

Manifest your desired relationship with breathwork

Guest: Michael Stone

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Meagen Gibson - [00:00:10]

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, co-host of the Relationship Super Conference. 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 to achieve his vision of allowing anyone in the world access to expanded states of awareness safely from the comfort of their home. In the last 3 years he's facilitated over 800 online sessions in Neurodynamic Breathwork Online with participants in over 120 countries.

At the end of our talk, Michael is going to guide us through a sample of Neurodynamic Breathwork, so make sure you stick around until the end.

Michael, thank you so much for joining us today.

Michael Stone

Thank you for having me, Meagen. I'm looking forward to the interview.

Meagen Gibson

So, Michael, I understand that having a successful relationship was one of your important goals when you were growing up, but that you were struggling to make it happen. Can you tell me more about that and what it has to do with breathwork?

Michael Stone

Yes, sure. I'd be happy to.

So I grew up in a fairly normal family. There wasn't a lot of trauma, there wasn't a lot of horrible things going on. And I was pretty intelligent, as in left brain intelligent.

So as I was growing up, I got into school, I got all good grades, I was doing very well. Looking from the outside, I was doing very well. And I also had this vision in my head that my parents seemed very happy. And one of my goals that I'd set when I was young was I wanted to have a relationship like that. I want to be in a happy relationship. I had a younger sister, so I even was modeling. I want to have two kids just like them. This is great. So a relationship with two kids was high on my priority list, and they were my model, in essence, when I was growing up along with all the other things that I wanted to have in my life.

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And as I got older, I was on the path of high school, college, getting good grades. I went into engineering and science because that was what I was drawn to and what I was interested in. Also, my father was an engineer, so I was, in a way, modeling him too. And got out of college, got a job, was doing very well, making good money, but on the side of the relationship, it just wasn't happening. And I would go into relationship after relationship, and each one ended in exactly the same way, and within a very short period of time. Within 2 to 5 months. Where it ended very dramatically and where it was a really bad break up and generally I wouldn't talk to the person again.

So it was far far far from what I was looking for in a successful relationship. And I kept thinking, I'm a smart person, I get straight A's in school, I'm good in business, I've got my MBA, I can figure this out. This can't be that complicated. And what I came up with, based on my personal development at that time was, there's millions of women out there, I'm just not choosing the right ones. I have to make better choices. If I make a better choice, it's all going to be great. But it wasn't. I was choosing different women. It still didn't work.

So I was really stuck. And not only was it damaging to me in the fact that I was frustrated by not being able to meet one of my life goals, but I started to lose trust in myself. Where before I'd been really confident in my ability to deal with life, to get ahead, all of a sudden there was an area that just seemed like a complete mystery that I had no idea how to move forward in.

And then at one point, I met this woman who I wanted to at least check out, and maybe this is the one. It was just like the next one on the list, so to speak. And she was still living with her ex-boyfriend. They'd already broken up. And she one day told me, "Michael, I want to go down to South America". I went, "Why?". She said, "I want to go into the Amazon. I want to see pink dolphins". In my head I'm going, what the heck is a pink dolphin? But I'm also saying, who cares. If I can get her into a space where we're together for a few days, I can see whether we're good together. This could be great. And get her away from her ex-boyfriend. So I said, let's go. I figured whatever it is, let's do it.

So we ended up going to South America, to Peru. And when we got to Peru, when we were going to go out on this reserve that we're going to where this woman had bought this land to preserve the Amazon, she said, "Would you like to have a local shaman go out with you?". And so it's just this little guy, about 4'10, who didn't speak any English. So I figured, sure, bring him along. Why not? So he came out with us.

And the first night we were there, he said, "Would you guys like to participate in a religious ceremony that we do down here?". So I'm thinking, I never just say yes to those kinds of things. It's like my science mind. So I have to go, "What's involved?". She was totally different. She's like, "Yeah, let's do it". So I had to satisfy my left brain mindset. "What are we going to do?". He said, "It's very simple. I go out into the rainforest, I collect a vine and a leaf and put it all together, boil it up, and you drink it.

Now, I'm a chemical engineer. You don't do that kind of stuff. It's like when you're putting something in your body, you know what you're putting in. And also, it's like when you're mixing something up, it's like 0.52g of this and 0.62g. It's not like you grab some stuff from the forest and put it in a witch's brew and drink it. So my initial reaction is, there is no way I'm drinking this stuff.

But the woman I was with goes, "We have to do this, Michael. This will be awesome. What an adventure". So now I've got this mental conflict going on and one side of me is going, Michael, you came all the way down here just to see if you're a good fit for this woman. If you say no to this, this week is over. You may as well have wasted a week of your life.

And then this other side of me is going, this is not safe. You've never done something like this just spontaneously. What are you thinking? And finally that piece of me that just said, "Okay, let's just do it", won. And that was just a breakthrough for me right away because I wasn't a very spontaneous person in that I was always thinking things through and analyzing what to do. So I had the breakthrough. I said, "Okay, let's just do it".

