



## Neurodynamic breathwork

**Guest: Michael Stone**

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### **[00:00:10] Meagen Gibson**

Hi I'm Meagen Gibson, co-host of the Trauma 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 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 his vision of allowing anybody in the world that wants to experience the benefits of expanded states of awareness to be able to do so safely from the comfort of their home. In the last 3 years he's facilitated over 800 online sessions of NeuroDynamic Breathwork Online with participants from over 120 countries.

Thank you so much for joining me today, Michael.

### **Michael Stone**

Thank you for having me. I'm very excited about doing the presentation today.

### **Meagen Gibson**

So we just heard a little bit about the first time that you did breathwork, but I would love to hear more about how you got into doing it.

### **Michael Stone**

That's an interesting story, actually, because if you saw me when I was growing up, you would say I'm not a good candidate for something like breathwork. I was very science oriented, and it was like, if you couldn't prove it to me scientifically, I was not interested.

So just to give you a summary of how I got in, I grew up in a very normal family. There was no real trauma involved, at least from my perspective, I felt like I was in a good place, I went to school, and I loved how my parents had their relationship. So in my unconscious thinking patterns, I decided that I wanted my life to be just like theirs. I wanted to get married when I was 32 years old, which is when my parents got married, have two kids, just like my parents. It seemed like a good number. Work for a big corporation and retire and that type of thing.

**[00:02:09]**

But this is all unconscious. Most of our stuff that comes in, 95% of it just goes straight to our unconscious mind so a lot of this stuff is conditioning we're completely unaware of. So that was one of my conditions. As I grew up I went into sciences, I got into chemical engineering, I got into business. I was having a very successful work career. And the biggest problem in my life was my relationships just didn't work. And it was extremely frustrating because I figured, I can figure this out. I'm a smart guy. This should be able to be figured out in a way where I can just get from here to there and make it happen.

But I kept trying and failing and trying and failing. I think the longest relationship that I had was about maybe 6 months, tops. I mean, that was like a success for me at that point. And they always ended up in a very dramatic way with hurt feelings and really not in a good way where'd I even stay in contact, mostly with the women that I dated.

And the only thing I could figure out from the state of consciousness that I was at that point was that, I haven't met the right woman yet, so I just have to keep trying. At that point, my thinking and my consciousness wasn't far enough along yet where I could actually ask myself the question, what's the common thread in all these relationships? And it wasn't them. It was me. So I wasn't looking in the right place of how to resolve this issue because it had nothing to do with them, but I just didn't get that.

So I kept alone in my work career, I kept trying. I got transferred to the East Coast. I was 31/31 and a half years old, I met a woman, and in my unconscious mind I'm going, okay, I've got to marry this woman. My time is coming from marriage. And so 6 months later I got married. A year after that I got divorced. And so that was my first lesson, don't marry the woman that happens to be in front of you when you think it's time to get married. That doesn't work too well. And when I got divorced, it really broke my mold, so to speak, my thinking pattern of how I wanted my life to be, when I wanted my kids, I wanted to be young enough to really enjoy them and that type of thing. So it shook me up, and it shook me out of this pathway that I'd set for myself.

And so I had to start to reexamine what I really wanted and what's going on here. And I ended up getting transferred to France and coming back to the US. And when I started to look at this, the first thing that I realized was, I don't want to work for a big company. I want to work for myself. Again, that was one of my patterns from childhood, because that's how I saw my father was and he seemed pretty happy. So that was the first thing that broke, and I quit my job, started my own company, and was very successful at it. I sold the company, started another one. So I was very successful, but still nothing in the relationship.

And at a certain point I met a woman and she was still living with her ex boyfriend. So I was going... But we connected, she wanted to date and at one point she said, 'I want to go down to Peru for a week'. 'Well, why do you want to go down to Peru?'. 'I want to see the pink dolphins'. I'm thinking, do pink dolphins even really exist? I said, I don't care, if I can go down to Peru for a week and spend some time with this woman and see if maybe we're a good fit. This would be a great chance to hang out with her. Okay, let's go see the pink dolphins.

So we go down there and a friend of hers had purchased some land on the Amazon to preserve it, to preserve the rainforest. And we get down there and right as she's sending us out, she asks, 'do you want a local shaman to go with you?'. This little guy, about 4'10, didn't speak any English, but there was a translator out there. 'Okay, bring him along. What the heck'. So we're there out in the middle of nowhere, and the first night he comes to us with the translator and says, 'how would you guys like to

participate in a religious ceremony that we do down here?'. I never just say yes to that kind of stuff. Science mind going, I've got to know what am I getting into? So I go, 'what is it about?'. So he says, 'oh, it's very simple'. I go out into the rainforest and I get a bunch of vines and leaves, bring them back, put them into this cauldron basically, boil them up and you drink it. Now I'm ready to basically say, no way. It's like in chemical engineering you mix 0.5 to 6 grams of that and you don't drink a witches brew out in the rainforest. You just don't do that.

