwork that I developed, we don't set intentions. We don't try to drive the experience with our ego mind. We let our inner guidance bring up the experience that we're ready to have. It doesn't mean you have to go through it, but you have the resources, but you're still ultimately at choice.

In psychedelics, since it's chemically induced, something can come up that you're really not ready to work through. It's really important to have someone there then to support you in getting to the other side.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. I'm remembering a situation, because I've been interviewing people about therapeutic practices and modalities for healing trauma and anxiety and things like that for years and years and years. I feel like I have a lot of knowledge and a lot of practice.

I had a very humbling experience about two years ago where I got triggered by something out in the world that I couldn't have anticipated, and all knowledge was inaccessible to me. All practice, all knowledge, everything was just gone. I just bring that up so that people understand that when difficult experiences come up, or when your past comes up that you want to deal with and you're in a different state, your brain will literally shut off that front reasoning part of your accessibility to the things you know and the ways that you're capable.

Having somebody who's a facilitator that you can literally just say, "I'm struggling here and I don't remember how to get through this. Can you help me?" must be so helpful so that people, just like you said, feel free to just have the experience, just get through it and hold themselves and know that they're capable of it, and that they're going to come out on the other side, but not have to also try to reignite that front brain rational thought part that's like, "What do I do now, and how do I

handle this?" when that part is completely offline so that you can actually have the experience and digest and integrate it.

[00:14:50] Michael Stone

Exactly, yeah.

Meagen Gibson

What do you think are the qualities of somebody who is good at holding space, both in a psychedelic experiencing setting and also a breathwork setting? What are the kinds of people that are good for that? And what are the skills necessary to hold space for people in non-ordinary states?

Michael Stone

First of all, even if you can just think about even just going around in life, who do you feel safe with? Who do you feel safe in really being vulnerable and open to? And what are their skill sets? And those are the skill sets that people who facilitate these sessions need. For example, being present, being able to put their own stuff aside, being completely present with you, and people can feel that energy.

You're normally, like in everyday life, even if you're in a conversation, someone's talking, you're not really being present with them. You're already thinking about how you're going to respond. It's not a skill set that most people have unless they train themselves for it. It's just like our brain isn't designed like that.

It's really something that we have to practice and work with so that we can just stay fully present with someone when they're speaking, just being focused on them when they're having their experience, but not like staring like this, but in a soft way where they feel your energy that you're there for them if they need it. And your mind is not off thinking about what you're going to do later or what's going to happen.

And then the second piece is it's incredibly important for people to have done their own inner work. What I mean by that is there are things, and I'll talk specifically about breathwork now, but this is also relevant to psychedelics. There are things that can happen during a session with the breather that can really activate the facilitator.

For example, in breathwork. I do breathwork to music, and the music really supports the experience. There's a lot of research on how that works and why that works while they're breathing. Let's say a person is having an experience and they're in this blissful state, and then another piece of music comes on, and all of a sudden, they go into this dark space. Well, the reality is that that's where their psyche wanted to put them, and that's what they need to experience. But when they're in this space, they can very easily open their eyes and start yelling at the facilitator, "You don't know how to put together a music set. Who do you think you are? You're..." like this and that.

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If you have this unconscious sinking pattern it's incredibly important for you to be liked, which many people do, you are not going to be able to hold space for that person in that moment. You have to stay present with them. And in a situation like that, what a good facilitator would do is make that bigger, release that anger, scream louder if you can, really let that go. That's what needs to happen right now. Go for it. But if you're in your head about, "Oh, this person doesn't like me", you're not going to be able to do that.

It's really important to do some work and looking at your own unconscious thinking patterns and really being in a state where you take agency for your own emotional states and realizing that the outside world does not create your emotions. When something happens, it's the meaning that you put around that thing that happens that creates that emotion.

Just like if someone cuts in front of you in traffic, some people don't care, other people get incredibly upset. The ones that are upset, in general, we create this meaning, "This person is disrespecting me", or something like that. The other person may say, "Oh, he must be in a rush. No problem. I'm 20 feet back. Who cares?" It's like that with everything. But most people have this default mode where they project the cause of their emotional states into the outside world.

