



# Breathing into a **New Life**

How Your Breath Heals

Breathing  
into a New Life

John **Stamoulos**



# Breathing Into A New Life

---

HOW YOUR BREATH HEALS

*John Stamoulos*

Copyright © 2015 John Stamoulos  
All rights reserved.

This book is copyrighted under the Australia Copyright Act. No part may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the author/publisher. Under the provisions of 'fair use' doctrine reproduction without permission is limited to brief quotations embodied in such documents as private study, research, criticism or review.

Permission enquiries are to be submitted to:

John Stamoulos  
PO Box 152  
Torrensville Plaza 5031  
South Australia  
<http://www.johnstamoulos.com>  
[john@johnstamoulos.com](mailto:john@johnstamoulos.com)

The intent of the author is not to dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a form of treatment for physical, emotional or medical problem without the advice of a physician either directly or indirectly. The author only offers information to assist in your quest for physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. It is the recommendation of the author/publisher that all Breathwork experiences be conducted with a trained facilitator.

In the event that you choose to use any of the information shared in this book, the author/publisher assumes no responsibility for your actions.

Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Because of the dynamic nature of the Internet, any web addresses or links contained in this book may have changed since publication and may no longer be valid.

Cover Design by Alex Mankiewicz

Printed in the United States of America with CreateSpace  
ISBN: 0994241305  
ISBN 13: 9780994241306

**National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry**

- Creator:** Stamoulos, John, author.
- Title:** Breathing into a new life: how your breath  
heals / John Stamoulos.
- ISBN:** 9780994241306 (paperback)
- Notes:** Includes bibliographical references.
- Subjects:** Self-actualization (Psychology)  
Holistic medicine.  
Healing.  
Breathing exercises.
- Dewey Number:** 158.1



*With love to my son, Evun*

*and*

*To My Conscious Community*

***You breathe authentic heart into my life.***



# Acknowledgments

This book was not a solo endeavour. Many people deserve recognition for their part in birthing Breathing Into A New Life. There are those who contributed directly and others whose quiet support and nurturing have added ease to the process that has delivered the final product you now hold in your hands.

I want to thank my dear departed friend, Shantelle Gold. Many years ago, she encouraged me to write a book that would, as she put it, 'Release *me*'. Thanks also to Barbara Wilson for gently nudging me in that same direction.

*Deepest appreciation is extended to my friends and colleagues whose support and wisdom kept me at the task:*

Angelo Tsakalos for your encouragement at the first spark of this idea. You helped birth my message and you were there to unravel the technical mysteries that got in the way of its production. As I always say, "Everyone needs an Angelo!"

I am eternally grateful to Dr. Reza Samvat for his long and abundant friendship, and for his knowledge and contributions in explaining some of the neurological science and metaphysics behind Breathwork. Thank you, Reza for the use of your home where my book began its life.

So many members of my Conscious Community are an integral part of my shared experiences in this book. They walked my path with me



and their insights and knowledge shine through in my stories and instructions.

*Acknowledgment goes to the people in my life who inspired and shaped the concepts I have shared and who taught me about love:*

Dad, thank you for teaching me about love and Great Spirit. Mom, I miss you so much and I thank you for being proud of who I am.

Gayle Laver, thank you for being my soul sister and such a loving presence in my life. You have taught me about kindness and gentleness.

St. John the Russian (My Namesake) thank you for showing me about humility, trust, hope and healing.

Babaji – (Bhole Baba Ki Jai), thank you for teaching me about Love, Truth and Simplicity.

Shri Muni Raj, thank you for listening, for your gentle guidance and for such extraordinary journeys in India!

To Surrinder Nath, my spiritual father in India, and his lovely wife Edith Nath, I extend my heartfelt thank you for your presence in my life.

Buckminster Fuller your futuristic visions and expansive theories inspire me.

My first Breathwork teachers, Bronwyn Barter and Julie Way, thank you for showing me how powerful and transformative the process could be and for opening the door to my life's passion.

Thank you to all my Breathwork clients and students. You have all taught me so much. You have given me the opportunity to learn from you so I, in turn, can teach and share that education in my book.

☆☆☆

I want to thank my amazing and talented Personal Assistant and friend, Cherry Choo, who adeptly organized the initial time off for me so that I could begin the creative process of this book.

The sincerest of Thank You's to all those contributors who so generously agreed to allow me to quote their wisdom throughout my book, *especially* John Bradshaw, Catherine Dowling, Wilfred Ehrmann, PhD, Robyn Fernance, Dr. Stanislav Grof, Ken Kizer, E. James Lieberman, Bob Mandel, Gunnel Minett, Keith Post, and Lena Kristina Tuulse. Your words helped build a solid foundation and added greater clarity to my message.

Appreciation for the patient efforts expended by Alex Mankiewicz to create the illustrations within my book. My special gratitude goes to her for her design of the exceptional book cover that is the essence of my message.

Thank you to Susanne Swan who reviewed this book. I truly appreciate and value your feedback and expertise. Also Donna Ferretti, PhD. for the second overview and distinctions that gave clarity to the process.

I want to thank my Editor, Kellie Poulin. You have been an incredible support throughout this journey. I cannot express in words how thankful and grateful I am to you for your tireless assistance in getting

this book finalized! (And...gratitude for Terry's patience and understanding during the whole process.)

Thank you to all my worldwide promoters. We have learned so much together in the last two decades about creating sacred spaces where people are safe to come and explore.

Thank you to DC Cordova, Kerry Zurier, Dominique Lyone and everyone I have met through Excellerated Business School®. It has been a rich learning platform that provided so many opportunities for my growth and development as a public speaker.

Finally and most significantly, this book would never have existed without Breathwork and all those individuals and organisations such as the International Breathwork Foundation, who are dedicated to its development and expression in the world. Your enthusiastic efforts have made it the powerful presence it is evolving into today.

Thank you to everyone whose loving hand has touched me so that I could tell my story and share Breathwork's transformative power with you.

