



Book Recommendation

Breath by James Nestor

It might seem peculiar to recommend a book on the science and art of breathing – surely this is something we simply sub-consciously do. Personally, I feel I've got a pretty good grasp of breathing and haven't skipped too many breaths over the past 55 years!

However, there were three combined elements which encouraged me to prioritise this book next on my reading list. Firstly, three different people had recommended this book to me. Secondly, I have been a long-term admirer of Wim Hof – the legendary Dutch breather – and his personal recommendation was on the front cover of the book. And, thirdly, several years back I had a very positive experience of participating in some breath holding work with an experienced free diver – to discover I could relax, engage in specific breathing techniques, and then hold my breath quite comfortably underwater for two minutes was a remarkable experience for me.

So, curious to learn more, I leaned into James Nestor's book *Breath* with the sub-title of 'The New Science of a Lost Art.' What I found fascinating was Nestor's research – as a journalist he literally travelled the world to explore ancient breathing practices and also to speak to modern scientific experts using breathing exercises to improve health, rejuvenate internal organs, enhance athletic performance, reduce snoring, allergies and asthma, and even straighten curved spines! The depth of Nestor's research is extensive and his book reveals so many interesting insights.

What I also appreciated, but it may not be to everyone's liking, are the personal experiments that Nestor puts himself through – as he completes ten days of forced mouth breathing, then ten days of forced nasal breathing (except when eating!). The data, the results, and the experiences Nestor details adds another intriguing factor throughout the book.

A main take-away for me, was the value and importance of breathing through your nose – particularly when inhaling. According to Nestor's research and evidence, humans were designed to breathe through their noses, and for hundreds and thousands of years apparently they did. But, more recently it has become common for us to breathe through our mouths. Our nose filters, moistens, and heats the air as it enters our body and this makes a significant difference. Nestor states 'that nasal breathing begets nasal breathing' and personally I have found this to be true. As yet, I haven't experimented with taping my mouth closed whilst sleeping at night, but I have found myself more conscious of nasal breathing and enjoying the practice at various times throughout the day and during my physical training. A full exhalation is another key to better breathing.

Nestor provides evidence that breathing can influence our body weight and overall health, it can increase the size and function of our lungs, it can help us to calm our nervous system, control our immune response and restore our wellbeing.



At **my manifesto**, we are passionate about helping people reveal their personal manifesto so that they can live their best life. We believe this book can assist you to live with greater ease and less disease. Coupling the increased awareness of your breath, with the increased clarity of your manifesto we believe newfound vitality awaits.

Breathe well!