

Explanation of Joy Breathing

By: Carol Small

I am so happy to have this opportunity to share about Middendorf Breath Work. For me, it is the connecting fibers that bring together the whole picture of human consciousness. I think I have had my part in most of the pieces of the puzzle. I have been a body worker. I've studied Hypnotherapy trying to understand the workings of the mind. I have worked with the physical, with diet and exercise and the products that promote perfect health. My psychological work with clients is definitely from a spiritual approach, where I help them see that the world as not real but a reflection of our thoughts.

About 4 years ago, I realized that while working with clients I could see their patterns and the core issues easily. Generally speaking, the core issue is always self abandonment at some level. People look for something outside themselves, that is often seductive, to fulfill their needs and desires. I knew that the return to Self was the answer to real fulfillment and it also then in turn became clear to my clients as we worked. There was only so much that could be experienced on the inner to alleviate the desire to externalize a way to fulfill needs through working with awareness. There was definitely a need for the experience of Self to be so strong that the external world looked pale by comparison. There is only so much we can accomplish by using our minds to inform our mind to help us heal. Somatic work, like Middendorf, works at a cellular level to support growth and change. That is when I was led to the experience of Breath. Middendorf Breath Work. This isn't a piece of the puzzle, it is the puzzle itself. The Breath in my experience is consciousness itself and resides in the center of our being. The answer became as simple as connecting to our Breath. Our Natural Breath. Just the mere experience of being with

the sensation of movement of breath in the body brings that experience of completeness of fulfillment we are all looking for. This process teaches how to let the breath come and go on it's own without pushing or pulling or manipulating it in any way. That was actually the most difficult part for me. How could I be present with the breath and not control it in some way. I was so used to pushing and pulling in my life. The thought of allowing the Breath to lead me was revolutionary. The breath can be manipulated so we create a state of relaxation, but how long does that state last? It becomes clear when we superimpose our own will on the breath or manipulate it in any way we lose the benefits of what natural intelligence can do for us. When we learn we can't force the breath into a fake state, but we can allow the breath to be invited in all parts of our body, which gives the sensation of being carried and supported from within. The Joy and gratitude that comes with the relief of letting go of control makes the need to control the outside world to meet our needs obsolete. This is why I call my Breath practice Joy Breathing.

The 3 and a half year training changed my life to an immense degree. Through allowing the breath to move me and gradually giving up control of my breath and allowing the natural rhythm to develop, I was able to watch my false self with all its strategies and controlling behaviors begin to dissolve in the mist of that divine intelligence. It created a chance for me to have a healthy container to grow up all over again, to go through the developmental stages, to grow up like a much straighter tree instead of the bent over one I began with.

When we are babies we are in sensation and fully breathing bodies. Then our natural growth gets interrupted. We get cut off from our bodies and that is dangerous to be acting in the world without access to our true guidance. When our developmental stages are

damaged and we try to adapt to our outer world, we learn to compensate and that becomes what we think we are. That is how, in my opinion, wars are perpetuated. We forget who we really are. In the breath work we don't try to solve the problem or conflict, we go directly to the Self in the center of the body and experience the sensation of the movement of breath in the body. Joy breathing helps you inhabit yourself so you no longer need to respond to the invasion of the outside world. Your natural breath brings you safely home to yourself.

The Breath training actually is like matching the evolution of consciousness. It allows us to grow up like a healthy tree. From the pelvis down it is like the roots which give support. It's in the lower body that the unconscious power is connected to the earthly primordial soup. When that primordial impulsive power connects to the Self which is in the trunk, this is the core self. Then this core self connects to the leaves which are the upper space that flower into the expression of our own individuality where we use our hands to express in the world. This is all offered by allowing us to find the truth of our own experience not by being told what to feel or what to do. It all comes together when you combine Breath, Sensation and Presence. Those 3 create a whole that come together with the relationship to the outer and the inner. The outer and the inner then connect to the horizontal experience of relationship and the vertical which connects our Self to the Heavens and the Earth. This new relationship to the core self now becomes the source of fulfillment.

There are two forms that Middendorf Breath work takes. Hand-on method and Movement classes.

- Hands-on method is where you are laying on a table and I am using my hands to invite the breath into the body. This is a natural, comforting process where deep relaxation meets your full presence bring a pure experience of being home in yourself.
- Movement classes are also used as a tool to facilitate the movement of breath and presence in all parts of your body, connecting you too your deepest self. These movement classes are done sitting on stools while I will assist you in body movements that invite breath and presence and a deep sense of well-being.