So that's a whole training, too, about taking responsibility for your emotional states in what we call taking it vertical versus projecting the cause into the outer world. Every emotional state that happens is actually a pathway to personal growth, where you can really see what's going on in your inner world that's causing that emotion. It's always something from your past. So that's the training that people really have to have so that their own personal stuff doesn't get in the way of them holding a safe space for another person.

That's why I shudder when I see these training programs that say, we're going to train you in a weekend or two weekends to be a breathwork or a psychedelic facilitator. I'm going, "Oh, my God". It really does... Our program is a six-month program, and most psychedelic programs are quite extensive, too, because it really is a skill set that you need to train yourself in that doesn't necessarily come naturally. And we've got to understand yourself on a very deep level in order to be able to hold space and not get into your own stuff during a session. People feel it. People really feel if you're present with them.

Meagen Gibson

It reminds me of when you were talking earlier about, that you had had an experience when you were a kid. I remember the way you phrased it. You said, "My child brain made some meaning out of that experience that then influenced and determined how I would relate in relationships as an adult".

Often, I think people underestimate the things that will come up for them because maybe they didn't have a trauma history or any adverse child experiences and things like that. They're really taken aback or surprised when some dark stuff comes up or things... Because your brain doesn't decide, or it doesn't make rational decisions about what is difficult or what was hard or what felt unsupported. It's just going to decide that and make meaning to protect you.

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The importance of being able to really work through that yourself as a facilitator first so that you're able to hold the span of experiences that your breathers, in this case, are having, right?

Michael Stone

Exactly. It's interesting in terms of what you say. It's like even in childhood, one experience for one child, they'll be fine, and the next child will be totally traumatized. It's not like there's no judgment about it, it's that some children at certain points have more resources to deal with stuff than others. There's no good or bad about it, but it's not the experience itself. It's basically what resources do you have to really absorb the experience and make meaning out of it, and make a meaning out of it that can move you forward instead of devastate you.

That's not saying that anything that happens to a child is okay. There are things that are not okay, whether or not the child can deal with it. It's not okay if someone abuses you. It's not okay if certain things happen. But if it does happen, certain people just have more resources to work with it than others. As you grow up, even a little thing can traumatize you. That most people would be fine with, but it's just because that particular thing, for whatever reason, you didn't have the resources to deal with.

And again, there's no judgment about what traumatizes one person or that doesn't traumatize another person. It's just how do you work with it later, really, ultimately, and work through it as you get older, when you do have more resources?

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. I like to think of it as resource management. It's less about the thing that happened to you and more about reclaiming the energy that has been diverted toward either not dealing with the thing that happened to you or actually dealing with it. Then once that's... I say it like it happens like that, but once you're working through it and reclaiming that energy for your own instead of having it siphoned off to manage this other thing that feels difficult. It feels like the weight of the world has been lifted off your shoulders, doesn't it, Michael?

Michael Stone

It makes a huge difference. If you have all this stuff, and anytime you have something that happens to you, and it's like you don't fully experience it, there's like a body component. If you have all this stuff in your body, just imagine how much energy it takes your body to really continue to suppress all that stuff, instead of doing what it's really designed to do, which is make you feel healthy and vibrant and alive and stuff like that. After a while, it just wears on you.

So it is important to start, whether you work through this stuff, whether it's with psychedelics or breathwork or other pathways, to start to work with this stuff so you can really start to release it and clear some of this stuff up. And again, that's why it's so important to have a qualified facilitator to be able to work with you if some of this stuff does come up so you can safely process through it.

[00:23:46] Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. One of the most interesting parts for me of hearing from researchers and facilitators who are doing psychedelic experiences is the extended neuroplasticity, as they describe it, of the brain to integrate new patterns of behavior and make meaningful changes in your life if you're ready to do that for things like addiction or substance use disorder or trauma and PTSD, things like that.

Is there any overlap in breathwork that you're seeing in your community as far as people's state experiences that they get in breathwork, being able to prolong out and affect change and malleability in their lives after that?

Michael Stone

That's a good question. The breathwork that I work with, that I created, NeuroDynamic Breathwork, it's specifically designed to allow that to happen. Part of it is that it's non-directive. What I mean by that is, it's like during the breathwork, the facilitator does not try to guide the breather's experience. In most breathworks, there is some level of facilitator guidance. Like they'll say to breathe deeper, connect to love, or do this or do that.

