

# Expansion, Contraction and the Breath Cycle

## ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 What is the importance of the breath?

00:00:08 One has to really detect expansive, contractive movement force.

00:00:17 It's not just, okay, if you focus on the breath, that's expansion and contraction.

00:00:22 You have to detect those flavors in it.

00:00:24 And you don't want to only do it with the breath forever,

00:00:30 because the idea is you want to eventually be able to detect this in all sensory experiences, all time.

00:00:37 But the breath is a representative of this.

00:00:42 How can I detect the breath?

00:00:47 There's three ways you can do it.

00:00:49 You can just focus on the volumetric expansion on the in and the volumetric collapse on the out breath.

00:00:57 That would be one way.

00:01:00 You're alternating expansion and contraction in the sense of literally space getting larger or smaller.

00:01:05 You can reverse it, though.

00:01:07 When you breathe in, the muscles contract and the linings of the bronchi and so forth feel a tug inward.

00:01:23 Remember, I always say pressure or space or etc., etc., or force.

00:01:34 When you breathe in, there's actually a contractive force that's detectable.

00:01:41 And when you breathe out, that releases.

00:01:44 So there's an expansive force.

00:01:46 That's the opposite polarity of the volumetric expansion and contraction.

00:01:51 One way you can work with the breath expansive, contractive-wise is in breath is volumetric expansion, out breath is volumetric contraction.

00:01:59 Volumetric, pardon my geek speak, it just means with respect to how big something is, how you would measure the volume.

00:02:09 So you can expand on the in, contract on the out.

00:02:13 Or force-wise, you can contract on the in and expand on the out.

00:02:18 Or if you want to get fancy, you can volumetrically expand and force-wise contract on the in and reverse that on the out.

00:02:27 So you have a both on the in, a both on the out, but the roles of father and mother get reversed.

00:02:35 Sasaki Roshi says when father finds mother's native village and mother finds father's native village,

00:02:45 then father turns into mother and mother turns into father.

00:02:50 And they flip roles and that's the only way that they can come back, etc., etc.

00:02:55 So you've got whichever one you want to call the native village.

00:03:02 But if you want to call the volumetric thing sort of like surface and then the other thing deep,

00:03:12 so your surface expands on the in breath, the depths contract on the in breath,

00:03:16 but then on the out breath they flip roles, right? The surface contracts, but the inside muscles stretch.

00:03:25 So that's probably part of what he's talking about, but just a very small part.

00:03:32 What I find is that by working with the breath that way, which is readily available,

00:03:39 almost anyone can get the volumetric expansion contraction.

00:03:44 Most people can detect the muscles doing the opposite.

00:03:49 I find that working that way with the breath sort of sensitizes to the detection of similar phenomena in other sensory domains.