

## The Offering Breath — Essence

This advanced technique needs a quiet place and a quiet time when you're relaxed and ready to enjoy a period of calmness and a mellow mood. This technique is thousands of years old, in all likelihood; certainly many centuries old.

### How to Practice

Keep your awareness of the breath at the gateway of your nostrils, watching your breath coming in and going out from the rim of your nostrils. Place your mind at the rim of the nostrils. Watch the breath come in and go out. Now, as you breathe in, pretend that you are breathing out. And as you breathe out, pretend that you are breathing in. This thought and attitude of reversal with each breath — in that you visualize you are doing just the opposite of what is going on — is a direct calming influence on the breath. It will not work unless you have a serene mind in comfortable, quiet circumstances. However, this pretending of the opposite — remarkably and quickly — slows the breath down profoundly.

You'll notice, as you practice this, it's easy and natural but suddenly the breath becomes quite still. The breath activity continues to a small extent, but as you do this technique, you don't feel a need to gasp for air or any particular discomfort. Rather, there's a growing sense of pleasantness and well-being.

So, simply continue to watch the breath but have the attitude, the visualization, that you are doing exactly the opposite of what your breath is doing. When the inhalation occurs, feel that you are exhaling. When the exhalation occurs, feel that you are inhaling. The breath will become so calm and slow and pleasant that you'll begin to sense a calming of your mind, emotions, and heartbeat.

### Benefits

In this approach you will gradually become, if comfortable, so calm and centered that your awareness will move from the breath to the life force which directs the breath and from the life force you will go upstream, beyond the life force, to a sense of the center of life and being within you. You will have a blissful, profoundly quiet experience of your inner self. This experience is called *samadhi*, or spiritual awareness, one of life's highest states of being.