



ADVANCED LEVEL RITUAL: “VOO” BREATHING METHOD

The next ritual that we’ll be learning is an advanced practice developed by Dr. Peter Levine, as part of his Somatic Experiencing® model. Dr. Levine developed a practice to balance the nervous system, which resets the connection between the vagus nerve and other critical organs. This exercise is known as the “Voo” breathing method.

The “Voo” breathing method vibrates the vagus nerve and, over time, increases regulation. Think of it as giving this very important nerve—the longest in the body and one that sends and receives messages from almost all your major organs—a gentle massage. Here’s how it works:

Begin by finding a comfortable place to sit. Close your eyes or cast them downward. Place one hand on your heart space, the other on your belly. Now, follow the breathwork ritual from earlier in this chapter and repeated here:

Use long, deep breathing as you inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Put some space between the top and bottom teeth, checking to ensure the tongue is resting on your lower palette.

On the next outbreath, make the sound: “Voo”

As you exhale, use the lower register of your voice to make the sound, bringing the vibration down as far as you can into your belly or your chest. That vibration is what’s releasing the vagus nerve’s grip, right down the center line of your body. If you use the lower register of your voice, it’s going to deepen your connection to that vibration further down into your body. Imagine you are almost making the sound of a foghorn, guiding ships to safety. As you do, pay attention to the vibration you feel inside, right underneath your hands.

Repeat this breathing method up to five total repetitions of “Voo” breathing. No more than that. If you find yourself a bit lightheaded, take gentle breaths in between or cut back to three repetitions. Go gentle and slow with this ritual.

On the final outbreath, repeat the words, at whisper-level volume, “I am safe,” cascading the resonance of these words all the way down into your belly. Using this phrase will help seal the relationship between body and mind.



REFLECTIONS

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?



Advanced Level Somatic Dimensions Noticing Inner Experience

*Refer to the examples here to describe your inner experience (aka, interoception),
use the Glossaries of Somatic Dimensions and Emotions
(see appendix), or add your own:*

Airy	Emotion(s)	Image(s)	Softening
Breath	Expansive	Lukewarm	Softer
Brisk	Fluid	Melting	Smooth
Buzzing	Glowing	Oblong	Snug
Calmer	Grounded	Pulsing	Spacious
Comfy	Heart Beating	Relaxed	Tepid
Cooler	Heavier	Round	Tingling
Color(s)	Held	Settled	Vibrating
Dense	Hotter	Slower	Warmer

Answer These Questions For Yourself:

Now identify *where* in the body you feel different...

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