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And so we drank the witch's potion. That's how I saw it at the time. And I had this amazing journey. It was actually Ayahuasca, which I'd never heard of at the time. I didn't even know what it was, but it's a plant medicine which takes you on this psychedelic journey. And I went into this space where, really for the first time in my life, I felt like the world was a safe place, and I felt like the world was happening for me, not to me. It was just this amazing experience. Where before, I always kind of felt like life is a battle. I have to protect myself.

And so I had this amazing experience. It lasted about 3 hours. And then when I got back to the United States I'm going, okay, if I can have that kind of experience with a substance, then the receptors are there in my brain. There's got to be another way to have that experience without the substance, because I'm not flying down to Peru every weekend. That's not going to happen.

Meagen Gibson

That's not a sustainable way to access that state of consciousness is it?

Michael Stone

So I started to search, and I looked at various things, like shamanism. And then I finally landed on breathwork. And when I looked at breathwork, it looked really interesting based on what I was reading about it, but I also wanted it to be scientifically based. So I started looking around at the various breathwork teachers and there were quite a few. Like the first one I'm looking at, how did the person develop this breathwork?

So the first one I read in this little bio, "One day I just got this download from the universe, and now I'm presenting it to the world". I'm going, not for me. And finally I landed on holotropic breathwork, which was developed by Dr. Stan Grof, who's a psychiatrist, and he developed it through his research with LSD psychotherapy back in the day when it was legal. And they were actually looking to see if we could have some benefit for therapy.

And after it was banned he spent a good chunk of time looking for, there were other ways to access these, what he called, non ordinary states of consciousness. Because he found that people, when they were on these LSD journeys in a controlled setting where he was sitting with them and working with them was, in many cases, much, much more effective than just talk therapy, because their mental defenses weren't in the way. Like in talk therapy, to a certain degree, you're always looking at, I want to look good for the therapist. I don't really want to look like a total idiot. So there's always this filter of the ego mind. And with the LSD that was gone, it was just kind of coming up from their inner being what was going on, so for healing and for working through.

So ultimately, he did research. He saw what traditional societies had done in order to access these healing states. And what he saw was that there were two threads that were common to almost all of these traditional societies. One was some kind of work with the breath, and the second one was with sound. For instance, in Buddhist meditation, you're watching the breath. In shamanic healing, they're doing rattling or drumming. So these were two threads that came through everything.

And then he did some study in modern consciousness theory. And then ultimately, he developed a breathwork that would allow people to drop into these psychedelic style states without substances, just with breath in a very natural way. And he called it holotropic breathwork.

So I tried that, and had an amazing experience. Okay, this is for me. I'm in. And I started doing more breathwork, and within the first five or six sessions I got to the bottom of why I was unable to have a successful relationship.

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And what I found was in breathwork you can have a wide variety of experiences, but one of the experiences that is available is you can go visually back into your childhood and see things that you may have forgotten, but see them from a different angle, from a more observer perspective, from an adult perspective, instead of seeing it from your child perspective when it happened.

So what I saw was, I was 5 or 6 years old, and I saw a conversation with my mother when she was telling me about her childhood and how she grew up. And both of my parents are German Jews. So they were Nazi escapees, basically. So they had to run for their lives just before World War II, they got out.

And she was telling me about her family history, and where they'd been in Germany for hundreds of years, her father was a World War I hero, he'd saved a bunch of lives, he got the Iron Cross, which is the highest reward they give for courage and that type of thing. And one of her ancestors had saved their village by paying Napoleon to go around instead of burning it down, he was like the richest guy in town. And all of a sudden, from almost one day to the next, they had to run for their lives. And it wasn't just they had to leave, even her friends turned against her because their parents were telling them, "Don't spend time with her, she's Jewish".

When she told me this story, and even though she didn't tell me this, I made an unconscious decision that the world was an unsafe place in my mind as a child. I'm going, if you can't trust your country, and with all the things that her family had given to the country and to the village, who can you trust? Even her friends turned against her.

So I was bringing that unconscious conditioning to each relationship that I was having. And when you go into a relationship from a place of, the world is an unsafe place, I can't trust the world, you bring that to, I can't trust the other person. So I was always getting to a certain point in the relationship where I was opening up till all of a sudden this conditioning kicked in and this unsafe dealing came up and I'd shut down, and it couldn't go any further. So it had nothing to do with the other person.

And if I'd have been a little more aware back before I did all this journey, I would have really noticed that the one common thread in all these relationships was not the other person, it was me. But at the time I was thinking it's like, well, who do I choose? That's really the important thing in the relationship. And so once I saw that, I could start to work with it, how I was sabotaging all the relationships and driving these women crazy, because they wanted to be in a relationship, I wasn't letting them in. And it wasn't like I made a conscious decision to do that. It was all this unconscious conditioning that was coming into the relationship. So once I saw that, I could start to work with that. Once you bring it to consciousness and see the pattern, then you can actually work with it so that you can turn it into a positive, not a negative.

