A photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore under a clear blue sky. The waves are white and foamy, and the sand is a warm, golden-brown color. The sky is a deep, clear blue.

# SHH...TAKE A BREATH

DISCOVER HOW CHANGING  
THE WAY YOU BREATHE  
COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Janine Fletcher



**SHH...**

## **TAKE A BREATH**

*It may be hard to believe,  
but 9 out of 10 adults breathe incorrectly,  
thereby impairing their health  
and exacerbating anxiety and depression.*

(Dr Joseph Mercola)

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# Chapter One

## The **One Thing**

I have a question for you; -

*What's the one thing that you're doing right now, and every minute of every day, that is either helping you or hindering you?*

This **one thing** – depending on how you're doing it – will either be; -

- Causing you to be in a negative frame of mind  
**OR**  
in a positive frame of mind
- Making you feel anxious, angry, defensive, agitated  
**OR**  
making you feel calm, peaceful, relaxed, friendly
- Triggering your body's stress response  
**OR**  
activating your body's natural healing ability
- Having a negative impact on your training, sports performance and recovery time  
**OR**  
having a positive impact, on your training, sports performance and recovery time
- Helping you to focus, concentrate, learn easily and be productive  
**OR**

making it difficult for you to focus, concentrate, learn and be productive

- Enabling you to access your creativity,

**OR**

causing you to be 'stuck' for ideas

- Causing you to be defensive, irrational, reactive and impulsive

**OR**

improving your ability to respond in a calm, rational way and make conscious choices.

- Increasing **OR** decreasing your pain levels

If the impact this **one thing** is having on you [depends on how you're doing it](#), then it stands to reason that if you learn how to do this one thing in such a way that it is having a positive rather than a negative impact, you will have more control over

- your frame of mind, how you feel and the choices you make,
- your anxiety and stress levels,
- your health and your pain level,
- your learning ability, your creativity, concentration and productivity,
- your sports performance and recovery time,
- how you respond to others and even how you feel about yourself

That's quite a significant impact this **one thing** can have on your life.

So, what is this **one thing**? ...

Take a few minutes to ponder...

What do you think this **one thing** could be?

## Chapter Two

OMG, It's Breathing!!

That **one thing** is breathing!

Maybe you were expecting something a little more complicated; - the impact your breathing pattern (simply the way you are breathing), can have on you mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually is certainly very significant, but because it is so simple, practical and basic, its powerful effects are often overlooked.

*Breath is the very essence of life and drives all the other functions of the body.*

*We can't do without breathing, but we can do it badly for a long time.*

*Poor or dysfunctional breathing in turn leads to a whole host of other problems, including poor digestion and bowel function, decreased ability to control pain, poor posture, stress, depression, migraine, poor sleep patterns, lack of concentration and so on.*

*The whole act of breathing in and out creates a lymphatic movement, and poor breathing and posture will also contribute significantly to lymphatic congestion...*

*(Julian Baker, Bowen Unravelled)*

Many people are unaware of just how great an influence their breathing pattern could be having on all aspects of their lives.

As an educator, I am really passionate about sharing this information; - this little book truly could change your life.

My purpose in writing this book is to

- make you aware,
- give you the opportunity to experience for yourself the astounding effects of changing your breathing pattern, and
- share some of my research with you

## Becoming aware

Ponder the following...

When we are born, breathing is the first thing we do to signal that we're alive ... and also what we stop doing to signal that we are no longer alive; - it's the first and the last thing we do.

I wonder just how significant that is.

To breathe is to be alive. Could breathing hold a key to life?

What is the connection to the way we breathe and the way we are experiencing life?

We can do without food and water for days and still survive, but we can only do without breathing for a matter of minutes.

To thrive every cell in our bodies needs an abundant supply of oxygen.

When we are stressed or anxious it becomes difficult to breathe.

When we are happy, calm, relaxed it is easy to breathe.

On average a person may take between 17,000 to 30,000 breaths a day.

**Become aware of how you are breathing right  
now ...**

... is it relaxed, soft, slow, gentle, deep, easy? Or laboured, heavy, shallow, fast? Where in your body do you feel the air going... into your throat, chest or belly? Does it feel comfortable or uncomfortable for you?

How are you feeling... physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?

**An opportunity to experience for yourself the  
astounding side-effects of changing your breathing  
pattern...**

I'm going to guide you through 3 different breathing patterns. I encourage you to follow the instructions and do them for yourself, so that you can get a sense of the phenomenal impact simply changing the way you are breathing can have.

1. The first one is a **shallow, rapid, chest breathing pattern.**

Place a hand on your chest, take around 10 short, shallow, fast breaths. Feel the movement of your chest and probably also your shoulders.

- Notice what breathing like this is doing to you
- How is it making you feel?  
(more than likely breathing like this is beginning to make you feel very uncomfortable, anxious, annoyed, angry, defensive...)

2. The second breathing pattern is a **slow, gentle, deep, abdominal breathing pattern.**

Place a hand on your tummy, take around 10 slow, gentle, deep breaths. Feel the movement of your

tummy; - expanding as you breathe in and contracting again as you breathe out.

