



DAY.6

Michael Melnychuk, PhD candidate at the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience, Trinity explained: "Practitioners of yoga have claimed for some 2,500 years, that **respiration** influences the mind. In our study, we looked for a neurophysiological link that could help explain these claims by measuring breathing, reaction time, and brain activity in a small area in the brainstem called the locus coeruleus, where noradrenaline is made.

"Noradrenaline is an all-purpose action system in the brain. When we are stressed we produce too much noradrenaline and we can't focus. When we feel sluggish, we produce too little and again, we can't focus. There is a sweet spot of noradrenaline in which our **emotions, thinking and memory** are much clearer. "This study has shown that as you breathe in, locus coeruleus activity is increasing slightly, and as you breathe out it decreases."*

There are traditionally **two types** of breath-focused practices -- those that emphasise focus on breathing (**mindfulness**), and those that require breathing to be controlled (deep breathing practices such as **pranayama**). When a person's attention is compromised, practices which emphasise concentration and focus, such as mindfulness, where the individual focuses on **feeling** the sensations of respiration but makes no effort to control them, could possibly be most beneficial.

In **Hindu philosophy**, they use the word 'PRANA'. It means 'the vital life energy that lives everywhere, and we can bring it in our body only with conscious breathing. Conscious breathing is being aware/paying attention to your breath. But how much attention do we give to this 'Prana' that gives us life?



DAY.6

Phrase of the day: 'Today I observe my breath'.

Write this phrase in your journal.

PRACTICE: FOLLOW THE BREATH

Today, be AWARE of your breath. It's a practice you can do anywhere, and anytime. Just observe your inhalation and exhalation at different moments during your day.

Our **breath shifts** when our moods change, when our thoughts change, when our bodily sensations change. Our breath is an excellent indicator of what going on inside ourselves. As well as a tool to shift moods, thoughts or sensations.

Start your day by listening to the **meditation 'BREATHE'** (10 min), and focus on the symbol of breath above, while you are listening to the recording.

Don't judge it.
Don't try to change it,
& leave expectations aside.

Write in your journal any sensations that arise from this practice. Any thoughts, or feelings.

Breathe in, Breathe out.
Dive in.