

*"Remember to breathe. It is  
after all, the secret of life."*

- Gregory Maguire

## The Serenity Breath Process

Your ability to be conscious of your breathing patterns and rhythms is your ability to transform your life. You're about to learn a process that's deceptively simple and yet it has the ability to transform your mind and body in ways that few methods ever can.

One of the leading researchers in the mind-body field, Dr. Patricia Gerbarg states:

*"Because breathing has such a strong impact on our thoughts and feelings, it provides a portal through which we can send messages to our own nervous system to quiet our minds, reduce defensive over-reactivity and enable us to feel safe, close, loving, and loved."*

### The Incredible Benefits of the Serenity Breath

When you speed up and slow down your breathing, you activate the sympathetic and parasympathetic responses of the nervous system. By changing the pattern of how you breathe, you change the pattern of the energy and information being sent to your brain, heart, nervous system and entire body.

Every moment of your day, you have an amazing opportunity to bring yourself back into a state of **resonance** - *the balance of mind, Heart and body*. And when you feel that resonance, it feels like a state of harmony and peace and

gives you all the energy you need to move through your day and accomplish your daily tasks.

Stressful thoughts and emotions are replaced with a calm centered feeling. You sleep better because your mind is relaxed. New research shows that the better you sleep, the better your Brain and body functions. But it gets even better...

If you want to optimize your mind and body and prevent the wear and tear of the aging process, your sleep quality is one of the biggest predictors of the aging process.

## **“Calming the Fire” (the Fight or Flight Response)**

Each time you practice serenity breathing, you activate the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) response (rest and digest) and decrease the sympathetic response (fight or flight). The more stress you feel, the more your Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) is activated which can turn into a vicious cycle - more stress = more cortisol, etc.

*Sympathetic response* = fight or flight

*Parasympathetic response* = rest and rejuvenate

The key is balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems because both play an important function. It's not about eliminating all your stress, it's about seeing your stress in a new way and releasing your attachment (or avoidance) to what creates it.

## **The "Why" Behind The Serenity Breath**

You may remember my story of working with a therapist years ago when I had significant amounts of anxiety. With her help, In a matter of minutes, I became aware that my breathing was constricted and I was breathing ***exactly opposite*** of the way that I should've been!

***That day changed my entire life.*** As I look back, I see how that simple shift with my therapist's guidance helped me release enormous amounts of built-up stress. And once that stress was released, everything got easier for me!

I had no idea that such a simple change would yield such dramatic results.

The real work began after I left her office. *Because I had to make that shift part of my everyday life.* But I didn't have the process that you were about to learn.

Had I had this process earlier in my life, I can only imagine the wonderful gifts that would have given me. But now you have this process, a combination of years of research into the power of the breath and how it touches literally everything in our lives.

Before we begin the steps of the Serenity breath, it's vitally important to understand its purpose. In other words its "Why".

It's been said that you could go days or weeks without food, hours without water but not more than a couple minutes without breathing.

Because your breath is the source of Life of your entire body.

No breath = no life.

Here's an interesting way to think about your breathing...

Constricted breath = constricted life.

***It's that simple.***

But when your breath is open and flowing, your whole approach towards life changes. And the more you practice the Serenity Breath, you discover that it ***gives you energy***, awakens your mind and opens your Heart in ways you might not have imagined possible.

When you think about it, how do you breathe in your *normal* everyday life?

Then, think about how you breathe when you're on vacation.

If you're like the rest of us, you feel a dramatic difference when you're on vacation.

You don't just breathe a little bit different, you breathe a LOT different.

You've experienced major stressors in your life. And you know how that affects your mind in your body. But the more stress we feel, the more constricted our breathing gets. And that constriction begins to dramatically diminish our life force and our minds ability to adapt to the very stresses that show up on a regular basis.

## Turning the Tide on Stress

You can't change the stressors, *but you can change **your response** to them*. In other words, instead of the stress is mastering you, *you begin to master it* instead.

What you begin to use the Serenity Breath, you stack the odds in your favor.

## The Power of Paced Breathing

The frequency of your breathing directly affects every organ, system and function in your brain and body

The discovery that Drs. Vaschillo and Lehrer made was the pace of breathing was the key that unlocked the ANS (Autonomic Nervous System). This discovery is **groundbreaking** because for the first time, the average person has the ability to access the built-up stress in the nervous system and release it with a simple breath practice.