# Table of Contents

Foreword. . . . .	xiii
Preface . . . . .	xxi
Introduction. . . . .	1
Chapter 1 The Dark Night of the Soul . . . . .	5
Chapter 2 From Darkness into Birth- Birth is not Benign. . . . .	29
Chapter 3 Life Begins – The Journey to Awareness and Breathwork . . . . .	77
Chapter 4 Back into Darkness and Finding the Way Out . . . . .	111
Chapter 5 What is Breathwork. . . . .	147
Chapter 6 The Science and Spirituality of Breathwork . . . . .	199
Chapter 7 Journeys with Breathwork. . . . .	233
Chapter 8 Divine Life Plan. . . . .	265
Chapter 9 Owning Up to Life . . . . .	299
Chapter 10 Chasing the Monsters from Under the Bed . . . . .	333
Chapter 11 A Life of Choice. . . . .	373

Chapter 12 Returning to the Point of Origin Within Myself. . . . .411

**Appendix**

Appendix A Birth Scripts and Characteristics. . . . . 437

Appendix B Your Divine Life Plan Exercise. . . . . 473

Appendix C The Many Faces of Breathwork . . . . . 490

Bibliography. . . . . 499

**Figures**

Figure 2-1 The Story of St. John the Russian . . . . . 73

Figure 4-1 A Powerful Forgiveness Story . . . . . 132

Figure 5-1 The Path to Your Authenticity and Your Heart . . . . . 157

Figure 6-1 The Brain. . . . . 210

Figure 9-1 Responsibility Flow Principle . . . . . 300

Figure 12-1 The Journey to Transformation. . . . . 433

Figure 8-1 Life Assessment Tool. . . . . 489

# Foreword

*from Dame D.C. Cordova*

I can't actually remember when I first met John Stamoulos. It was so long ago that it feels like a lifetime has passed since our first introduction. We began our connection by sharing a pioneer teacher, Sondra Ray, in the field of Breathwork or 'Rebirthing', as it was known back then.

I have spent nearly four decades involved in the personal development, transformational field. My business mentors were pioneers in experiential, entrepreneurial education. They literally initiated the field, which has been my life's work for 36 years. I was a student of their Business School for Entrepreneurs in 1978, which was the first of its kind and I learned the principles so well that I became a partner. Later, I inherited all the rights to the intellectual property of this unique educational system. Through personal work and powerful partnerships, my efforts have achieved tremendous success globally.

It was through the magnificent principles and gifts of Breathwork that I have been able to become one of the "elders" in the industry. I had to be ready and I had to have my 'deservability' level high enough to attract wealth, to keep it and to now commit my life to the humanitarian endeavours that I do. Breathwork has facilitated my ability to receive these wonderful gifts and to clear the different blocks that have come up as I have walked my road to success.

## Breathing Into A New Life

As I got to know John and observed his work with groups and individuals, I became viscerally aware of his great commitment to his clients and students. His personal mastery allowed him to take people to a very deep level that accelerated healing and created greater results.

In addition to contributing to our Money & You community through the years in the highest form of service, John has expanded the work of Breathwork and dedicated his life to spreading the Breathwork process through the world.

There's so much that I can say about Breathwork – this powerful tool that John Stamoulos delves into in this extraordinary book. Like John, this work saved my life and supported me to find my life's purpose. It allowed me to heal the intense wounding I experienced from my father leaving our home when I was 3 years old. I was able to make peace with my mother as well, which allowed our relationship to evolve into a magnificent friendship that is the backbone of my relationship with others today.

This work supported me in releasing the grief of the loss of beloveds. It was my ally in clearing blocks to creating the life I now live - one of wealth, prosperity and purpose in uplifting humanity's consciousness through socially responsible businesses.

Surprised? Not as much as I was to find that a simple tool such as Breathwork could become the basis of my commitment to the principles of life mastery.

## Foreword

To this day, no matter how stressful or how tough things can get, I breathe deeply to integrate the higher aspects of myself and become grounded.

*The breath is key.*

Nothing connects us to the Great Spirit as much as the awareness that we are one breath away from it. This is also a path to choosing aliveness – and it will affect every part of your life!

I am so happy that John finally has written this book. The topics covered here are very powerful. They are proven principles, tools and techniques that many successful people have put to work in their lives. In other words, there is social proof that this work is effective. It can bring about permanent change and personal transformation, which can facilitate having the life of our dreams.

*Taking action is key.*

The way that this book is written, its different processes, exercises, and its information will support you tremendously – if practiced and applied in your daily life.

Life is beautiful, peaceful, prosperous and joyous. As I continue to commit my life to the betterment of humanity, I never cease to use the principles shared in this book – and I hope that you will too!

Aloha Nui Loa,

Dame DC Cordova  
CEO, Excellerated Business Schools® / Money & You®  
<http://www.DCCordova.com>



## Breathing Into A New Life

*from Kerry Zurier*

There are many people who are devoted to bringing full health and healing to humanity. And, there are many paths to do so. When people are confronted and afraid, it is the unconscious, automatic survival patterns that take over. We are not at choice in those moments. Our actions and movements are dictated by the past. The only way out of the fear is through.

I have worked with thousands of human beings, as a Master Certified Coach and as a lead instructor for Money & You ®. And, it is always at the point of seemingly insurmountable odds and/or pressure that individuals and groups break through to their next highest level. What is required, however, is a willingness to accept, allow, forgive and let go of our past and the stories we have attached to it.

In this book, renowned Breathworker, John Stamoulos shares his journey as an example to all of us to be willing to do our deeply personal work and transform our past. Through the breath, we can all achieve a level of forgiveness, transparency and authenticity that every human heart desires.

At his deepest moment of personal crisis and contemplating suicide, R. Buckminster Fuller (Bucky) came to the realization that, “You do not belong to you. You belong to the Universe. Your significance will remain forever obscure to you, but you may assume that you are fulfilling your role if you apply yourself to converting your experiences to the highest advantage of others.”

Like Bucky, John Stamoulos has embarked on a life that is committed to using his life’s lessons to contribute to changing the world. His

## Foreword

call to action to everyone he touches is that of personal responsibility. And, through personal responsibility, we regain integrity and are able to be at choice.

