

# Dr. Kathy's Corner

March 2018

*Who has seen the wind? Neither you nor I: But when the trees bow down their heads, the wind is passing by. – Christina Rossetti*

*We are born, we die, and in between these irrevocable facts of human existence the breath weaves all moments together. – Amy Wright Glen*



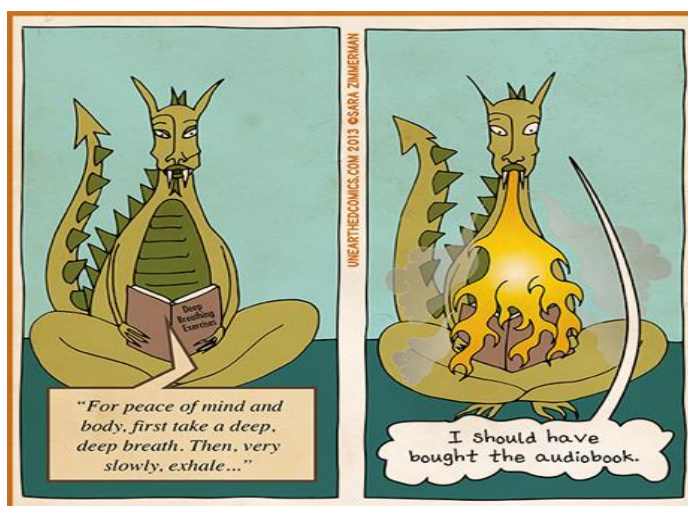
This month I would like to share a story of one of our female physicians who I had the honor to share a lunch meal with a little while ago. Let's call her Dr. Breathless. She and I chatted easily about her family and patients (being HIPPA compliant of course).

At one point, Dr. Breathless got pensive and said that she realized that there are times during her work day that she feels totally depleted, exhausted, as if she has run out of fuel to keep going. We talked about a specific time when she recalled "hitting the wall" at 3 o'clock in the afternoon after an especially difficult series of patient encounters.

As she shared some of the details of those stories, I noticed that her breathing had become more shallow and a bit more rapid. When I pointed that out to her, she stated that she was not aware of that, but that at times, she does almost feel like she is running out of breath. Dr. Breathless assured me she had just had a physical recently (a rarity actually, among physicians) and all the results were good.

As we chatted a bit more I suggested she become intentional about her breath during the day. I asked her to do, what I ask all the docs I can, to do: breathe in between patients. It is a form of clearing the stress and distraction of one patient before you enter the room of another. It also allows you to intentionally fill your body and brain with much needed oxygen during stressful times.

When I saw her a couple of weeks ago, she told me that, not only is she feeling less tired, but she has her teenage daughter "breathing between classes" as well. It seems like such a little thing to intentionally breath, but in reality, we walk through much of our days being unaware of how we are responding to the world around us, and often

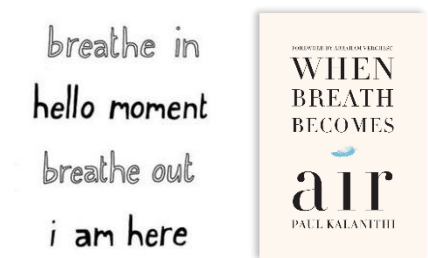


we are holding our breath or shallow breathing from our chest rather than our bellies. Living mindfully calls us to notice the little things that make the biggest difference.

Research is clear that deep cleansing breaths during the day can increase attention, reduce anxiety, stabilize blood pressure, increase energy, and improve sleep (if you wake up earlier than you want, try lying there and concentrating on ONLY your BREATH—forget about counting sheep, just focus on your breathing and more often than not you will return to a peaceful state and may even fall asleep.)

Start today to care for your body intentionally: Occasionally just stop a second and take a breathing break. I think you will find it makes a difference—in that moment and hopefully for the moments yet to be.

Thank you for all that you do! *Kathy*



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