And so in future relationships, I would actually watch for it. Because I knew it would come up, it doesn't go away overnight just because you see it's there. It's been there for 20/30 years. And when I started to see it coming up, instead of just being that block and shutting down, I would talk to the person I was in the relationship with and say, "You know what? This is coming up for me right now. This is what happened. This was kind of like my conditioning, but I'm committed to working through it. Please stay with me here. I'm working with it right now, but I'm committed to the relationship".

And it completely shifted the nature of the relationships because they saw my commitment to the relationship because I was being honest and open with them. Before I couldn't be honest and open because I didn't know what was going on. So it's really about you having to bring it to consciousness.

And I changed, even though I still was in the space of, what's important is who do you choose in a relationship? It wasn't now who I chose to be with. It was like, what part of myself do I choose to bring to the relationship? That was the choice that mattered. So it completely shifted my whole definition of who do you choose? It was about me, not about the other person. And I started to choose that part of me that was fearless, that was committed to the relationship, to bring instead of that part of me that was afraid of getting hurt.

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And so it didn't change overnight, but it got better and better and better. My latest relationship has been for over a decade, it's been amazing. And it's not that we don't fight or we don't argue, but we're both committed to working through things and to expanding and growing. But it was a journey. It's like first seeing the conditioning and then being willing to integrate that information and working with it in your life to actually really bring it into your life.

Meagen Gibson

And so if I hear what you're saying really correctly, it was the breathwork that allowed you to get this self awareness and the consciousness around your conditioning and the patterns of thinking and things that were getting in the way of your relationships.

Michael Stone

Exactly 100%.

Meagen Gibson

Now I'm just curious, does that continue to happen as you do breathwork? Are you constantly having little nuggets revealed to you?

Michael Stone

Yes but it's not always in regards to relationship.

Meagen Gibson

Right.

Michael Stone

In breathwork the theory is that everybody has, what I call, an inner guiding intelligence. Some people see it as a connection to source or higher self. It's that part of your psyche that already has all the answers, and you just have to get access, really. And normally our ego mind is so crazy and chit chatty and trying to figure things out and trying to protect ourselves, that we have very, very little access to that quiet inner voice.

And it's the same inner voice where we get these flashes of creativity. And many times the major inventions in history are not when people are trying to think them through, they're just laying in the bath and relaxing or in the shower, and it just comes to them. Because they let go of the thinking mind and just allow more access to this inner wisdom that we all have.

So in the breathwork sessions, it's kind of like whatever is up for you in that moment, that's what's going to happen. If you need body releases because there's too much tension in your body, that will happen. If you're ready to go to the next step in the relationship, something will come up around that.

So it's really about trusting the process. It's just like life. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but it's about trusting the journey and trusting that whatever happens you can learn something from it and take the next step. Breathwork is the same way. It's just a journey, just like in life.

Meagen Gibson - [00:18:24]

And you said connecting to source and things like that, and for me, I don't know if this will resonate with people at home listening, but it's almost like getting quiet enough just to hear your own intuition, whether that's connected to source or whatever makes sense for you.

Michael Stone

You're totally on the same track. Exactly.

Most people, when they're trying to make a big decision, they list the positives and the negatives. It's all about their thinking mind. And ultimately you can never really figure it out because there's always a balance. There's positives, there's negatives, there's this, there's that. And if you just did it just working with positives and negatives, you'd never really take a big step in life and take a risk because your ego mind doesn't want to fail. It's got all these things around. I don't want to look bad, I don't want to fail. And ultimately you have to connect to that intuition, to that inner desire, to really be who you can possibly be, to bring yourself to the world, to take those big steps. And yes, intuition is part of that.

Meagen Gibson

And even beyond a fear of failure, I would say even perfectionism keeps so many people from even getting close to vulnerability or risk. We're striving for such a high measure that we don't ever allow ourselves to take risks.

Michael Stone

And perfectionism is interesting because many people think this is great, I want to be perfect, but the reality is it keeps you from doing anything. It's really a safety mechanism of your mind so that you don't have to jump out and take risks. So it's an excuse because you're never going to be perfect. It's not possible. So in a way, it's just a mental excuse not to have to take a risk, not to have to work through the fear. Things that we see look like they're positive, they may not be, they may be defense mechanisms.

Meagen Gibson

And in the context of relationships where perfectionism comes in is I see people who have been, maybe in similar situations to you where they've been trying to pursue a relationship for a while, they can't quite figure out what's going on and so they just start collecting evidence of what they don't want as protection. They're looking for this perfect human being that will meet this checklist of needs instead of meeting each human being where they are and assessing whether they're a good fit for you at the time.