If integrity is “the state of being whole and undivided” (Oxford English Dictionary), then as individuals it is creating alignment within and between our commitments, our words and our actions. This state of wholeness is consistently being interrupted by our disempowering stories and thoughts that emerge from our pasts. We live life as if on a tightrope suspended between what we want to believe and what the evidence is pointing to. It is only by getting to the point of being completely real with what is driving us, that we are able to transform our lives.

We all have a past and we all have a choice in how we use that past. For me, as the youngest child of an affluent and alcoholic father, I made up that I had to be perfect and put his needs and the needs of my older siblings before mine in order to maintain order. My formative years became about not making waves and proving my right to exist. My world was about hyper-vigilance and order for others. I carried this way of being into my adult life and, through deep personal work including coaching and Breathwork with both John and others, I was able to let go and forgive my father. I could see how I created needing order and control and to be the boss.

When we are carrying our undistinguished stories, fears and past around, it is like holding a beach ball under water for a significant amount of time. Ultimately, we only have two choices. Keep holding the ball underwater and we are exhausted and resigned. Or, we let it go. When we do, the ball almost explodes out of the water until it floats again on the surface.

## Breathing Into A New Life

Transformational work, including Breathwork, is the act of letting go of the beach ball. It is the antidote to exhaustion and resignation. And, it requires a willingness to be with the thoughts, feelings and body sensations that accompany the release. It requires a willingness to accept your past as the perfect road to bring you where you are today.

And, like a bad neighborhood, this is not a place where you want to go alone! In my work, I am continually reminded of a fundamental human nature which is to go inward with the disempowering stuff of life and to share the empowering or exciting times and circumstances. This is not only antithetical to what humans need, it is also perpetrates social dogma that has humanity operating in individual silos. Or, as I like to call it, “parties of one.”

Support is a requirement of human nature!

So, grab support with gusto. As you read this book, do the Journey Questions, Affirmations and Exercises. Hire a Breathworker. Get massages. Hire a Coach to support you in moving forward. Take on personal development through programs like Money & You ®.

Most importantly, forgive, accept, allow and love. Forgive the past. It is over and complete. Accept the lessons you have learned. Accept yourself and those around you. Allow yourself to be everything you are and everything you are not. Allow humanity to be self-expressed. Allow the full spectrum of emotions in your life including true joy.

## Foreword

Love. Love comprehensively. Love yourself and your fellow humans. And, take on Breathing Into A New Life. What is on the other side is worth it!

Kerry Zurier, MCC  
Master Certified Coach, Accomplishment Coaching  
Lead Instructor, Money & You ®



# Preface

This book has been a long time coming yet it seems that right now is the perfect moment for its birth. Its inspiration can be attributed to my community members who encouraged me to write it, my own personal experiences that internally demanded expression and my desire to encapsulate a sense of meaning and purpose in my present life.

Yet the more significant impetus for its creation is to share my journey with BREATHWORK and how this dynamic technique helped me heal, connect with myself, transform and learn to live out of love rather than fear. I believe this powerfully life-altering process is a template for positive change that is of particular relevance in light of the darkness and chaos of our present global upheavals.

There is a miraculous resilience we possess as human beings. My personal story is told as a way for readers to understand that every day, they too can create their own blueprint for healing out of their life traumas. Just as I found my way to the meaning of my life out of the rubble of its disintegration, that potential is available for all to discover. Just as I have realized my human journey is one of continual discovery and growth if I take responsible action toward a goal or desire, it is possible for anyone to achieve their own epiphanies and choose to take conscious, courageous steps in their lives.

From the moment of my arrival here on this earth, my life has been dedicated to healing. I was named in honour of St. John the Russian whose life was dedicated to performing miracles of healing for others even as he lived as a slave in Russia. As he did in his life, I feel I was

## Breathing Into A New Life

born to heal and assist others in navigating the challenging process of change in their lives. I was born to help people transform their existence for the better. I am compelled to support them find their own strengths, courage and the infinite love inside them.

My life is framed around being of service and this book is an extension of that purpose. I deeply desire to serve anyone who is ready to hear about Breathwork, anyone one who longs to connect, to heal, to change, to live a fuller, deeper more expansive life. I want to give and serve with compassion and insight by doing what I love. For the past 20+ years, I have done exactly that!

I have travelled the world as a Breathwork facilitator and teacher bringing this message of healing by offering Breathwork's transformational power to thousands of people. I am a dedicated and passionate practitioner and have had the privilege of delivering its gifts to audiences in UK, Europe, Middle East, South America, North Africa, USA, Canada, Australia, India, and Asia. I live my life using the Breath, teaching about it and facilitating this work constantly.

It has been a privilege to experience every moment of my life so far and it has delivered powerful learning and unforgettable experiences that I now can share with so many.

During the process of writing this work, I revisited some of the most painful and some of the most glorious moments in my life: The excruciating loss of leaving my son in the U.S. and returning to Australia; the overwhelming joy of being reunited with him; the awe-filled moment of conducting Breathwork under the stunning vista of the night sky in Greece; the unspeakably humbling event when I stood before an audience of 600 Muslims who wanted to know about Breathwork

## Preface

and were eager for me to teach them; the awful-beautiful sessions of releasing so many of my personal life traumas through the glorious path of Breathwork.

There is an extraordinary power in the breath that allows immense freedom of choice and unlimited possibilities. It is the ultimate journey through adversity back to love.

As I stand on the precipice of another quantum leap in my growth, I am forever grateful for all that has nurtured and fertilised the soil in which I now stand. I have not been alone on this journey – there have been angels seen and unseen whose hands of guidance and encouragement have sustained me. My worldwide conscious community nourishes me as I continue on my path and take all-important action toward writing future chapters through my experiences and evolution.

In the end, it is all about love. When I experience the immense flow of love that emanates from the core moments in every Breathwork session, I know that this process opens us up, Breathes New Life and Heals. It is why I wrote this book and it is my deepest loving desire that you find within its pages your own healing and understanding of the immensity of perfection that you and your life truly are.

