

Section III - Expiration: An Opportunity to Let Go

FALL - Gathering Spaciousness

The ELEMENT of AIR

WEEK # 38 :

Making more room for life sometimes involves being aware of parts of your body, mind, or emotions that may stay chronically tense and protected out of fear.

In the chakra system our pelvic floor is considered part of the root or foundation of our being. If there is tension held here then free movement of the breath is limited and our life force is constrained. This also is tied in to our survival and lack of connection to the Earth.



Have you ever checked in with the tension that you may be holding in your pelvic floor muscles?? If you live in a Western culture I would be willing to bet that there is quite a bit of unnecessary tension there (we don't squat much!), which is coupled with self image and the way we think and feel about ourselves and the world we inhabit.

The pelvis is part of the lower breathing space and pelvic floor muscles directly affect the quality and fullness of our breathing. Here is what Dennis Lewis says about it in his book *Breathe Into Being*:

“These muscles include the perineum, located between the anus and sexual organs, and the pelvic diaphragm, which stretches across the floor of the pelvic cavity. In healthy natural breathing, during inhalation the diaphragm in the chest moves downward, the belly expands outward, the abdomen widens in all directions, and the pelvic floor moves slightly downward. During exhalation, the entire process is reversed, with the pelvic diaphragm moving slightly upward. If the pelvic floor is chronically constricted in any way, a spontaneous natural breath is not possible. The free movement through us of the breath of life requires a pelvic floor that is both relaxed and resilient.”

— Dennis Lewis

When these muscles are relaxed and open you will also feel more grounded and rooted to the earth and a sense of peacefulness may flow in. Increasing awareness in this area is done by squatting more often, and paying attention to the muscles in the pelvic floor and whether they are guarded and tense, or relaxed and open.

Squatting can be difficult for some, so if this is true for you, then simply put something underneath your heels. You can also place your hands in front of you on the floor for balance. As you squat, notice the movements in belly, back, pelvis and chest as you breathe. Also notice if there is a shift in your tension level, emotions, and mind chatter. The belly may soften, relax, and let go. As you practice this it will become easier over time. Muscles will open up that have been chronically tight and holding on for years.

When to do this? Whenever you might choose to sit in a chair – instead squat! Watching T.V., listening to music, talking on the phone....the possibilities are endless. Try it out with the intention of just observing and watching your breath. This practice is not meant to be a work out move or even a yoga technique! It is simply inhabiting your body, grounding to the earth, and making more room for life!

Quote of the Week:

“Breathing easily and fully is one of the basic pleasures of being alive. The pleasure is clearly experienced at the end of expiration when the descending wave fills the pelvis with a delicious sensation. In adults this sensation has a sexual quality, though it does not induce any genital feeling. The slight backward and forward movements of the pelvis, similar to the sexual movements, add to the pleasure. Though the rhythm of breathing is pronounced in the pelvic area, it is at the same time experienced by the total body as a feeling of fluidity, softness, lightness and excitement.”

—Alexander Lowen (The Voice of the Body)