Michael Stone

Exactly. And as I went through breathwork there were some other things about relationship that definitely came up that supported me in really moving to where I am today in relationships.

Just an example or two. One is, I used to see relationships as, first of all, as 50-50. It's like I'm 50% responsible. The other person is 50% responsible. And also my goal in a relationship, and this was part of my own insecurity because I hadn't really worked on myself and done my own inner work to gain my confidence, as I was really looking for someone that I could take care of. And not in a way where they would expand and grow, but in a way where they wouldn't leave. They would be dependent on me so I could pay money for them, so I could take care of, I could buy their healthcare so they wouldn't, that kind of thing.

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And I wasn't even thinking about this consciously. These are some of the things that came up in breathwork: what am I looking for in a relationship? Why am I in it? And when I saw that, I'm going, that's not what I really want. It's like, no, I want to do my own work, gain my own confidence. And then what I really saw was that what I want in a relationship is to be in a relationship where I could support the other person to expand and grow. And when you do it to the other person, it comes back to you also.

And when you look at things from that perspective, you have to expand and grow in order to support the other person. So it's really this big circle that takes you higher and higher into the personal development field. Both of you grow at the same time. And that shifted everything.

So it really changed what I call my definition of love. Where I used to see love as, I want to help the other person. I want to make sure they don't have to worry about anything. I'll pay all their bills, I'll do this, I'll do that, and they'll love me and I'll feel good about myself. It's like strengthening my ego. I'm helping that other person. I'm great, kind of thing, but by putting myself above the other person. In essence, it's just like an ego thing. And then when I shifted my definition of love to support the other person, to grow and expand, it made a huge difference. I started attracting different people for one thing. I wasn't attracting people who wanted to be taken care of.

And there's a huge difference in... They have this old story about if you give a person a fish, you feed them for a day. If you teach them how to fish, they can feed themselves for the rest of their lives. And it's the same thing that I was looking at. I was the person giving them the fish every day. They'd be dependent on me the next day for giving them another fish.

And the whole thing with 50-50, I also saw that it can't be like that. Relationships don't work when they're 50-50 because there's always this exit door of, well, this is the other person's responsibility, I'm not taking it. This is part of their 50%. So I completely shifted to that. That from my perspective it's 100-0. I'm 100% responsible for this relationship. And that also made a huge difference because everything that happened, I took responsibility for. And if I wasn't happy with it, I needed to do something to create a shift and a change.

And the other really important thing that I saw was that relationships are not easy. You're constantly up against your own stuff that's being brought up, because you're very close to the person and you're very open and vulnerable to them so when stuff comes up, it can go very deep. And if you're going to be in a successful relationship, you have to be committed to your own personal growth or it's just never going to work.

And there's just another old story. There was this guy who was in this training as a Monk, who went to the head Monk and said, "I'm completely committed to being awakened. I've been here for years. It's just not happening. What am I doing wrong?". He said, "I'll show you". So he takes him to this river. He has him lay down the river. He holds his head underwater, and the guy starts struggling because he can't breathe. So he's struggling and struggling and struggling and struggling, and finally he pushes his head above and takes a breath. And he said, "When you're as committed to being awakened as you are to taking that breath it will happen. You have to be 100% in".

That's the way it is, at least for me, in relationships too. You've got to be 100% committed so when your own personal stuff comes up, you just don't let it come out and happen and blame the other person or start complaining or whatever. You have to be willing to do your inner work on a moment by moment basis. Each moment is about, what can I bring to this relationship? Not what can I take from it?

Because for me, it used to be, what can I get from it? And what I could get from it that I could feel good about myself because I was helping the other person? And when I shifted it to in every moment, just looking at what can I bring to the relationship? And bringing meaning, how can I support the other person to evolve and grow? All those things just made incredible changes in the nature of my

relationships, the joy I was getting from them and also the people I was attracting. So you bring in what you're looking for.

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So it's really important to look at what is your definition of love? What are you looking for in a relationship? It's a huge step in terms of having successful relationships.

Meagen Gibson

You mentioned a lot of takeaways of your personal experience, but I know you've also guided a ton of people through a breathwork experience of your own design. And not to share anybody's information that isn't yours to share, but in general terms, what have been the experiences of the students that go through breathwork experiences with you around relationships? Have they been consistent with your own?

Michael Stone

Yes. Well, it's never exactly the same because everybody's on their own path and needs different things but I've worked with tens of thousands of people in breathwork now, and in the area specifically in relationship, what I found is that there are some common threads in terms of what are the specific things that people say support them in having good relationships?

And I broke it down into this little mnemonic for myself, which is BRIDGE. So it's like, how do you bridge the gap from the relationship you have right now to the relationship of your dreams? And so each thing stands for something. And these are all things that I saw from my own experiences and from the experiences of my breathers that they shared afterwards. So they're not something like conceptual that I thought up.

