

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

#### Summary of day 9 session: Just Breathe!



#### Breath work can help us to.

- Regulate the nervous system
- Calm the mind
- Awaken creativity
- Respond instead of react
- Manage triggers
- Deal with grief and loss
- Reduce difficult emotions such as anxiety, overwhelm, anger and so on

#### Did you know?

- Author, Richard Sutton recommends that we slow the breath down to 5,5 breaths per minute. This takes us out of the stress response and promotes healing in the body.
- Hillary Clinton used the 'alternate nostril breathing' technique when she lost the election to Donald Trump and said it "saved her life" from the anxiety she was experiencing at the time.

#### The breath is a brain hack

- Our hunter-gatherer ancestors were under threat every day; hunting for food, surrounded by wild animals and other threats. As humans, we've been biologically programmed to be anxious and fearful because this is how we survived this era, long ago.
- Now, however, life is different, and we are no longer under constant threat of survival. However, our programming hasn't changed, and we find ourselves sitting at our laptops or at work, experiencing the very same stress response as our ancestors did.
- Our stress response or 'fight, flight and freeze' response is always activated. The sympathetic nervous system is in constant overdrive causing a continuous stream of cortisol and adrenalin to be released into the body. Our breath shortens, our muscles tense and essential survival functions are enhanced.
- We need to learn a brain hack to short circuit this ancient programming so we can activate the para-sympathetic nervous system and move into the 'rest, digest and healing' response.

*Our breath is the secret! Use these simple breathing techniques below as a brain hack to mental fitness;*

#### 1. Alternate nostril breathing technique

- Block the right nostril with your right thumb, whilst the ring and baby finger block the left nostril. The middle finger is placed on the forehead.
- Start by inhaling deeply through the right nostril as you lift the thumb. Then replace the thumb as you lift the ring finger and exhale deeply through the left nostril. Inhale through the left side, close that nostril and exhale through the right as you lift the thumb again.
- Continue to inhale through the right nostril, exhale left nostril, inhale left nostril, exhale right nostril
- Continue in this way for 5-10 cycles.
- Release this technique and return to a natural breathing rhythm.

#### 2. The '3:4:5' and '4:7:8' breathing technique

- Inhale slowly through both nostrils for a count of 3, hold the breath for a count of 4 and then exhale through the mouth slowly, for a count of 5.
- Repeat this for 5-10 cycles
- Then, inhale through both nostrils for 4 counts, hold the breath for 7 counts and exhale out the mouth slowly for 8 counts.
- Repeat this for another 5-10 cycles.
- If you feel this is too challenging for you today, continue with the 3:4:5 ratio.
- Release the technique and return to natural deep breathing.

#### Breath Meditation

Imagine that whatever it is that you need today, is in the air around you. Be it courage, safety, love, understanding or kindness. Whatever it may be- bring it in on the breath as you inhale deeply. Let it fill your body and your mind. Your body is listening to what we put in our minds, let your body anticipate all the beautiful things you welcome in with the breath, now. Think of someone you love. As you breath out, gift them whatever they need now with every deep exhalation. Send them love, compassion, kindness, relief- whatever you feel they need in this moment.