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If you feel like work is taking the wind out of you, you're not alone. Two in five adults report chronic stress at work. Many of us are gasping for a "breath of life" just like Queen Ravenna in Snow White and the Huntsman. It's hard work being queen, so she was looking to take in Snow White's fresh breath to invigorate her.

The chilling lyrics from the film's title song can easily be applied to how many Americans feel at work: "I was looking for a breath of? life / A little touch of heavenly light / But all the choirs in my head say no."

With employees working long hours -- their shoulders hunched over computers and checking email at lightning speed -- it's no wonder many don't take the time to breathe. Not to mention the choirs in our heads telling us that taking a break is a bad thing for our jobs and the company bottom line. But breathing is more important than ever before. Deep breathing is no longer just relegated to the practice or yoga or mindful meditation. It's become an essential tool of the modern day work-life merge.

The Breath as Fuel

The breath is the sustaining force that keeps us in human form. It's the fundamental transaction of life, the fuel to help us manage stress and the ignition switch for the creative impulse. Understanding how to harness it is crucial in the new world of work, where getting a handle on managing stress arguably offers a competitive edge. With so much spiraling out of control, the one thing we have the ability to master is our breath.

Harnessing the Breath at Work

Harnessing the breath, and channeling it more precisely, trains us to be mindfully aware of where we focus our attention and how we interact with our coworkers. Awareness is fostered when the breath is nurtured. Deepening and slowing your breath helps trigger the parasympathetic nervous system and tells the brain to release calming hormones. It creates the atmosphere from which to make better decisions.

The breath is the gateway to the silent space within. Not an easy place to get to in a 24/7 high-tech global marketplace where connectivity is the law of the land in "real time." Here are five tips to using the breath to break work stress.

1. Morning Breath: Set your alarm for 10 minutes before you need to get out of bed. Upon awakening, sit up in bed in a comfortable position and keep your eyes closed. Open your mouth. With sound, breathe in and out three times into the pit of your belly, as if fogging a mirror. You'll sound like Darth Vader. Then close your mouth and continue to inhale and exhale for a few minutes. Open your eyes and continue to breath in silence.

2. Commuter Breath: When traveling, or if working from home as you prepare to sit at your desk, just notice your breath. If you are driving in traffic or getting the kids off to school, as stress increases your breath gets shallow. Inhale to a count of three through your nose, hold for a moment, and exhale to a count of three or longer. As you breathe, think to yourself, "Breathing in, I am peace, breathing out, I am peace."

3. Anchor Grounding Breath: Before you begin your work, set the tone for your day. Sit comfortably in your chair with an erect spine, shoulders relaxed, your head in alignment with your spine and your chin parallel to the floor. Place your right hand on your belly. Take a deep breath into the pit of your belly, deep into your diaphragm, and feel your breath push your hand out into a Buddha like belly. Breath in and out and feel your breath expand into your side body and back.

4. Mid-day Energizing Breath: By mid-day there's plenty of stale air to dispose of. Sit up straight in your chair with your spine erect. Open your mouth and making a panting sound with equal inhalation and exhalation. Like a puppy. Close your mouth and continue that panting allowing the air passing over the back of your throat and in and out of your nose. Try for 10 seconds, pause and repeat. If you get dizzy, stop.

5. Workday Closure Breath: To end your workday, sit in your chair with a straight spine. Close your eyes. Bring your attention to the base of your spine. Imagine a pool of white lava sitting there. Start breathing in and out of your belly (diaphragmatic breathing). With every complete in and out breath the white lava crawls upward. Imagine it expands into the area right below your belly, rises into your stomach, into your heart, to your throat, to the area between your eyebrows, to your head and then pours out the crown of your head back down your spine to begin again.