With love,  
John





# Introduction

Breathing Into A New Life is both a story about my personal evolution and a handbook of exercises and techniques to assist the reader in waking up to his/her potential for change and growth.

Writing a book shares a similar process with life as both evolve in layers and chapters. When one stands back and looks at a book or at life, one can perceive the unfolding from hints of awareness to bits of learning that finally reach full-blown understanding and new directions.

My story chronicles a personal path through pain, struggle with fear and movement out of that darkness into the clarity and unbounded joy of my life's work as a healer. Both this book and my awakening begin at an event in my adult life that abruptly changed my trajectory. In retrospect, it was the blow that woke me up. The story begins with a traumatising event that causes me to attempt to understand the 'what' and 'why' of what happened. I reflect on past events, actions and beliefs in my life as I seek answers for my terrifying situation. The stark reality of my present circumstances put me squarely in a victimized and powerless position. From that point onward, the story follows a steady progression toward unhooking from the past and focusing on reconnecting to my authenticity and passion.

My path of discovery leads me from learning about my traumatic birth and its lifelong subconscious effects; through understanding the confusing and challenging childhood I lived that was both painful and magical; to revealing my rebellious teen years that gave me voice; to experiencing marriage and fathering a son; to enduring a heartbreaking

## Breathing Into A New Life

divorce and finally to embracing life as a single parent and as a healer. Along the way, my synchronous encounter with Breathwork was the saviour that efficiently and emphatically pointed the way through my depression and uncertainty. The life that I now experience as Breathwork facilitator, intuitive and empathic mentor and teacher of the process to thousands was forged in the deep explorations toward healing that I was privileged to know through Breathwork.

Each chapter steps through an incremental segment of awareness that summarizes the learning at the end. This book is also a workbook that has been designed to encourage the reader live their own journey in parallel with my story. The chapters are filled with thought-provoking questions and each chapter offers exercises and affirmations to assist in opening readers up to a deeper look at their interior landscape.

I have included many anecdotes of the healing journeys of others as well as evidence that supports the validity of the technique. Several sections are dedicated to exploring Breathwork's surprising history, as well as the science and spirituality inherent in the technique. This information sources from the perspective of respected members of both the scientific and Breathwork communities.

In my working with an individual or an audience, I love to pose questions like: "What is it that you want in your life? What it is that you want *for* your life? What do you want to get out of your life? How do you want to contribute? How will you make a difference? What is it that you have *actually* contributed and what are you going to be remembered for?"

It is by stirring up curiosity and introspection that I believe I assist people to become more aware and to be great at living their lives in its highest expression. It is my most sincere wish that you, the reader,

## Introduction

might find support for answering those questions for yourself within the pages that follow.

With the deepest gratitude and humility, I offer you Breathing Into A New Life. It represents the heart and soul of my human journey in service to those who find the path of Breathwork as sacred and god-affirming as I have discovered it to be.

Thank You. Be Well.  
John





## CHAPTER 1

---

# The Dark Night of the Soul

*“We have two choices: We can be victims of the world or redeemers of the world. We cannot be both.” ~Marianne Williamson*



## Victim, Fear and Choice

The life journey from chaos to transformation is rarely a smooth and straight road but its twists and turns can teach us, make us stronger and ultimately lead us to a destination where love, bliss, abundance and peace are possible. The seeds of our greatest growth are often planted in the depths of the greatest life challenges we encounter along that road – challenges that begin at the very start of our lives... with our birth and our first breath.

Our birth is the original wounding that writes the opening chapter of our life story. By the time we take the first inhalation of unfamiliar air, we have already experienced immense fear and trauma from our birth process. As we grow, the events of our daily existence continue to script our experiences. We are taught how to conform to the rules of our environment and soon learn to adopt others' ideas and rules. Our identities are shaped and sculpted in the image of societal norms. In order to survive (or so we think), we must comply with the code of conduct that someone else hands us. In the process of that conforming, we lose our natural connection to our Divinity, forget who we truly are and become victims of our circumstance.

It becomes a life quest, then, to heal from the effects of our birth experience and reconnect to our true identity by changing our adapted beliefs and our conditioned behaviours. When we transform, we are freed from our victim status and we can live authentically with empowered choice that sources from our deepest truth. If we are willing to step onto that healing path, we open ourselves up to change and we evolve.



## Breathing Into A New Life

Our breath, the very mechanism through which we maintain our physical life, is the elegant and intelligent instrument of this transformation.

*Breathing offers us not only safe access to our unconscious, but through certain breathing techniques it also becomes the means of healing hurts and traumas that may be stored there. (Dowling, 2000)*

Many profoundly eloquent literary works speak of this stepped transformational process. Time and again, as we seek our highest self-expression, we lose our way and are blindsided by the chaos and confusion that our life experiences present. We are plunged into darkness and do not recognise our entanglement. Without awareness, we will be unconsciously driven to continue repeating the same behaviours that produce the same unwanted outcomes even whilst we outwardly long for change.

When we wake up to our predicament and get curious about its origins, we start to understand and gain clarity about our life. At this point, we discover that we can heal our traumas and change our causal beliefs and thoughts. We see a way to emerge from the life challenge that has obscured our view and we learn to use that knowledge to meet each successive event with more insight, capability and perspective. Each time we engage in this cycle, we move closer to leaving our victimhood behind and we embrace our capacity to be victorious in life.

As we embrace this awakening to our highest self, we become more aware and conscious of our process; we heal more completely by releasing trauma; we let go of our story through forgiveness and we develop a profound sense of compassion and love for ourselves and for others.

## The Dark Night of the Soul

We learn how to live more authentically from our essence because we take responsibility for our life and act with more integrity about our choices. Every healing and realisation is another evolutionary step closer to the core of who we truly are – infinite heart and divine love.

