

## *How to Make Your Life Less Stressful and More Successful*

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You can turn a stress-filled, tension-packed life into a relatively stressless, balanced life with greater “flow.” There’s a simple principle you have to follow in order to do this. Here it is. Take your attention away from what you want to achieve, and place it on yourself. Instead of sacrificing your own balance in the rush of trying to get where you want to go, make an *inner state of deep relaxation* your top priority, no matter what the situation. By doing this, you are guaranteed to achieve more, while enjoying deeper levels of satisfaction in your life and work.

But how do we find the state of inner relaxation that is the key to successful living? And can focusing on maintaining physical relaxation really make all the difference in our lives? The answer is an unequivocal YES! Esoteric and spiritual traditions throughout the ages are based on this truth. Let me tell you how I personally came to recognize its extraordinary power.

If you have read *The Art of Effortless Living*, then you know I grew up a Type A personality, totally focused on achievement. I graduated with highest honors from Radcliffe College, the sister to Harvard University, received my Ph.D. from Columbia University, and became a professor of philosophy by the age of 27. I was on the fast track, and to all outer appearances, very successful.

Then my life fell apart. At the age of thirty-one, I developed a serious connective tissue disease that crippled me, and kept me in constant pain. I consulted some of the best doctors in the country, and was hospitalized twice, all to no avail. I spent **three years** as an invalid. On a good day, I could walk around my apartment, and when I was feeling

really terrific, I could manage a short walk up and down the block. That was my life, and it was a nightmare.

Trying to heal, I plunged into the study of nutrition, and embarked on a rigorous cleansing diet. This helped somewhat. Yet diet was not the deciding factor in my regaining my health. It wasn't until I began exploring the mind-body connection, that I healed. Mind-body work teaches you how to regain control over *how you feel on the inside*. It's the key to peak performance and life transformation. It gives you specific inner techniques for mastering the art of living.

By working on mastering the mind-body connection, I regained total physical health—something my doctors had told me was impossible—and went on to become a marathon runner. I also learned that through mind-body work you can transform virtually ALL aspects of your life: your health, your relationships, your productivity, and your creativity. That's when I decided to devote my life to studying and teaching the power of the mind-body connection.

You access your own higher power when you learn how use the mind-body connection. You do that by practicing techniques that teach you how to change how you feel on the inside, releasing you from tension, fear, anger and stress.

Most of the time, most of us change how we feel inside by taking something—food, alcohol, drugs—or doing something—watching television or calling a friend—to change our mood. But then we are always dependent on some outside source for our sense of well-being, and never free of our mind's ups and downs. In mind-body work, YOU decide how you feel inside, and that is the biggest source of power you can ever own in your life: **YOUR OWN POWER OVER YOURSELF.**

The first rule of thumb for all mind-body work is to learn to be deeply relaxed, and the first technique for doing that is to become more aware of how you breathe. Learning how to breathe in a deeply relaxed way can make a monumental difference in your life. Let me explain why.

We function at our peak when we breathe deeply and easily, because this state is scientifically known to be **SYNONYMOUS WITH PEAK MENTAL FOCUS AND EMOTIONAL CALM**. Unfortunately, 95% of us breathe poorly, both out of habit and as a reaction to stress. We hold our breath periodically, or breathe shallowly, into the chest rather than the abdomen. And we often breathe far too quickly.

Full bodied, relaxed and normal breathing goes deep into your belly, feels very easy and soft, and is quiet. When you breathe in a fully relaxed way, you breathe *between four and six breaths a minute*. Most people breathe so poorly that they average between ten and thirty breaths a minute.

My book, *The Art of Effortless Living* (available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) both describes in detail how to breathe in a relaxed, meditative manner, and offers numerous anecdotes of the impact that breath awareness has had in liberating people to greater emotional freedom and productivity. Because breath awareness takes time to learn, my CD series *Effortless Practice* (available on my website [www.ingridbacci.com](http://www.ingridbacci.com)), that is meant as an accompaniment to the book, offers you audio versions of exercises that you can use every day to train yourself in the mastery of this supreme art. Finally, the MP3 meditation download available on my website provides excellent training in deep relaxation.

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