- Notice what breathing like this is doing to you
- How is it making you feel?

(more than likely breathing like this is beginning to make you feel more comfortable and much better than the previous breathing pattern)

3. The third breathing pattern is called **Take A Breather** or the **Solar Plexus breathing pattern**.

This breathing pattern is similar to the above abdominal breathing pattern but it has three unique features;



1. The focus is on expanding the muscles and rib cage, to create the space for your lungs to fill to their full capacity, and, the outward movement of the solar plexus area.

2. There is a significant pause between the inhale and exhale.
3. The exhale is very slow

Interestingly, the **Take A Breather** breathing pattern mimics the natural movement, expansion and rhythm we experience when we yawn.



To experience this for yourself, place your hand in front of your mouth, open your mouth wide and take in some air ... this should make you yawn.

As you yawn pay particular attention to

- The expansion of your rib cage and muscles
- The outward movement of your Solar Plexus area
- The significant pause between the inhale and the exhale
- The slow exhale

NB, I have noticed that there are some people who have difficulty yawning. If you are one of those people please keep reading as I know some strategies and techniques that may assist you.

Another way to experience this movement is to pretend you are smoking a cigarette

As you pretend to smoke a cigarette, pay particular attention to

- The expansion of your rib cage and muscles
- The outward movement of your Solar Plexus area
- The significant pause between the inhale and the exhale
- The slow exhale

Now that you're familiar with the movement, expansion and rhythm ...

Let's *Take A Breather*

## Chapter Three

### *Let's Take A Breather*

**To experience *Take A Breather* or the *Solar Plexus* breathing pattern...**

**Simply repeat these 4 steps:**

1. Take a slow, gentle, deep breath in through your nose.
2. Feel the outward movement of your solar plexus area as you expand your ribcage, chest and abdominal muscles.
3. Pause; gently keeping your muscles in that expanded state. Never hold your breath, just pause.
4. Very slowly breathe out.

When you're familiar with the 4 steps, close your eyes and continue to *Take A Breather*.

**After 5 minutes –**

Do a body scan and notice how you feel right now?

Can you breathe properly yet?

How good do you feel right now?

If you're still having trouble, you're not sure if you're doing the technique correctly, or you would prefer to listen to a guided audio when you *Take A Breather*, I suggest you purchase the **Take A Breather** APP – available from the APP store for \$9.99

<https://appsto.re/au/szB5..i>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.com.janinefletcher.takeabreather>



On the APP there is an instructional video, 2 guided audios, (1. Approx. 5 mins more suited for children and 2. Approx. 10 mins - more suited for adults), more suggestions if you need extra assistance, as well as additional information, activities and processes.

Some of the common responses from children and adults the first time they experience the *Take A Breather* breathing technique are things like; -

*I feel calm, relaxed, comfortable, safe, confident, stronger, smarter, more gentle, soft, peaceful...*

*I feel like I could do anything*

*It's refreshing*

*It makes me feel happy inside*

*It makes me feel more alive*

*I feel less stressed*

*It makes my worries go away*

*I feel ready to learn*

*It helps me not be angry*

*I feel like nothing in the world can hurt me*

*I feel like I just filled up with joy*

*It lets a heavy weight off my shoulders*

*I have a more positive perspective*

*It brings out the best in me*

*It's such a relief...*

They're pretty impressive outcomes, don't you think? And, achieved after just after a couple of minutes of *Taking A Breather*.

If there was a pill you could take to get results like these, (without any nasty side-effects), people would be lining up to buy it.



The following information from Dr Frank Lawlis helps to explain what is happening inside the brain and body to produce these kinds of responses.

*There are over 2,000 organs and hormones that can be affected positively or negatively in a matter of minutes by shifting your breathing pattern.*

*Taking quick, shallow breaths usually signals to the brain that a threat exists, which stimulates the **stress response** and therefore establishes destructive thinking patterns.*

*Conversely, taking slow, deep breaths, usually signals to the brain that the coast is clear and all is well.*

*(Retraining the Brain, 2008 Dr Frank Lawlis)*

The **stress response** Dr Lawlis is talking about is often called the 'Fight or Flight' response, and sometimes also the 'Freeze or Flop' response. This is our in-built survival mechanism and affects the body in such a way that anything which isn't necessary for survival; - things like thinking, learning, digestion- shut down. This is a very handy response if you're in a life-threatening situation, but for most of us on a daily basis, this survival response can be triggered by psychological threats and fears.



We can trigger the **stress response** by worrying about things – either things that have happened in the past or things that may happen in the future; fear of saying the wrong thing, fear of not being liked, fear of making a mistake, financial concerns, general anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling you need to protect yourself, being defensive... anything like that.

Negative self-talk, whether it is directed towards yourself or someone else, is enough to trigger a **stress response**. Your physical life isn't actually in danger – it just feels like it is.



The good news is that of all the physiological responses to stress, breathing is the one we can consciously control.