My personal life story is a clear reflection of this transformational progression. The ultimate healing of my traumas grew out of one of the darkest periods of my life when I lost my way and struggled to understand how things had become so irreparably altered. In the insights and life perspective that guided my emergence from that darkness, I discovered the breath as a potent healer and powerful mechanism for personal awakening. Although my biological story begins with the dire events of my birth, the pivotal moment of fierce redirection happened at a most fearful time in my twenties when I was living in the USA:

Since coming to New York from Australia with my American wife, Vanessa, and our 2-year old son, Evun, I had taken a waiter's job at a diner. I was unable to practice my professional work as a remedial (massage) body therapist without first sitting exams so the diner's work was the only immediate option.

My wife and I were saving so we could move to Florida and buy a house. It was 1993 and housing was affordable back then. With both of us working, we felt we could do it quite quickly. We were looking forward to settling into a life in the southern States with our son, so our efforts were very focused on that goal.

I was putting in nearly 60 hours a week at the restaurant and, even though the hours were long and not in my line of work, I enjoyed the place and the buffet of characters that paraded through its doors. The clientele appealed to my curious and adventurous nature and

## Breathing Into A New Life

I enjoyed their colourful presence. In addition to my mother-in-law working there, I had made many friends with my fellow servers, including an Irish immigrant, Patrick, with whom I became quite good friends because we shared a 'new to the USA' status.

It was close to 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I had just returned home from my shift at the diner. This particular day, my wife was at work and my son was with my mother-in-law. In the quiet of the late afternoon, I was ready to unwind from another long shift.

That day, as much as I wanted to relax, there was a disturbance deep within me that would not let me settle. I had been sensing a particular escalation in the elusive problem of 'what was not right' in the relationship with my wife. My intuition was heightened to the point of restless discomfort layered with intense agitation. It felt like I, or something, was about to explode. I was angry and upset at my inability to resolve the situation and was working out my frustration in one of my usual ways. I started mopping. (When I am upset, I manage it by cleaning.) I had just finished a phone call with my parents in Australia and had delivered them a fabulous "whopper" of a lie by telling them everything was fine.

As I struggled with the surge of anxiety from the shifting sand beneath my feet, and tried to work out my anger, destiny literally knocked on my apartment door. It stood there in the form of two burly representatives of NYPD's finest who slapped a restraining order on me and instructed me that I was to leave my home immediately. The order which was initiated by my wife and also signed by my mother-in-law, stated that I was a danger to my wife and my son, that I was accused of trying to kill them and that I had to appear in court to defend my alleged threatening actions toward them. It felt like a hole had opened up and

## The Dark Night of the Soul

swallowed me. In that darkness, I was confused and scared. I had no idea what was going on or even if I was headed for prison.

The police gave me only a few minutes to leave. They waited while I gathered some belongings. In total shock and disbelief, I filled a small bag with some clothes, grabbed a couple of books and my diplomas and a few other bits and pieces. They unceremoniously escorted me from the apartment. I sat on the curb outside my apartment as the neighbours gawked at me. I was embarrassed and ashamed. My Greek cultural ancestry held family as its most cherished value so this was a crushing blow to my very DNA. I had spent my teen years in rebellion against all that my heritage stood for but now, since becoming a father and husband, I had embraced the best of what it meant to live those roles. With the events of the past few hours, I had gone from being a respected family man with a job and a home, to sitting on the curb outside my former residence; homeless.

In the jumble of thoughts and emotions that accompanied my terrifying displacement, I tried to grasp an understanding of the situation. How had this happened? What was I to do? Where was I to go? I was totally alone on the streets of New York. As my thoughts turned to my son, I felt an overwhelming sense of loss. What about Evun? How would I protect him? Would I ever see him again?

It was getting dark, and I knew I had to find shelter. Fear and sadness gripped every cell of my body. I was a stranger in a strange land and I had nowhere to go. The legal process into which I had been injected totally mystified me and I was in mortal fear of going to prison. What would happen to me if I did? I had no idea but feared the worst.

## Breathing Into A New Life

The biggest question that hung in front of me like a flashing neon sign was - Why? Why had this happened to me? Why had my wife not only betrayed me but also fabricated a completely false story about me? Why was she so determined to rid herself of me?

My thoughts wandered back to the recent July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. That was the day something in our relationship had irrevocably changed. I had been invited by an Australian friend of mine who was living in New York City to join him for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations. Vanessa told me that she had decided to spend the day with Patrick and some of our other close friends from the diner. I thoroughly enjoyed the festivities in New York but when I had returned to the apartment, something felt 'off'. I had been able to smell and sense a difference in the environment and a definitive change in Vanessa.

As hard as I had tried, I had been unable to generate a conversation with Vanessa around what had happened. From that point on, she had acted strangely and had become increasingly distant. I knew my intuition was right. Something had occurred but I had been doubly frustrated by the fact I could not confirm it, no matter how many ways I had attempted to ask questions. In addition, she had become quite mean to our son and that had been a very troubling turn of events. She kept going out at all hours of the night and would take him out with her. That had really upset me. Even her mother had noticed her behaviour and had expressed concern. With each passing day, our relationship had worsened and the tension had increased.

And then there had been the phone call from a counsellor who Vanessa had contacted to apparently work through whatever was troubling her. Under my persuasive inquiry to the counsellor, I had been able to find out that Vanessa had sought help in order to work through her feelings

## The Dark Night of the Soul

of guilt about something that had happened. That had been enough information for me to put two and two together and realise that my suspicions had been accurate. She had betrayed me.

When I had confronted her, I had suggested that we could talk about anything and could work through anything. I had asked her to be honest and tell me what had happened. Instead of conversation, my inquiry had been met with silence. As I looked back, I had to admit that my relationship with Vanessa had been tumultuous at best and torturous in its darker moments and this was truly one of the darkest!

My past began to flash through my consciousness, as I combed my experiences looking for clues that might explain the reason for her betrayal.

I flashed back to my teenage years, my family and my total rejection of everything the traditions of my Greek heritage and religion had taught me. I recognised my confusion about who I was, about my life and my beliefs; I recalled my personal struggles with my sensitivities and frightening psychic experiences and I revisited the harsh realities of life growing up as the child of immigrant parents in Australia.

I had hit my teens during the wild punk days of the 1980's and had embraced that culture fully. I was angry and in total rebellion against my life, my heritage, religion and my family and punk culture's total rejection of society was the perfect ally for my revolt.