**[00:06:57]**

So I'm ready to just say no but the woman that I'm with goes, 'oh we have to do this. This sounds awesome. This will be great'. So now I'm having war in my brain. There's this one part of my brain that's going, 'this is unsafe. Do not do this'. And this other part that's going, 'you came all the way down here, spent all this money and time to connect with this woman, and if you say no, you're going to be like a total wimp. That'll be the end. You've totally wasted your time, energy and money. It'll never work'. So this battle took place, and I ultimately decided, you know what, what the heck. If I die, I'm dying in the rainforest. They're beautiful trees around. I've had a pretty good life. Let's go for it.

So that was already a big breakthrough for me, just from the fact that I did something spontaneously, which was not my style. I really had to think stuff through in order to be willing to participate.

So we had this religious ceremony, which turned out to be ayahuasca, which I'd never heard of at that point, I had no idea what I was getting into. But I had this amazing experience. And it was an experience of feeling connected to the universe in a very strong, beautiful way. It was the first time I'd ever felt that in my life. I always felt like I had to protect myself, like it was me against the world. And it just really blew my mind in a way that, oh my God. Is this real? Is this really the way things are? Have I been misinterpreting my relationship to the world my entire life?

So I get back to the United States and with my science brain, I'm thinking, okay, if I can have that experience with a substance, and if it's real, I should be able to have the experience in a more natural way. The receptors have got to be there in my brain or else it wouldn't happen. So it started me on a journey of, okay, how can I have those types of experiences without substances? Because I wasn't going to go down to Peru every week, that was not going to happen.

And that ultimately brought me to breathwork. And I was exploring it because some of the stuff that I read about it made me think, well, maybe this is it. Maybe this is what I'm looking for. And I saw there was a bunch of different breathwork modalities out there. Okay, how do I choose? First one I went to I said, okay, I'm going to see how did the creator really figure out what this breathwork modality was? That was my key.

So the first guy, he wrote something, he said, 'I just downloaded it from the universe one day'. I'm going, not for me. But ultimately, I came across holotropic breathwork which was developed by Dr Stan Grof. And I immediately, as soon as I read the story of how he created it, tuned into his breathwork. He had done research with LSD psychotherapy back in the day when they were still exploring the potential therapeutic uses of it, it was still legal. And done that for a couple of years before they banned it. And had seen that people that he'd been in talk therapy with for, he was psychiatrist, that for many, many years, just with one or two experiences with LSD psychotherapy in a safe structure where he was with them, had these amazing breakthroughs and were able to access things that they've been suppressing. Like when you're in talk therapy, your ego mind is always getting in the way, I want to be liked, I want to be this. That was all out of the way where they were opening up to him in a much more beautiful healing way.

**[00:10:28]**

And so he saw these expanded states of awareness. He called them non-ordinary states of consciousness at that point, we now call expanded states of awareness, and have an amazing healing capability. So after LSD was banned he researched and he looked at traditional societies, he looked at modern consciousness theory to see how people had historically accessed these states over human history. And what he saw was there were two threads that went through everything. One was something to do with the breath, and the other had to do with sound.

So, for instance, with shamanic societies, there was rattling and drumming so the shaman could put himself into a trance state so he could channel this healing energy to the people that he was working with. Even in Buddhist meditation, watching the breath, watching the breath and staying focused on the breath. So he started to experiment and put together breath and sound in multiple different ways to see what was the most effective way that he could create a one day workshop format to allow people to drop as deeply as possible into these healing states.

And ultimately, he developed a breathwork technique and found that there was a specific trajectory of music that he could work with that would allow people to really dive in. But he did it through trial and error. He worked with people back then, groups, over a period of a month and another group, and actually worked in a scientific way to see what really works, not just what he thought would work. So that was for me.

And so I tried a holotropic breathwork session, and I had a very similar experience to what I had in Peru. Oh my God, this is it. I'm in. So I started to take more and more sessions, and at a certain point, I said, okay, I want to be able to give other people these experiences, too. So I went through a 3 year certification program in holotropic breathwork and started to present the workshops and host them, facilitate them in Southern California. And I did that for over a decade. And one of the things that I found was I really started to get in touch with, as I did the breathwork, many of my unconscious thinking patterns and started to see why things were happening in my life today that I had no idea about.

And the first was the thing with relationships. I totally resolved that through breathwork. And what I saw in one of my, I think maybe the 5th or 6th session, I dove back into my childhood. That's one of the experiences you can have. You can go back into your childhood and re-experience things in different ways or actually see things that you forgot happened. And I saw when I was a 5 or 6 year old child and my parents, who are both German Jews and Nazi escapees, they had to run for their lives right before World War Two, and they were telling me the story of how it happened. My mother's family had been in German society for hundreds of years, and her father was a World War One hero. He'd gotten The Iron Cross, which was a super high award in Germany for courage and valor. And one of my ancestors, back in Napoleon's time, had paid Napoleon to basically go around the village and not burn it to the ground. He was like the richest guy in town. And then from one day to the next, they had to run for their lives.