## Chapter Four

*Taking A Breather* can make you  
**H**appier



Of all the physiological responses to stress,

## **BREATHING**

is the one that we can consciously control

As of all the physiological responses to stress, breathing is the one we can consciously control, by *Taking A Breather* it is possible to override the stress response, calm yourself down and respond in a more rational, wise and constructive manner. The sooner you are able to do this, the easier it will be.

When you become aware of the first signs of a stress response; -tense muscles, shallow breathing, increased

heart-rate, a tightening in the Solar Plexus area – you can just stop and *Take A Breather*.

I'm not suggesting that you suppress your emotions. I've found that if there is a build-up of suppressed emotions, until that emotion is expressed, a person may actually have difficulty *Taking A Breather*.

It can be useful to think of emotions as energy. If you keep suppressing an emotion, it can build up and then explode out of all proportion to the situation, or be misdirected.

So-called negative emotions often have a positive message; - they can be a signal that you need to make some change in your life; - lifestyle, relationship, direction, being true to yourself and so on. Sometimes an emotion like anger for example, that is triggered by some injustice, can be a motivator to take some positive action; - it's more a matter of using the energy in a constructive, rather than a destructive way.

So, if you feel an emotion like anger inside, allow yourself to feel it- just see it as energy, let it run its course, and let it go. (ideally if you can do this in private you won't be taking it out on anyone else).

Once this anger, or whatever emotion it is, is out of your system, you can *Take A Breather*, calm yourself down, and when you're in a calm, relaxed state, you'll usually be able to get a different perspective on the situation and respond in a more constructive way. Basically, you'll have more control over how you respond.

I'll tell you a story that demonstrates this beautifully. The story is about two Primary School students, but I'm sure you'll be able to imagine how it might relate to people of all ages in all manner of situations.

After recess one day, a young girl was in tears and said that another girl had been mean to her. Both girls were pretty upset so I suggested they go and *Take A Breather*, and when they were feeling better, to see if they could come up with any good ideas about improving the situation.

After about 5 minutes, I asked each girl what they had come up with; -

The 'victim' said, *"Well, I know I can be over-sensitive and I really don't have to take any notice of what someone says to me."*

And the 'bully's response was, *"I know I can be pretty mean and I really don't want to be like that anymore."* ... and apologised for her behaviour.



What a wonderful example this is of how *Taking A Breather* can help us to access our innate wisdom and bring out the best in us.

Not all relationship challenges will be solved simply by *Taking A Breather*. It is certainly more effective if all parties involved do it, and it helps to be aware of just how harmful to our relationships and ourselves the stress response can be. Doing something as simple as *Taking A Breather* can make such a difference.

In the long-term the results can be even more impressive; -

*By sitting and mindfully breathing for 10 minutes a day,  
in as little as 8 weeks  
you can strengthen the part of the pre-frontal cortex involved  
in generating positive feelings  
and diminish the part that generates negative ones*

Richard Davidson, Ph.D.

### Some of my research ...

Using my research data, I've categorised the benefits into three major categories covering mind, body and spirit ... which you'll find under the headings of **S**marter, **H**ealthier and **H**appier, the acronym for which is SHH, kind of a cool match with *Take A Breather*; - SHH... *Take A Breather*.

In this chapter the focus has been on How *Taking A Breather* can make you **H**appier; -

- Aids in the production of 'feel good' chemicals such as serotonin
- Helps to 'bring out the best in you'

- Promotes resilience and the ability to ‘bounce back’ faster from challenges
- Allows you to see things from a different perspective; - seeing things from a different perspective changes the way you think, feel and respond
- Positive emotions; - peace, kindness, understanding, love, joy, compassion and gratitude come to the surface
- Gives you access to more positive, constructive and empowering thought patterns

### **Testimonials:**

#### **N (Teacher) Age 43**

*...Within a matter of minutes, I went from being highly stressed to very calm and peaceful. This allowed me to put my ‘issues’ into perspective in a positive way. The most empowering and reassuring aspect of this is that as Janine guided me through the process, I was able to maintain my privacy and make these changes within myself. Very quick, very easy, very powerful!*

#### **J (EEN -Nurse) Age 53**

*The first time I tried the Take A Breather technique, I experienced a profound shift of all mind chatter. I found myself in a peaceful and calm state of mind quite quickly. As I listened to the Take A Breather app, Janine’s voice kept me there; - reminding me to stay on task. After the 10 minutes*

*guided audio, the peaceful feeling stayed and I had a clarity of thought which lasted for hours.*

### **A (mum of two)**

*Take A Breather was recommended to me by a friend. I was curious as to how breathing could help my two daughters. Life just seems so busy these days and I wanted to lessen the anxiety, mood swings and overall unhappiness I was seeing in my girls.*

*Janine and her Take A Breather technique has been awesome. She has given the girls the tools they need to turn many situations and their thoughts into positive ones. Learning to breathe properly enables them to think about things calmly and resolve situations well. It is a bonus to be able to do this at any time of the day. I have also reaped the benefits of Take A Breather in my hectic day to day life.*

*I would recommend this to anybody. It is truly amazing how breath can change things for the better.*



In the next chapter we'll look at how Taking A Breather can make you **S**marter.

