



Breathing—It Fills More Than Just Your Lungs

by Becky Maginn

Recently I was reminded that there is more than one definition of *inspiration*.

With a deadline approaching, I was looking for a fresh slant for a piece I was writing, but no aha moments were coming. I had hoped for an epiphany on my chilly fall-colored morning walk. Later, while checking the day's news, I'd kept my mind open to any angles that might be relevant. I had continued to think on the subject while washing dishes and standing in line at the store.

After a while, giving up momentarily on productivity, I picked up a monthly home and garden magazine whose issues tend to languish under my coffee table in their plastic wrappers until they're practically out of date. Unfortunately, I think of these as luxury leisure reading and tend to save them as a reward I rarely feel I've earned. I had barely gotten through the table of contents when I had an idea for my article, and I believe the key to this phenomenon was simply my stepping back from what was preoccupying my mind and taking a moment just for me. I took a breath.

That's when I remembered that other definition, "the act of drawing in, specifically, the drawing of air into the lungs." For the first time I saw a direct connection between the stirring of the mind I usually associate with the word *inspiration* and a simple breath (not even a gasp of awe or that fancy breathing of meditation required here).

I have heard repeatedly from those sage philosophers also known as flight attendants that I should not attempt to help others with their oxygen masks before securing my own. Apparently, though, I still forget just how vital it is to put myself first at times, to keep the balance in a busy life.

Taking a breath may be especially valuable now, amid all the holiday goings-on. Turns out it also makes good business sense.