

Take a Breath Brake:

Mindful Breathing Techniques for Pain and Stress Reduction

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Take a Breath Brake: Mindful Breathing Techniques for Pain and Stress Reduction

Melissa Rosen:

Good evening. My name is Melissa Rosen, I am the Director of Training and Education at Sharsheret, and I'll be your moderator tonight. I want to thank everyone for joining us this evening for the unique opportunity to take a Breath Brake.

Melissa Rosen:

And I think it's important to note how we spelled brake, B-R-A-K-E. It's worth noting that it was intentional and we should all take the time in life's craziness to stop and take a break for breath. So before we begin, I have just a few housekeeping items to share.

Melissa Rosen:

First, I want to express our gratitude to the sponsors of this program; Merck, Seagen, and the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's thanks to their generosity that we can continue to offer educational and support programming such as this.

Melissa Rosen:

Of course, I also want to thank our program partners for tonight. They are all fantastic organizations that share our important mission. Advocate Aurora Health, the Cancer Thrivers Network for Jewish Women, part of Detroit JFS, Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit, Imerman Angels, Kids Kicking Cancer, and Twist Out Cancer.

Melissa Rosen:

I want you to know that this webinar is being recorded and will be posted on Sharsheret's website along with the transcript. Please note that participants' faces and names will not be included in that recording. All participants were muted upon entry. Please keep yourself on mute throughout the call.

Melissa Rosen:

We actually received some really interesting and important questions ahead of tonight's program. For any questions that arise tonight, please use the chat box, which you can access at the bottom of your screen. And there'll be time for questions and answers toward the end of tonight's program.

Melissa Rosen:

As a reminder, Sharsheret has been providing telehealth services to the breast and ovarian cancer communities for 20 years. In fact, we are celebrating two decades of supporting those impacted by cancer on July 11th. If you're interested in learning more about this event, please visit our website homepage.

Melissa Rosen:

A reminder that Sharsheret has an amazing team of social workers, as well as a series of formal programs to help women and their families navigate the different aspects of a cancer experience.

Melissa Rosen:

One relatively newer support program is our Best Face Forward 2.0 or BFF 2.0. This program provides need-based subsidies for specific non-medical needs, including the purchase of a wig, 3D tattooing to complete reconstruction, the use of cold capping during chemotherapy, and more.

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Melissa Rosen:

One of the BFF 2.0 services is a series of meditations that you can use on the go and as needed. We'll share information about how to access those meditations right now in the chat box and also as a part of the follow-up email you will receive later this week or early next week with regard to the recording and additional information.

Melissa Rosen:

And, of course, I want to remind you that as always, our support services are 100% confidential and 100% free. Okay, as we move into the webinar itself, I want to remind you that Sharsheret is a national not-for-profit cancer support and education organization and therefore does not provide any medical advice or perform any medical procedures.

Melissa Rosen:

The information provided by Sharsheret is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment for a specific medical condition. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem. As always, seek the advice of a physician or qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

Melissa Rosen:

Okay, let's get to it. We are so excited to have Rabbi Goldberg here with us tonight. Rabbi Elimelech Goldberg, lovingly known as Rabbi G to thousands of children is the founder and director of Kids Kicking Cancer, a nonprofit organization that teaches martial arts to children battling cancer, as well as those facing other serious challenges in their life.

Melissa Rosen:

The therapy techniques he has developed using meditation and breathing exercises have been incredibly successful in decreasing pain in pediatric patients. Rabbi Goldberg began this program in 1999, nearly 18 years after losing his first child to leukemia.

Melissa Rosen:

He holds a first-degree black belt in the Korean art of Choi Kwang-Do, and is a clinical assistant professor in pediatrics at the Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit. Rabbi, I'm going to turn the screen over to you. Thank you again for being with us.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Thank you so much. And before I share my screen, let me share with you a story about a gentleman who walks into a cardiologist's office, sits down, and the doctor says, "Sir, what seems to be the problem?"

Rabbi Goldberg:

The gentleman looks up and he says, "The problem is, I think I'm a moth." "Excuse me?" He says, "Yeah, I think I'm a moth." So the cardiologist said, "You should probably see a psychiatrist and not a cardiologist." He says, "Yes, I know." So he says, "So why did you walk in?" He says, "The light was on."

Rabbi Goldberg:

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So I would love to share with you tonight the story of some incredible lights, the light of children, the light of your soul, and the light of a breath that can transform pain, fear, and anger into an extraordinary power.

Rabbi Goldberg:

My own world, as it was just introduced, the first introduction to pediatric oncology began with my daughter. One week before her first birthday, she was diagnosed with ALL, which today is a very treatable disease. Over 90% of our kids do great with that standard leukemia. It wasn't the same thing in 1981.