So the first is B, which means no blaming. Blaming the other person in a relationship is, in essence, putting yourself above them and not taking the responsibility for fixing something. So it's an ego mind thing about I'm better than you, and you need to fix this or else I'm not going to be with you or else whatever, in their head, the consequences are going to be.

And then R would be, relationship to self. If you don't work on your relationship with yourself, it's going to be almost impossible to have a successful relationship with somebody else. You have to do your own work. Because it's all coming from you, and then it comes back. It has to start with you.

And the third thing is I, which is inner work. And in breathwork that's what we call it. You're doing your inner work. You're looking at your unconscious thinking patterns, you're looking at seeing and getting to the bottom of why you're doing certain things. Your brain will not let you have experiences to do things where there's not some benefit to you, but many times you don't see the benefit.

Just as an example, let's say you want to be in a successful relationship. And this is a real example from life, from one of my breathers. And it was so important to them, and they're thinking mind was going, this is my priority. And when they got into breathwork, what they saw was that there was a part of their mind, you can call it child mind or this kind of decision that they made when they were 6 or 7 years old that's saying, the most important thing to me is my freedom. I need my freedom in life. So whenever they were getting close to being in a good relationship, this thing would kick in, I can't be in a relationship and have total freedom because there's another person I have to deal with. So they wouldn't dive in.

So it's really about starting to look at what are these things in your mind that are keeping you from really manifesting? If you really want something and you're focused on it and you're dedicated to it, you'll ultimately get it. If you can see where your unconscious blocks are so that your unconscious mind and your conscious mind are both moving in the same direction and not pulling in separate directions, it'll happen. So doing your inner work is incredibly important.

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And then next is D, which is do not complain. And complaining is, if you really take a step back, complaining is a dysfunction in one of your other most critical relationships, and that is your relationship with the present moment, your relationship with life. When you're complaining, you're saying that life is not the way it's supposed to be. It needs to be different. You're making a judgment about how things are. And if you resist life, you're going to also resist your relationship because your relationship is part of life. It's all together.

And so really, you're giving away your power when you're complaining. You're basically saying, I'm at the effect of what's happening in the world or this relationship, whatever. I'm a victim, so to speak. Versus if you can really watch yourself and stop this. Everybody complains, it's just this mind mechanism really.

And it's mostly unconscious. And if you start being conscious of how many times you complain during the day, it'll freak you out. And it can be, complaints are just as simple as, it's raining today that sucks or whatever it is. Just even in the little things as you walk through your life during the day, or things should be a little bit different than they are, you'll be surprised how much of your life you waste complaining and not really fully appreciating and diving deeply into what life's experience can offer you.

But it's even more important in a relationship. Who wants to be around a person that complains all the time, first of all? It's just a total downer. Come on, man. And second of all, just by complaining about the other person, again you're making it so that I'm better than you. It's like your fault. You need to fix this in order for me to love you. You're almost like setting conditions upon your love. You're turning it into a business transaction. If you change, I'll love you.

So you're really being in a place where, the way I see it, there's two languages we can speak. One, is a language that comes from the heart, a heart language, and the other is a language that comes from the head, the head language. And when we speak from our head language, we're never forwarding the relationship. You have to come from a place of the heart. And when you're complaining, you're not being in your heart. So if you can just bring yourself back to your heart and it'll shift.

And one of the ways that you can do your inner work in a very, very powerful way in the relationship is, your emotions are just messengers. They're messengers from your inner being that are trying to tell you something. They're not bad. They're not good or bad. They're just messengers. They're giving you information. And we tend to, with our emotions, accept the positive ones and resist the negative ones and suppress them, so we never get the messages that we need to get from what we have decided are negative emotions.

And in a relationship our tendency is, if the other person says something and you get upset, to project the cause of the emotion onto the other person. So let's say they say something and you get irritated. You say, "You're making me angry. Why do you say that? I feel disrespected. You're disrespecting me". It's like you project your internal state onto the other person.

If you really take a step back and think about it, it's like, if you're driving a car and someone cuts in front of you, one person as a driver will be really upset and they'll start screaming and yelling at the person. I know many people like that, but another person won't care at all. And it really depends on not what happened, but what is the meaning you took from it. The person who gets upset will have created a meaning like they're disrespecting me or something like that. The person who isn't won't go there at all. They'll just say, oh, that person must be in a hurry. They have to get somewhere. Awesome. I'm just 25ft further back. Who cares? I'm happy I could be of service to them.

So it all depends on what meaning you take. And when you're in a relationship and the person says something and you get activated or irritated, usually the meaning we create is something that they caused something to you. They disrespected me so they got me angry. They did this, they did that. And if you can shift that to what I call, taking it vertically, living in the horizontal plane is like looking at the world has control over my internal emotional states. Versus looking at it from a perspective of this

is coming up to teach me something. And if you can just take a step back and look at what's really happening here.

