

Heart Coherence Meditation for stress and overload

Here I would like to introduce a simple breathing exercise that can bring a lot of relief in cases of stress and overload.

This so-called heart breathing originally comes from the HeartMath Institute program. Here you can find more tips: <https://www.heartmath.org/resources/heartmath-tools/heartmath-appreciation-tool-and-exercises/>

I modify it a bit. Here is my version of heart coherence breathing:

- Sit down in a place where you can be by yourself and quiet for a while (10-20 min). Turn off your cell phone and make sure you are comfortable. If you like, snuggle up in a blanket. If you like you can listen to meditative music.
- If you like put a hand on your heart to connect with your heart through the warmth of your hand. If listening to your heartbeat makes you anxious, just skip this step.
- First observe your breathing cycle without judging it.
- If you feel like you wanting to start the breathing meditation, begin to deepen and lengthen your inhalation and exhalation gradually.
- In the next step, imagine being in a wonderful place or surrounded by loving people or playing with a beloved pet. Alternatively, imagine being enveloped in warm sunlight. Stay in the positive feeling that is created through this visualization.
- Then begin to imagine breathing in and out through your heart. Allow the breath to spread throughout your torso. Just as light would spread throughout a room. Imagine that there is A LOT of SPACE around your heart. Space for relaxation, space for creativity, space to breathe or simply space to BE! Warm light fills this space. If you see a specific color that is okay too.
- Allow this space to expand even more each time you exhale. As if you are allowing your heart to get more and more free space. Allow this space to be connected to the loving feelings for your family, friends or your pet or...
- Be careful not to want anything except to unburden your heart of all the "I have to's". By that I mean, don't make the exercise another task to be done!
- Each heart has its own space - figure out what your heart needs to do and stay with the exhale and inhale as an anchor.

- It is about an actual feeling of security, love and free space, it is not meant to be about mentalization (thoughts)!
- If you like, you can now start inhaling and exhaling in a rhythm of 5 seconds each - so a regular and slow breathing cycle of 10 seconds in total. (I count 21,22,23,24,25 - 21,22,23,24,25...) Counting creates a breathing rhythm that additionally serves as a kind of anchor and does not have to be strictly followed. It is more important to stay heart-focused and in a positive feeling at the same time than to count precisely! Continue as long as you like.
- When you are ready then slowly come back to "real life". After a while, open your eyes and allow yourself about 5 more minutes to return to the bustle of everyday life. Enjoy resonating the connection with your heart for a moment :)
- Often your eyes tear or you have to yawn a lot, these are signs of relaxation and coherence. However, for some people, "just" a feeling of calm and serenity emerges over time. At some sessions nothing at all seems to change or one may even remain tense, in this case I suggest that it might be better to stop the session and start again at a later time.