Rabbi Goldberg:

I thought she was an amazing little trooper. At two years old, she did a bone marrow transplant. She'd tell the docs, "No medication today, please." She'd tell the five-year-old kids in the infirmary not to cry.

Rabbi Goldberg:

A number of years after she passed away, I found myself directing Camp Simcha, part of Chai Lifeline, in the early days of the camp. Many of you have probably heard of the Chai Lifeline. I came upon a five-year-old child in the infirmary having his port accessed for his chemotherapy. And this boy was screaming.

Rabbi Goldberg:

In the old days in medical school, we used to teach that there's a pain center in the brain. Today, we know it's not true....it means that a person's afraid, angry, they're depressed, there's no sense of purpose to their pain. The nociception, the actual pain message, goes up.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So this child is being held down and the third nurse has a large syringe to plunge into his chest and he's screaming something awful. And they looked at me and I just yelled, "Wait." And they all stopped, even the kid stopped screaming.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And frankly, I didn't have a clue what I was going to say next. I just said to the nurses, "Can you give me five minutes with this child?" And the nurses were happy to leave. The little boy looked at me like I was the governor, I had just stayed his execution.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And I explained to this child, "I'm a black belt," which doesn't mean anything. But to a little kid, it's a wow. I said, "Could I teach you some karate?" He almost jumped off the table. I explained to him in the martial arts you learn that pain is a message, you don't have to listen...Breathe in this amazing energy, this light, and push out the pain.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Five minutes later, we're doing a simple Tai Chi breathing technique. 10 minutes later, they took out the needle, he looked up at the nurse and he said, "Did you do it yet?" And that's when Kids Kicking Cancer was born.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

But tonight, the goal is to teach you what really the children of Kids Kicking Cancer are teaching the world every single day, and that is: no matter what we face in our lives, we can breathe in the light and blow out the darkness. And that's why I am privileged to be here tonight to talk to you about a Breath Brake with the wonderful organization Sharsheret.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So let's talk about that four-letter word, the bad one, stress. It's not really four letters, it's a few more. But that word has so much implication on everything that's going on in our lives, and it's linked to about everything terrible you can think about.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Stress impacts our health significantly, and negatively impacts our healing, especially if you get into your adrenal glands and you start shooting out these nasty chemicals called glucocorticoids.

Rabbi Goldberg:

I use a lot of big words. They let me teach in graduate schools because of it. I don't know what half of them mean, but they sound pretty cool. But we live in constant stress chemical world. Now, obviously, stress needs to be part of the human condition, it needs to be part of the animal condition.

Rabbi Goldberg:

This is a picture of me growing up in the Bronx. If you are a leopard and you haven't eaten in a few days, then you have the need to fight. If you're a kangaroo that doesn't want to join them for dinner for obvious reasons, you have a need to flight. And that's really natural.

Rabbi Goldberg:

If stress had been created in California and looked like this, it wouldn't work. Because when we're stressed, we can't be thinking of anything else. If we're in that life and death fight-and-flight mode, your focus has to be in every aspect of your body. So let everything else go, so you can oxygenate, energize for fight-or-flight.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Well, that's great for the 20-minute run in the jungle, but it's a disaster for everything else. And so I had to color this DNA chromosome because of HIPAA regulations, you shouldn't recognize who it belongs to. But at the end of the telomeres, there's a description of longevity. People who have ongoing chronic stress have shorter telomeres. Stress can kill us.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The natural response to stress, get ready for this, is more stress. The chronic cycling of ongoing stress and stressors that impact every part of the quality of our lives. Pain becomes extrapolated.

Rabbi Goldberg:

You have stress, you have pain, the pain message goes higher. Not just psychogenically, the way we imagine it to be, but really the chemical implications of stress. And we actually do functional MRIs, we know what's going on in people's brains.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

Fear. You're sitting there and you're wondering. All of the things that are stressful will enhance fear. And then there's that anger. When we're angry and we're stressed, we're a lot more angry.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And then we find us incarcerated within that what-if world, "What if this happens? What if that happens? What if this doesn't work? What if that doesn't work?" And we become really captured in that world.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And then you try to go to sleep at night. You know what it's like? You're lying there, "Big night. Okay, I'm going to sleep now. I can't believe it's 2:00am. No, really, I got to go to sleep." And nothing works. And you're not even allowed to count sheep anymore, it's not politically correct. We end up stuck in that world.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So when we talk about stress and we talk about pain and we talk about what causes the juncture between stress and pain... There's a gentleman, Ronald Melzack, he was one of the great discoverers of sodium ion channels and how that impacts what we call nociceptive pain. A fancy way to say, "Why we say 'Ouch.'"