The underlying principle of what I'm doing is that the person's own inner guidance brings up the experience, and it knows much better. It's like this deeper part of their psyche knows much better what they're ready to experience than I possibly could. I could guess, but you don't guess on this stuff.

Meagen Gibson

That seems dicey.

Michael Stone

This is all about supporting people to access these inner resources that everybody has. As a result of that, as they do this on a more regular basis, if they do choose to make it into a practice like a yoga, and they start to continue to connect to their inner guidance, there's two things that happen.

First of all, they start to trust themselves more. Because many people, especially if they've had a history of trauma, one of the unfortunate side effects is that they make this unconscious decision, "I can't trust myself" because they went through an experience that they couldn't handle. That has a really important impact on relationships and other things that happen in their life later if they don't do some work on shifting that.

When you do this breathwork, where you start to see that when your inner guidance brings up these experiences that you really can handle them and process through them, it really starts to shift these thinking patterns, "Yes, I can trust myself". That makes it much easier than to work through some of these things, whether it's trauma or something else in your everyday life as you start to change these unconscious thinking patterns that then it supports you more in moving through things instead of holding you back.

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As you start to... Because it's unguided and because you start to get more connection to this inner guidance, first of all, again, you can regain self-trust. And second of all, when we do surveys, 75% of our breathers say that when they are in their everyday life, they have better access to this inner guidance, like this being able to more quiet the ego mind and connect to their intuitive self, to this deeper self in their everyday life.

So it really does... If you do make it into a practice, not obviously after one session, it's not a magic pill. But if you do really decide to make it into a practice, it does make a very deep, deep difference in your ability to connect to your inner being on an everyday basis in your life.

Meagen Gibson

That's a good touch point. I'm sure that that's really comforting for people as they're building their self-trust. Yeah, I can see that. Do you have any data on how many of your breathers have had a history of psychedelic experiences?

Michael Stone

I haven't done surveys, but it's more anecdotal because people share afterwards in the sharing circle after the breathwork. I would say at least 40% of people have had at least one psychedelic experience, maybe half. And I would say at least 30% are currently working with psychedelics in some way.

So there is a quite heavy crossover. Some people like to do both because they are a bit different. Some people, for instance, breathwork is many times used as an integrative practice from psychedelics. It can be used as something independent, but it's also commonly used as an integration because many times after a psychedelic session, there might be some loose ends that the breathwork session can then tie up and support the completion of the experience. It can be very powerful as an integration tool also after a psychedelic session.

Meagen Gibson

Then there's lots of reasons why people might not be interested in psychedelics at all. Where do they, obviously, I was going to say, where do they differ? I think that part of that is drugs. But also where do the experiences of psychedelics and breathwork, how do you see them being... We've talked about the ways that they're similar. How are they distinctly different outside of just the fact that you're not ingesting anything when you're doing breathwork, other than air?

Michael Stone

From my experience in breathwork, there is a wider range of experiences. And part of it is that we really encourage people to bring their body into the session, so to speak. Because many times, the first experiences that people have are what we call sensory experiences, where this stuck stuff in their body wants to release. And many people move around quite actively. Like they pound pillows and they really sound, they scream, they yell. They can be very active physically during the session, which is quite rare in psychedelics. Usually, you're just laying there and it's just happening and someone is sitting beside you.

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We really encourage people to, if your body wants to move, trust your body. This is all about regaining trust, really learning how to trust yourself and listen to yourself on a much more deep, profound level and bringing that back into your life. So you listen to your body, and if your body wants to move, you let it move. If your body wants to make sounds, you let it make sounds. It's really about... And if the emotions come up, you let the emotions flow. There's sensory experiences which in general, I would say, don't happen in psychedelics.

There's a lot of other experiences, for instance, that do happen in both. In both cases, you can get visuals. Some people think, "Oh, I can't get visuals in breathwork", but you do. Because, again, it's a different pathway to quiet the default mode network. In breathwork, it's the faster, deeper breathing, your CO2 level changes, your blood gets more alkaline, and it creates these changes in your brain. In psychedelics, it's chemically induced, but it goes to the same place.

Many of the experiences are similar. So visuals, you can get fractals, you can go back into these childhood experiences, but see them from a different perspective and take away a different meaning. You can have transpersonal experiences, where you feel like this oneness with the universe, or you go back into past life experiences, or ancestral healing experiences.