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So instead of just projecting it out, saying, okay, I'm feeling upset. Is this feeling familiar to me? When was the first time I felt this? What meaning am I creating out of this? Okay, yeah, I remember I felt this when I was 7 years old and this and that was happening, and I made a decision then. Oh my God, I'm an adult now. I don't have to let a 5 year old kid run my life.

So take a couple of minutes. Just do your work instead of yelling at the other person or whatever, and then open your eyes and then instead of yelling at the other person, say, you know what? Thank you so much for saying that. It brought up an emotion in me, and it was my teacher in that moment, I learned something incredibly profound about myself. This is what I learned. Thank you for being my teacher in this moment. Thank you for being my Buddha, however you see it. Just imagine how just doing that would shift the relationship. You never yell at the other person. You never get upset with the other person. You always see them as your teacher and as your guide in life.

So that's part of doing your own inner work. And many of these things I saw in my own breathwork sessions, but people also got in their breathwork sessions.

And then the next thing is, the G is like, I see it as a God or Goddess. And it's like when I speak to the person I'm in a relationship with, I visualize them as being a goddess. You could do it a different way. You could do it as a queen or as a person you respect. That's just how I do it.

And I'm saying, okay, if this person was this goddess and I'm visualizing them, how would I speak to them? How would I be with them? How would I talk to them? And I certainly wouldn't disrespect them. So it makes a huge difference when I'm visualizing them like that in terms of how I treat them, how I react to them. And many years ago when I wasn't being conscious, I would be disrespectful to the other person in many different ways, which is incredibly damaging to a relationship.

But just visualizing them, for me this works, as a goddess has completely shifted that. So when I talk to them, I'm very respectful, I'm very open. I try to just keep my heart open and be present for them. And it allows me to be more present, because not being present with the person is being disrespectful. If you ask a person a question and then your mind is wandering and you're not really listening, the other person will feel that and they'll feel disrespected because you don't really want to know, your mind is already on to the next thing.

So it allowed me to be more present with my partner, even with them eating. It's like I wouldn't just be eating, eating, eating, I'd also be present with what's happening with them. It wasn't just about me.

And the last thing, which is the E, which is what we've already spoken about, is supporting my relationship partner to evolve and grow. That is so important to me right now. And that's a huge, huge thing to me, and not only to me, but to other people that have been in breathwork, in terms of seeing that they've changed their definition of love and what they see and how they can contribute to their relationship in the most positive way.

Meagen Gibson

I love that. I was almost afraid for a minute there that we had gotten off and we weren't going to get to G and E, but I was keeping track because I really liked the acronym. I mean, all of those were fantastic, and I could spend some dedicated time to 'Do Not Complain' I'm sure, in addition to all the rest of them.

So I'm conscious of the time, and I definitely want to make sure that we hear what exactly happens during a Neurodynamic Breathwork session and then get a sample of that as well.

Michael Stone - [00:39:33]

Sure. So a Neurodynamic Breathwork session, it's approximately a 2 hour experience. And the first piece of it, the first about 40 minutes, is an introductory talk to make sure that everybody understands exactly the experiences that can come up and how to work with them and how to drop into them as deeply as possible and how to surrender into the process, which is very important.

And then after that, there's an actual breathing experience, which is about 1 hour, where in essence, you're breathing more deeply than you normally do and a little faster over a period of time. And then after a certain amount of time, you allow the body to take over and do whatever breathing technique it wants to. And by doing this faster, deeper breathing, you're actually creating some physiological changes in your body that support the quieting of the ego mind.

So you drop into this place of stillness, or where you don't have this constant chitchat in your head where you can connect to this inner guidance, which then brings you the experience that you're ready to have in that moment.

So you have the experience. And some people have strong emotional releases. Some people have insights in terms of in relationships, or get downloads of how to resolve issues in their life. Other times it can be a trauma release, for instance. Many people, your body could shake for half an hour as it's releasing trauma, which is one of the ways that your body does release trauma. In the same way that if a deer crosses the road, if it gets hit by something and it's okay, but it's kind of stunned, it'll shake for a few minutes just to release the trauma, and then it moves forward.

So it can be all those. Sometimes people visually go back into their childhood like I did, and see things from a different perspective where it can support them in moving forward. Sometimes people feel like they get past life experiences. Some people get visuals, some people don't. But basically you get the experience that you're ready to have and process in that moment. And listen to music. Music is playing. Music also supports the experience.

So at the end of it, you come back down. We do a little couple minute guided meditation, and then there's a sharing group where people share their experiences with the group of people.

It can be done online or in person. Right now it's almost all online because of COVID. There's anywhere from 50 to 250 or 300 people from around the world, all in a very open hearted way sharing their experience. First of all, it's a great integration to just put words to the experience and connect it from this right brain experience to the left brain experience. And to also just have this amazing sense of community of people who are in an open, vulnerable space and who are creating, in essence, when you share you're creating relationship. You're being present, you're being open, you're sharing from your heart. And it's a great practice in bringing that into your romantic relationship, too.