Rabbi Goldberg:

But he said, "What's going on with phantom pain?" Phantom pain is the pain, as you might know, of a limb that's not there. So we have a child here who has an amputation on the right wrist. In Africa, for example, we see a lot of amputees, because they don't do limb-salvage surgeries.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And so, in order to be able to address the pain in the limb that's not there, we use what's called mirror therapy. We didn't create it. It's been around for 30 years. But we use meditations to allow the child to actually feel the light come through the hand that they're experiencing in the mirror, and change the pain messaging, which means that pain, ultimately, is a memory.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So we're living in this world of stress, we're living in this world of pain, we're living in this world of what-if, but don't worry about that because that's bad for you. Everybody got that?

Rabbi Goldberg:

So there are ways to find different methods to overcome stress. Not recommended because it just creates more stress.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So I'm going to do a quick evaluation with you. I hope you don't mind. I didn't ask an IRB on this, so you don't have to tell me your results. But this is developed at University of Oxford. The theory is that people who are more prone to stress are more hyper-attentive.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

I'm going to show you a picture of two almost identical dolphins. If you can notice more than five differences between the dolphin on the left and the dolphin on the right in 20 seconds, it shows that you are subject to a great deal of stress. Don't have to tell anyone the results, but let's see how quickly you can count the differences.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Okay, you can stop counting. Sometimes stressing stress can make people really uptight, so you have to be able to laugh from time to time.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But the challenge is that stress becomes a definition and forces us to become defined by realities. People become cancer patients. I explained to pediatricians that you're working with healthy kids with tumors. People can become defined by the cancer world.

Rabbi Goldberg:

People used to come to me for counseling, "I'm depressed." I would explain to them, "You're not depressed, you're experiencing depression." Because if you're depressed, you're not going to change, that's who you are, okay? It's a given. Just grow up with it.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Or "I'm angry." Well, that's defining you. Or "I am short." Well, certain things you'd have to live with. This makes a lot better sense when I'm presenting in person. I'm about 5' 6.5" with my shoes on.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But I was brought... It was cute. We brought a group of kids to teach the Detroit Pistons, that's their basketball team. Detroit is a big basketball town. And we brought a group of kids with their little karate uniforms. And the manager told me, "Rabbi G, go into the courts and just tell..."

Rabbi Goldberg:

They were in a training facility, they were in a huddle. "Go in and just introduce yourself and tell them what you're going to do with them with the kids." So I walk into this huddle, "Hello. Hello. Hi, I'm Rabbi G, I'm here for the tryouts."

Rabbi Goldberg:

They were very tall gentlemen. And they laughed and I explained to them, "You go on the court and you just think about the spout that you had with your girlfriend or the battle with your wife or the war with your wife about your girlfriend." And they said "Oh yeah, the man knows." I got instant credibility.

Rabbi Goldberg:

You can't flow. Your real power in life is to be able to use your breath to create that flow. And we lined up our little kids and these very tall gentlemen. We taught them what I'm going to teach you tonight; how to breathe in light and blow out darkness. And feel that in your body in a way that changes the stress response that impacts anger, fear, sadness, and all of the elements that can define us, not with light or with darkness.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

And this is the message I'm presenting to you on behalf of our children. And the words the children use, and I want you to memorize these three Ps: Power, Peace, Purpose. No matter what we face in our lives, we can bring in this amazing energy, this light, and push out pain, fear, anger, discomfort.

Rabbi Goldberg:

We asked the thousands of kids that we work with around the globe who are, thank God, in 106 facilities today, "What's your purpose?" And the children yell out, "To teach the world." So if you can learn how to do this, you can actually help our kids. And I'll tell you how you can thank them for these techniques. It will make a big difference to them.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Power, that we can bring in this light. Peace, push out pain, fear anger, the junk. And, ladies and gentlemen, your purpose is to teach. There's not anyone on the multiple boards that are present tonight who's not a teacher.

Rabbi Goldberg:

People are watching you. It could be your family, could be your neighbors could be your community, could be your friends. And when you respond, breathing in that light and blowing out the darkness, people will notice and you will impact the lives of those around you. That's power, peace, purpose.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So with kids with cancer, we're able to see, we make changes in their pain perception in functional MRIs. That's the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, the amygdala, all responsive through pain. But you don't have to be a kid to be able to do power breathing. Power breathing is to use your breath to empower and energize every second of your life.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So let's talk about freeze, fight, flight. "Fight and flight" was a term that was created by Walter Cannon in Harvard. Obviously, Professor Cannon was a man of great caliber. That was a joke, but you don't have to get it, it's okay.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The idea of freeze is like that natural boom, you get stuck. And we become disassociated. That's where that first stress response, sometimes the disassociation can last a while and you just don't feel like you're part of yourself. You don't feel like things are going, flowing. "I'm different."