All those things, I would say, are common to both and available in both. But the real physical stuff, I would say, is more readily accessible in breathwork than in psychedelic experiences, where I don't think I've ever seen someone screaming and yelling, pounding pillows, and moving around, like dancing and stuff like that during a psychedelic session. Although I guess it could happen.

Meagen Gibson

I'm sure it's happened to somebody. We'll get that email, I'll send it to you.

Michael Stone

Especially if people take psychedelics and go to raves or something, obviously, they're going to move around. But in a session where you're on your own, laying down with a facilitator and doing a healing dose or whatever you want to call it. I rarely see that stuff.

Meagen Gibson

We've talked a lot about NeuroDynamic Breathing, and I understand that you're going to give us a taste of that. How can we get that started? You can give us a little example of what a breathwork session might be like with you.

Michael Stone

Absolutely. Just one thing before I do that, and that is just to give people a sense of what type of... We were talking a little bit about the types of experiences, but also the type of results that people get. Release from anxiety is very common. Something like 85% of people get relief from anxiety issues. 85% also have some relief from trauma, if that is something that they're bringing in. 67%

some release from depression, if they're bringing that in. 61% get increased connection to their intuitive self, to their creative self. More than half have improved romantic relationships. About half get more clarity on their purpose in life.

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You're not going to get all these experiences in one session, but those are all available ultimately. If that's a place where you're ready to experience it and you're open to having that experience. It's really you're ultimately in control in breathwork, which is really beautiful because it's interesting because it allows you to let go of control because you know you are in control. It makes it safer to... Because in the back of your head, you always know that if this is too much, I just slow down with that. It allows people to really dive in because they just have that... They know that if they need it, that safety net is there, or they can get support from the facilitator.

Meagen Gibson

And those of us with control issues like me.

Michael Stone

Yeah, exactly.

Meagen Gibson

Who are like, "Who has the time for six hours of psychedelic experiencing? I can commit to two hours of breathwork". That feels much more manageable, right?

Michael Stone

Right, exactly. Yeah. That was part of the reason I developed my own breathwork, because Holotropic is like a 10-hour all-day experience, it has to be done in person. I really wanted something that could be made accessible to people anywhere around the world very inexpensively. If they really wanted to do breathwork, they could do it no matter what. All they need is the internet connection, basically.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. You're going to give us a taste of what that's like right now, right?

Michael Stone

Yes, I will. All right. What I'm going to do right now is the normal breathing sessions are about one hour. There's a whole trajectory to the music. It gets very intense in the middle, and then it gets very gentle at the end for integration. But today, we're just going to do a taster session. It's more of what I would call a reset breathwork, where it's going to be gentle music for about eight minutes, and it's more for resetting your nervous system, putting you in a more softer space.

The breathing technique will be a little bit different than we usually use because it is more for just putting yourself more in your body and just getting a taste of what even eight minutes of just

deeper breathing, how it can really shift how you feel in relationship to just how you are in the world, so to speak, right after the session.

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The ego mind may shut down, it may not, because this is a short session. Those physiological changes I was talking to you about, do take a little bit of time to happen, but either way, it's fine. If your chit-chat mind is still there, you just stay focused on the breath, allow whatever wants to happen.

Again, the two watchwords are 'surrender' and 'trust'. This is all being brought up by your own inner guidance, and as best you can, you just want to surrender to the process. Just open your heart to whatever wants to happen. If your thoughts shut down, beautiful. If they don't, also perfect.

It's a very different way of being in life than we normally are, because we're normally always comparing things to how our ego mind wants them to be or how we expect them to be. We very rarely just are completely present with what's happening in the moment.

That's another thing that breathwork can do is when you start to bring this back into your life, it can really deepen your whole experience of life as you can get a little bit out of this whole judging mind, so to speak, and just with what is and just experience the beauty of every moment in life instead of being in the future or the past and compare it.

Okay, so let's... We've got to do a screen share here. Okay, so during the session, this is an eyes closed experience. And you can either wear an eye mask or just close your eyes, that's fine. Again, we are going to play music. So you might want to... If you're on a phone, you might want to grab some earbuds or something just so you can have a nice experience with the music. Or if you want to put a headset on, you can. But again, all you're going to be doing is breathing, focusing on the breath and just allow it.

