



Start with Breathing

Do you know that the way you breathe can influence how you *FEEL*, how you *THINK*, and how you *ACT*?

Stress, anxiety, and anger can activate our *fight or flight response*. In this state our body becomes tense, our heart beats faster, and breathing become shallow to signal that we might be in danger. **Helpful when a threat is real, not so helpful when it is a false alarm (e.g., anxiety, anger, or activated with no real danger present).** Taking slow, deep breaths can counter this physiological response.

Step ONE to Calm and Regulate Strong Emotions

1

SLOW. YOUR BREATHING

BREATHE IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE AND EXHALE LONGER OUT THROUGH YOUR MOUTH

You can use breathing to help regulate your and calm your nervous system.

When you're feeling calm, your nervous system is in a relaxed state, and your breathing slows.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING allows more oxygen to reach your brain and provides a signal to your body that you are safe and it is time to start to relax. A calmer body produces calmer (and more accurate and helpful) thoughts.

This slowing down can help you act more deliberately and compassionately during interactions with children and make better choices (with less regret) when upset.
The more often you practice the more automatic this calming strategy will become.

Additional Resources and websites

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-waves/201704/the-inside-story-how-slow-breathing-calms-you-down>
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