

## Tips on Relaxation

If I could share one thing with you this would be it. Learning it, understanding it, and embodying it take time, and sometimes we need help or encouragement. Enjoy!

We hear a lot about relaxation, but what does it mean, and is it even achievable?

First of all, we have to get used to the idea that we will always have emotions as long as we're alive. That's part of the contract. The trick isn't, as many of us wish, not to feel, but rather, how can I can feel and yet not allow my feelings to control me?

1. Name your feeling. Naming your feelings is a good way to disassociate with them in a healthy way. Saying "I am feeling ...", rather than "I am ..." sounds and feels differently.
2. Noticing where you are feeling your feelings in your body, and by the way this works with physical sensations too, can help you to notice them as an experience, rather than the whole.
3. Finally, learning to relax and breathe, despite what you're feeling or where you are feeling it are crucial.

The last step is probably the most difficult, because it goes against what many of us have been taught, and goes against our biology. Yet it helps us to process whatever it is that we are feeling in a way we can not if we try to avoid our feelings or sensations, as many of us do. When we learn, and it is possible to learn, this technique we in effect learn to flow more with life's circumstances. Finally to use a metaphor, it's like saying to a small child, "It's okay that you're feeling ..., You're okay", rather than "Don't feel ...", or something else to that effect.

Learning to relax your breathing is difficult for many of us. We have learned either because of our lifestyles, experiences, culture, to chest breathe, when ideally we would all be breathing with our bellies. Again, learning to breathe with your belly is possible, it just takes time. What I mean by breathing with your belly is this, as you breathe in, your belly ought to rise up, or stick out, and as you breathe out your belly ought to deflate.