And the decision that I made at that point was, they didn't tell me this, but this was in my child mind, the conclusion that I came to, the meaning that I drew from it was, the world is an unsafe place. If you can't even trust your country that you've contributed to for hundreds of years and then they want to kill you, basically, who can you trust? So that was an unconscious thinking pattern that ran my life up until that moment.

And obviously, when you think about it, if you come from a space of the world as an unsafe place, you're never going to have a successful relationship, because as soon as you get to a certain point,

unconsciously, you're going to pull back. I don't want to be hurt. I don't want to be turned on. And so I would get into this relationship with a woman and go to a certain place and she was going, 'oh, this is great'. We're diving in, and then I would just shut the door and drive the person crazy. So it was totally me. It had nothing to do with the other person. They were all awesome. It's just I was under the influence of this unconscious conditioning pattern that wasn't allowing me to dive in the way that I really wanted to.

**[00:15:08]**

So once I saw that, I could start to change, I could start to work with it. And it's not something that happens overnight, it was a pattern for decades. But I started to see, in my next relationship I saw when it kicked in. I said, okay, I don't have to let a decision that a 5 year old made run my life as an adult. So I started to see it, and I started to tell the other person about it. When I saw it, I would express it and say, oh, this is kicking in. And then the other person would actually want to support me in working through it so it was very beautiful and started to completely shift my place. The world is a safe place. People are out there to support me. They're not out there to hurt me.

And it took a while but now I'm in a relationship that has lasted for 10 years. It's amazing. We both support each other, and I ultimately completely resolve that. So that's just one example of one of the breakthroughs that I had in breathwork.

So after I was doing holotropic for a decade, one of the things that was frustrating to me is that it's an amazing technology that Dr. Grof developed, but it has to be done in person. Everybody's laying out on mats, you need to get a huge venue, it's expensive and so you have to charge a lot of money. And it's very difficult to do more than a few a year because there's so much admin work in putting it all together. So I saw that people were getting these amazing results but they wanted to do more. And also it was limited to the number of people that could fly to LA, had enough money for that to take a couple of days out of their lives.

### **Meagen Gibson**

There's obstacles in the way.

### **Michael Stone**

Exactly. And what I saw in one of my breathwork sessions was that, you know what? This is one of the gifts that I have, of being able to hold space for people in these expanded states that they feel safe enough to really dive in and experience, see their unconscious thinking patterns and release, and it's one of the things that is really part of my mission in life. So I got that in a breathwork session.

And when we do surveys of our regular breathers, that's one of the things that people say they get, they get more clarity on their purpose in life. And that happened to me. But what I saw was that if I really want to make a difference in the world and really make a shift in world consciousness, I've got to be able to do more than 50 people, 3x a year. And the only way, ultimately to do that, that I saw, was to do it online and to do it in a way where people could participate wherever they were in the world, all they needed was an internet connection. Where I could do it inexpensively and where I could do it in a way where it was very convenient, they could just do it from their house. So they didn't have to fly anywhere, they didn't have to take a day out of their lives. And that's what started me on my journey towards developing NeuroDynamic Breathwork Online.

**[00:18:07]**

One of the other things that I got out of breathwork is, anytime that you take a leap, like you take a risk and move forward, there's almost always this inner judge that's saying, 'you can't do this'. And it happened to me, too, with Breathwork Online. It was like I had all these inner thoughts about, 'what are you thinking about?' You're at retirement age. Only kids start online businesses. Are you kidding? You don't know anything about this'.

**Meagen Gibson**

'Who do you think you are?'

**Michael Stone**

'Who do you think you are?', and that type of thing. 'You hate social media. You're going to have to be on social media all day long. You're not going to like this'. And at that point I had a cell phone, but it was like one of these flip phones. Some people don't even remember those. But it's like when you flipped them open.

**Meagen Gibson**

I miss them.

**Michael Stone**

It was a smartphone. But also if you wanted to text somebody, number one was 'ABC'. If you wanted the 'C' you punch number 1 three times. It took about an hour to write a text. So I didn't even care about smartphones, I didn't take my phone with me in my car, I just didn't want to be bothered. So then the voices, 'you're going to have to get over that. You're going to have to be available 24/7. You're going to have to get a smartphone. You're not going to do this. What are you thinking about?'. But I knew by that time, from breathwork, that those thoughts didn't mean anything. It's just this auto mechanism that everybody has from childhood like, 'you can't do this or you're not lovable', that as a 5 or 6 year old, you make these decisions and create these meanings out of things that happened when you're young.

