

What is Integral Breath Therapy?

By Carol A. Lampman



The answer to this question continues to evolve and expand as we understand the nuances of working with the breath as an altered state modality. The method itself is often difficult for facilitators to explain to their colleagues and clients. This is understandable as this modality, while being quite simple, is woven with complexities due to its multi-dimensional nature. As a healing modality, it encompasses aspects of nearly every therapeutic concept and modality.

How would you describe or explain this work?

At the foundation level, Integral Breath Therapy includes elements of Psychotherapy, Somatic and Body Centered Therapies, Reichian processes, Stress Management, Emotional Release Work, Movement Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Energy Therapy, Inner Child healing, Focusing, Guided Imagery, Breathwork, reprogramming the system of Beliefs and the power of Intention.. Within the structure, there is a focus on grounding, centering, clearing, opening and understanding as it pertains to our personal work as well as facilitating individual clients.

In its entirety, Integration Process Therapy (advanced programs) expands to include Pre and Perinatal Psychology, Emotional Anatomy, Water Therapy, Release Therapy, Voice Dialogue, Music Therapy, Bodywork, Sand Tray Therapy, Meditation, Reichian Character Structures, Bioenergetics, Advanced Energy work, Dream work, Jung's Mandala, Psycho-Spiritual work, and the topics of death and dying. There are additional applications for continued clearing, conscious creation and self empowerment, opening the heart and healing relationship issues, personal and spiritual growth as it pertains to the individual process as well as facilitating groups.

It is important to understand this method fully and completely in order to explain it accurately to others. I would describe it as a natural, organic, energy therapy to which a multitude of applications can be applied. The breath accesses all four levels of our being, for healing; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. There is a mechanism within each of us, the inner healer, that knows exactly what is needed in order to return to health and wholeness. The basic principle is that "whatever is most needed" to restore us to our healed nature will emerge spontaneously during the altered state created through the use of the breath. The presence of the facilitator is a healing in itself. They are the witness to the pain of the past and a support for change in the future.

The natural basis for this method is what makes it appropriate and applicable to so many qualifying professions. The training is designed to teach "facilitators" who will incorporate and use the method within the scope of their original profession. A therapist

will use it in one way, an educator or coach in another, a body worker applies the tools to their method, and health care professionals find their own applications. I often explain what we bring as facilitators to our sessions in this way: There are three kinds of therapists in the world. The first kind sits on the river bank and instructs the person how to swim. The second one gets into the water and shows the client how to swim. The third kind swims with the client, not too far ahead and not too far behind. This is who we are as facilitators of this method.

There is an area of confusion for many and that is that many facilitators see this method as “deep process work” and feel it should be treated accordingly. The level of training along with the personal experience of the student is likely to influence their point of view. It is true that it can be, but it is only one facet of a powerful and diverse modality. The uniqueness of the method is that it adapts itself to the client and the needs of the moment. Any given session may be soft and gentle or dynamic and energetic. You can never know what might emerge or what will be needed in advance. It is important to allow for the natural process to emerge spontaneously. Always set aside your ideas or thoughts about what is going to happen in a session, very often you will be proven quite wrong.



In the process of socialization, the Western culture has become emotionally repressed. In order to be socially correct, there has been an energetic holding of emotions, words and actions. The process of holding back and containing the energy happens through controlling the breath. We may grasp the inhale, restrict the exhale and eliminate or hold onto the pauses. When the control is removed from the breath, it is a bit like opening the doors to the dam. The release may include intense feelings and

physical reactions. This energetic release has immense value for those of us who have been “holding” back our emotions since childhood. The result is an enormous sense of relief and feelings of elation as energy flows freely through the system.

Emotional Anatomy is a vital component of this method. Most people have no idea who they are as emotional beings and how important it is to be able to access, understand and draw on the feedback of our emotional responses. The process of freeing the body mind from energy of emotions that have been stored for decades is imperative to reclaiming equilibrium. However, the emotional process can be very addictive and the facilitator needs to be watchful for signs of those who repeatedly seek the excitement of the emotional release. The “high” that follows is a temporary state and what goes up, will eventually come down. This becomes a block in itself and there is a resistance to give up the “high” that results from the movement of so much life force energy. There comes a time to let go of the need to fly. Then, the important work of creating a life of peace, joy and happiness begins.