Most people breathe mostly from their chests and breathe too rapidly. The average person breathes at a rate of 12-18 breaths per minute. That pace of breathing is one of the central causes of stress, hypertension, blood pressure issues and host of other physical, emotional and mental ailments.

The discovery that Vaschillo and Lehrer made was that when people breathe between 5-7 breaths per minute, their heart rate, blood pressure and stress levels dropped **dramatically**. The simple shift of slowing their breathing pattern and becoming more conscious of how they breathed is more powerful than any other single method (including prescription drugs).

Because of their breakthrough research, we all can benefit by paying attention to and nurturing the precious breath of life we all have - moment to moment.

The Serenity Breath combines that research with a simple to use technique that anyone can learn in just minutes a day. Each time you practice the Serenity Breath, you strengthen your mind and nervous system as you release built up stress.

## Serenity Breath and HRV

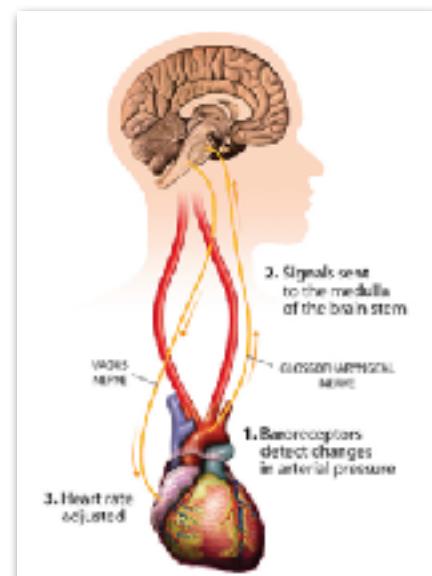
Each time you practice the Serenity Breath, you increase HRV (Heart Rate Variability). Studies have shown that the higher your HRV, the more balanced your mind/body energy is and the more peace and resilience you feel. In the next chapter you'll learn about Heart Resonance and the importance of tracking your heart energy.

The diagram below you can see the relationship between the heart in the brain. Each time you practice the Serenity Breath, it creates a flow of nourishing blood and neurochemicals that flow to your brain and the rest of your body.

Each breath, you are self nurturing and building resilience. Amazing for something so simple that we don't even think about it during our normal day.

But with the power of the Serenity Breath, now you have a simple tool that you can use throughout your day to regenerate and rejuvenate your entire mind and body.

In the next section, will talk about the steps of the Serenity Breath and how to practice it to reduce stress and strengthen your resilience.



## Breath Pacing

The basic breath pacing and your intent is the key to this process. Slow paced breathing supports your heart and increases your resilience. Your focus is to breathe at a rate of **six breaths per minute**.

There are many methods to relax the mind and body but the fastest way (oh and the one that creates longer-term results) is slow paced breathing.

**NOTE:**

It will take approximately 2 to 3 days for your system to become rebalanced using the Serenity Breath. Once you "reset" your breathing pattern back to normal, all it takes is several minutes a day to stay balanced.

The Serenity Breath is only effective when you make it a daily ritual, like brushing your teeth. Because once you've made a ritual, it becomes a habit. And there is no better habit to have then gentle balance breathing from your belly.

Here's the general format of the Serenity Breath.

1. Six breaths per minute
2. Three times a day
3. Approximately 3 to 5 minutes each time

**Let's practice a simple version now...**

Find a comfortable place to sit or lay down. Set your intent. For example, "*This is my time to rest and relax*" or "*My intent is to connect with my inner self, relax my mind and body and let go into the beauty of this present moment*".

Begin by breathing in through your nose to count to five, hold for a moment, and breathe out to count of five...

It might help if you make this sound "ahhhhh" on the out breath. Some prefer listening to the sound of the breath at on the exhale. Do what you feel is comfortable.

Allow yourself to feel the sensations of your belly moving in and out, relaxing your diaphragm each time you exhale...

Each time you practice this breathing pattern, the more in touch you'll become with your mind and body.

**The Serenity Breath Process**

This simple (but powerful) process helps you re-connect with your Essence. It takes just a few minutes to do and you can do it anywhere, anytime. The beauty

of this process is it helps you release old energies and emotions that no longer serve you and feel the Light of your Presence.