Also, it's just very supportive being in a group of people like that and having this amazing community to work with. And that's it.

Meagen Gibson

Especially a shared experience with different experiences individually.

Michael Stone

Yes, exactly.

Meagen Gibson

Important part of it, I'm sure.

Michael Stone - [00:43:08]

Yes.

Meagen Gibson

Well, I understand that you're prepared to give us a little taste of that today.

Michael Stone

Yes, exactly.

So what we're going to do today, normally it's a 1 hour experience. We're just going to do 5 to 6 minutes today just to give people a taste of what it feels like in your body.

Really just see how you are right now, what kind of mental frame are you in? How are you feeling? And just be open to, just by doing 5 or 6 minutes of breathing to music, is there a shift? Even if it's just a gentle shift, and just see what comes up. Some people will have more powerful experiences, for some people it could be gentle, but just be open to whatever wants to happen and open your heart just to breathe and see what comes up from being in a place of beginner's mind and curiosity.

Meagen Gibson

All right. Well, I'm certainly ready to begin.

Michael Stone

Okay. So I'll just give you just a minute or two breathing instructions, and then we'll get started.

So what you want to do with the breath is, first of all, you want to breathe in and out through the mouth. And there's a couple of reasons for that. One is it's easier to move more air. And especially in a 5 or 6 minute experience, you want to get the thing going because the additional air does create certain changes in your physiology.

And also whenever you're in a release state or emotional state, your body always switches to mouth breathing. It's just a natural thing that it does. So it kind of gives you permission to release.

And second of all, you want to breathe deeply. So you want to take full, deep breaths so your diaphragm expands. And when you breathe in, if you put your hands on your belly, your belly will expand, so your belly goes out. You're breathing deeply into your lungs.

And thirdly, you want to breathe in a way where there are no gaps, where you're always breathing in or breathing out, just creating this beautiful circle of breath.

And fourth, just breathe a little bit faster than normal, but the fullness and the depth of the breath is more important than the speed. So it's kind of like (breathing example). And find something that feels comfortable to you. It shouldn't be stressful. Don't tense up your body, I'm going to make this happen. And it shouldn't be like this panting breath. The fullness and the depth, again, is more important. Full, deep breaths, just a little faster than normal.

And if it gets towards the end and the music is very soft, the last couple of minutes, and it feels like your breath just wants to come back to normal, that's totally fine, too, as it gets towards the end where your breath starts to want to calm down.

And just open your heart to whatever wants to happen. Just surrender. Let go. Be with what is. And don't go in with any intention or expectation. You're just being a completely open space.

[00:46:05]

And also, if you're in a situation right now where you're walking around or whatever, you want to move to a place where you can be half quiet, no one's going to bother you. You can do this sitting up in a chair, it's totally fine, or laying down or whatever, but this is a closed eye experience. So you want to be able to close your eyes where you won't be disturbed for the next 10 minutes or so. Opening your eyes really jars you out of the process. About 80% of our energy comes in and out through our visual cortex. So this is an inner adventure, inner journey, so you want to keep your eyes closed just to get to a place where you won't be disturbed. And some people like to wear an eye mask, if you want to you can do that, too, or just closing your eyes is fine either way.

And you might have some tissues if you have some just so you can wipe your face or whatever, if you start to sweat or whatever. And we're ready to go.

Meagen Gibson

All right. And I just want to clear with you, I would really like to leave people off with you. I would like for you to close this. I don't think they need to see me again. I'm going to participate, but if you wouldn't mind, I'm going to say thank you to you right now so that I don't have to interrupt people's experience at the end with my formal goodbye.

So, Michael, thank you for being with us, and thank you for taking us through this breathwork experience.

Michael Stone

Thank you for interviewing me. I appreciate it.

All right. And then at the end of the breathwork I'll just do a couple of minutes, just a little relaxed guiding to bring you back, and then just talk for a couple of minutes at the end to tell you, if you do want to pursue breathwork, how to do it for free with me for a while.

Actually, maybe I should do that now, because at the end people are in a bit of an altered space sometimes.

Meagen Gibson

If people want to hear more about you, Michael, how can they do that?

Michael Stone

So my website is breathworkonline.com just breathworkonline.com. Very simple.

And so if you do want to give this a try, just check it out. And with something like this, it's experiential. I could talk about it forever but ultimately you need to really experience it for yourself to see if it's something that you resonate with and works with you.

And so if you go to the home page, you'll get a chance to try out a session for free. Just a little button you click, "Try a free session". And then if it's something that you do resonate with, you'll get an email offer afterwards to breathe for a whole month for free. And we do 20 live sessions every month. So you can really turn it into a practice if it's something that appeals to you.