## Chapter Five

*Taking A Breather* can make you  
**S**marter

In this chapter the focus is on How *Taking A Breather* can make you **S**marter.

You've probably already experienced this for yourself; - when you're stressed you can't think clearly or concentrate, and you're certainly not in a receptive learning state.



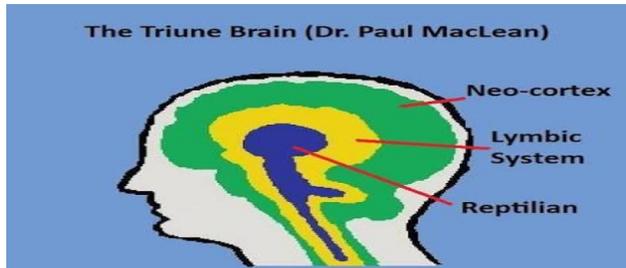
Remember the stress response is our survival mechanism so when we're stressed, functions not necessary for survival, like thinking and learning, shut down.

Some of my research ...

*Taking A Breather* overrides the stress response and makes us **S**marter because it

- Improves your concentration and ability to focus
- Allows you to be in a receptive learning state
- Activates the Neo-Cortex of the brain enabling you to be capable of innovation, high level creativity and problem-solving ability
- Improves academic performance and is key to overcoming learning difficulties

- Enables effective rational thinking and your ability to make conscious choices; - to respond rather than react
- Promotes a 'growth' mindset; - loving challenges, change and possibilities



The Triune Brain model is a theory of the functioning of the human brain by Neuroscientist, Dr. Paul MacLean (National Institute of Mental Health, Washington). The Triune Brain theory helps to stimulate thinking about the different aspects of being human and how these relate to learning and behaviour.

The Triune Brain theory suggests that the brain is made up of three distinct areas;

**The Reptilian Brain** responsible for base drives, the mid-brain or **Limbic System** responsible for emotions and memory, and the **Neo-Cortex** responsible for "higher" brain functions.

### **The Reptilian Brain**

- Develops between conception and approximately 15 months

- The main responsibility of this brain is to ensure survival and to maintain routine body functions (breathing, heart beat... etc)
- Monitors the outer world through sensory input and then activates the body to physically respond in ways that ensure survival
- Self-preservation
- Automatic response to stimulus
- Concerned with safety and physical survival
- Likes rituals and patterns
- Unable to reason
- No innovation or risk-taking

### **Limbic System**

- Develops between 15 months and 4 years
- Processes emotions
- Important to memory and learning
- Immune and autonomic nervous systems are regulated in this area
- Self-awareness begins in the limbic area
- Dreams/fantasy
- Emotional attitudes
- Limbic learners develop a strategy and use it for everything
- No transfer of ideas
- Learns through repetition
- AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM – controls the internal environment. It governs breathing, heart rate, digestion and other physiological activities such as physical responses to emotion as sweating palms that often accompany fear.

There are 2 divisions of the Autonomic Nervous System; - the Sympathetic Nervous System (also Known as the Fight or Flight' system and the Parasympathetic Nervous System (also known as the Rest and Digest system).

The impact on the internal environment depends on which division is being activated.

For example, if the Parasympathetic Nervous System (Rest and Digest) is activated, breathing will be slow, gentle and deep, heart rate will lower and digestion will be taking place.

If on the other hand the Sympathetic Nervous System (Fight or Flight) is activated, breathing will become more rapid and shallow; heart rate will increase and digestive function will decrease.

### **Neo-Cortex**

- Begins developing approximately age 4
- The seat of academic learning
- Intellectual and creative brain
- Contains approximately 70% of the brains 10 billion neurons
- Able to exhibit healthy integration of emotion and rational thought in response to stress
- The most effective mode for rational thinking
- Centre for all intellectual and abstract thought
- Capable of innovation and high-level creativity
- Discrimination and focusing abilities are strong
- Loves challenges, change and possibilities

Depending on the circumstances each part can become dominant. Ideally, all layers would be working in a well-integrated fashion doing what they are designed to do.

### **How this model explains what happens when we are under stress**

Under stress, extra electrical activity and blood supply is needed in the survival areas of the brain (**The Reptilian** and **Limbic system**) and is directed away from the **Neo-Cortex** where understanding and high-level thought processes can occur.

*... the reptilian brain is the part of the brain that takes over when we encounter danger or stress, because it initiates and regulates the body's fight-or-flight response.*

*The reptilian brain oversees the mind/body's survival, ensuring that basic needs are met before other, higher functions can proceed smoothly.*

(Carla Hannaford, Ph.D., Neurophysiologist)

I'm sure you can imagine the potential benefits of such a simple tool as *Take A Breather* to help students to be able to focus and concentrate, calm, relaxed classrooms, students being in a receptive learning state and able to access their creativity.

