



## **Simple Heart-Centered Breathing Exercise**

(“Quick coherence” technique from the Institute of Heart Math – [heartmath.org](http://heartmath.org))

This is most powerful to do first thing in AM (even if it means waking a little early), or last thing PM. Any amount of time is great. 20 – 30 min or more is lovely – but any amount of time is helpful. Once you start doing it regularly, it is deeply self-nourishing and self-reinforcing: and it builds resilience to stress, peace of mind, and positive outlook. Find a quiet, warm comfortable place to sit and set a timer, so you don’t have to watch the clock.

The equipment sales side of HeartMath ([heartmath.com](http://heartmath.com)) sells simple biofeedback equipment, which I find to be exceptionally helpful – but you don’t have to use it.

### **Step 1: Heart Focus.**

Focus your attention on the area around your heart, the area in the center of your chest. You can also place your hand over the center of your chest to help keep your attention in the heart area.

### **Step 2: Heart Breathing.**

Breathe deeply but normally and feel as if your breath (or energy) is coming in and going out through your heart area. Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural inner rhythm that feels good to you.

### **Step 3: Heart Feeling.**

As you maintain your heart focus and heart breathing, connect with a feeling of gratitude. Recall a positive feeling, a time when you felt grateful, and try to re-experience the feeling. One of the easiest ways to generate a positive, heart-based feeling is to remember a special place you’ve been to or the love you feel for a close friend or family member or treasured pet or anything else that you feel grateful for in your life. OR even better, simply smile gently and go to the place of no thought and only gratitude – just the state of gratefulness – not for anything in particular.

Every time your mind starts wandering to judgments, worries, your “to-do” list, or any number of other things, bring it gently back to focusing on your heart, breathing in and out “through your heart” and staying in a place of gratitude.

\*\*\*Also see Rick Hanson (Ted talks, etc.), multiple meditation programs/apps online, mindfulness training, Marianne Williamson