Rabbi Goldberg:

And the moment we feel we're different, life is different, the stress chemicals start turning up more. And we can get caught being defined by being a cancer patient, by being afraid, by being angry, by being depressed.

Rabbi Goldberg:

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And all of these things you can see in the brain and what stress does too, and what pain does too. [inaudible 00:21:16] 24 or 25 in the brain as it relates to depression or anguish or anger. You can actually see the different parts of the brain light up. Because it's not just about a singular pain.

Rabbi Goldberg:

"Pain, stress, anger, fear, they amalgamate as a neuro-matrix." Ronald Melzack. And so to understand that is to understand how to defeat its impact on you. So it freezes that very basic dorsal vagal all the way down [inaudible 00:21:48] those of you who have read Stephen Porges.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Fight or flight, that's the sympathetic nervous system. And then you have the parasympathetic nervous system, that's the part that allows you to regain control of life, how to slow things down, how to take control, how to regain life in a powerful way.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So here's how we can identify the ability to take control, and it's really simple, it's called biofeedback. Because when you have stress, anger, pain, fear, your body gets tight, without talking about fancy chemicals, your body gets tight. Some people feel it in their head, some people feel it in their back, some people feel it in their stomach, their chest, their shoulders, their neck, everyone's got their special spot of stress.

Rabbi Goldberg:

When you can identify, "Hey, I'm stressed because my body is tight," you can change it. They say there are two types of Americans; those who have back pain and those who will have back pain. So we have ongoing stress, ongoing weight that pulls us down, ongoing challenges that we feel throughout our body.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But if you can identify the stress, the tightness in your body, you can change it. It starts with identifying and then creating the biofeedback.

Rabbi Goldberg:

It simply means, as I tell busy executives when I give these seminars at major companies, if you pick up your phone and your arm gets tight, it's likely that you're having a stress response or your phone is too heavy, maybe it's an Android. But if you can recognize that your arm is getting tight, you're having a stress response.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And so, identifying, becoming observant. Real observance means to observe yourself; what do I feel like? Am I supposed to feel like this? The answer is no. And the ability to first observe it by biofeedback is really important.

Rabbi Goldberg:

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When I first started Kids Kicking Cancer, some of my medical colleagues were a little skeptical. Don't emphasize the breathing stuff, it's a little heebie-jeebie. I give grand rounds all over the world in hospitals and schools.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Even though I left active Rabbinate as you probably have figured out by now, my greatest joy in life is to hear myself speak, so I do a lot of that. There isn't a hospital that I speak at in which there aren't people who come to me and say, "I'm the one trained in the breath work."

Rabbi Goldberg:

Because the scientific literature, the medical review of the power of using your breath to regain control to regulate your body is significant, it's ironclad. You can change your body with your breath.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Everybody has stuff, we all carry baggage. The guy in front of me at Delta last week, he told the attendant, he said, "Sir, I'd like this bag to go to Dallas and this bag to go to Newark and this bag to go to Mexico City." And the gentleman said, "Sir, I can't do that." He said, "Well, you did it to my luggage last week."

Rabbi Goldberg:

Everybody's got stuff. We all carry baggage, everybody. That's the human condition. Nobody's immune. The identification of what are your triggers? I think my granddaughter must have drawn on this when I was in Israel. What are your triggers? What are the things that get you uptight? We all have them. Identifying them really works.

Rabbi Goldberg:

What are the triggers? Identification of those triggers can be significant. So here's the Breath Brake. And we've trademarked this, by the way. I catch people breathing in the airport all the time. "Sir, you were breathing. We have the trademark. You have to support Kids Kicking Cancer." "I wasn't breathing." "You were breathing."

Rabbi Goldberg:

We get into these fights. It's very hard to litigate on that. But the Breath Brake, as Melissa so accurately pointed out, is not just to take a break, it's to be the break. To be the break on the stress chemicals by replacing it with a much more powerful energy.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The power of a smile, even neurochemically, is extraordinary. So I hope every once in a while I see a smile from here to there, must be that you're watching something else while you're listening to me. But it could be that the ability to smile is really profound. But listen to your body, listen to your voice. Are you tight? Are you feeling tight?

Rabbi Goldberg:

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Yes, talking about stress, even trying to capture the differences between the two dolphins can make you stressful. Oh my gosh, there are too many differences. Listen to your voice, listen to yourself, and learn power, peace, purpose.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Power means no matter what we face in our lives, we can breathe in the light and blow out the darkness. And these kids do it all the time, you can do it.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Peace is to refine the P-word. It's not a problem. If you're really good, you can turn everything into an opportunity. And purpose, that's really cool.