In July 2012, after 11 years of research, I first introduced *Take A Breather* to a Primary School in Geelong, Victoria. I assessed the breathing patterns of nearly 500 students and then taught them the *Take A Breather* breathing technique.

What I observed when I was assessing the students' breathing patterns was that those students who were experiencing learning difficulties, were anxious or had behaviour problems, were often classic 'chest breathers.

My observations merely supported the research I'd done on how the brain functions, 'chest breathing' and the 'stress response', but it was intriguing just the same. I began to wonder if simply changing a child's breathing pattern would help that child to overcome his/her learning difficulties.

In July 2013 I attended a seminar by Dr Grant Sinnamon, a Neuro-Scientist from Queensland, who has developed the REPAIR Model. As I listened to Grant's presentation on brain development, the different functions each area of the brain is involved in, and the difficulties deficits in particular areas cause, I started thinking that perhaps 'breathing' would help to improve brain function and restore these deficits.

*Without the brainstem (reptilian brain) functioning at an optimal level we are automatically going to have problems with higher order functions.*

Dr Grant Sinnamon

I had the opportunity to speak with Grant and he said that he also believed that 'breathing' was a key factor in improving brain function. In the early days of *Take A Breather*, I had a number of professional discussions with Grant; we would share our ideas and experiences, and Grant would explain

the sometimes-intricate science behind what at first seemed like miracles to me.

The first of these occurred when I was listening to 'A', a Year 3 boy, read

The words 'A' was saying didn't match the words in the book. He was making up a great story but it wasn't what was written on the page. I asked 'A' if his Solar Plexus area felt open or closed. (I have discovered that this is an indicator of stress or impaired function). "Oh, it's closed", he replied. As we had learned that *Taking A Breather* was meant to improve brain function, I suggested 'A' go and *Take A Breather* until his Solar Plexus area felt open.

To my surprise, when 'A' returned and had another go at reading, he read perfectly; - no mistakes, and exactly the words that were written on the page!!



After this, I was inspired to develop a simple 3 step process using *Take A Breather* to target specific areas. By that I mean,

- whatever it is you want to improve, you focus on or do that activity first,
- then you *Take A Breather* for a few minutes or until your Solar Plexus area feels open and you feel calm and relaxed.

- After you've *Taken A Breather*, you simply repeat the same activity and notice what changes have taken place.

Some other examples; -

A 15-year-old reads well but is unable to remember most of what he has read ... *Takes A Breather* for a few minutes and is now able to recall most of what he reads.

A year 4 girl can't think of what to write about and is stuck for ideas - *Takes A Breather* for a few minutes and comes up with a great idea and is excited to continue writing.

A year 5 boy who reads fluently but doesn't understand what he is reading scores 3/10 for a comprehension test ... *Takes A Breather* for a few minutes and scores 9/10 for the same test.

A year 5 boy who reads quite well but is unable to recall what he has read or answer comprehension questions, says he finds reading boring ... *Takes A Breather* for a few minutes and when he continues reading, begins to laugh; - the book he is reading is very funny and he now understands what he reads – he is also able to answer comprehension questions.

These are just a few examples of the incredible impact *Taking A Breather* for a few minutes has had for students.

### **Does it always work this quickly?**

In my experience so far, I'd say often, but not always.

I'll share with you another example where it took a bit longer, and if you're a teacher, it may just give you a

different perspective on those students who seem to take forever to do their work.

'T' was in Year 5 and was taking forever to complete his work. His task was to copy some information from another book. The threat of having to complete his work at recess caused an emotional plea from 'T'; - "But I can't help it. I can't go any faster!"

I asked 'T' to explain to me what was happening.

He explained that when he looked at what he needed to copy, by the time he went to write it, he had forgotten what the words were.



I said it sounded like something wasn't quite connecting in his brain and suggested that he *Take A Breather*.

I checked on 'T' a few minutes later but he was still struggling. I suggested he *Take A Breather* for a bit longer. When I checked again, there was still no change. 'T' did *Take A Breather* for the third time... the bell went and 'T' still hadn't completed his work, but he went out to recess.

I was a bit disheartened because I had expected instant results. The next day "T" was asked to complete a similar

task. After a little while ‘T’ came to me and said, “I don’t know what happened, but I can do it now!”

My desire to be able to offer *Take A Breather* to any student who may be struggling was the main reason I was prompted to create the *Take A Breather* app.

**Take A Breather** APP – available from the APP store for \$9.99

[https://appsto.re/au/szB5\\_i](https://appsto.re/au/szB5_i)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.com.janine.fletcher.takeabreather>



The app has been designed in such a way that you will know all that you need to know to use *Take A Breather* for yourself;

On the APP you will find; -

- An instructional video,
- Additional activities for those who need extra assistance
- A 5-minute guided audio (more suited to children)
- A 10-minute guided audio, (more suited to adults)
- and 7 simple 3 step processes; -

1. To improve reading
2. To reduce stress, anxiety, worry

3. For creative ideas/solutions
4. To ease headache/pain
5. To feel better
6. To improve eyesight
7. To address individual needs

If you are wondering if *Take A Breather* will help either your child, yourself, or anyone else, just notice the breathing pattern. Any time a person is struggling in a particular area, chances are the breathing pattern is shallow, chest breathing, so *Taking A Breather* would help.