And so I knew at that point, it doesn't mean anything. There's no reason why I can't do this. So I plunged ahead and got through all the obstacles. And I am on social media all the time right now. I've got an iPhone. I'm on my phone constantly, I'm texting back and forth. And over the last 3 years I've worked with people from 120 different countries. We have 65,000 people in our community now, and primarily from people telling their friends based on their own results. And it's just been an amazing success. But I had to break through my own barriers, my own unconscious blocks, in order to get there.

So breathwork, I can really say, has been instrumental in virtually everything that I've accomplished in my life over the last decade.

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, I can see how.

**[00:20:36]**

So I would love it if you could give me a breakdown of, since this the Trauma Conference, and I love your stories and anchoring in your stories as well, of how transformative it's been. Have you seen any participants with trauma related stuff specifically, have breakthroughs with neurodynamic breathwork?

**Michael Stone**

Yes, absolutely. And to give you one example, there was a man who came in to do our breathwork, and we have a program where people can participate on a regular basis so they can really start to develop that neural pathway to this inner guidance that we all have. We can talk a little more about that later. He was on that program so he'd done several breathwork sessions. And in one of his sessions he went back to a childhood experience which was incredibly traumatic. He'd been abused fairly severely by a person that he trusted. And at the time that it happened, afterwards what he took from it was, 'I'm unlovable. There's something wrong with me, otherwise why would someone who I trust do that to me?'. And he felt ashamed. He didn't even want to talk about it. So he was just really suppressing it afterwards.

But even though he was suppressing it, it was impacting his life in a very powerful way. He never got into a relationship because he didn't feel safe, because if someone else loves me it could happen again. So even though he's suppressed it into his being, it still is impacting his life in a very profound way where it was keeping him from manifesting the life that he wanted.

And in the breathwork session he went back to that actual experience and re-experienced it, not just mentally, but emotionally, like he was actually in the experience, in his body he was experiencing it. And what he saw was, that at the moment that this was happening, even though he knew that what the person was doing to him was wrong, the correct thing that was happening to him. He saw that in that moment, what he felt was that everything's going to be okay. He felt this divine connection, that he was protected. And that whatever happened to him, even though it was wrong, he would get through it.

And once he saw that, after he came out of his breathwork session, he completely shifted his relationship to the experience. And he saw it as, 'oh my God, as part of that experience I got this amazing gift'. And the gift was of feeling safe in the world and feeling that no matter how bad things got, no matter what challenges I met, I was always protected.

**Meagen Gibson**

And that's that expanded state of consciousness that you're referring to. This is not just a thought.

**Michael Stone**

Exactly. The expanded state of awareness allows you, it isn't just a thought process, it's in combination with an embodiment process where you're actually in your body and getting the emotional release, not just the thinking release. Because thinking, you can think all you want, but it's very difficult to work through trauma or anything else just by reasoning it out and saying, 'I shouldn't be feeling this way'. 'That wasn't that bad', or whatever. It just doesn't work because it's in your body. And ultimately you have to connect with your body.

**[00:24:07]**

And one of the things, the unfortunate things that happens to people when they have trauma is a disconnect from their body because their body doesn't feel safe, the emotions didn't feel safe. And so in breathwork, part of it is you do get embodied. You go back into your body through this breath and music and are able to work with and release emotions that are stuck from childhood or from later on in life.

But with this particular person, when he came back with that different viewpoint, looking at it from a different perspective, it completely shifted how he held the experience. And he started to work with bringing that back into his life. In the same way that I did when I worked with shifting from the world is an unsafe place, to the world as a safe place. He had the same thing. And those kind of things don't happen overnight. It's not like you have this one thing and there's this magic pill that he's taken, breathwork, and all of a sudden it's resolved. But it puts you into a pathway and gives you a resource to work with in order to work through it that you didn't have before.

And once you have that resource and you know that it was safe to actually go back and actually feel the emotions, because as a child, it is unsafe. It's not a bad thing that people do when they dissociate.

### **Meagen Gibson**

I was going to say, it's a safety mechanism, a sophisticated system that our brains and bodies have developed to protect us because that flood of feeling makes us unsafe or feel unsafe.

### **Michael Stone**

Exactly. So it's perfect. It's what happens, and it's what needs to happen for us to get through those experiences.

But as an adult we have more resources. But since we're still in our body back at the place where we have the experience, it's still like, we feel like we don't have the resources unconsciously because we're still back to when it happened. So if we can go back in and actually feel the experience and create a different perspective of looking at it from now, being an adult, it can completely shift our ability to work with the experience in our current life.

And that's what happened with him. And he started to work with it and ultimately he was able to process through it.