Rabbi Goldberg:

There's a group called The Optimists, it's like The Lions and the Rotary Club. You've heard of those groups. There's a group called The Optimists. There's probably a group called The Pessimists. Those are optimists with experience.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So they made this great party for our kids. And towards the end of the party, there's a young man, Bernard, not yet 11 years old, who is being wheeled by his twin sister Brittany to the front of the room. Bernard wants to talk.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And The Optimists MC gives him the microphone. And he says in a loud voice, "Hi. My name is Bernard." And everybody stops to look at this not yet 11-year-old child in a wheelchair. In a loud voice, he says on the microphone, "I want to thank you optimists for making such a great party. I want to thank Kids Kicking Cancer, you guys are amazing, you're our family."

Rabbi Goldberg:

"I'm going to teach you what they teach at Kids Kicking Cancer, and that is, no matter what you face in your life, you can breathe in the light and blow out the darkness." And he proceeds to do the Breath Brake that I'm going to teach you in a moment.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And then with a big smile on his face, he says, "Remember, no matter what you face in your life, you can breathe in the light and blow out the darkness."

Rabbi Goldberg:

And then they gave me the microphone. I had to take a Breath Brake myself because we all know that Bernard's mother ran away when he was a baby. His dad died when he was eight years old, his uncle died when he was nine years old.

Rabbi Goldberg:

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[inaudible 00:29:23] he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor that was slowly stealing any movement from his body. With his one good arm and beautiful smile, he's telling everyone in that room, "No matter what you face in your life, you can breathe in the light and blow out the darkness."

Rabbi Goldberg:

So, based on Bernard, I explained to the group that optimism has just been defined by Bernard Johnson. But it doesn't mean that everything is going to be great, it means that we can respond to everything with greatness. And that's power, peace, purpose. And our kids do it. We just had a belting ceremony outside, the whole group of kids.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Here's what it's about. Amalgamating your own sense of energy power, creating that peace, and purpose. For the Jewish people, there's a symbol you might recognize, that we do it as individuals and we do it as a nation, we do it as a world. It's a pretty familiar symbol.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But let me explain what this means and how you can integrate this into your lives. We all have stress. When we deal with disease states, diagnostics, bills, clinicians, pain, fear, nausea, a thousand things that are just symptoms that we deal with, every single one of them creates another level of stress, creates another level of challenge, creates another level of even taking pain and lifting pain all the way up.

Rabbi Goldberg:

We know this. We live with it. But the key is not to be defeated by it but to identify the tightness that the stress and the stressors cause in your life. Feel it, then check the floor. Check the ground, look down.

Rabbi Goldberg:

If you have any major body organs lying on the floor, call 911. That's stressful. Then your stress is right on target, but it's not there. That means the stress that you're feeling is not a 911. The stress that you're feeling is generated by our minds that over-actively take those pains, take those fears, take those thoughts and build them up as if it's a 911 call.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Our brain and our body doesn't know the difference, and we respond with that tightness. And the living with that tightness implicates every part of our health. The ability to identify, again, check the floor, there's nothing there, it'll kind of make you chuckle. There's nothing there.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Life does have stressors, but the stress response that you're responding to is as if, on an ongoing basis, you are having a 911 call. Your brain doesn't make the difference, but you need to.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So when you feel tightness in your body and you know it's not a 911, there's nothing on the floor, then you need to identify your ability to change that, because the ongoing stress is a disaster for your health. The ability to re-channel and re-regulate is very, very simple. And here's how it goes.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

So you're feeling tightness, again, sometimes head, neck, shoulders, everyone has their special spot. You're feeling tightness, nothing on the floor, and you're not exercising. Because if you're lifting weights at the time, your body will get tight, and that's perfectly okay. No weights, but still tightness.

Rabbi Goldberg:

You can use your breath to re-regulate. What do I mean by that? Breathing is the only part of the autonomic nervous system, that's the stuff that happens all by itself, that you can so easily control. So when you use your breath to actually focus to relax your muscles, you are reversing the glucocorticoids that are shooting out of your system.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So we recommend, and it's pure recommendation, you breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. If that doesn't work for you, you can choose any orifice you like. But preferably, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But watch me. When you do the breathing, the key is that it's somatic. You're moving your body with the breath. So we kind of rub our hands together. Now I'm going to show you how we do it with our hands. You can do it without your hands.