And turning it into a practice has an extra level of benefit, like in yoga. You can do yoga here and there, it will bring benefit, but if you turn it into a practice it takes it to a whole new level where you can start to bring this better connection to your inner guiding intelligence, into your life as you strengthen that neural pathway, which is what happens for regular breathers. Two thirds of them say they have better access to their intuition, to their creativity, and also to this, what I call inner guiding intelligence in their everyday life. If this feels right to you, I'll see you in a breath session.

[00:49:32]

Alright, so let's give it a try now.

Okay, so we're ready to go. So get into a comfortable position. Again, either sitting up or laying down.

Make sure you won't be disturbed and close your eyes or put an eye mask on.

Bring your attention inside. Letting go of the outside world, letting go of what just happened or what's going to happen later today.

Take one deep breath, let it out.

And now scan your body and see if there's any tension in your body. And if there is, just as best you can in this moment, just visualize all of that tension releasing into the universe.

If you have tension in your shoulders, release that or your face, release your jaw, muscles, every part of your body. Just visualize the tension releasing into the universe. Maybe taking one deep breath and visualize with the out breath all of that tension, release it.

And now bringing your attention to the breath, and starting to deepen the breath. Starting to take full, deep breaths in and out through your mouth. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply.

Staying with the breath. Putting all your focus, all of your intention on the breath.

And now breathing in a way where there are no gaps, where you're always breathing in or breathing out. It's creating a wonderful circle of breath. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply.

Staying with the breath, staying with the breath. And now giving yourself permission to allow whatever wants to happen to happen. If sounds want to come out of your body, let the sounds come. If your body wants to move a little bit during the session, let it move. Just allowing your body to do whatever it needs to do in the session and just staying with the breath. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply.

And now speeding up a little bit faster than you normally do but making sure your breath stays full and deep. Breathing faster and deeper, deeper and faster, faster and deeper and just letting go, allowing, surrendering, staying focused on the breath. Breathing faster and deeper, deeper and faster, faster and deeper.

And in a moment the music will begin. Just staying with the breath.

Now slowly bringing yourself back. And if your eyes are still closed or if you're still breathing quickly, just slowing down the breath. If you want to, just take a moment to be with yourself, be with yourself in a very gentle way.

Be present with yourself without any judgment. And just being with whatever the experience was and just accepting it for what needed to happen in this moment, whatever it was.

Just notice, are you judging the experience? Are you saying I wanted this or I wanted that? Just something to notice. Or just being with it and accepting what it was.

And then when you're ready, just opening your eyes, bring yourself back and maybe putting your feet on the ground. Just connecting to the healing energy of the Earth, grounding yourself.

[01:01:04]

And just doing some self observation and seeing just doing 5 minutes of breathing, was there any shift in your anxiety level or your stress level or the amount of thoughts that were flowing through your head or is it exactly the same? Without judgment again, just noticing.

Again, this was just a very small taster session, 5 minutes versus an hour. So thank you all for participating in that.

And just one thing that I want to leave you with, and I talked about a lot of things you could do today, and just a couple of just very simple things that I think would be really helpful. And the first is, look at your definition of love. And without judgment, I told you what was working for me and how mine shifted, but everybody's different. But looking at it and seeing, does that definition of love serve you in creating the relationship of your dreams?

And if it does, awesome, just stay with it, move forward and work on some of the other stuff. But if you're seeing that, no, that's not really going to create the relationship that I'm envisioning in my dreams, then take a look and see if you're willing to maybe shift it into something that does, that does support you in creating that relationship.

And the second thing is, look at how many times you complain or blame something on something in the outside world in your life. It sounds really simple, but it isn't because it's so ingrained. We do it all the time. We don't even notice.

And if you start to see how much of your life you spend blaming and complaining, at least to me it was a shock at the beginning. Oh my God, I didn't realize I was doing this. When you complain and blame, you're giving away your power because you're basically saying that the world has control over you. What happens in the outside world controls whether you're happy, whether you're not happy, how you feel.

And if you start to see that and start to minimize it to some degree, you start to take your power back. Where you can say, okay, this is happening, what can I do about it? What action can I take? Instead of complaining or blaming or whatever. Taking responsibility for shifting things or moving forward, switches you to victim mentality, to self empowerment mentality.

And that's one of the things that people get out of breathwork. They feel more self empowered. Because when they start to get a better connection to their inner guiding intelligence, they trust themselves more and they start to see that the answers lie with them. They don't have to look to the outside world for how they can be happy or to look to the outside world like, I've got to take a course, then I'll be happy. Or even, I need to buy a car, then I'll be happy. It starts to go with, no, it's already there inside of me. I just need to connect and bring it forth into the universe.

So those are just a few little tidbits to leave everybody with. And we will complete there, and so again thank you, everyone for participating today and much love to you all.