The breath technique we're going to use today... And again, these techniques in breathwork are not a way to breathe in your everyday life. This is specifically for breathwork. You're going to be taking full deep breaths, just at normal pace, though, not faster than normal. Just at normal speed is fine. Even if your body wants to do it a little slower than normal, that's okay, too. But you can just start with just normal pace, but full and deep.

We're going to start with breathing in and out through the mouth. But if at a certain point your body wants to switch to nose breathing, that's also fine. It just looks like this. When you breathe in, your belly expands. When you breathe out, it goes back to normal.

It's like this. When you breathe in, it's like... You can see my hand gets pushed out. When you breathe out, back to normal. You can see I'm just breathing at a normal pace. You want to breathe in a way where there are no gaps, where you're always breathing in or breathing out, so there's no breath holds or anything like that.

So just full deep breaths, but just enjoyable, not stressful, normal pace. Eyes closed. And just letting whatever wants to happen to happen. And your body may want to move a little bit or little

sounds may want to come out. Either one's fine. And you can do this sitting in a chair. If you want to lay down, you can also. Either one's fine. So I'll just give you a moment to get set and get comfortable. If you have anything really tight around your chest or your belly, you might want to loosen it up just so you can breathe freely.

[00:39:56]

Hey, so let's get started. All right, so just closing your eyes. Just bringing your attention inside and noticing, is there any tension in your body? And if you can, just energetically releasing it.

It's going through your feet, your legs, your belly, your head, your shoulders. Just allowing yourself to be as relaxed as possible in this moment.

The eyes closed and letting go of what's going to happen later today or what happened earlier. Just being in the moment. Being with your body, being with yourself.

And now deepening the breath. Starting to take full deep breaths in and out of the mouth, just at normal speed. Starting to breathe fully and deeply. Deeply and fully.

In and out of the mouth, and breathing in a way where there are no gaps, where you're always breathing in or breathing out, and making it an enjoyable breath.

Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply. And just at the end, when the music stops, just stay eyes closed just for another minute, and I'll bring you back a little meditation. We're now breathing again, fully and deeply. Deeply and fully, no gaps.

And in a moment, music will begin, and I will see you on the other side.

Now, if you haven't done so already, bringing the breath back to a normal rhythm. We're going back to normal breathing. If it feels right, just keeping your eyes closed for just a moment longer. And taking some time to be with yourself in a very gentle, soft way.

Taking your time, when you're ready, you can open your eyes. If you want to keep them closed a bit longer, that's totally fine, too. But when you do open them, just noticing, do you feel any different in your body? Do you feel more grounded? Just see if there's any shift at all from how you felt nine minutes ago to now.

Again, this was just a taster session, very gentle music and more gentle breathing. If you do want to try a real hour session, we do offer a free session for everybody in the summit on the website.

Meagen Gibson

Michael, thank you very much for taking us through that example session and everything that you've shared with us today.

How can people find out more about that breathwork offer and you and NeuroDynamic Breathwork?

[00:52:28] Michael Stone

If you just come to our website, which is very simply www.BreathworkOnline.com. You'll see on the front page, there's a little button you push saying, 'Try a Free Breathwork Session'. We do five or six live sessions every week. Some are in the evening, some are in the morning. So whether you live in Europe or the US or Australia, there's always a time that works for you.

With these experiential things, ultimately, it's the same with psychedelics. Ultimately, if you feel called to do it, you really have to try it out to see what it feels like, what it really the experience is. That's part of why I gave the little taster session, so people could get a sense of what it's really like just to focus on the breath.

I do encourage you to give it a try if this resonates with you at all, if you feel called to do it. No obligation. They're 2 hours long. There's an intro talk where we really give you all the information that you need to dive in safely, an hour of breathwork, then afterwards, people have an opportunity to share their experiences, which is a very...

It's never recorded, so it's always private. It's just a very safe space for people to connect from all around the world. It's a very beautiful, heart-oriented space that many times people don't have in their everyday life, where they're not being judged. People are just holding space for them.

Meagen Gibson

Very beautiful. Thank you again, Michael Stone.

Michael Stone

Thank you for having me on the summit.