

## Makeovers Meditation Exercises. Breath Counting.

Breath counting is the first meditation exercise. It is simple, and it requires no mental preparation at all. Breathing is a natural and automatic act our body does to sustain life. When we get stressed, our breathing is affected and we tend to lock our breath. Remembering to breathe allows our body to diffuse the central nervous system by preventing the release of the powerful stress hormones that throw our natural chemistry out of balance.

Since this is the first meditation exercise in the Makeovers program, please prepare some mental notes before you begin.

### **Exercise:**

1. Find three quiet spots where you may go throughout the day to close your eyes for 5-15 minutes.
2. Pick one of these spots when you are ready to begin.
3. Get comfortable. Close your eyes.
4. Imagine everything is going to be alright.
5. Create a beautiful place in your mind where you would most like to be at peace: A luxury hotel or yacht, on top of a high mountain, a cabin in the woods, a meadow with a stream, a sunny day on a tropical island, outer space, under the sea, or on a cloud. This place could be anywhere; use your imagination!
6. Here in this place that is all your own, time and money are irrelevant. Life is perfect in this place. Sir Thomas Moore called it Utopia. Christianity calls it Eden. Finding your oasis is the number one shift/paradigm in the Makeovers Meditation Exercises. Congratulations! You did it!
7. Breathing for the purpose of meditation takes practice to master. Relaxed shallow breathing like we do all day long without even thinking about it is not the way. The correct way is to inhale through your nose as you begin counting at an even pace: *One... two... three... four*. Take in as much air into your lungs that you possibly can and hold it for a brief moment. When you've reached the number four, exhale just as slowly and evenly counting backwards: *Four...three...two...one*. Repeat.

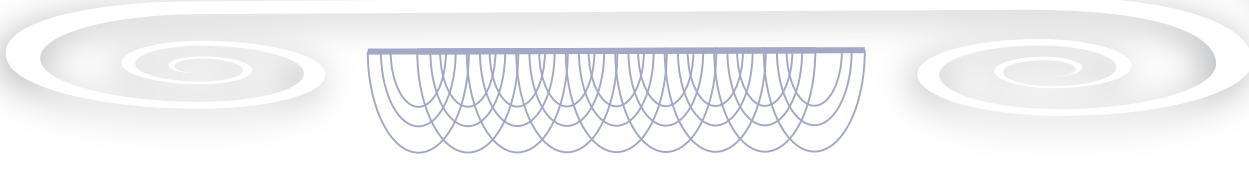


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***Now, here is the key!*** Our thoughts race all day long. During meditation, the most important thing to learn is how ***to slow your thoughts way down*** and to think only about the task at hand.

So, during your breath counting exercises, concentrate all of your attention on your breathing and counting. As thoughts come up, let them pass by like cars on the highway. As soon as you realize that your attention has wandered off from the counting and breathing task at hand, bring it back gently to this important work. Teaching yourself to do this will move mountains in terms of your ability to control where your attention goes.

### Expected results:

- **Power over actions comes in your reactions.** Life comes at you fast. We react out of ***habit***. Being aware of how you act and react in a situation life has dealt you—***as you are going through it***—is a very powerful tool in your ability to change the outcome of a situation and get the best possible result out of it. As the saying goes, hindsight is 20/20. The magic comes from having insight ***during*** your life dramas—not afterwards—when it is usually too late.
  - Breath counting is the foundation exercise for the Makeovers plan. All of these exercises are written in chronological order, so that you must master each one to be able to understand and apply the rest of the exercises to your life. Just like riding a bike is a skill you must practice, so is the meditation process.
  - The result you get from practicing the breath counting exercise will be a ***feeling***. You will know it when your mind comes upon it after practicing a few times. It is a feeling of something familiar: Peace, surrender, gaining control over your mind, and awareness that in fact you are not your thoughts. While you
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may own your thoughts, you are not bound by these patterns of thinking. They no longer define you. You have autonomous control of them and you are now the master of your domain. ***Your mind now becomes a tool.*** This is the beginning of a purposeful life versus a life asleep and in the automatic.

***Welcome to the superhighway towards your true identity: Your Spirit.***

