

Lighten Up!

Transforming dead weight into wellness and supreme balance

By Carol Hicks

Life's challenges can feel hopeless and heavy. Sometimes it is a problem of excessive physical weight. Others suffer with an attachment to things which clutter their world and all but suffocate them. Depression from childhood wounds and anxiety about an uncertain future weigh heavy. Destructive habits deepen the sense of oppression. We despair when physical pain, loss, and grief intrude. Lightening that load is possible when we intentionally cultivate the habit of expecting (and thus creating) happiness and success even in the face of chaos, challenge, trauma, difficulty. A good place to begin is taking a nice deep satisfying breath and just letting it go, establishing a rhythm of easy breathing that leaves you floating weightlessly on the infinity wavelength of your own breath. Some believe that as long as you're breathing, there is more right with you than there is wrong.

Observe this breath. Pretend that you have just discovered breathing for the very first time and just notice the nuances of each breath as its own unique and separate miracle. On the next exhale, you might immerse yourself into an imagined pool of water that embraces, supports, and holds you up so easily, as though you were as light as a feather. And notice that you can slowly and decisively let all the air out of your lungs and, as you exhale, feel yourself dropping deeper and floating lower in the soothing water of your imagination. Fill up with air again, taking all that you can hold. Float high in the water. Give yourself to the water, floating weightless, breathing yourself up and down. And know that each breath is, in effect, a sort of elevator that you can slide your consciousness into and ride it down to the core of calm chamber within you. At the first signal of any tension, anxiety or unhealthy impulse, you simply Stop! Drop! And Roll your awareness inward, as if you were on fire. Use that elevator to drop inside, into a place of immense wellbeing. An eerily still eye of a hurricane where you are safe from the tumultuous winds that swirl around you. Safely inside them at their absolute center – at the heart of the matter.

Not trying to do anything, or get anywhere, or fix anything. Just observing without judgment. Maybe you can discover that your sense of comfort continually increases with each breath and you can gradually let yourself experience a pure and complete relaxation and presence inside your skin. Your conscious mind can participate by adding a silent internal soundtrack while exhaling slowly and completely at the next out breath: "I am completely relaxed..." you say, even though you know it isn't fully true yet. You put this intention in the present tense to purposefully create that reality. "At this time..." you add on the next out breath. Reminding yourself that you can relax completely, just for now. Dropping inside this timeless moment of right now. There is nothing you need to do and nothing you need to worry about. Any unfinished business out there can comfortably wait. "Both physically..." you say with your inner voice on the next out breath. And as you focus your intention on this matter of physical relaxation, dispatch an imaginary awareness crew on a 'search and observe' body scan mission throughout your entire body, making note of all you feel without judgment. Noticing where there might be a

tension or a tightness or comfort or pain and just breathe into that part with awareness and permission to let it be and relax deeper into that cocoon of calm, kind of melting and releasing any tension you don't need to hold onto, the way stiff noodles do when they drop into a pot of boiling water. "And mentally" is the final phrase of the 4 part sentence that you say to yourself from deeper and deeper inside this core of calm on the next exhale. And just what is 'mental relaxation', you might wonder. It's when you casually observe the thoughts that you let come and go past the reviewing station of your conscious mind, as if they were on parade. In fact, you might like to imagine sitting beside a real river and remember your dispassionate, detached ability to observe with a calm awareness, noticing first the current itself and how it flows continuously. You casually notice and are not disturbed by anything that rides that current, whether it be children floating by on inner tubes, boats, barges, driftwood, whatever it might be, you simply watch it come and let it go. Just like the breath. Just like the Life Force that is breathing you. And with it the constant flow of your own thoughts generated by your unconscious and parading past your conscious mind: observing the continuous flow of the river of your own thoughts as they make their way past the conscious mind. Not trying to stop them or change them or fix anything, just letting them come and watching them go, just like a breath.

And back around through the sentence again and again, 'I am completely relaxed, at this time, both physically and mentally' using your own inner voice at your own chosen speed and noticing how with each repetition it becomes more true. You begin to know that you like this focused breathing and the lightness it brings much better than the heavy feelings you're saying goodbye to with each breath. You begin to know that you are on the brink of a massive change that will sweep through your entire experience of being yourself. But first you may have some forgiving and remembering and accepting of yourself to do. And letting go with compassion, breathing consciously into this business of saying goodbye to compulsive, desperate, mindless patterns that have burdened and unbalanced your life – up until now.