Rabbi Goldberg:

I'm going to ask you after a few times, and please watch me first, to close your eyes. And you can do this any time and any place. But if you're driving, please do not close your eyes. I say that with great caution.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But we get our energy flowing and rub our hands together. And then we hold our hands just about waist level, right just by the navel. You notice my shoulders are a little forward, my chin is forward. And as I breathe in through my nose very slowly, I'm lifting my body up with the breath, turn my hands, and pull in a little bit more. And hold that for three days. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, for three seconds. For three seconds. Three seconds.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So it goes like this: you're breathing in, pull it up, up, up. Two, three. And then you're pushing out. When you're pushing out, let your chin fall with the breath, breathing out slowly through your mouth, your shoulders, your chest, your stomach. At the end of the breath, push out a little bit more.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So the breath looks like a wave. You're going up with the breath, hold it. Two, three. And then like you're pushing out, but make sure that your chin, your shoulders, your whole body is following. At the end, push out a little bit more. Up, and then...

Rabbi Goldberg:

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And the slower you can do the breath, the better, but only do it in a way that's comfortable for you. It never should be stressful. It never should be that it's hard. There might be times that there are multiple reasons that the breath has to be done in some other way, that's cool.

Rabbi Goldberg:

As I said, you can breathe through your ears if you want. But the key is to make that movement with the breath, that wave. And as you exhale, just let everything fall and relax. One more step.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Martial arts, which we teach, is very focusing on the imagery. So before we break, and we don't do any of that in our program, before we break a board or a brick, you actually have to see it break. If you see your hand break, it's usually a bad sign not to do it.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The imagery that we use in the breath is to imagine as we're breathing in, we're breathing in a powerful, beautiful, healing light, and pulling it all the way, all the way, all the way up to the top. But you don't want to blow out that light. What you want to do is blow out the darkness, any feeling of pain, of fear, frustration, disappointment, anger. We all have darkness.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So imagine as you're breathing in, you're breathing in this healing powerful light that's coming up through your body, all the way, all the way, all the way up to the top. And then slowly, as you breathe out, feel and see the darkness come out of your mouth. And at the end of the breath, push it down.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Let's do three breaths like that, if you don't mind. Just rub your hands together, get the energy flowing. Close your eyes and imagine as you're breathing in, you're breathing in this powerful light. Pull it up gently, up, up, all the way up to the top. Hold it. Two, three, push out the darkness. Blow it out. Feel your chin go down, your shoulders fall, your chest, your stomach. Push out. Excellent.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Let's do it again. Breathe in the light. Hold it. And blow out the darkness. Breathe in the light. Pull it up with your body, all the way up, up. And blow out the darkness. Feel your chin go down, your shoulders fall. One more time. Breathe in the light. And blow out the darkness.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Excellent. Excellent. There are two words in Korean that we teach after we do a Breath Brake. Those of you who speak Korean, "*Baruch Hashem*." It's not really Korean. There was a Hollywood actor by the name of Gerard Butler, made a movie, hurt his back, and I was teaching him how to do the breath work. And I told him that, that was Korean.

Rabbi Goldberg:

It's actually Hebrew, but I didn't tell Gerry that. So he went to all the Korean restaurants that he goes to in New York and they're all going "*Baruch Hashem, Baruch Hashem, Baruch Hashem*." But the idea of...

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What it really means in English is that we're blessing God. But who are we to bless God? It's from the word *bracha*, a channel, a pool.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Everything in our life is flowing to us from a greater source. The more we can breathe in that light and blow out the darkness, the more we change what's going on inside of our bodies.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So this is my synagogue, the Young Israel of Southfield in Michigan. It's really not, it's the Dearborn Islamic Center. But there was a poster on the wall there that said the following, "A perfect God created an imperfect world perfectly." Then they quoted me, "Rabbi Elimelech Goldberg. Founder, Kids Kicking Cancer."

Rabbi Goldberg:

So I actually used that as the title of a book which is available at Amazon if you look up Elimelech Goldberg. What's cool about the book is every time you download, there are 30 meditations in the book, I tell the reader that there are actually 30 QR codes. If you don't know what a QR code is, here's a web link. If you don't know what a web link is, you probably have no stress, you don't need the book.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But every time somebody listens to a meditation, the numbers go up in front of our kids, letting them know they're teaching the world. So that's power, peace, purpose, and we all do this together.

Rabbi Goldberg:

In Hebrew, the word for a brain is *moach*. *Moach* is a brain. To put your *moach*, to put your brain in a particular place is *sam moach*, which is the same as the Hebrew word *sameach*, which is the word which means happiness.