As a student of Integral Breath Therapy, you are sometimes a facilitator, often a coach, and always a teacher. One of the most important uses of Integral Breath Therapy is that of stress management. 75% of the reasons we see a doctor are stress related. All of the benefits of “The Relaxation Response” are a side affect of working with the breath. You need to teach this method to your clients as a stress management and self-development tool. Better than that, what if you brought it into the high stress business world and offer it as a class? You could teach Emotional Anatomy so that people learn about who they are as emotional beings. Dis-Ease is the result of the holding back of healthy emotional expression. You could teach about the role of BELIEFS and offer the tools to look “underneath” their story to a deeper truth. There is nothing more powerful than supporting someone as they discover “how and why” they are re-creating the same reality again and again. There is such satisfaction in bringing your presence to another person as they discover that change is possible and that it all exists within them. You could teach Breathing as Meditation as a resource for connecting to the wisdom of their hearts.



Integral Breath Therapy is a self development tool and it is part of your role to teach your clients how to use it in their lives. As a result, they are empowered to take control of their lives and begin to make the changes they need. As a facilitator, you are a trusted ally, neutral guide, skilled technician and teacher to your clients and groups. It is important to bring this work out into the world from a very realistic and multi-dimensional point of view. It needs to stay grounded in both practical terms and in its applications. This is the only way that modalities that use the breath will be openly accepted and recognized in the professional world. While it is powerful, it is completely

safe when used as taught. This natural and organic method works with the part in each of us that knows exactly how to come back into balance. It is a diverse, adjunct modality that can be uniquely combined with many other methods.

This process is a Self-Empowerment method. It is only when we (the client) hand over our power to others that we are at risk. It is when we (the facilitator) take that power and presume to know for others what is best for them, that we interfere with the process. It is when we interpret or take responsibility for the outcome of the session that we disempower others. This reinforces the victim personality and traps the facilitator in the role of the rescuer. The responsibility lies fully with the client. The facilitator needs to be willing to support them in their process or their resistance until they are ready to take the next step. There is truth and there is timing. We may know a truth, but is the client ready to hear it at this time? And, what if we are wrong? How damaging might that be? When we trust the inner healer, it will come from them or be revealed to them in the session. I am not saying that there are not times that we might confront or nudge a client we know well. What I am saying is that we teach others to connect to their inner wisdom and connect to their own answers. This is Self-Empowerment!



When we honor these sacred boundaries, we are teaching others that their own wisdom can be trusted. We will only allow ourselves to go so far ... so fast. Why? Our ego structure, along with its defenses, is designed to keep us safe in an unpredictable world. It is true that the beliefs that are contained in this construct were created before the age of reason, but it has been continually reinforced during the years since childhood. It is deeply entrenched. If we let go all at once or move too fast in

the process, we may begin to unravel at the seams. This can be frightening, in fact, terrifying to us. There is no hurry and no destination, it is enough to handle one piece at a time.

The mission statement for Integration Concepts is "We believe each person carries the potential for greatness; the expression is unique to each person. Our mission is to hold this vision for you until you can connect to it within yourself." We dismantle the structure and the defenses, one belief at a time. We release the emotions in a way that is contained and not overwhelming. Step by step, the process can be used to support someone while they climb out of a deep hole and the same process can be used to climb to the stars. It takes time and space to integrate and rebuild before moving to the next step. It is all in divine order and we have all the time we need.

The summary...

Integral Breath Therapy is a natural, organic modality that is safe and simple to use. It is a body centered process that works with the breathing mechanism to create an altered state of consciousness. It is self generated by the client along with the request (intention) for healing of body, mind, emotions and spirit. It is an experiential method that has a wide range of applications. It can be used for stress management, physical healing, building self esteem, emotional balancing, personal growth, and for spiritual development. Once mastered, it is a tool that can be employed by the individual as a method of personal guidance through life's peaks and valleys.

It is the ideal tool to support your profession as a Social Worker, Psychotherapist, Body Worker, Physical Therapy, Health Care Professional, Yoga Teacher, Coach, and Hospice Care, as well as those who work in the field of Education.