

Breathe

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Breathing, we all do it...am I right? Obviously, we **all** breathe, but it turns out that **how** we breathe and **when** we **do** or **do not** breathe can have a huge effect on many other things going on in our bodies.

So, what happens when we breathe? You bring oxygen into your body, right?

The dictionary definition says that breathing is “the process of taking air into and expelling it from the lungs.” So, yes, breathing is the process of moving air into and out of the lungs to bring in oxygen and flush out carbon dioxide. As it turns out, there’s so much more going on in our bodies when we inhale and exhale than we can imagine.

When we’re living, working, and/or caring for a person living with dementia, there are numerous benefits to us taking a minute of our time to care for ourselves first, to make it possible for us to care for those around us more appropriately and with more patience. Let’s take a closer look at this concept with Teepa. You are welcome to enjoy this Teepa Talk video in its entirety, but for the purposes of this article we will be focusing on two shorter segments.

Please [view this video](#) from the 5:00-5:50-minute mark now.

- What did you notice Teepa doing in the video ?
- Why do you think Teepa demonstrated breathing that way?
- How could this way of breathing help with care partner tasks?
- Can you think of a situation when this breathing technique would have been or will be useful to you?

Now, continue watching the video from the 5:51-8:00-minute mark.

Lack of oxygen makes you feel nervous and tense, often without you even realizing it is happening. This type of slow, deep breathing activates nerve cells, which in turn creates a relaxed, alert state. It also lowers your heart rate and blood pressure and improves your circulation. Ultimately, you have more concentration and energy to complete the tasks that you are doing, while at the same time calming yourself down. My yoga teacher describes it as letting go of what you **don’t** need and making room for what you **do** need. So...**breathe!!!**

- Take a deep breath in.
- **Blow** it all the way out.
- Take another breath in.
- **Blow** it out.
- Take one final breath in **and... let it out!**