I often suggest that parents and teachers become familiar with the *Take A Breather* breathing technique and processes on the APP before they guide a child through *Taking A Breather*. This way you'll be able to match the instructions at a pace that suits the child and also to watch for any changes in breathing pattern.

It is such an honour and a privilege to be able to facilitate some of these changes and so heart-warming to see some of the transformations that can take place.

I'd like to share one more example with you – this one was a little more involved and a more long-term project.

One day I was approached by 'A''s mum. 'A' was in Year 4 and was just not making any progress in Maths. 'A's mum knew of my background and asked if I could suggest what she could do to help 'A'.

I told her that I'd seen some promising results from using *Take A Breather* and offered to work with 'A' once a week at lunch-time.

'A' had received extra tuition and support all through school and at home in the area of maths – her reading was very good, but in the area of maths little or no progress had been made; - in year 4 'A' even struggled to count by 2s. Each week I worked with 'A' we focused on a different mathematical skill or concept and 'A' would reinforce this at home by first *Taking A Breather*, (allowing her to be in a receptive learning state), then practising the skill or concept.



Three years later I contacted 'A' and her mum to ask her to write a testimonial about her experience with *Take A Breather*, this is what she said; -

*When my daughter, 'A' was in Year 4, I was really concerned because she still wasn't making any progress in Maths. No matter how often we practiced or how much extra support she had, she struggled to remember even the most basic number concepts. From the time she started school, anything to do with numbers and Mathematical processes just didn't 'click' with her.*

*After just 6 weeks of working with Janine and using the *Take A Breather* breathing technique to target Maths*

*deficits, 'A' was able to learn more, retain more and had the confidence to do more, than she had in nearly 5 years at school.*

*'A' is now in year 7 and her lack of progress with Maths is a thing of the past. Her recent comment that 'I enjoy Maths', speaks volumes. She continues to learn and develop her understanding of number and Mathematical concepts. Maths doesn't scare her anymore; - she has the confidence to 'have a go' as well as the ability to work Mathematically, (her Maths brain is working!); - she 'gets it' now.*

I don't guarantee that *Take A Breather* will be the single answer to all of a child's learning difficulties, but I'm pretty sure it will help.

I can't begin to imagine what it's like for a child to have to front up to school day after day, year after year, and struggle to learn; - just not 'getting it', not understanding why, thinking that there is something wrong with them. If simply *Taking A Breather* can help even a little bit, it's worth doing and if it fixes the problem altogether, then that's brilliant.

As you may have guessed, my background is mainly in Primary Teaching and Education. I have also trained as a Masseuse, Bowen Therapist and Kinesiologist. In regard to *Take A Breather*, Education is the area I've had the most experience in. However, there would be similarities in the workplace especially as far as the ability to focus, concentrate, be productive, stress management and health and wellbeing are concerned.



Regular *Take A Breather* breaks in any workplace would definitely be beneficial.



### **Testimonials:**

#### **M Age 8**

*M experiences learning difficulties with mathematics and has difficulty recalling the simplest equations from time to time. She is also a nervous child and eager to please, so it was causing her great anxiety in the classroom.*

*We saw an immediate response during the session and her teacher has reported a noticeable improvement in the last few months. Janine's experience as a teacher together with her breathing technique has definitely helped M – she now has the tools to enable her to focus on problem-solving and manage the way she reacts when she gets stuck.*

*(M's mum)*

**A age 7**

*A is doing very well with her reading and also concentrating more on her maths. Thankyou very much for the Take A Breather technique. We can see that it is helping her in a big way. She does not rush and is a lot calmer with her school work.*

(A's mum)

We've now covered how *Taking A Breather* can make you **H**appier and **S**marter. How *Taking A Breather* can make you **H**ealthier is what we'll look at in the next chapter.



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*S*MARTER *H*EALTHIER *H*APPIER

## Chapter Six

*Taking A Breather* can make you  
**H**healthier

A quick google search will tell you that 75-90% of doctors' visits are due to stress-related illnesses. To consider breathing as part of any wellness and health-care plan is definitely a good idea and is supported by science as well as common sense.

*The insidious effects of constantly elevated stress hormones include memory and attention problems, irritability, and sleep disorders.*

*They also contribute to many long-term health issues, depending on which body system is most vulnerable in a particular individual.*

Bessel Van Der Kolk (MD)



*Slow, deep breathing supports the body's ability to heal naturally, engages the Parasympathetic Nervous System (the Rest and Restore Nervous System) which helps to digest stress hormones.*

*Stress hormones lead to cellular inflammation which is the root cause of all degenerative disease.*

(Christiane Northrup MD)

So, on the one hand we have the stress hormones produced by the Fight or Flight response, and on the other hand we have a way of engaging the Rest and Restore or

Parasympathetic Nervous System, which helps to digest stress hormones.