When I was 18, I had decided to live in Greece for a year in order to find myself and follow my dream of being free to live in Europe. I was done with Australia. I had romantic visions of life and had wanted nothing more than to learn about the world and myself.

## Breathing Into A New Life

In an apparent run-in with destiny, I had moved to Athens. I met Vanessa at an international hotel and bar there. It was a place that I loved to frequent. I would go there to dance, have drinks and meet people. At the time, I was dating another girl, but that was of little consequence. If you are destined to meet someone, *no matter what, you will meet* and so Vanessa and I did just that. In our conversations we discovered how much we enjoyed each other's company. Our time together included touring the sites and learning about each other. Our birthdays were just two days apart –mine was on February 4th and hers on the 6th.

Vanessa had been born in Greece but had been raised in the U.S. When we met, she had been staying for an extended time in Athens with her mother and stepfather in a luxurious hotel. In our sharing, it was clear that she was dealing with some difficult issues. She was severely wounded and in deep sadness. In the same way I had wanted to help my mother when I was a child, I wanted to help her. I felt a deep desire to save her. I didn't understand at the time but in retrospect, that was clearly a large part of our attraction. Through the doorway of my compassion, I deeply connected with her and eventually fell in love. In an intuitive prophecy of things to come, I used to say to her, "What did we do, make a contract so we were destined to come here on earth and meet so you could break my heart, stomp on it and traumatise me in order for me to wake up?"

This idyllic time of our courtship was abruptly interrupted when I had to return to Australia. There had been some problems with my visa paperwork and, even though I was Australian born, the Greek government had wanted me to serve in its army. I was forced to leave the country and that meant I also had to leave Vanessa. The choice had been sad and difficult to make. I had been happy in the life I had established for myself. I had used Greece as my home base and had

## The Dark Night of the Soul

travelled around Europe exploring and discovering the history and cultures of its many countries. Just as I had envisioned, I had also begun to learn a lot about myself.

My return to Australia felt like a kind of defeat. There were a lot of old unresolved issues for me that I had to face there and I really didn't know what I wanted in life. Vanessa and I stayed in touch for a while but eventually our communication stopped and we lost connection with each other. I fell into a dark period in my life but even in that unconsciousness, somewhere deep inside, a light was starting to shine through. There was a stirring within me. I began to question life and started to explore philosophy and world religions; anything that might support my thirst to find meaning in my life and in that of our collective human journey.

It was a full three years before I heard from Vanessa again. Out of the blue, she called me one morning at 4 a.m. The night before Vanessa called, I experienced a clearly premonitory message as I noticed a picture in a magazine of someone who looked a lot like her. When she called the next day, she didn't say anything but I knew who it was. "Is that you Vanessa?" I asked. When she spoke, we started talking like we had never been apart. Looking back on that moment, I knew then that I really did love her. We continued to talk often until I decided we needed to be together. I abruptly stopped my life in Australia, got on a plane and went to Boston where she lived.

Not long after, we were married and enjoyed an extended honeymoon exploring Europe, travelling to Egypt and the Middle East. After a long holiday together we came back to Australia and had another wedding – a Greek wedding this time. We lived with my parents and were really struggling to find ourselves and define our direction. Our son



## Breathing Into A New Life

was born in 1991. He was named Evun after my father whose name was Evangelos, which means Archangel.

Evun was a total delight to us. By that time, I had completed my studies as a Body Worker and was employed as a Remedial therapist-massage therapist. It felt like life was finally on-track. I had a profession, a family and was engaged in my life pursuits. Then one day, Vanessa announced that she wanted to go back to the U.S. She said she felt incomplete without her mom and dad and wanted to work through and heal her relationship with them.

Even as I write this book, I am still confused about whether anything she told me back then was true or not. I did not understand her unpredictable behaviours, nor was I able to intuit the truth of anything she said. I eventually learned that she lied a lot. She had many incongruent personalities and mannerisms that kept me off-centre and scrambling to stay upright. I never ever recognised them as symptoms of the psychological imbalances with which she struggled. I learned about that much later... At that point in time, I was totally in love and a powerless victim to her desires. My sole focus was on how to help her heal from the tragic stories she had shared with me. She was wounded and I wanted to fix her.

In compliance with her desires, we moved to the United States with our two-year old son in tow. After we settled in, we formed some definite goals and began to work towards them. I was sincerely attended to our life, which gave shape and purpose to my existence. My perspective of life and what it meant had shifted dramatically from that rebellious, angry teenager of years before. Now in my twenties, I had become a responsible father, a family man, and a professional body worker. I had taken up residency in the U.S. and was gainfully employed at the diner.

## The Dark Night of the Soul

Then this traumatising event had erupted in the middle of my life. I was completely numbed out, raw and laid bare by what had transpired. Everything I had been building had now crumbled into formlessness around me, leaving me both vulnerable and abjectly immobilised. The reflections on my past had not yielded any answers. It was getting later and night had fallen. I had no desire to be exposed and victimised on the unsafe streets of New York. Whilst I was trying to decide what I was going to do, I thought about an Armenian woman, aptly named Angel, who was a hostess at the diner. We were good friends and I felt I could confide in her and ask for support. I rang her up and she immediately came to get me. I spent that night at her home.

In those days, there were no cell phones but I had a beeper that enabled me to contact my mother-in-law. During our conversations, she kept telling me how much she wanted me to see my son even though she knew about the restraining order that she had co-signed. The mixed messages and the suddenness of the legal proceedings were all very surreal.

I moved from Angel's place to the home of another diner co-worker, Connie. She also was a dear, dear, dear friend whom I wish I could find today. Connie lived in New Jersey with her daughter and she graciously took me into her apartment. When I arrived at her place, I totally collapsed and spent nearly a week curled up in a ball on her living room floor. I was completely exhausted, traumatised and frozen. My only defence was to close out everything and shut down. It was the only way I could cope. Eventually, she picked me up off the floor, got me together and found me a lawyer. Without her strength of action, I am sure I would never have moved.

