

Tips for Breathwork Integration

by *Susanne Andrés*

Here are some tips about what to do after an intensive Holotropic Breathwork experience.

First of all: Take really good care of yourself!

When you return home after Holotropic Breathwork, make sure that you have some time and space for yourself. A lot has been stirred up, so take time to digest all you have been through in order for it to settle. For example, sit in silence in your best chair, and just look out of the window, allowing thoughts and feelings to drift by, just like clouds in the sky. Also consider these tips:

- See if you can have an open attitude toward everything that arises in you.
- Notice that whenever there has been an opening, a closing might occur, so you could feel a bit lonely after having spent some intense moments with a group.
- You might experience mood swings and body symptoms. Welcome and acknowledge whatever occurs without judging it, and see it as a continuation of what you kick-started in the breathwork. It is your Inner Healer still working on your movement toward wholeness.
- Do not compare your sessions with others' sessions. Everybody is incomparably unique, and so are you! Trust your own process.
- You might receive a challenging letter or phone call, or someone you haven't seen for awhile might contact you. Whatever happens: Embrace it as a synchronistic event.
- Do not let yourself be caught by a situation, a symptom, a pain. Go behind it, surrender, and stay with the process.
- Allow yourself, in a graceful way, not to spend a lot of time trying to gain an intellectual understanding of your experience. It will come from within; so will the change.

Also know that you can be quite vulnerable and in very close contact with your core Self. Therefore, make sure that you are together with people whom you trust. Share your experience with friends who understand what you have gone through. Others who do not follow you might unintentionally disempower you. Remember that the difference between the wise and the insane is that the wise know whom not to talk to!

You might feel ungrounded and even a little inflated after the breathwork. Therefore, wait a while before making any major decisions. If something is truly important for you to act on, allow yourself to reflect and settle some more, and for a couple of weeks, let it ripen from within, and then take action.

You have been doing deep, inner, vertical work; therefore, if you have an unpleasant symptom, it often cannot be solved in the horizontal realm in relation to other people. So, be aware that you do not project out your frustration. Instead, take full responsibility for your feelings, stay with your process, and go vertical. And get someone to help you, if doing so is too difficult to handle yourself.

If you feel miserable: Don't isolate! See it as a sign of healing: Pain is healing halfway through. Make connections as one more step of moving toward wholeness. If any symptom or uncomfortable feeling persists more than a few days, contact your facilitator or someone from your group, or your therapist. Here are more tips:

- Go for long walks in nature.
- Rest a lot.
- Eat healthy and tasty food, beautifully prepared.
- Drink plenty of water to remove any toxins that might have been released during the breathwork.
- Go slow on the alcohol. It narrows your consciousness, whereas the breathwork expands it.
- Do some gardening and cleaning; they are very good ways of grounding.
- Postpone challenging meetings, if you can.
- Have a massage. Take warm footbaths and long showers.
- Watch only movies that are full of meaning, heart-opening, and fun.
- Write! Dance! Listen to great music! Sing! Swim!
- Look at your dreams, and write them down. Draw them!
- Hang your mandalas on your wall, and turn them upside down. They will speak to you. And maybe draw new ones. Bring your mandalas to a therapist who has experience in transpersonal psychology. This could help you assimilate your experience even more and deepen your understanding.
- Meditate! It is a great way to facilitate the process of integrating the experience into your everyday life.
- Do only something that feels good and nourishing.
- Read Stan and Christina Grof's books: *The Stormy Search for the Self*, *Psychology of the Future*, and *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*. Also, find other literature that can help you learn more about your experience.
- Spend time with people whom you love, and who care for you.
- Open your heart and mind, and see if you can get a glimpse of the sacred in everybody and everything.
- Know that patience, time, rest, being with what is, and loving-kindness are all absolutely essential for a successful assimilation.

Lastly, for further integration, pass on the gifts and insights you have gained from your experience for the benefit of all your relations, and the greater good. May the breath be with you! ▲

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