

### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL RITUAL: INTEROCEPTION USING MINDFUL BREATHWORK

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One of the simplest and most essential forms of interoception comes to us through mindful breathing. The emotional and physical benefits of a breathwork ritual are widely known. The practice of mindful breathing gets credit for everything from stress relief, lowering anxiety and reducing blood pressure to enhancing spiritual experiences. Some say mindful breathwork is the key to slowing down cognitive decline and to keeping the brain and body healthy and the spirit young.

NOTE: If you have a physical limitation (e.g., difficulty with nose breathing) that requires you to adjust the following ritual, it's okay to adjust to your comfort level.

Before you begin, read these instructions fully:

Step 1 Place one hand on your heart space—right in the center of your chest—and the other on your belly. This contact will help anchor your awareness in the body. As you breathe, begin to pay attention to what you notice inside, right underneath your hands.

Step 2 Now slowly take a long, effortless in-breath through your nose, followed by a long, slow out-breath through your mouth. Support the settling in your body by putting space between the top and bottom teeth and softening your tongue to rest on the lower palette of your mouth (doing the opposite increases anxiety and stress). Make this dance between the in-breath and out-breath effortless—just the right amount of inhaling so that you begin to slowly go deeper into your long out-breaths and notice more spaciousness inside.

Repeat this ritual for three minutes. Answer the "What's Different" questions on the following page.



## REFLECTIONS

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### WHAT'S DIFFERENT?



#### Beginning/Intermediate Level Somatic Dimensions Noticing Inner Experience

*Refer to the examples below to describe your inner experience  
(aka, interoception) or add your own:*

Anxious	Grounded	Relaxed
Breathy	Heart Beating	Settled
Buzzy	Warmer	Slower
Calmer	Overwhelmed	Stressed
Cooler	Pulsing	Tingling

#### Answer These Questions For Yourself:

Before this ritual, my body's experience was...	After this ritual, my body is more/less...