

SONOPRANA

Breathwork & Sound meditation

Introduction

I've been a student of Spirit, Meditation & Sound for the past 5 years. While walking the spiritual path I've also walked the pragmatic path of Industrial Design for product and experience in the past 16 years. The art of creative expression in service of Business, Mass manufacturing, and Technology has taught me valuable lessons about human behavior, perception, and the essential nature of intuition in a world quantified and directed by data.

I've learned that while powerful; exclusively rational frameworks are simply incomplete, and enable the creation of dehumanizing systems.

As an experience designer, Breathwork meditation guide, and sound healing student, I'm at a unique position to bridge rational frameworks and emotional/spiritual experience. This is important because when we experience spiritually meaningful/healing moments, we open up to the presence of spirit in ourselves and in others, and our mind based illusion of separateness from fellow humans and from nature fades. When this understanding is applied as an operating principal in business and systems design, it supports the generation of inclusive and ethical products and services.

This paper touches on Breathwork as a powerful spiritual and somatic healing modality, and its natural compatibility with Sound meditation. My aim is to create a short and rich intro for anyone who is curious to learn about Breathwork as a practice.

"Science is the contemporary language of Mysticism" Dr. Joe Dispenza

Breath as the vibration of spirit

"Within many archaic languages, including Andean Quechua, Amazonian Quechua, Tibetan, Aramaic, Latin, Greek, Hawaiian and others, the word for "breath" is the same word that is used to describe life, spirit, and soul." Roman Hanis, Shaman

Breathwork is an active meditation that helps clear and align our Mind-Heart-Body channel. The practice of Breathwork has been shown to promote positive psycho-spiritual experiences, repatterning, processing trauma, and somatic release of stagnant energy, pain, anger, and shame. My personal experience with Breathwork as a meditative practice, and a teaching, is that it is deeply spiritual and effective in integrating different aspects of the self into a cohesive whole.

Breathwork techniques vary in breathing pattern, cadence, and effect. There are many Breathwork approaches utilizing breath as the vehicle to deeper knowing, healing, meditative states, and expanded consciousness. While many of these techniques are trademarked, there is little available scientific research in this field.

Two of the most prominent Breathwork practices available today are Pranayama Yogic Breathing, and Holotropic Breathwork.

Pranayama breathing techniques are a chapter of ancient Yogic science and have been practiced for thousands of years in support of Health, Focus and Longevity. Holotropic Breathwork, developed by Dr. Stan Grof, is a modern secular approach that can induce Psychedelic, Psycho-Spiritual, and Somatic experiences that help re-pattern and re-process trauma in the body.

During a Breathwork session one can experience a wide range of physical and emotional responses in the three centers of intelligence - Body, Heart, and Mind. In addition, meditators may experience sensations, colors, and visions relating to current and past lives, and the energy centers in their body (chakras). A common experience is the rising life force (Qi, Prana) vibration in the body, a feeling similar to an electric current that moves through our very being.

Some people experience tension or pain in different areas of their body. This can be indicative of stagnant energy, blockages, and unprocessed emotions such as grief, pain, shame, anger, fear and trauma. An experienced Breathwork meditator, can direct the breath and the energetic current generated in the body towards these areas and facilitate their own release through shaking, vocalizing, crying, humming, yelling, etc. This release allows life force (Qi, Prana) to flow freely, cleanse and re-member one's essence.

The Science: Breathwork has been shown to activate the Parasympathetic nervous system, and lower blood pressure and Cortisol levels. It is also attributed with the effects of anxiety and stress reduction. Some claim that Breathwork can induce the body's natural ability to produce DMT, also called the spirit molecule, found in powerful psychedelic plant medicine. Research on this front is limited yet the longevity of Breathwork practices and the countless testimonials leave little doubt that this practice is powerful and effective.

Some Breathwork patterns are controversial because they introduce high amounts of oxygen into the body, causing effects similar to hyper-ventilation which may be damaging to the brain if practiced for extended periods of time. This should be taken into careful consideration when choosing a practice and a teacher.

The Mystery: Meditators often report spiritual experiences such as connecting to loved ones (living and deceased), other lifetimes, and to younger versions of themselves in this lifetime to name a few. Some meditators report deep emotional and ancestral healing of core wounds and trauma. The journey taken is seldom the same from session to session and non-linear. It is a connection of dots that has meaning to the person experiencing it exclusively.

The list of claimed Breathwork benefits is long, yet clinical studies have only been performed on specific types of Breathwork (Holotropic) while other methods remain in the more traditional healing and spiritual practice sphere.

As with any powerful practice, one must take caution with who they practice with, and their own health. Working with a trained teacher, and deep listening to one's body is necessary.

Breathwork & Sound

The world is made of energy that vibrates at different frequencies. Human ears can hear a limited range of frequencies between 20Hz and 20kHz. Human eyes can see a limited range of wavelengths between 380 and 740 nanometers which is a fraction of existing light wavelengths. However, the human body is made of about %60 water which responds to *all* vibration. Our body is much more sensitive and quick to know than our mind, partly because our cells receive vibrational information before it is processed in our brain and our visual and auditory senses have limited receptivity. In other words, our body always listens, and it always knows *before* our mind does. This is the nature of instinctual and intuitive knowledge and in our culture, both of those ways of knowing are considered second to rational thinking. We are taught to override our intuition (gut feeling) and to suppress or hide complex or negative emotion, yet those emotions don't simply disappear; when not adequately processed and expressed, these emotions are stored in our physical body and over time become dis-ease.

Both Breathwork and Sound as Somatic healing modalities help us quiet our minds, and allow our bodies to 'speak' and release trapped or unprocessed emotions. Both modalities are free of dogma, and religious affiliation. Both live at the intersection of Spirit and Science.

Breathwork and Sound can be woven into almost any experience tapestry depending on the set, setting, and audience. As the breathing pattern generates a meditative state, the Rhythm, Harmony and Sounds applied support the emotional processes that arise from the breath. This is a skilled and intuitive practice that is based on deep listening and drawing on the practitioner's knowledge of frequency, harmonics, amplitude, tone, and cadence.

Breathwork and Sound are based on vibration, resonance, and felt sense. Both can help regulate our nervous system, clear our body of stagnant energy, and generate coherence in our energy field.

"The body follows the mind, and the mind follows the breath" Yogi Bhajan

Resources:

- Becoming Supernatural | Joe Dispenza, Dr.
- Healing | David Elliott
- In an unspoken voice, how the body releases trauma and restores goodness | Peter A. Levine, PhD
- Effects of yogic breath regulation: A narrative review of scientific evidence
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0975947617303224>
- What is Breathwork, and does it work? | Alexandra Palma, MD
<https://www.parsleyhealth.com/blog/breathwork-does-it-work>