I had the good fortune to have many angels around me; a lot of amazing, beautiful people who supported me when I reached out to them. I

## Breathing Into A New Life

wish I could connect with them today, as I will always have the deepest gratitude to them for their assistance.

Contrary to my worries, the court hearing happened with little fanfare and the judge's decision allowed me to have supervised visits with my son. The irony of that determination did not escape me. Here I was, the parent who was the stable one, being observed during visits with his child, whilst the parent who was treating my son badly was free to interact with him. It was completely absurd. In an even stranger twist to this story, it was my mother-in-law who volunteered for the supervisory duty!

I did not trust her and sensed she was mixed up in this more deeply than it appeared. Beyond her simply co-signing the restraining order, I was sure she was an integral part of it all. She had connections in the police force and knew a few people of questionable character in the area and was not shy about using their services as needed. I was certain that either Vanessa or her mother were having my every move tracked. Around that same time too, I had some crazy person confront me with a gun in my face on the streets of New York one night. I was a powerless, frightened refugee trapped in a foreign country with nowhere to go. It was a truly crazy making time that seemingly, I had to experience. As I reflect on this now, I can see that I was clearly embedded in my victimhood, although I would never have described it as that.

My mother-in-law kept encouraging me to take my son and leave the country. Yet, I knew that every airport, La Guardia, Newark and JFK, had an APB (All Points Bulletin) out for me in case I did try to leave with my son. Her urging me to take him and leave just didn't feel right and made no sense at all given how much she wanted to have her grandson around. It was clear to me that I was being set up to be in

## The Dark Night of the Soul

violation of my Restraining Order. Otherwise why would she be saying this to me if it were not some kind of trickery to get rid of me?

I was still on the trail to find out the truth about my wife's betrayal. I ended up confronting the man whom I suspected of being her lover. He was one of our friends at the diner and despite evidence to the contrary, he denied any wrongdoing. As I had done with my wife, I offered reasonable conversation and solution-oriented communication. And, just like my wife, I was met with lies and rebuttal. He was my friend and I knew what he was up to but decided to let it go. I had reached a point where I was okay and had decided that if they wanted to do this, fair enough.

When all this was taking place, I was heading to Boston one day for a break when I received a frantic call from Vanessa telling me that a car had hit our son. I quickly came back to New York to be with her only to find out it was all a lie. It was a moment of realisation for me that showed me how very manipulative she was. It was also representative of what it was like to live in the confusion of never knowing what was true and what wasn't. I could not trust my own intuition to discern what was truth any more.

I still don't know what's true about her childhood and the stories she told me and what she told other people. And even though my mother-in-law is a good friend now, I am unsure of her participation in these events. To this day, I am still confused about many of the details of what actually happened. Living with someone who has a mental condition like Vanessa's, the truth and the lies become a never-ending kaleidoscope of intermingled, changing shapes and patterns

In the end, I left my job, which added another weight to my growing collection of losses and tragedies. I had become friends with a

## Breathing Into A New Life

personal trainer, Arturo, who was a Columbian immigrant. He and his girlfriend took me in. They lived on the 34<sup>th</sup> story of an apartment building. By that time, I was a complete, exhausted mess. The combination of the initial eviction and all the subsequent legal issues, supervised visits with my son, being followed by police, lack of admission of any affair from my wife or her lover, and my homelessness and now joblessness, all conspired to strip me of any semblance of strength. I had to keep going. I stayed on their floor in the foetal position for another ten days. I was totally destroyed, totally messed up; my whole world and everything I believed in was gone.

What happened next, however, truly woke me up.

As I lay in distress on the floor, I had an out-of-body experience. I will never forget it. I actually saw Vanessa and my mother-in-law and another man in a diner talking about how to get rid of me. It was crystal clear to me. I heard the conversation because through some multi-dimensional travel phenomenon, I was actually there. It was as if I was sitting at the table next to them. What that experience did for me was infuse me with the energy to act again. I got up and contacted my wife.

When I got hold of her I said, “So are you having a great time planning how to get rid of me? I saw you at the diner.”

By her reaction I could tell that what I had seen was true. It was confirmed by my mother-in-law’s disbelief at being found out also. Because I could not explain this experience, I said that other people saw them and told me. There was no way to share the essence of what had actually happened but I was grateful for this universal intervention.

## The Dark Night of the Soul

After that, incredulously, we reconciled and Vanessa agreed to come back to Australia to sort things out. We were on the way to the airport with my son and all our belongings; and three times she changed her mind at the last minute and didn't want to go. I finally realised that I couldn't do this anymore. I could not live this way and it became clear that I had to let go. I had given this relationship all I could give it. I had fought really hard, so hard, yet, as painful as it was to leave, it was impossible to stay.

So I just boarded the plane and returned to Australia. Once home, I literally spent a whole month in bed. As I look back with the knowledge I have now, I had reproduced a stunning recreation of my birth trauma: I had been prematurely ejected from my home and my life, separated from love and was left completely raw, vulnerable and totally unsafe and terrified.

I was in such a depressed state that my parents feared I would try to kill myself. If I ever had a *Dark Night of the Soul*, that would be it.

Everything felt disconnected and chaotic. I was embroiled in this crazy relationship with someone whom I loved, yet did not trust. To me, because of her inexplicable and vindictive actions, she seemed emotionally unstable. I did not understand and I felt angry and defeated. I had no tools with which to work through my depression or to become conscious of where I was in my life's journey. The only thing I knew for sure was that I was abjectly overtaken with fear. What to do about it was a whole universe away from my awareness at that time.

I could hardly know from the state I was in, that destiny was leading me to a powerful lesson that would *step* me onto my authentic path in life. There was no way to comprehend what I had drawn into my life

## Breathing Into A New Life

and why. At the time, I had no clue how my birth figured in this situation. There was no understanding how my early years of strong intuitive and creative abilities that I had shut away were connected to my New York City homeless experience. None of these relationships were established. It felt as if someone and something else seemingly beyond my control was pulling the strings of my life and I was a hapless victim of their plot. All I had to cling to was my blaming and my anger.

