



Lesson #4 — Conscious Alpha Brainwave State

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Wonderful to be with you again.

Today we are going to expand on our homework a bit. If you recall, in the last lesson, we did have some homework which was to spend about five minutes doing the concentration meditation, focusing on a different point in the body, seeing if you can't remain between beta and theta which should be the alpha brainwave state. It's concentrated and centered, and the mind isn't wandering off into a dream like state nor is it getting into a stressed state. It's relaxed, and hopefully you have a taste for that type of concentration meditation. And if you noticed the point where your mind shifted into the relaxation state, where your breathing maybe changed, that would be wonderful because in that moment, that was the vagal response, that vagus nerve had a release, it relaxed and it sent a message to the entire body to go into a rest and digest mode, out of the stressful fight-flight-freeze mode or productivity mode.

Today we are going to work with that vagus nerve in a different way to show that there are multiple ways to stimulate the vagus nerve and to take us into what I will call primary awareness. And what we're going to be doing is a type of Valsalva maneuver. The Valsalva maneuver is going to create intra-abdominal pressure, and then as we release that pressure, we are going to do this through our breath, it will actually drop blood from the brain. Essentially what it will do is drop blood from the brain and into the body and you can faint

doing this. The primary danger is fainting, so we are going to do this sitting down. Now lots of children do this naturally when they play and they hold their breath, and they let it go and they faint out, which I don't recommend, you can fall and hit your head, that is the main danger. But there are other dangers to this that you should know about.

Primarily, it's very rare that it happens, but since we are going to be creating some degree of pressure in the chest, if you have glaucoma the pressure that it is going to create can cause problems if we have glaucoma, like a retinal detach. Now you would have to create a lot of pressure to do that, so we are not going to use that much force here. So, I am just warning you, sit down and we are not going to use so much force that it is going to dislodge our retina. And also, we want to make sure that if we have certain heart conditions that we will be careful with this. Again, we are not going to hold our breath super tight and super hard and super long. We are going to do it just to the degree that it feels quite good and that should keep us safe. If you have any concerns about this process, you can skip this training and go on to the next one and in the next lesson, we will have another way of getting into this alpha brainwave state using another method, not vagal breathing. But 99.999 % of the people are not going to have a problem with this. You might consult with your physician if you have any concerns or if you feel like you need to skip this lesson because you have severe heart ailments or glaucoma, then have no concern about that, but just listen to the lesson without necessarily doing it or you may just soften the breath a bit.

Now it's important that we don't do this lying down because what we want to do is create an effect where the brain loses blood for a period of time and it has this effect of dropping us into our bodies. And during this time as we drop into our bodies upon the release of the breath you might notice that we suddenly become aware of our heartbeat. We may notice that we actually feel the vibrations of the nervous system. We might notice certain feeling of undulation in the body. We might notice a lot of things and that's because when we release the blood pressure, we release the breath and the blood pressure then drops, and there is a part of the brain, there are several parts of the brain, that work together, it's called the default mode network that creates your sense of self, it creates the ability of being self-absorbed. And because we are self-absorbed, we often are unaware of what is happening in our bodies. When the blood doesn't sufficiently activate that part of the brain, what ends up happening is, we become aware at deeper levels in the body. We are actually, here now and not projecting off into the future or the past, self-absorption, things we need to do and that sort of thing. So, this can be a tremendously beneficial exercise, if done properly. So, we are going to be careful about it and we are going to do this in a way that it feels good to you. And so, I'm going to walk you through the process and then we will give it a try.

And so first just watch what I do. So, what I'm going to do is take in a deep breath, feeling, to the point that it feels good. And then I'm going to hold it and open my chest up. What this is doing is creating a little pressure in the chest, but it feels quite good. It's like a nice stretch. And then you release the breath whenever it feels really good to release. You don't need to hold it any longer than that. And what is happening in my body is: It feels very, very centered. It feels very, very connected. It feels very, very soft and even everywhere. My blood pressure has dropped, my heart-rate is slowed. In fact, it was so silent inside that it took a while for me to be able to generate words to explain what was going on.

Alright, so let's go ahead and give it a try together. We are going to take that breath in to the point where it feels quite good. We will pull our shoulders back and stretch our chest anyway that feels good. And release whenever it feels good in a way that feels good. And then just feel the body. Some of you might notice that your body seems to be undulating. That's the result of your body being so relaxed that the pulse is moving your body and you've become aware of that movement on some level. Some of you may actually feel your pulse. Now, this is an activity that you must not do while standing because you can faint out. You must not do it while driving, using any heavy equipment, just do it while seated. You don't want to do this lying down, however, because when you lie down the blood will remain in the brain and so you are not going to get as much of an effect. Now it's not like you are completely emptying your brain of blood, don't worry that you are starving your brain of blood, that is not what is happening. It's just a blood pressure drop, and a descent of blood pressure has this effect briefly. You might notice how long the effect lasts.

Let's try it one more time and let's see how long we notice the effect lasting. My blood pressure is starting to rise. There are still no thoughts. The body feels very centered and relaxed. I wonder what your body is feeling. Has your blood pressure risen yet? Are you still quite relaxed? Do you still feel quite centered?

Now, vagal breathing is a very powerful tool, but it has some disadvantages. Now we are creating a strong vagal response and it takes the body into a highly aware state. Aware of its internal functions, right? Centered and deeply relaxed. This is a highly conscious alpha state. However, it is so relaxed that we may not be able to move in this state. We may not function very well in this state although our eyes are open. So, through vagal breathing we have gone from an eyes closed, slower process of entering into alpha that isn't quite as deep as the concentration method, into one that takes us into a deeper alpha brainwave state, highly centered, aware, but not focused, not using concentration. But the blood pressure is low enough that we really probably ought not be moving around. And so, this is not an ideal approach but something that's often times very helpful when we are under lots of

stress, we need to relax, the quick way to get in. But the main point of demonstrating this was just to show the shift from beta brainwave to alpha. Did you notice that change? Did you notice that vagal response? Did you notice the blood pressure dropping, the body relaxing and centering? Did you notice how quiet your mind became? Maybe a drop in anxiety? Did you notice the internal awarenesses? Did you feel your breathing? Did you notice your heart rate? Some of you may have noticed this. As you practice it will become ever more clear.

So as homework we are going to try the vagal breath again. Again, feeling it is the key. Making the whole process feel good. The breathing in, breathe in to the point where it is full, to the point where it feels good but not really uncomfortable. Just to the point where it feels really nice and fulfilling. And then we'll stretch it in a way that opens that chest in a way that feels quite good and then release, at the time that feels right, at the speed that feels right. And then we will just allow awareness to drop into the body and notice what we notice. You might take notes if you have a notebook. Once the process is done, stay in that relaxed, highly aware, centered alpha brainwave state until beta returns. It might be five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes down the road. At some point something will pull you out. You might mark down how long it took to come out of this alpha brainwave state and you might note some of the things that you felt. Did you notice your breathing process? In what way did it change from normal? Did you notice your heart-rate? Did you feel your body undulating according to the heart-rate? These kinds of things. Did you notice any thoughts or not? What kind of feelings were there?

And with that, I hope to see you in the next lesson.