



# Breathing as a Tool for Self-Regulation and Self-Reflection

*Paivi Lehtinen, Minna Martin, Maila Seppa, Tina Toro*

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The book describes how to use breathing as a medium for self-regulation and self-reflection and how balanced breathing thus helps to promote mental and physical health and alleviate symptoms resulting from imbalanced breathing. The authors describe applications of psychophysical breathing therapy in many areas of life, developed by both themselves and other professionals trained by them. The approach of the book is based on the interactional aspects between mind and body. A person's breathing style influences their relation both to themselves and to others - and vice versa, and thus mental and also physical health. A comprehensive theoretical description of the psychophysical regulation of breathing and the consequences of imbalanced breathing is complemented by material derived from the authors' extensive clinical experience. Psychological orientations used by the writers include object relations theories, and psychodynamic, cognitive, brief and group therapy theories. As a new aspect the writers introduce how breathing patterns are learnt in early interaction. The writers also acknowledge how physical factors affect and interact with psychological factors in producing imbalanced breathing. Psychophysical breathing exercises seek to restore natural breathing appropriate to the physical needs of the body. People are helped to observe and assess sensations, emotions, and thoughts in connection with changes in breathing, thus learning in a very concrete way how mind and body interact. A key aim of the exercises is to increase the awareness of how breathing reacts in interpersonal interaction. That is why the writers prefer group therapy. A prerequisite to learning new ways of breathing is that the person feels she and her breathing are accepted as they are. Learning to calm down is another key aspect in the therapy. Instead of anatomical concepts mental images are used.

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