That's one example of how people can work with trauma in breathwork. And the key factor is they have to feel safe. And that's why it's important who the facilitator is, who you work with, because if you don't feel safe with the person, you're not going to go there and you're not going to have a good experience. Anytime that you want to work with trauma, you have to be in a safe space or you're not going to be able to work with it effectively.

So for people at home thinking about breathwork, and especially neurodynamic breathwork, walk me through it. What's that experience like? What is breathwork, and especially neurodynamic breathwork?



**[00:27:12] Michael Stone**

So breathwork is, just on a very basic level, you close your eyes and do deeper breathing to music. But from a safety perspective it's much more complicated than that.

And so it starts with, when people decide that they want to try it out, we distribute an informational brochure so people can understand what types of experiences they can have, and what could happen during the session. It's like if you're prepared for something you can deal with almost anything, but if you're not prepared for it it's very difficult to work through.

**Meagen Gibson**

It's like if you get on a roller coaster, if someone handed you, you might feel a little nauseous, you might get a little dizzy, it might be a little disorienting, you're like, okay, then I can come into this experience open minded knowing that all these things might happen, instead of being surprised by them and then shutting down in fear.

**Michael Stone**

Exactly. And even with the roller coaster, if you tell a person, 'you know what, you might feel your heart pounding, you could interpret it as fear but other people interpret it as excitement'. Then people are totally in for it. It's the same thing with breathwork. It's like as long as you prepare them for what could happen, they can do a deep dive in a much safer way.

So we do the prep work where we give people a 7 page PDF that they have to read through before they start the session to prepare them for what could happen. And then there's also a few contraindications. We make sure they don't have any physiological or serious psychological issues, so they can really be safe in diving into these expanded states.

And then they come to the breathwork. And all you really need is a decent internet connection, just put on a pair of headsets and it's about a 2 hour experience. And in each session we have about 30 minutes or 35 minutes of an introductory talk. And again, that's like a second level of safety. Because even though we give people PDFs to read, most people don't read it.

**Meagen Gibson**

Nobody reads instructions anymore.

**Michael Stone**

We have to go under the assumption that people may come in and not know anything. So this is again, a safety thing. We can't assume anything.

So we go through the important points again, how you do a deep dive into the breathwork, what could happen, how to prepare yourself for it. Because many times, for example, people can have an experience of fear. And in breathwork, fear is not a bad thing. It's like fear is an auto mechanism in your brain anytime something new is happening. If you're taking a leap of faith in starting a business and putting all your money into it, or you're in a new relationship, or you're in a new job you'll have this fear response that kicks in. And it's this auto mechanism from evolution, where back in cavemen days, the most important thing was stay alive until you have kids.

## **[00:30:12] Meagen Gibson**

Continue the species.

### **Michael Stone**

Exactly. Anything new is a risk so it's natural that this fear mechanism kicks in. But in breathwork it's really a good thing, it means that things that no longer serve you are starting to come up to get released, or you're starting to get insights about new ways you can live life. And so fear sometimes kicks in. So we talk to people about that, that if it does kick in it's totally natural and you can just process through it. On the other side of the fear is generally just a very profound experience of relaxation and love and other things once you allow it to be the way it is. Every emotion has its own beauty if you just allow it to be what it is. It's when we try to twist it, suppress it, make it be something different, that we start to create problems.

So we prepare people for what could happen. It can be a blissful experience, it can be possibly a difficult experience if you're processing through some trauma or some other things. But it's not something that's coming in from the outside world. This is something that's already inside of you that wants to release out of your body. And one of the underlying principles of neurodynamic breathwork is that everybody has, I call it an inner guiding intelligence, you could call it, higher wisdom, higher self, people call it different things, but it's this part of you that already has all the answers. Basically this deeper part of your psyche, not the ego mind, there's part that actually has this connection and that has all the answers that you need.

And it's the kind of thing when people make major inventions in life or create things, usually it's not when they're thinking about it, working through it, it's when they're laying in the bath and relaxing, and they're actually connecting to this inner resource and it just kind of pops in. And they get stuck when they're just trying to figure it out. And it's the same thing in breathwork, you connect to this amazing inner resource. And the important thing about that is, if something is being brought up, it's being brought up because you are ready to process it and you're capable of processing. Otherwise it's not going to be brought up.

So we always tell people, don't set the expectations, don't try to guide the process. Let's say you had some trauma when you were young. It may not be ready to process in that moment, so it's not going to come up. So you don't want to try to push it up because your ego mind has no idea what you're ready to process. So it's more of a modality of surrender, let go and opening up. It's not like you have to push through something or do something. I mean, anybody can do it. It's just a let go. But when I say anybody can do it, surrendering takes practice because we never do it in life. We're always judging, comparing our experience to what we want it to be. We're virtually never just in the moment just being with what is.

## **Meagen Gibson**

We're always trying to exert control.