If we don't have a way to balance the Stress Response with the Rest and Restore response, we can become exhausted and unwell.

Mental Health and Anxiety are also areas where considering breathing as part of the health-care plan is definitely a good idea.

Remember Richard Davidson's quote from Chapter 4.

*By sitting and mindfully breathing for 10 minutes a day,  
in as little as 8 weeks  
you can strengthen the part of the pre-frontal cortex involved  
in generating positive feelings  
and diminish the part that generates negative ones*

Richard Davidson, Ph.D.

I came across some other interesting ideas in this area in a book called *The Master Key System* written by Charles F. Hannel (1866-1949) ...

*... the breathing apparatus responds to every thought  
... when you are 'tired' or 'discouraged', your body is starved  
by short, irregular breathing supply  
... A person cannot breathe slowly and deeply and be sad,  
fearful, critical or judgemental  
A depressed person is not in the habit of breathing deeply.*

One lady I spoke with who suffered from anxiety had been told by her doctor to take some deep breaths. She'd also seen it recommended in magazines and on health programs, but no-one had actually shown her how to breathe in a way that helped, until she learned the *Take A Breather* technique.

If someone is suffering from anxiety they're usually in the habit of 'chest-breathing'. Telling a 'chest breather' to take deep breaths can actually make them feel worse, unless they change where they are breathing. I have found that learning the *Take A Breather* breathing technique is really beneficial for people suffering with anxiety.

I also found when teaching *Take A Breather* to a group of young, teenage men who had been diagnosed with anxiety, that just understanding what was happening on a physiological and neurological level when they experienced anxiety gave them a sense of relief and empowerment.

Another area *Take A Breather* can be beneficial for that I'd like to bring to your attention is training and sports performance.



A little while ago I was sent an article from a Fitness Magazine titled. “Breathe Better. Train Better”; - in the fitness industry the importance of effective and efficient breathing is obvious.

Because *Take A Breather* activates the Parasympathetic Nervous System; - (Rest and Digest or Rest and Restore), it also helps with recovery time.

In summary, then ...

Some of my research ...

*Taking A Breather* makes us **H**healthier because it

- Reduces stress and anxiety and has a positive impact on stress related illnesses
- Supports the body to heal naturally
- Engages the Parasympathetic Nervous System; - the Rest and Restore Nervous System, which helps to digest stress hormones
- Improves sports performance and aids recovery time
- Every cell in the body needs an abundant supply of oxygen to function efficiently
- Helps to reduce pain levels

## **Testimonials:**

### **E Age 40**

*For no special reason I started to suffer from anxiety at the age of 40 and the slightest issue could give me cause for concern.*

*'Take A Breather' provided techniques to manage my anxiety – from understanding the feeling, to managing my response. I now use the technique when I feel anxious and also when I need to have clarity and focus on a task.*

### **L Age 13**

*I use the app when I feel like I'm going to have a panic attack and also when I am feeling anxious or uptight about something. In the mornings sometimes I feel this way before school and after I use the App, I feel calmer and my breathing isn't all frantic. The App helps me with being less stressed about something and less worked up about different things.*

## Chapter Seven

### *A Powerful Transformation Tool*

Simply changing the way you are breathing can help you to be **S**marter, **H**appier and **H**ealthier.

How incredible is it that most of us have grown up not knowing this ...?

And, what a difference it can make to our lives when we do know.

Breathing is the one thing that every single human being on the planet has in common. It's so simple, it's so powerful... and now you do know.



This is information that will serve you for the rest of your life, in so many ways, when you remember to use it.

I personally like the Take A Breather breathing pattern because it is safe, it mimics the body's natural

movement, muscle expansion and rhythm, and it's very easy to learn; - I've taught it to children as young as 4 years old through to my mum who is 88 years old.

I've not practised or trialled any other breathing techniques to the extent I have *Take A Breather*, so I've only been able to tell you about my experiences with *Take A Breather*.

So far, the *Take A Breather* breathing technique has yielded some pretty impressive results and I hope you will be inspired or curious enough to use *Take A Breather* for yourself. The least that will happen is that you will give your mind, body and spirit a chance to rest and restore and, you just might experience a 'miracle' yourself.

You know enough right now to begin using *Take A Breather*. The *Take A Breather* app will also guide you step by step in using this powerful transformation tool.

***Take A Breather*** APP – available from the APP store for \$9.99

<https://appsto.re/au/szB5..i>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.com.janinefletcher.takeabreather>



The app has been designed in such a way that you will know all that you need to know to use *Take A Breather* for yourself;

On the APP you will find; -

- An instructional video,
- Additional activities for those who need extra assistance
- A 5-minute guided audio (more suited to children)
- A 10-minute guided audio) more suited to adults)
- and 7 simple 3 step processes; -

1. To improve reading
2. To reduce stress, anxiety, worry
3. For creative ideas/solutions
4. To ease headache/pain
5. To feel better
6. To improve eyesight
7. To address individual needs

Many of my experiences with *Take A Breather* ‘miracles’ have been unexpected and came about just because I was curious and open-minded enough to ‘have a go’.