The Serenity Breath activates the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. The hypothalamus is the bridge between the mind and the body

## **The Serenity Breath**

1. Close your eyes and focus on your belly. Take several slow deep calming breaths. Breathing in through your nose to count to five, hold for a moment, and breathe out to count of five...
2. Touch the tip of your tongue to your inside of your palate
3. Now, focusing on your Heart, breathe into your Heart...
4. Now, imagine that it's just before sunrise. As you continue to breathe, you feel the Sun as it begins to rise gently...
5. Place your hand on your Heart and just breathe into the Light of the Sun
6. Let this warm loving Light and Presence relax your mind and body

Continue pacing your breath at six breaths per minute.

Just breathe gently and allow yourself to let go and feel...

Breathe in the Love and the Light of that Presence...

Taking all the time you need to feel this Divine Love within you.

This is your core, your Essence

### **NOTE**

A special Serenity Breath guided imagery audio is located resource center.

For some, the steps of the Serenity Breath may appear too simple to be of any real benefit.

But that's the mind based on its conditioned filters that saying that.

In fact, the simpler the process, the easier it is to apply and experience transformation.

The secret of the Serenity Breath isn't the steps themselves, ***it's the experience you feel in your body***. In other words, when you begin to practice the Serenity Breath, your mind lets go and your body relaxes. And the more you practice the Serenity Breath, the more the stuck and unresolved energy you release.

As you learn more about how to apply the Serenity Breath, and the more you practice it, the more your Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) comes back into balance. Remember, the ANS controls your heartbeat, respiration, digestion, blood pressure and how you deal with stress.

Your breath gives you a special way to access your ANS so you can release the built-up stress and regain your energy, focus in clarity.

The Serenity Breath stimulates the hypothalamus - one of the key glands of the endocrine system. The endocrine system produces and regulates all the hormones in your body. The hypothalamus is the **bridge between the mind and the body**, between the nervous system and the endocrine system. **It is triggered by thought**, and manifests that thought in the body through the hormones. **So, the hypothalamus embodies thought.**

*“We live in an ocean of air like fish in a body of water. By our breathing we are attuned to our atmosphere. If we inhibit our breathing we isolate ourselves from the medium in which we exist. In all Oriental and mystic philosophies, the breath holds the secret to the highest bliss.”*

- Alexander Lowen



## Let's Review



1. When your breathing is out of rhythm, it throws off how your mind works, how you make decisions and how you communicate with others. But when your breathing is in resonance, your brain, Heart and body all work together in synchrony. This synchrony gives all of your vital organs, muscles, blood and Heart the energy that it needs most.

2. The more you practice the Serenity Breath, the more it strengthens your Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) - The part of you that controls the fight or flight or rest and digest response. In other words the results are cumulative. Each day you practice, the more peaceful and resilience you become.

3. When your mind is out of rhythm with your heart, you automatically feel stress. And that stress can be measured through what's called Heart Rate Variability (HRV). The higher your stress, the lower your HRV. And the more peaceful and connected you feel, the higher your HRV.

(More about this in Chapter 5)

One of the best things to know is that you change even stressful rhythms into peaceful ones. And the most powerful way for you to do this is through your breath. Because your breath gives you access to the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) we spoke of earlier. At first, it boggles the mind that's something so simple can be so powerful.

#### **4. The Power of The Resonance Breath**

When you breathe at the rate of 5.5 to 7 breaths per minute, you create the optimal state of resonance and balance between the brain and Heart. In the state of resonance, built-up stress begins to dissolve naturally.

The research showed that the more a person breathes in resonance, the more their heart rate decreases, their blood pressure normalizes, and the systems of the body come back into natural harmony and order.

When a body senses stress, it secretes the hormone called cortisol. It's often called the "stress hormone" due to its association with the state of stress in our bodies. That's because levels of cortisol in the body spike during times of high stress.

Cortisol is produced by the adrenal glands.

This connection between the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and adrenal glands (also known as the HPA axis) forms the backbone of the body's stress response system.

The Serenity Breath can help you dramatically lower your cortisol levels and turn off the "fight or flight" response and engage the rest and digest response instead.

**Note:**

(For a simple reminder of the Serenity Breath practice as well as to measure your Heart Resonance, see the Serenity App)