Rabbi Goldberg:

You don't have to speak Hebrew to know that we have an ongoing opportunity and choice in life where to put our brains. We can remain stuck in pain and fear and anger. And the more we do, it just adds up and makes depression and challenges greater and greater.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And no one can blame anyone for facing down life's darkness with all of the above. Pain, fear, and anger are natural. What's heroic is the ability to identify the tightness that it causes, because it will cause tightness in your body. Identify it. And of course, there's nothing on the floor. This is not a 911 call.

Rabbi Goldberg:

This is a call to recognize that the pains and the fears, the angers and the stress, the depression, and all of those amalgam of brain chemistry, that's what those are, it's brain chemistry. It's natural. And it's natural for that chemistry to then define who and what we are.

Rabbi Goldberg:

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But I'll tell you who and what we are, we're great. The ability to identify that tightness, breathe in the light and blow out the darkness. People will watch you. "What are you doing? Why are you doing it? What does *baruch hashem* mean?" And again, you don't have to say *baruch hashem*, you can say whatever you're comfortable with.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The martial arts, we talk about...all different words from all over the world. It's not the word, it's the feeling, it's the thought of identifying the tightness and knowing that you can respond to it with the power of your breath.

Rabbi Goldberg:

In English... Despite growing up in New York, I do speak English from time to time. In English, respiration spirit. In Hebrew...*neshima, neshama* – the breath, the soul. And it's like that in multiple languages.

Rabbi Goldberg:

We have programs, before COVID, I was teaching Pope Francis how to do our power, peace, purpose bow. He actually grabbed my arm afterwards and said he felt the children were so holy that the children should pray for him, which I was very touched by.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But we're spreading this around the world, but we're spreading it through you. Because when you have the natural reason, every reason to respond with pain, fear, feeling defeated, feeling defined by X, Y, and Z, feeling what if this happens, what if that happens, and being defined by that; the ability to reach into your soul, into your breath, into your hearts and know that nothing can defeat your light, that's forever.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Nothing can defeat your ability to teach. And because of life's situations sometimes, the greater the challenges, the greater the teacher. Your ability to identify that tightness, to breathe in the light. As you're breathing out, push out the darkness and feel your body relax. Remember that wave up, and then gently down.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Your ability to do that will not only change what's going on to your adrenal gland, because if your body is relaxing, if your body is letting go, then there's nobody running after you with a knife in the jungle, no reason to hold on to the tightness. The tightness will allow you to observe that it's time for your Breath Brake.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And if this works for you - and I'm going to ask my friends from the leadership of Sharsheret to share my email, "For a good time, call Rabbi G" type of thing - to share the email and tell the kids that you had a good time learning from them because it will make a difference in their lives.

Rabbi Goldberg:

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We have kids in Zimbabwe and Zambia, they don't even have pain medication. But knowing that the world is listening and watching makes every difference in the world to them. So, my friends, breathe in the light and blow out the darkness. And that is power, peace, purpose.

Melissa Rosen:

Rabbi, thank you so incredibly much for that. Your email was just shared in the chat box. We do have a few questions, if you are able to take a couple of questions right now.

Melissa Rosen:

A couple of them were very practical. So one of them, someone asked if there was a standard pause between the breaths when you do them, how long should we be pausing in-between those breaths?

Rabbi Goldberg:

Comfortably. Recommending that, sometimes the focus on the breath can itself become strenuous, so take one or two regular breaths in-between each Breath Brake. Try to do, if you can.

Rabbi Goldberg:

And we actually are just perfecting an app, it will be a reminder. It's still in beta but we hope by the end of the summer to have it out. It's a Breath Brake app. You can schedule it for every hour, every two hours. It's the voice of one of our children reminding you, "Time for your Breath Brake."

Rabbi Goldberg:

But every time you'll take... And there are some video lessons from the children there on how to do the Breath Brake. But every time you'll take a Breath Brake, a ray of light will go from you to children all over the world with a thank-you note, thanking them. So it's an opportunity to not only use that breath to calm your body but to really change the lives of thousands of kids.

Melissa Rosen:

Beautiful. Beautiful. Thank you. What do you recommend in terms of the number of breaths you take? What's the optimal amount?

Rabbi Goldberg:

Optimally, and studies indicate, and I really stand by this from a scientific point of view, if you do this Breath Brake for 120 years, you're going to live a long time, guaranteed.

Rabbi Goldberg:

That being said... That was a joke. But that being said, you're going to be breathing anyway, we just don't think about the breathing. Reformatting the breathing as a tool, but very importantly, using movement, it's really important to get that movement in there, and then that will change the neurochemical makeup of your body. Again, we've done functional MRIs, we can prove it.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The best way to do, and it's hard to do sometimes for people just to remember, but do it as much as you can. Every hour, take a Breath Brake. Take a Breath Brake to do a Breath Brake. And you can spell it both ways then.

