



Hello all,

Welcome to *Swan & Stone, Volume 2, Issue 3, Coherent Breathing – Origins*. In this article, I take you back to the very beginnings of what we know today as *Coherent Breathing*. I related this story in a May, 2014 article but in retrospect I was unclear about the exact chronology.

When we think of Coherent Breathing, for many readers familiar with my writing, heart rate variability (HRV) may come to mind – the relationship between breathing and heart rate variability being a central theme of *The New Science Of Breath*. But the fact is that I first discovered that I could effect my own EEG via breathing before my introduction to HRV bio-feedback, circa 2000. I began personal EEG assisted meditation in the latter half of the 90s in an attempt to start all over again with my approach to meditation, now that the Kundalini genie was back in the bottle. I was seeking to understand the meditative state as Elmer and Alyce Green had described in their work about which I'd read quite a bit at the time:

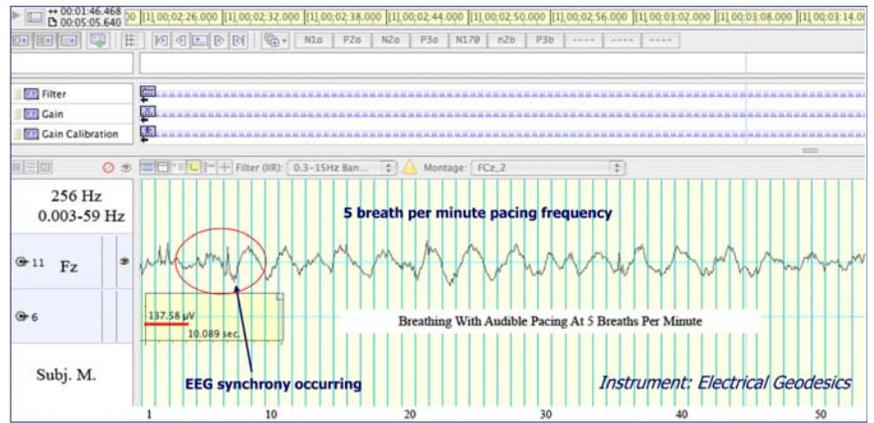


Figure 1: Wideband EEG while breathing with Coherence Clock generating huge waves at ~.17 Hz. Wave activity correlates with Valsalva Wave activity at the earlobe. (Presented at ISNR 2013).

“Theta training is a form of accelerated meditation -- and the benefits to its users are incalculable. They range from better physical functioning, to improved emotional balance, to sharpened intellect, to true creativity -- to the solution of “insoluble” problems in unpredictable ways, coming into mind as from another dimension.” (Beyond Biofeedback, Elmer and Alyce Green, 1977).

An interesting back story (which I hesitate to tell, but it is relevant) is this: As a Member, Scientific Staff of [Bell Northern Research](#) and recently promoted Director of R&D (circa 1987), BNR sent me through a lengthy management development program at the Center For Creative Leadership in Greensboro, N.C., part of a comprehensive management training program that also involved intelligence testing and psychological makeup. These aspects of the evaluation were performed by Dan Chartier, PhD., his office located not far from Bell Northern Research offices in Research Triangle Park, N.C. An intern was working for Dr. Chartier, and she facilitated the administration of IQ testing, psych makeup, and the recording and assessment of my EEG, Chartier being a relatively early adopter of EEG in his psychology practice. Anyway, when it came to my EEG, which should have taken 30 minutes, the intern was flustered, I could hear her speaking to herself...This went on for another hour or so before she called Dr. Chartier in to help figure out what she was doing wrong. Dan checked everything and as it turned out, she wasn't doing anything wrong, my brainwave pattern was simply “upside down”, opposite of what is typical. Now it is fair to say that at this point I'd been practicing breathing, yoga, and martial arts on and off for a good while, which is where the conversation inevitably went. (Note that this was during my period of spontaneous Kundalini arousal which started in 1985 and would go on for a decade.) Regardless, it sparked my interest.

A decade later I am in my home office, now in Texas, in seated meditation using a Minder Labs Abhyamudra 2. Over the course of months I learned how to elicit an EEG pattern that demonstrated the “upside down” pattern: reduced beta, increased alpha, increased theta, and increased delta amplitudes, (the pattern that I later found out [Anna Wise](#) referred to as the *Awakened Mind* pattern). Mind you, I was involved in a number of other practices and receiving acupuncture on a regular basis. I got to the point where I could realize the pattern reliably with eyes closed. I also determined that my breathing was the crucial factor, without breathing with depth and rhythmicity, I could not realize the pattern at all. About 2000, I met Dee Edmonson, RN, and EEG professional, who introduced me to HRV biofeedback – allowing me to perfect my breathing. But even when I did, the Awakened Mind pattern would come and go – there was still something I was missing..?



Circa 2003, the quest led me to San Francisco where I spent a day hanging around Union Square with a good friend, who I'd met at Esalen in 2000, and the next day I headed north across the Golden Gate *Bridge* to Anna Wise's office. It was in her chair that I discovered the missing link – *the bridges*, of which I eventually concluded there are 12, comprising 6 general anatomical zones, i.e. *The Six Bridges*. In-session, which consisted of 2 rounds of 45 minutes with tea in between, Anna didn't tell me what to do. She knew of my interest and that I was there to validate some things for myself. She simply observed the Mind Mirror and told me when the Awakened Mind pattern was present and not present. By the time I left her office, I could turn it on and off at will, more or less instantly.

When the session ended, we again had tea and I related to her what I had been doing “internally” in-session. She acknowledged but said little more. Anna passed away in 2010. I said nothing more about Awakened Mind until 2014.

After visiting Anna in 2003, I later validated “the protocol” and incorporated the understanding into the Coherent Breathing system as we described in *The New Science Of Breath* (Elliott, Edmonson, RN, BCIAC-EEG, 2005), the necessary factors being:

1. Posture: Specifically Man United With Heaven & Earth (Warrior)
2. Breathing: Resonant “Coherent” Breathing.
3. Stillness: Other than breathing, we don't move a muscle, and don't blink an eye.
4. Relaxation: Specifically the conscious relaxation of *bridges* - letting it all go.

For me, these simultaneous factors elicited the Awakened Mind brainwave pattern – reliably. They are also very consistent with the fundamentals of Eastern meditative method as I understand and practice it.

I have said and continue to say that if one employs these factors simultaneously, “meditation” automatically occurs – where one need know nothing more about the subject. This can be done without electricity as it has been in ancient times. This being said, “profundity” benefits from precision, and in these modern times, precision benefits from practice with biofeedback.

I attended two week long workshops with Anna Wise at Esalen prior to visiting her office in 2003, the first in 2000 and the second in 2002, if I recall correctly. One of Anna's favorite nouns was “profundity”, where she clearly used this to describe the general aim of meditation – to have a *profound* experience, and that the aim of meditation is to learn how to live a *profound* life, one that is filled with deep experience, insight, and meaning. The definition of profundity is: *to have deep insight or great depth of knowledge and experience.*

My readers have heard me speak of placing the body/mind in “neutral” many times, where the mind is active but “thought” stops, no internal dialogue, no rumination – *no thought*. If we persist in this state, the illusory boundary between the body and the cosmos disappears and with it a clear and present perception of unity is experienced.

I am in agreement with Elmer and Alyce Green and cannot improve on their articulation of the benefits accrued from practice.

Stephen Elliott, President, COHERENCE

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