### **Michael Stone**

Exactly. And that's one of the practices, I call it surrender gym, that you can start to learn in breathwork that you can then bring more into your life and really deepen your experience in life by being able to completely dive into the moment instead of being in your head all the time. That's one of the side benefits when you start to do this as a practice.

### **[00:33:23] Meagen Gibson**

What's the correlation of the musical element in there as well? And what role does that take? And why is it such an integral part of the experience?

### **Michael Stone**

Well, there's two pieces to it. So once you get the introductory talk, then we get people going with the breath. There is a specific technique that people start with, which we explain. And at the beginning, you want to move a lot of air, in terms of there are certain physiological changes that happen in your body that support the quieting of the ego mind. And it takes some deeper breathing for a while to get there.

And then once people dive into their experience we tell them, follow your body wisdom with the breath and just see what your body wants to do. So we start with the technique, but then again this is all about trusting yourself, and that's one of the things that when people have trauma, one of the casualties is they don't trust themselves on a certain level. And this starts to rebuild that trust, basically, when you do this type of breathing.

So you trust your body in terms of the type of breathing that it wants to do as you go deeper into the set, and you trust your own inner guiding intelligence in terms of bringing up the experience that will be the most effective for you to have today. And there's about an hour of breathing and people, in front of their computer, they close their eyes so they're in their own space. If they need support, they can get support from me in chat, we can talk back and forth in private chat if they need it, but otherwise they just process through.

And the music follows the trajectory, it starts with a little bit of a beat behind it, it builds an intensity, then it comes down to a gentle ending. And the music does two things. First of all, just having fairly loud music in your ears, quiets the thoughts to a certain degree, quiets all the distractions. But also in the same way that music is, they call it the universal language of essence, where everybody can relate to music in essence. So it doesn't create the experience, but it allows people to dive deeper into whatever experience their inner guidance wants to bring them.

So some of the music has a more emotional component to it, so if people need to dive into their emotions they will. At the beginning it has a nice beat in case people need to move. And movement and sound and emotions are three of the keys in taking a deep dive into the breathwork session. So if people want to move, like if their body wants to move, we encourage them, let it move. If sounds want to come out, let the sounds come out. If emotions want to come, let them come. We generally suppress all that, like loud sounds, we've learned from childhood, it's like, 'don't make loud sounds, you're going to bother someone.' And that's incredibly unfortunate because loud sounds are one of your body's most effective way of releasing stress and tension.

So in the breathwork we just encourage people, if your body wants to do it, just let it come. If your body wants to tone to the music or scream and yell or whatever, just let it express the way it wants to, just allow, just be open.

So they finish their process and the music again is supporting them, carrying through the process and not getting stuck anywhere. It's this flow of sound, this river of sound they're writing on. And then at the end we do a little guided meditation just to regroup them, and then we have a sharing circle.

**[00:36:50]**

And the sharing circle can be as powerful as the breathwork itself. Where people from, many times, 40/50 different countries, we get anywhere from, in general, like 75 to 250 people that are participating, sometimes up to 500 or 1000 with special events, where people can then, first of all, share what they want from their own experience. It's optional, but many times sharing really helps integrate it where you just express it, where people are just holding space and it makes it more acceptable, it makes it more real for yourself. Or you can just hold space for others. And many times other people's experiences give you insight into your own. And it's a safe place to express. And it starts to train your psyche that you can be in a safe place with other people. Express where other people won't judge you or other people will just accept, with an open heart, whatever you're saying and just give you support.

So it supports this whole, you can trust, you can trust, you can trust, and where you're more open to that. And obviously sometimes in life you don't want to trust, but at least you can make your choice where it's not this automatic thing where you never trust. You start to be able to make more of a choice and to be able to look inside, do I feel safe or do I not feel safe? And then make those decisions, instead of having this unconscious block, it's never safe. Just being in the sharing group, people said, supports them in opening up in their relationships more, whether it's with their husband or wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, even sometimes with their mother or father or children.

So the whole thing is put together with every piece of it having its own specific purpose. And then we finish. And then also after the session, we also give people some guidance in terms of how to do more integration activities. Because you can have this amazing experience but ultimately, if you don't integrate it into your body, it's just another experience. In the same way sometimes people go to these workshops and seminars and they get all high and they feel, 'this is awesome' at the end but then a week later they're just back in their stuff. It's like forgot. Because they don't bring it back into their life, they don't create a structure of integration to bring it into their life and really start to work with it going forward.

And that's how neurodynamic breathwork works.

### **Meagen Gibson**

I love it. And I bet, imagining people in the sharing circle, a lot of times if you're working through trauma, or just somebody that's curious about breathwork, there's a lot of intense stuff coming up, and that sharing circle gives people that immediate circle of people who are also on a really intense journey to validate and hear and receive, without judgment, without attachment, anything that they wanted to share that they're going through.

