

This month's hero

Former dental technician John Stamoulos, conceived on a boat from Greece to Australia, can make you relive your birth through a unique method, combining breathing, meditation and psychoanalysis. It helps to release stress and heal your body and soul.

John

Master of breath

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Australian John Stamoulos is one of the world's leading specialists in rebirthing. It is a special breathing technique that also involves meditation and fine psychotherapy which releases trauma on all levels - emotional, psychological and physical. This technique was developed by American Lenard Orr at the end of the 70s. Many people that go through rebirthing share that their mind experiences visions that they claim were from their early childhood and even their birth.

Two members of our staff visited the course and shared amazing details. They firmly agreed that the technique really helped them remove the stress built up for years, get closer to a true inner balance and to feel more energetic.

John claims that rebirthing improves concentration and stabilizes health. I first met Stamoulos during his first trip to Bulgaria during the summer. I found out he was coming back in October. He not only gave an exclusive interview for EVA magazine, but he also allowed us to attend a rebirthing session. The session is no less than impressive. We start a conversation that reminds of undressing the soul down to its most intimate corners. It's something of a spiritual healing, it helps realize the logic of behaviors and helps you find ways to face your thoughts and feelings in a healthy way. The breathing that follows takes 45 minutes to an hour. This session activates memories and feelings. The patient shares them with John, lives through them and overcomes them. At the end I find that the session I am attending is of a patient who lives a fast life full of stress. He hasn't rested in a long time, yet he feels calm, recharged and just like new.

Here is John's story:

John, what are the most common issues that your patients have?

They are mostly emotional issues, that are deeply rooted in the relationships between people. They are also the ones that provoke the deepest trauma. Next are financial issues, health problems, or specific feelings of shame or guilt. Because I mentioned health, the main reason we lose it is our brains and the unwise ways that we live our lives. When we are out of balance, the body signals that. Most people have lost all touch with themselves because they are too busy working. They need to reestablish this relationship. They can learn to recharge, to take more responsibility for their actions, to be in balance with themselves.

Can this type of breathing heal the body?

Yes. I have a client who had prostate cancer. He was extremely skeptical when we started, but his wife bought a few of my CDs with meditation. He came to breathing sessions and listened to my CDs every night. He's been getting better, his cancer is receding.

How many sessions minimum are enough to feel the effect?

I suggest a minimum of 10 sessions, so that you can relive the traumatic moments in your life, the part that you do not understand. It's completely up to you whether you do them once a week or once a month or however often you choose to.

Once a month is the minimum I recommend. When you have let go of most trauma from your body, the main result of this breathing is that you achieve better clarity and you can see and assess real life better. After such a number of sessions you can usually do your own breathwork – this is a session of breathing that you do to yourself. You need special training to work with someone else. After the 10 sessions are done, patients keep contact with me by phone or email, because I travel so much.

You travel?

I spend half of the year outside of Australia. I started the breathwork schools in Malaysia, Saigon, the Middle East, Iran, China. Next year I am teaching a trainers' course in China. I work a lot in Europe and the USA.

How did rebirthing start in your life?

It happened quite unexpectedly. I was in the midst of a deep personal crisis. I always imagined life was a road in a coordinate system and no matter where it lead, it always went up. You learned, you mastered the rules and they helped you cope. All I believed was taken from me in seconds. I had serious relationship problems, I got divorced. I lost my son, my home, my career. I saw my image of love painfully crumble. I fell under the coordinate system of life. I was looking for ways to reach to myself and I went under rebirthing. I had no idea what it was at the time.

What did it feel like?

During my session I was able to reach my heart and soul. I discovered who I was. I looked at my problems from a distance and I realized they were not so scary. I got in touch with my emotions, which is much harder to do for a male. I got free of a lot of pain. I felt my power was recharged and metaphorically speaking, I just stood up. If I hadn't done the session, I could have been a victim for the rest of my life, an angry person. I could have not been able to have a relationship for the rest of my life. Ever since this first session, I think that I can handle anything, even if it's really horrible.

What were your inner issues to overcome?

Some of the trauma was connected to my origins. You might have noticed my family name. I am of Greek roots, I was conceived on a ship from Greece to Australia. I was faced with a lot of negative attitudes because I was a foreigner. Some of my teachers made sure I had a traumatic childhood. I was humiliated a lot. I used to get panic attacks, loss of vision, especially when I needed to talk in front of large groups of people. Thanks to rebirthing I was able to let that pain go and I do wonderfully with large audiences today. My second session was even more interesting. It took me back to the time of my birth.

How did that feel?

It was extremely difficult both physically and emotionally. My mother was hospitalized when she was 6 months pregnant because of the shock of something she saw. You can imagine how scared and worried she must have been, in a foreign country, in a hospital where people speak a language she did not understand. We know that everything the mother feels get transferred to the baby. She was there a whole month and they had to cause my birth. They actually initiated the birth with an injection. They separated me from her and put me in an incubator.

During my breathwork I connected to the moment of my birth. I felt totally panicked and confused. The main idea behind rebirthing is to set yourself free from any trauma or system of beliefs which you have created for yourself, from the moment you were born and after. You need to face these fears and realize that they make you behave in certain ways. How you were born is of major importance. Babies who experienced natural birth have a lot more energy and are less traumatized.

Should one be prepared, in a way, to have awakened to a certain level of spirituality, before they can face the trauma that surfaces during rebirthing?

In fact, it is the person leading the session who needs to be prepared. In the preliminary sessions you discuss many subjects and he helps you to be psychologically stable when you face your trauma. The therapist leads you through breathing and he leads you through your surfacing issues.

What did you do before you started rebirthing therapy?

I was a dental technician. After a few sessions, the Rebirthing Institute asked if I would like to teach the technique. Then I overcame my fears and started group therapy. Later I started with children, then parents. Then couples. I started helping my son and my relatives.

How long since you started teaching rebirthing?

It's been 16 years. I am 42 now.

How popular is rebirthing in Australia?

It was one of the first countries where the government officially registered the breathwork organization. There are over 100 breathwork practitioners in Australia. We have training schools. The yearly world conference gets together about 300 registered practitioners.

Tell us how you live your life. Do you limit your food, for example?

The most interesting and important thing is my life is how to balance it in the best way possible. I achieve this by being disciplined about how much I work, eat, or drink. When I am in Australia I work 4 days a week.

I love to exercise. A few times I year I do 10 day juice fasts or avoid certain foods. Sometimes I have periods without coffee or alcohol. You need to achieve balance! It makes no sense to deprive yourself of a piece of chocolate or coffee. There is nothing bad in a glass of wine. One shouldn't overeat. I also try to avoid processed foods.

How often do you do breathwork?

Every day before I fall asleep. If I had a session with someone who was really stressed out, I need to talk it off with someone else. Talking releases a lot of tension and pain.

One woman shares her impressions from her first rebirthing session

The sound of a heart beating with the music during the session gave my breath a certain rhythm. When I calmed down I felt like every single cell inside my body was vibrating. I thought of something I hadn't done since I was a child. I used to turn the vacuum upside down and put a ping pong at the end of the hose. I started laughing. I felt like I was that ping pong. I remembered giving birth to my two daughters. Then I saw myself as a baby in my father's hands on the way out of the hospital.