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Rabbi Goldberg:

So I recommend every hour. You will feel better, absolutely. Again, I've been putting on seminars for many, many years now, the amount of feedback that we get is extraordinary. But always do it in a way that's comfortable. You can't do this wrong. Again, use your ears. That's the funniest way to remember it. You can't do it wrong.

Melissa Rosen:

Perfect. So I have a question that I think maybe a lot of people... I'm seeing a question here that I think maybe a lot of people are wondering about. Someone said, "Is it normal that every time I pay attention to my pain, even if it's to breathe into it, I feel like it increases. How do I get around that?"

Rabbi Goldberg:

That's a great question and really probably the gist of another seminar. Because we've actually trademarked the term pain extraction versus distraction.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Most of the techniques that are out there, for children and adults, is "Be distracted from it. Listen to a good movie." And that's great. Laughter, all of that is extraordinary. But there are times that you just can't be distracted.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Extraction is the visualization of the pain that makes holes in it with the breath. You actually see it coming out. So we've done that with... Started some studies with adults as well. We find it very effective. I apologize, that's not giving due justice to the pain extraction technique. This is really more of a focus just on stress.

Rabbi Goldberg:

But just in a word, gently, never breathe in a way that increases pain, but just to focus on that light going through the discomfort, and just blowing out the color of it. What happens is that pain is a very staccato message, that boom, boom, boom. Without getting into nociceptive pain, but that boom, boom, boom.

Rabbi Goldberg:

The more you can reclaim it, the greater your ability to lower the pain message. And number two: pain becomes extrapolated, it becomes much greater when we are feeling that we can't handle the pain.

Rabbi Goldberg:

So there's a Kahneman, a Nobel Prize winner, who did an experiment called Duration Neglect. We gave 'A' worst pain, but 'B' a feeling of control over the pain. And B was better than A, even though all of the stimuli for A was worse. So the more we can do things to take control over that, the better it is.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Where can you learn more about this? We're working on that. I will be providing a podcast and other things on these tools and techniques and they will be part of our app as well. So I apologize that I don't have a lot more to throw out in a very quick response on that.

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Melissa Rosen:

So Rabbi, will you let us at Sharsheret know when that app is functioning and when you have more information about the pain extraction technique? And we will share with people, even if it's six months from now.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Absolutely.

Melissa Rosen:

Wonderful.

Rabbi Goldberg:

[inaudible 00:53:32] my great pleasure if, after tonight, you guys are still talking to me. After all my jokes, that'll be a good statement.

Melissa Rosen:

Listen, the time is running short but I want to thank you so much for introducing us to this breathing method and sharing your insights. I found the presentation incredibly helpful and hopeful, and I hope you all did as well.

Melissa Rosen:

Once again, I want to thank our sponsors for this program; Merck, Seagen, and the CDC. And of course, our partners; Advocate Aurora Health, the Cancer Thrivers Network for Jewish women as part of Detroit Jewish Family Service, Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit, Imerman Angels, of course, Kids Kicking Cancer, and Twist Out Cancer.

Melissa Rosen:

Please take a moment to fill out a brief evaluation survey that is linked in the chat box right now. You can click it and still listen to the last few minutes of the webinar. And evaluations really do inform future programs.

Melissa Rosen:

I want to remind you that the recording for this, if you came in late or if you'd like to re-watch, the recording will be up on our website in the next few days, as well as a transcript. And we will send a follow-up email so that you have links to that, as well as a link to access the Sharsheret meditations that I spoke of as part of Best Face Forward 2.0.

Melissa Rosen:

I just want to say again that we're here for you and your loved ones during this time, providing one-on-one support and other programs to help you get through. Don't ever hesitate to reach out to our clinical staff, their email just being clinicalstaff@sharsheret.org. That will also be in the chat box.

Melissa Rosen:

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And I want to let you know that we're always adding new and exciting webinars on a wide range of topics to our schedule, so please check out our website regularly to see what topics are coming up. And our email is going in the chat, excuse me, our website is going in the chat box right now.

Melissa Rosen:

The last thing I want to say is, Rabbi, I don't know while you were speaking if you were able to read the chat box, but we got so many thanks and "What a wonderful webinar" and "I can't wait to use this technique." So thank you again for sharing. Oh, and a *"toda raba,"* thank you again for sharing and wishing everybody a great night. Good night.

Rabbi Goldberg:

Thank you very much.

About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for "chain", is a national non-profit organization, improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With four offices (California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), Sharsheret serves 150,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, more than 15% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret's Executive Director chairs the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

- Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences
- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer • Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors • Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer

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- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer • Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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