

Somato Respiratory Integration (SRI)

Breathing Exercises to Help Integrate the Twelve Stages of Healing & Consciousness

SRI is a powerful tool that is used to connect our brains' attention with our bodies through the breath. First taught as the "Twelve Stages of Healing", we now understand it to really mean the "Twelve Stages of Consciousness". Healing is constantly happening in our body minds without our awareness. 100,000 new skin cells are produced every minute that we are alive and the stomach lining is replaced in its entirety every 24 hours. Those are just two examples of our innate healing mechanisms.

Consciousness is different than healing in that it is an inner awareness or knowingness. Being conscious of how we react in a certain relationship or circumstance in our lives is required in order to be able to create a change, move through and heal that situation. Dr. Donald Epstein explains that "There are no thoughts, feelings and experiences we can have that are separate from the body. They actually have a physical spot or connection to the body that when that spot is paid attention to can re-create the experience." An example of this is a familiar scent that reminds you of a person or past situation. The memory triggers a feeling that you associate with that particular event.

The twelve breathing exercises of SRI catalyze the initial awareness that can lead to our recognizing the need for change, sometimes by re-creating an old experience. This helps us to develop the courage that will then lead to breakthroughs for unparalleled healing to occur in our lives. As we progress through the 12 stages, we gain momentum and a greater energy source to draw from.

Stage one of healing is called suffering. It is a starvation of life force energy which can-but does not have to-show up as muscle restriction, inflammation or pain in our bodies. This "locked up" area has what is called "bound energy" which we will draw from for use in the later stages. In stage 1 we want to be able to locate, experience and verbalize the differences between areas that feel disconnected in our bodies and the ones that feel peaceful. The main goal of stage 1 is to become connected to these different areas regardless of their differences. "Connecting" means to keep your attention on an area without your mind drifting, to be able to localize movement just in that part of the body and move breath in and out in that area.

This type of focused connection allows us to find parts of ourselves that we disconnected from in the past because it was unsafe to experience or be in our bodies at that instance in our lives.

In stage two we start to recognize that there are parts that are separate from us and that we forgot about. We start recognizing that we have different parts and different rhythms. A goal of moving through this stage is for these parts to co-exist. This consciousness allows us to tap into “polarities” that exist in our lives. We begin to recognize contradictions within us that run our lives. We now can begin to take the charge off these areas of our bodies and their associated stress response. When our parts begin to flow rhythmically without one dominating the other, our lives unfold with more grace, ease and less conflict.

In stage 3 we begin to notice that “we are stuck”. We recognize that we have been stuck for a long time and have not been paying attention to our inner needs. We start to gain consciousness that being stuck in our bodies creates an inability to move forward in our lives. Being stuck is not a failure; it is meant to build up our resources, just as feelings of frustration are meant as a sign to take action. The action that is called for here is to listen within and spur us on to take responsibility to create the life we want to live.

So I call upon you to connect to your inner wisdom and find your true voice and authentic self. Mastering the first three stages of consciousness will pave the way for you to be true to yourself and bring your gifts to everyone around you and the world.

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