

Breathing Techniques to Steady You in Unsteady Times

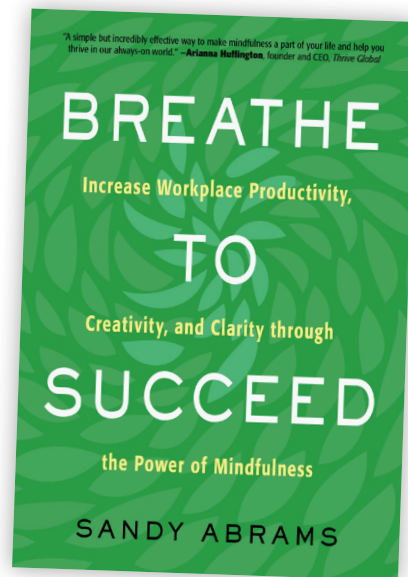


Sandy Abrams shares tips for breathing success in the corporate world, but also found them helpful as a mom.

When was the last time you took a deep breath? If you're like many of us, it's been a minute. Stressful times (like when you are quarantined at home with your kids) make most of us resort to shallow breathing – or even holding our breath.

This can lead to low-grade chronic stress, says Sandy Abrams, who specializes in sharing breathing techniques in the corporate world and is the author of "Breathe to Succeed." Abrams first discovered the power of breathing during her yoga practice, and quickly found it helpful in both business and at home. "I started to use the power of breath in parenting for all sorts of different applications, like patience and being present," says the mom of two sons.

Start your day in an empowered way with what Abrams calls "beverage and breath." Most of us like to enjoy a cup of something (coffee, tea, hot chocolate) to start the day, even when the morning is chaotic. Create a morning ritual by setting an intention for the



day, holding your cup, closing your eyes and taking three deep breaths. "Find in that small moment a sort of meditation to empower yourself for the day," she suggests.

A more specific (but still simple) technique is to inhale through your nose. "If you just take one deep breath through your nose, you're connected to that part of your brain that regulates emotion, and then it's up to you to decide how you need to feel," says Abrams. Exhale and feel calm, confidence or empowerment.

Or, for an immediate sense of relaxation, make your exhales longer than your inhales. "You can count to an inhale of four, and then on your exhale, six or eight," says Abrams. "And you will start to calm."

You can teach all of these breathing techniques to your kids. (Abrams' sons are 22 and 24 and still use the methods she taught them when they were little.) If your pupils are skeptics, she suggests having them search online, where they will quickly find the science behind each method.

One of Abrams' favorite breathing methods to use with kids is Lion's Breath. This one immediately purges negative energy – and makes everyone laugh. Just close your eyes, take in a deep breath through your nose, then snap your eyes and mouth open wide as you stick out your tongue and breathe out with a roaring sound. Afterward, enjoy the giggles. "Laughter is a great thing to do with your children," Abrams says. "Laughter is breath, too."

To close all the "open tabs" you have running in your brain and tap into creativity, try Bumblebee Breath. Close your eyes and take a long, deep inhale. Close your ears with your thumbs and use your fingers to gently cover your eyes. For the whole length of an exhale, make a humming/buzzing sound like a bee. "After one or two rounds of that, you just breathe normally for a few rounds and then you open your eyes, and you've got that blank slate you need for creativity," says Abrams.

[Click here for more breathing tips.](#)

– Christina Elston