Whereas sometimes our intimate relationships are the places where we struggle to express those vulnerabilities and have them really seen and held because of our attachments and the ways that our loved ones and intimate relationships react to what's difficult for us, because they love us so much that they don't know how to hold that stuff. So that's a really integral part of it, I imagine.

### **Michael Stone**

Yes, absolutely. Part of it is that in your intimate relationships in your life, always part of it is looking good, and part of it is not being too open and vulnerable because they're the people that can hurt you the most, because they're the ones that you really opened yourself up to.

**[00:40:28]**

So many times people will share to 85% 90% but there's still a few things that they just, 'I don't know how the other person would be able to handle this.' And so this is a safe place for you to actually open up with everything that came up, where it's clear you really sense the safety of the group.

And during the introductory talk when people start to dive in, we encourage people to allow themselves to feel the connection with the other breathers. And many, many people do feel that connection during the breathwork, where they feel like it supports them in diving into their process because you've got 100 or 200 people from around the world in the same place and doing the same thing, and also at the end that they've already feel this connection with the group. So they completely feel safe in opening up and diving into some very difficult stuff that may have come up from childhood where they would be ashamed to talk about it with their loved ones or whatever. And they start to feel more safe in really expressing things that may be more difficult for them to express in a safe container.

And again, that's why it's really critical in what format you do it in, who you do it with, because you're diving into an expanded state where you're more open, you're more vulnerable so it has to be a safe place, perfect to work effectively.

**Meagen Gibson**

I'm sure that the safety part of it is at the absolute pinnacle of importance to you.

**Michael Stone**

Yes. Exactly. And our whole structure and modality is oriented around people feeling safe.

**Meagen Gibson**

And I'm sure a wonderful element of that is just the fact that people can do this from the comfort of their own homes, and that that's going to be, in a lot of ways, an extra element of safety and protection for people to surrender into it, as you said.

**Michael Stone**

Many people prefer just doing it in their own homes. For instance, if you do it in an in person breathwork session, right after the session you have to drive home. And if you're in this really released state and stuff like that and you've got to drive for an hour. If you're still just gently coming back, you just lay in your bed for a while.

**Meagen Gibson**

You just take care of yourself however you need to because you're already home.

**Michael Stone**

Yeah. But other people prefer in person and they don't mind doing the drive home, and they're supported more by hearing other people screaming, yelling in the group and that supports them in letting go. Everybody's different. One isn't better or worse than the other, other than obviously online you can have more people participate from around the world, but everybody has a preference. But

many people do really appreciate the fact that they can just be in their space and feel safe and structure their room, create a nice environment for themselves that really works for them and feel safe in their own environment in addition to feeling safe with the group.

### **[00:43:29] Meagen Gibson**

Michael, I'm aware of the time and we need to wrap up, but if people want to hear more about neurodynamic breathwork and you, how can they do that? And how can they get a taste of what it is that you do?

### **Michael Stone**

They can go to my website, which is [breathworkonline.com](https://breathworkonline.com) and everybody can get a free first session just to try it out. And with experimental things, you can talk forever about it but the only way you can really know is to experience it for yourself. To see if this is a modality that you resonate with, that works for you.

And so you just have to click on try 'Free Breathwork Session' and sign up. We do 5 live sessions every week, so there's a lot of choices for people, whatever works for them and their schedule. And they can do their free breathwork session and ultimately, if they want to continue, we have all different kinds of structures, including a monthly subscription program where they can do as many sessions as they want each month, just for a few dollars a session, and where they get this more secondary benefit of, not just feeling more self empowered, connected to their own power by connecting to this inner guiding intelligence and seeing all their inner resources, but also on a secondary level, creating this stronger neural connection to their, we call it inner guiding intelligence, and being able to more effectively access it in their everyday life.

And our regular breathers do report that they have greater access to this inner guidance, inner wisdom, more clarity on their purpose in life, relief from anxiety, release of grief, increased connection to, what they call source, increased calm and peace. If you really commit yourself, you get the second level of really amplified benefits that you can bring back and permeate into your life. And I just encourage everyone to give it a try. It's 2 hours, it's free and see if it works for you.

### **Meagen Gibson**

Michael has generously agreed to give us a little bit of a taste of neurodynamic breathwork and he's going to guide us through that process.

### **Michael Stone**

So we are going to do a little taster experience now. And this will be maybe 6 and a half minutes of breathwork so it really is just a taste. It's not designed to have you do a deep dive, but just to really get a sense of what's available in breathwork and just to notice, do you feel calmer afterwards? Do you feel in a different space? A bit of a different state of consciousness after just doing deeper breathing for 6 or 7 minutes to music?

The breathing technique that we will do is, in essence, there's four things. One is you want to breathe in and out through the mouth. And there's a couple of reasons for that. One is you can move more air and you do want to breathe pretty deeply at the beginning. And the second thing is, whenever we're in a release state in our life, our body automatically switches to mouth breathing. So when you're

angry, when you're in an emotional state, when you're releasing something, if you just notice, you'll notice that it switches from the normal, which is nose breathing.