Perhaps you would enjoy dipping into your personal Experience Savings & Loan account and borrow some good feelings from your past and future. As you breathe yourself up and down here in the wellspring of wellbeing power place you've settled into, it's easy to follow that feeling all the way back to its earliest source. Your conscious mind might wonder where in time to go, but your unconscious holds the controller for this time machine and somehow knows that you can go all the way back to a time of innocence before you ever carried this heavy load, back when you experienced nothing except the profound exuberance of being alive. You may not even have known that you could remember having this feeling. Until NOW when you realize you suddenly ARE remembering something you didn't even know you had forgotten. So feel it now. And memorize it now while you let yourself breathe yourself deeper into that you, back then, as if it was now. What is it like to experience being four years old or sometime before the age of starting school? Feel your feelings, present in each moment, breathing easy, peaceful and calm, accepting yourself so completely you aren't even conscious that there is ever anything else. So have the good feeling your conscious mind remembers while you direct your unconscious to memorize each and every nuance of it as you just settle in

to that experience and let it feel real good, way down deep, noting that your sense of comfort increases with each breath.

Then, while you are having that experience, get a good strong grip on it and DRAG it ALL the way back into right now – a nice present for the present time when you can really use it in a directed fashion for your own betterment. You accept it by really breathing it consciously into the NOW.

OR, you might enjoy going into the future where you're going to be completely content with all that you've accomplished and recognize that there, deep comfort will have become so routine to you a long time ago, that you can harvest abundant stores of comfort and joy and habitual well being from this well invested Experience Savings & Loan any time you want to. No part of you is likely to object if you should borrow against this good feeling you have so abundantly in the future. You can transfer it back to the present and call it a present, with good interest.

And really hold on to all of these good feelings, recognizing that it doesn't matter whether you got them from the past or the future, you've always had them all along. You know how to have these feelings. They are your feelings, by virtue of being alive. Feeling how good it feels to intentionally transmit the message of acceptance to yourself – right now, just as you are: I accept you unconditionally, right now. And just let it in. Deeper with every breath. There really is no need to fix, stop, or change anything about who you are. Simply celebrate your wholeness. And it's okay to keep getting better all the time, so long as you know that you are also exactly alright, right now, just as you are.

And here we still are – again - with you still having the good feelings that become a mainstay of your core experience, deeper with every breath. And the more those feelings deepen, there is the discovery of a confidence that will begin to manifest through all walks of your life. You'll hear yourself saying what needs to be said, speaking your truth with kindness, holding nothing back. Discovering and accepting facets of you that have waited a long time, yearning for inclusion. It might be necessary to grieve for the great energy that's been spent to hide, ignore and even villainize them. As though they were an enemy or threat somehow. As if all parts aren't sacred and essential to your wholeness. But for some unexplained reason, suddenly, all that shaming and judging and hiding and fear is over and you see that you really are perfect in this moment, all parts included.

So, luxuriate in this moment, and invite peace with all aspects of yourself just as they are right now. Accepting and being okay with all aspects of who you are and what you feel. Even the conflicts. It's suddenly easy to somehow be above it all, a dispassionate observer who is a part of but also apart from, just observing clearly. Just be with any internal conflict as if you are comfortably watching a tennis match. Maybe this match takes place in a bit of a lightning storm and insights strike like lightning does: You can just watch with curiosity and note the drift of awareness.

Know that you have come to a place and time where you are the undisputed director of your life drama. And you simply ponder the question: Who am I now and what do I

want? Your conscious mind can participate in asking your unconscious to open internal lines of communication and let you understand what your soul is thirsty for. What will fill your cup? Continue to meditate on that question in one part of your heart even while you turn your conscious attention to other matters. But like a three ring circus, this process of wondering can continue in its own sacred arena even as the spotlight shifts and your attention becomes riveted on lions jumping boldly through flaming rings of fire in the next ring.