But, somewhere in my psyche, I felt the stirring of something I had subverted long ago as a child growing up in Australia:

*When I was a young boy I viewed life through eyes of incredible wonder and curiosity and in my soul I believed and knew the magical concept that THOUGHT IS CREATIVE. As I grew older I felt I had no control of my thoughts and was immensely afraid of creating horrible and frightening things in my life... what if my mother or father died, accidents, diseases, you name it. My anxiety had total control over me. The only way I knew how to handle this was to just not play that game. So I decided one day that I was no longer going to believe that THOUGHT IS CREATIVE. I simply shut this concept down. Nope, not playing that game anymore! From that point on, I unconsciously flowed with whatever was happening in my life and became its subservient victim.*

Still, deep down I understood the laws of the universe and all its magic. I had been an intuitive child and had developed a strong instinctual capacity that was not something one can just 'put away'. Even though that innate sense of knowing had been shut down, its presence reappeared in my experience of homelessness in New York. How else could I have known with such certainty what was going on that July 4<sup>th</sup> day with Vanessa? How could I have seen the vision of the conspiracy conversation at the diner? Without my knowing it, this horrific time in my life was the spark that ignited the fire of my transformation.

## The Dark Night of the Soul

If ever there was a hammer to wake me up from my slumber, my experience in the U.S. was it.

When I look back at my life from my present vantage point, it is hard to recognise who I was back then. I had no context for my lack of personal responsibility. All the signs of living below the line of taking 100% responsibility for my life and its events were evident. In the experiences of my homelessness, I was in denial, had compromised my integrity and power in order to preserve my relationship and to heal Vanessa. I blamed everyone for the bizarre circumstances in which I found myself. I had indeed swallowed a bitter pill by compromising my own happiness in order to make someone else happy and okay.

Yet I learned so much from that 'me' back then. Because of that experience, I was given the opportunity to get eye to eye with my primal fear, my unconscious victimhood and my unresolved traumas from birth forward. I was driven to understand and to develop a tool kit to deal with my unresolved and very creative issues.

If the 'me' now could talk to my 'me' then, I would have so much wisdom, love and gratitude to impart.

I would share how my homelessness was a clear creation of my entrenched victimhood. I would share how that situation was a signal that there was unhealed trauma with which I had to deal. I would share how I learned the necessity and value of taking full responsibility for my life. I would identify all the low vibration choices I was making...that I was in denial...that I was compromising my integrity in the things I was doing. I would lovingly point out that my inability to respond from my own power was a clear sign that I was not being Response-Able. That instead, I was reacting from my confusion, my



## Breathing Into A New Life

unconsciousness and limitation built from my own life pain and suffering and the perception that there was no choice. I would thank that 'me' then for being the catalyst and for holding the essence of the 'me' I have become today. And I would rejoice with my 'me' back then because, even though there was complete confusion, my 'me' now understands what a sacred place that really was.

*Confusion always precedes clarity. Confusion is  
a breakthrough state into transformation.*

From the context of my transformational process, I was entangled in the chaos and confusion of all that had happened. There was no clarity, conscious choice or solution that I could see. All I knew was pain, suffering and limitation. My journey of personal growth was just beginning.

## The Dark Night of the Soul

### Exercises:

In life, we all have our ups and downs. As we mature, we are afforded the ability to step back and see the bigger picture of our experiences. For me, when I was in the U.S., I went up and then I plunged below the graph of 'normal' in my dark night of the soul experience. I had no tools, but when I started to develop and grow from the experience, my trajectory shot way back up above the mean line of the graph of life, even higher than I was.

So now even as I engage the ups and downs in life, I might spiral down but I have the tools to quickly recover. It is the tools we develop that allow us to be more upwardly focused and enthusiastic about life. We must not remain wounded, depressed and stuck. In order to evolve, we must be able to acquire and use our tools to regain balance and thrive.

We all have some version of this pivotal descent into our own Dark Night of the Soul and subsequent recovery. Take a moment to journal or think about your own personal dark moment of life. What tools did you use to become upright and balanced again?

### Journey Questions:

What did your moment teach you?

How did it change your life?

How and why had you given away your power?

## Breathing Into A New Life

### **Affirmations:**

Even though I feel fear, I am safe.

*“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

## The Dark Night of the Soul

### Fear In The Ear

I want to say something about the subtle in roads fear can make in your lives. If you no longer allow fear to step blatantly before you and shout of cataclysm, it will creep behind you and whisper something reasonable in your ear. Be wary of rational thinking, reasonable supposition. When you are centred in your heart, fear has no power at all. It is something that may scurry through the room from time to time. You need not feed it until it becomes a monster. You can just let it run in one door and right out the other, and you may even comment, “Oh, there goes fear again.” Then watch the pyrotechnics of fear. It will tell you that the plane will crash, the food is poisoned, and you will be left alone forever. If you enter into any of those scenarios, you are caught.

Fear is only a teacher on your planet. Your schoolroom is always held within the hands of Perfect Love. All the monsters to be created on your planet have been unleashed, so fear will have no new faces. Oh, perhaps a virus or two. Nothing more. Fear has emptied out its bag of tricks: nuclear destruction, genocide, cancer, AIDS, torture, and still there is the human heart that seeks to know love. *That* is the voice of transformation.

*That* is the voice of truth.

*Fear is the frightened child, Love is the flame wholly understanding. Anger is a protective device. It is quite enough for you to experience anger. Nothing more need be done with it. Underneath anger is always fear and underneath fear is always longing.*

...Pat Rodegast and Judith Stanton, Emmanuel's Book II (Rodegast 2007)



**End of first chapter.**

**Before you go ...**

**GET FULL VERSION HERE:**

The Paperback is ready to be shipped immediately to your home! Purchase a copy of **Breathing Into A New Life** online!

1. CLICK HERE to order a copy from my store with CreateSpace:



2. CLICK HERE if you prefer to purchase from Amazon.com (maybe you have gift card, Premium membership etc):



**Connect with the author John Stamoulos at his website:**

**[www.johnstamoulos.com](http://www.johnstamoulos.com)**