

# Wilfried Ehrmann: Coherent Breathing – Aligning Breath and Heart

We are on the edge of a basic shift of our health care system. Many prognoses indicate that we are about to hit the borders of financial viability. The undeniable successes of medical research and practice have brought a lot of alleviation to sick people and prolonged their lives. On the other side, we notice a growing number of illnesses and new forms of diseases, which cause us worries. There is also an increasing dissatisfaction with medical care by many, even in countries with enormous expenses for the health care system. Academic medicine based on classical science can help a lot of people but by far not all. It best works with “normal patients” with average sensitivities and resilience. Others react allergically to medication or cannot tolerate the standard doses. Many suffer from disorders without diagnosis. They run from examination to examination without result. They have “pains without findings”. Others suffer from the side effects of treatments more than from the original symptoms.

Medical treatments have to become more individualized: Every patient needs a therapy adjusted to his condition and needs. At the same time, the cost pressure rises and the time doctors can dedicated to their patients decreases. The waiting times become longer, the dissatisfaction grows. Although more and more money is pumped into the system, it seems as if people are not becoming healthier and happier.

The basic shift we are probably facing presently means taking on self-responsibility. We are used to other people caring for our health: doctors, hospitals and the whole social and health care system. Now it is the point to reclaim this responsibility to ourselves without having to renounce the support of experts. We should become the primary experts for ourselves and see the specialists of the health care system as partners.

Medicine of the third person perspective (diagnosing and treating symptoms from outside) needs to be complemented by the first person perspective (investigating symptoms from the inside). So the challenge is to build up and improve our own health competence, and we notice the presentation of more and more promising approaches.

We discover ways to influence our bodies from the inside. For our organism is a gigantic self-controlling system. We know and experience thousands of subsystems regulating themselves all the time. As long as everything runs fine, we do not pay any attention to our blood pressure, lymph circulation or secretion of digestive enzymes. In every moment, our bodies autonomously achieve incredible results. Our brain is taking part in all these procedures. When we want to become the primary doctors inside of ourselves, we should learn to use those parts of our brain as highest authority of inner self-regulation, which are accessible for our consciousness. How can we program ourselves in a way that our bodies remain efficient on the one hand and regenerative on the other?

The method of Coherent Breathing presented in this book offers an important approach to this topic. For with the breathing process, nature has provided us with a metabolic function, which can operate with or without consciousness. With consciousness we can influence the breathing to modulate other physical systems by stimulating or moderating them. We just have to know how to breathe “correctly” for creating the desired results and how we can train our bodies to automatically breathe in a way that is most beneficial for them, which means for us and for our health. (...)

Coherent Breathing is an easy to learn and universally applicable method for prevention and self-therapy. On the one hand, it helps to balance the nervous system and on the other to strengthen self-awareness and self-perception. It supports us in situations of acute stress to calm down and takes the pressure out of daily experiences. It is useful for our own sense of health: To perceive how we feel with ourselves, to notice when we get out of balance, and to discern what helps us in tense situations and what is detrimental to us.

Every day, hour, minute we are together with ourselves. In any moment of our lives we know how we feel, we just have to ask our inside. What we need is a sense of when we are in inner balance and when we skip out of it. And when we are in imbalance, this the way, which brings us back to harmony and equilibrium. The simplest indicator for inner disturbances and the simplest corrector at the same time, is our own breathing. Breath awareness, that is attention to our own breathing, is a helpful access to our inner world, which is always at hand. The self-regulation by breathing is an excellent way to restore our inner alignment again and again.

It is imperative that we all become the most important experts for our own health! We just have to get started!

So this is the urgent and necessary shift of paradigms in our attitude towards health and quality of life: We can take on more responsibility for our health. Now there are numerous developments within the medical research, which back us up in this task. I mention two interrelated tendencies in this context: The new validation of the vegetative nervous system as basic component in any disease in general and findings about the role of the parasympathicus in stress regulation in particular.