The next *Take A Breather* experience I’m going to share with you was one of those ‘miracle’ ones that I couldn’t wait to share with my ‘go-to’ Neuroscientist at the time, Dr Grant Sinnamon.

I was visiting one of my brothers and I noticed that he’d started to need glasses to read small print. To cut a long story short, I decided to see if *Taking A Breather* would

improve his eye-sight. Again, I just followed the simple 3 step process; -

1. I gave my brother something to read.  
*(He needed to hold it at arm's length, squinting and struggling to make out the words as they were blurry)*
2. He closed his eyes and I guided him through *Taking A Breather* for around 5 minutes.
3. Then I asked him to open his eyes and read the same thing again. *(This time he held it just in front of him and was able to see the print clearly).*

I hadn't really expected it to work, but we were both astounded and delighted that it did. The improvement in his eye-sight lasted for around 3 weeks before he needed to repeat the 3-step process again.

When I returned home, I went through the same process with other family members and friends and I got similar results.

I had no idea how to explain this so I gave Neuroscientist, Grant Sinnamon a call. Grant said it absolutely could happen and went into great detail about what would be happening neurologically for something like this to occur.

Grant also said that it wouldn't work for everyone; - it depended on what had caused the deterioration in the

first place. This has also been my experience; - some people experience major improvements and others minor, and some, no improvement at all.

As a general guide-line, if you do experience an improvement in your eye-sight after *Taking A Breather*, you will only need to repeat the process when your eye-sight becomes blurry again.

The simple 3-step process for improving eye-sight can be found on the *Take A Breather APP*.

I've seen some amazing changes take place simply by a person *Taking A Breather*; - **improvements** in reading, comprehension, maths, handwriting, sports performance, dancing, drawing, creativity, pain levels, anxiety and stress levels, attitudes, eye-sight, perspective, relationships ... I hope you too witness or experience all of these improvements and more. Be curious, 'have a go' and see what you discover: - ... the potential applications of *Take A Breather* are endless.

Sometimes to make positive changes all you will need to do is *Take A Breather*. Other times you will still need other intervention; - other therapies, techniques, education or special assistance. Nevertheless, if you include *Take A Breather* as part of your intervention, anything else you do will be more effective.

The impact breathing has on our quality of life is beginning to become more widely known, and once you experience it for yourself, you will be amazed that you haven't made the connection to breathing and quality of life before. It is so obvious once you know.

Breathing is the most powerful tool that everyone has within their reach; whatever they're doing and wherever they are. I hope I've opened your mind to the incredible possibilities offered by *Taking A Breather*. Once you learn it, you've got it for life.

I encourage you just to become more aware of your breathing pattern throughout the day and take regular *Take A Breather* breaks, follow the 3-step process for any area you struggle or would like to improve, and take notice of the difference *Taking A Breather* is making in your life.



## **Testimonials:**

### **M Age 41**

*I initially used 'Take A Breather' to improve my eyesight. I tested my eyesight before using the APP for the first time and after. I definitely noticed an improvement. After a couple of weeks, I realised I hadn't been reaching for my reading glasses as much. When I did start reaching for them more, I 'took a breather' again and my eyesight became better. So now, every few weeks I 'Take A Breather' just to make my eyesight stronger.*

*I also love the way it makes me feel calmer and clearer in the head.*

### **J Age 52**

*The Take A Breather technique is nothing short of a miracle, with life-changing results accessible by each and every one of us. It has certainly changed my life. Although I am by nature a positive type of person, there are times in my life when I have and do experience anxiety, self-doubt and being stuck in a negative head-space. It can be a horrible, debilitating place to be. It could be brought on by a job interview, work dead-line, weight gain, exhaustion or just a bad day all around. We've all had one of those days.*

*Since being introduced to Take A Breather I am so much more in control of all aspects of my life. After just 10 minutes of TAB, I feel lighter, thoughts are clearer and there is a calmness that brings clarity and confidence back. I encourage you to Take A Breather and see for yourself; - it's phenomenal*

Further Information:

[www.janinefletcher.com.au](http://www.janinefletcher.com.au)

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[https://appsto.re/au/szB5\\_i](https://appsto.re/au/szB5_i)

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- and 7 simple 3 step processes; -

1. To improve reading
2. To reduce stress, anxiety, worry
3. For creative ideas/solutions
4. To ease headache/pain
5. To feel better
6. To improve eyesight

***3 steps to feel better instantly;***

***Close your eyes  
Take a deep breath  
and smile.***

***Try it.***

**Sara Landon**

**[www.janinefletcher.com.au](http://www.janinefletcher.com.au)**



**Take A Breather app**

**[https://appsto.re/au/szB5\\_i](https://appsto.re/au/szB5_i)**

**<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.com.janinefletcher.takeabreather>**