**[00:46:43]**

And you want to take full deep breaths. So if you put your hands on your belly and practice for a second, your belly should get pushed out when you breathe in like there's a balloon expanding in the bottom of your lungs. And you want to breathe in a way that's continuous, so you're always breathing in or breathing out so there's no gaps, like circular breathing.

And the actual speed of the breath is not critical. You can breathe at normal speed or a little faster than normal, but it's not like... The fullness and the depth of the breath is the most important thing. It's like... With your eyes closed. And you can feel into it, either just at normal pace, or if your body wants to go a little bit faster, that's fine, but again, not this kind of panting breath. And you want to just keep focused on the breath and stay with it.

And as it gets towards the end of the music, the last couple of minutes are very soft, if your body wants to come back to a normal breathing rhythm, that's fine, just trust what it wants to do. What you want to do is to get into a way where you can get the best sound quality possible. Ideally over your headset, earbuds are fine. And you want to have it so that it's playing fairly loudly. So it's on a river of sound, but not so loud that it distorts or glitches so it's going to bother your hearing, obviously, but you want to have a fairly full volume. And again listen to it in whatever way you get the best sound quality.

So if you're listening to this, you might want to put it on pause for a second so you can grab a headset or whatever you need. And you want to be comfortably dressed, so there's nothing really tight around your waist. If you have jeans or something, just loosen them up so you can breathe deeply without feeling constricted. And you can do this sitting in a chair, it's totally fine. Or you can even do it laying down if you want, it doesn't matter, either way is fine. And you're going to want to keep your eyes closed during the entire experience.

So what we're going to do is I'm going to start you off with about a 1 minute relaxation exercise and take another minute to get you going with the breath and the music will start.

During the music I don't say anything. It's just you and the music, you're on whatever journey you are, you're just breathing and just allowing, just surrendering to what's happening. You don't want to try to guide the experience in any way, you just want to stay focused on the breath. Just be, basically.

And that's it. And then at the end, afterwards, if you still feel like you want to keep your eyes closed for another minute or so, it's totally fine to stay in your space until you feel comfortable opening your eyes.

And the music I'm going to play today is, there'll be little pieces of 3 tracks that we would potentially use at various points in our 1 hour breathing set and breathwork. The first one would be maybe the fast track to get you going, and the last one is more gentle, it's like the end. And they're all by an artist called Byron Metcalf who is an awesome breathwork music composer. And the names of the tracks are *True Ground*, *A Healing the Earth Journey* and *Earth Om*.

All right. So let me get the music set up here. If everyone can just close your eyes, bring your attention into your body, take a deep breath. Do a quick scan of your body and release as much tension out of your body as you can, be as relaxed as you can in this moment.

**[00:50:35]**

Just starting with your feet and then bringing your attention to each of your body parts and visualize that body part letting go and relax. Going through the calves, the upper legs, torso and bringing your attention to your belly, giving it open, loose, relaxed to your face, relaxing your jaw muscles, your forehead muscles. Then to your shoulders, just giving them a little stretch to release tension. Then bringing your attention to your upper arms, lower arms and hands, wiggling your fingers, shaking your hands out a bit.

And then taking one more deep breath and just visualize any additional tension releasing into the universe. Then keeping your attention in your body, connecting to yourself as deeply as you can in this moment, being with yourself.

And now starting to focus on the breath, first just noticing the breath going in and out of your lungs. Now starting to deepen the breath, starting to take full deep breaths, feeling your belly expand with each in breath, in and out through the mouth. But keeping your body relaxed, no tension in your shoulders, making it a full and deep but enjoyable breath. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply. And now breathing in a way where there are no gaps. Where you're always breathing in or breathing out, just creating a wonderful circle of breath. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully, fully and deeply.

And now, if your body wants to make a sound a little bit on the outbreath just allow it to do that. Just feel into whether that supports you or not. It's totally optional. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully. It's giving yourself permission to allow whatever wants to happen to happen, to let go, to surrender. Breathing fully and deeply, deeply and fully.

In a moment, the music will begin. Have a wonderful journey.

And now, if you haven't already done so, slowing down the breath, breathing gently, being in a place of stillness and presence, being with yourself, being in your body, appreciating it. Just taking your time.

And when it feels right, opening your eyes very gently, staying in your body, noticing how it feels to have your feet on the floor, to be sitting in your chair.

**Meagen Gibson**

Thank you for meeting me so that everybody could have their own experience during that meditation. I appreciate you getting us through it.

**Michael Stone**

Thanks for participating.

**Meagen Gibson**

Michael, thank you for being with us today.

**Michael Stone**

Thank you for having me.