So, let your attention be fixated on a reflection device you bring to mind, perhaps an elaborate golden gilded mirror system and notice with interest that there is a center panel flanked by angled panels that create the illusion of infinity selves extending off to the left and right of the center panel. Activate this meditation by stepping into the spotlight in front of the center panel and compassionately look deep into your own familiar eyes, recognizing yourself as a friend. And now, look to the left and imagine that the progression of selves is getting younger and younger, by the minute or hour or day or week or month, year, or decade, all the way back until there at the farthest end you see your baby self making its entrance onto the planet. Maybe you'd like to materialize at your own birth, much like a spiritual midwife, catching yourself and beholding the miracle and wonder of who you are: welcoming yourself to life, celebrating your worth... and perhaps orienting that baby you as to what's ahead – which includes you and all the resources you've developed! You may be drawn to 'visit' with various ages and stages of yourself that you can see pulsating with an inordinate energy. They've waited a long time for you from their future to come back and assist them with any unfinished business. Visit previously scared and isolated, possibly despairing parts and give them new permissions and reassurance. Let them know that you can be trusted to know what their hearts desire. Give them your strongest permission to have needs and say so. And again, this inner healing continues around the clock in its own ring of the circus even while you go on to think about other things.

For instance, you direct your conscious attention back to the center panel where your current self gazes back at you and suddenly remember that off to the right march the progression of selves heading into the future where you're going to be at peace and radiating with perfect health and energy. You can fast forward in time to a place where you are already enjoying the wide range of rewards you are currently anticipating so fondly. Go far enough ahead where you know you will have completely recovered from the previous ravages of self abusive choices. And then take a good look at that satisfied self and memorize that happy feeling.

And from that spot in the future, let's remember back and review the process - from the day you were first listening to these suggestions, back at that turning point when you had finally decided it was time to turn things around. Set up a viewing screen so you can see that younger you who was just stepping on to this path. Watch the incoming breath as a searing white light that blesses and heals everything in its path as you breathe into and out from every facet of your physical self. Ever so gradually of course – so gradual that it's almost imperceptible to the naked eye, a transformational miracle occurs. And in this special way of viewing, you're not limited to what the naked eye can see. You can easily

imagine the magic of time lapse photography and watch that heavy problem you had been carrying for a long time as it decidedly melts away. Perhaps just a little less at first, and then the unmistakable fact of changes you can see. Appreciate the power of your core muscles. Experience the reality of this self who moves easily, dancing the breath, spinning mindfully through the multiple transitions that are part of everyday living. Comfortable inside your skin – a perfect fit – divine balance as the scale weight hovers in thin air, the arrow decisively pointing at your perfect number that your unconscious selects now.

Maybe you would prefer to imagine your transformation symbolically. You might think of a seemingly barren and parched desert that, unbeknownst even to itself, in fact contains billions of dormant seeds which, though buried for decades, are just waiting for the drenching rains that one day finally come and they WAKE UP and ever so gradually but dramatically that barren, crusted over landscape transforms into a lush and blazingly colorful paradise. In the beginning, you can only see the life giving water penetrating the hard earth and causing the seeds of change to swell up, open their casings, send out rootlets, and the first green shoots that appear suddenly above ground, as if the earth was boiling. In the next frames, the entire horizon is ablaze with waves of flowers dancing in the breezes – embraced and kissed with the breath of life.

And orienting back to the center panel where you can again watch the progression of selves marching eagerly and confidently into that beautiful future you imagined, maybe taking a special interest in seeing the oldest, wisest you you're ever going to become. That evolved self who may be more light and energy than matter, a self who twinkles with delight when you show up for a visit. You may have questions to ask and reassurance to receive from this wise old self who has been in proper balance so long now that he or she may need some prompting to even remember that there was once this heavy era that long since resolved into the light. Together, you might review the whole lifetime of selves progressing. Understanding everything, feeling very good all up and down the line, no matter which timeless moment you happen to be experiencing now.

And of course you are always able to breathe yourself almost instantly into this power spot you enjoy and memorize right now. It's as easy as wanting to. The neural pathway has already been created and even as you exit this trance, you deepen it further. It's just like that process that occurs when a child discovers a particularly powerful place where you feel very good and feel your power. When you first find it, you soak up all those good feelings and celebrate finding such a good place. Then you realize it might be more fun still if you had a blanket in here. So you run up to the house and get one and scurry it back inside to feather the nest. That's good but now you want something else and so you run back and forth all day, not realizing that you are creating and deepening the path to this power spot until finally you are so familiar with it that you can easily find your way back any time you want to be there. So, you emerge from this trance as if waking up from a deep dream, perhaps reluctantly because it feels so good here. But you can easily come back any time by rolling your awareness inside on any given breath. But at this time, you step on the breath elevator from deep inside the inner sanctum and simply ride it back to the level of here and now where you open your eyes.