



Hello all,

Welcome to Coherent Breathing®, Volume 2, Issue 12, November 2023, ***In Memory Of Dee Edmonson, RN, BCIAC-EEG (1942-2023)***. Many of you may have seen my recent note regarding the passing of dear friend and colleague Dolores Soriano Edmonson. Dee's funeral was held via Zoom on Saturday, November 18th. I was to speak, but when the time came, I could not get a word out edgewise. My apologies...

I consider Dee's and my meeting to have been destiny. We exchanged *gifts* that unlocked our respective aspirations. She gave me the gift of seeing my heart rate plotted in time (where previously I'd only listened), and I gave her the gift of Coherent Breathing which had already been fine tuned to elicit the EEG of the meditative mind. Dee's integration of neurofeedback, RSA biofeedback, and Coherent Breathing, was the basis for the clinical evidence as documented in ***The New Science Of Breath*** and later ***Coherent Breathing - The Definitive Method***.

We met circa 2003, when I was seeking a neurofeedback practitioner that could provide EEG protocol for ADHD. This was for our 13-year-old son, who I was attempting to rescue from hurtling down the path prescribed by the medical industrial complex which involved higher and higher doses of methamphetamine, loss of appetite, sleepless nights, a horror story in the making...

This was at the time that I was wrapping up my own personal EEG-centric investigation into a protocol for reliably eliciting the Awakened Mind EEG pattern. (Awakened Mind is a registered trademark owned by Judith Pennington.) So, I was pretty committed to the power and potency of EEG training. My instrumentation and protocol at this time was EEG, grounding, galvanic skin response, listening to my heart rate beat with amplification, and of course resonant breathing. I had been at this for a couple of years and had produced the initial recordings for the RESPIRE-1 CD and was carrying them with me all the time on my iPod.

My son and I arrived at Dee's office where we were greeted warmly and invited to have some water and rest comfortably for a few minutes while I completed the necessary intake paperwork. After a bit, my son and I were invited into the treatment room, where Dee guided him to sit in a chair and "hook up" to a HeartMath FreezeFramer instrument. He did and being a computer gamer and a "coherent breather", he caught on right away and scored 100% coherence within minutes. Dee rewarded him with a shiny new quarter and asked him how he felt, having done this for 10 minutes or so. He replied with a veiled, "Pretty good, I guess." From there, she moved him to the EEG chair, a Lazy Boy style chair that allows one to relax completely, as she proceeded to place EEG electrodes on his scalp and temperature and electro-dermal response (EDR) sensors on his fingers.

I asked, "Can I try it?" referring to FreezeFramer. Dee said, "Sure. I was going to invite you." So, I sat down, hooked up, and began breathing "coherently". My RSA was on the order of 30 beats of difference and the coherence score went straight to 100%. I could easily see the "phase lock" between the inhalation and exhalation phases of my breathing and the corresponding rise and fall of my heart rate, which I'd heard before but never plotted in time. I asked, "Where do I get one of these instruments?" She said, "I carry them for interested clientele." That day, I took home a HeartMath FreezeFramer instrument and began studying both the HRV phenomenon and the HeartMath protocol. Now that I could see my "HRV", I was keenly interested in learning more about heart rate and breathing, and more about what FreezeFramer was measuring.

Upon our 2nd visit the following week, I explained to Dee what it was I was up to, regarding my quest to find a reliable protocol for eliciting the Awakened Mind EEG, and that I had discovered that resonant breathing is central to it. I asserted, "Resonant breathing is also what makes FreezeFramer tick." She said, "No, breathing is not part of the HeartMath protocol. It is about emotional regulation." To which I said, "It is measuring respiratory



Dee Edmonson, RN, BCIAC-EEG



sinus arrhythmia (RSA), and responds to the same breathing I am developing to elicit Awakened Mind.” She said, “Then let’s put it to the test. You leave a CD with me and let me try it. I will also try it with some of my clientele, with their permission, of course.” And she did...not just using FreezeFramer as a “warm up” for EEG but applying it along with EEG and other biometrics – simultaneously. Her results were nothing short of astounding.

So astounding that she said, “My great friend and colleague Dr. Elsa Baehr of Neuroquest (to whom Dee introduced me) *must* see this!” Dr. Baehr did have a look, and continued to employ Coherent Breathing with RSA biofeedback, along with neurofeedback for over a decade thereafter and asked me to train all of her clinicians. What both Dee and Elsa saw, is the same thing that I saw, resonant breathing, when combined with relaxation and stillness, results in a reduction in high beta and the gradual emergence of the EEG of the meditative mind, a certain left and right symmetry of functional brainwave frequencies/bands.

Clients emerge from the session with, in Dee’s words: “a strange sense of internal calm and quiet”. After this, Dee, Elsa, and I were in constant contact regarding client experiences, protocol, etc. Generalizing, the three of us had been searching for the same thing, a protocol that would reliably reduce stress and anxiety and elicit the advantageous EEG of the meditative mind. To this end, I added RSA biofeedback to my developing “Coherent Breathing protocol”, and Dee and Elsa added RSA biofeedback with Coherent Breathing, ala Respire-1, to their clinical neurofeedback protocols. My son was Dee’s first client to experience the new combination for the prescribed 40 sessions.

What Dee and Elsa discovered is that when we have a client breathe, such that their RSA amplitude gradually increases, their internal state becomes much more plastic - they are able to achieve EEG goals much sooner, for example, lowering high beta and increasing alpha and theta. As RSA amplitude increases via breathing, neuroplasticity increases, and EEG progress hastens. But why?

During the 2005-2008 period, Dee and I presented findings at numerous annual meetings of ISNR and AAPB, which is how Coherent Breathing came to be known amongst the psycho-physiology community. Her emphasis was always about the success of her clients in overcoming obstacles and going on to live large happy lives. She was so excited about the efficacy of this “augmented” protocol, specifically, it’s power to make clients feel empowered, capable of walking out the door free of fear and full of confidence. Of course, the protocol was employed in combination with Dee’s many years of personal coaching expertise including emotional management, nutrition, rest, etc.

This was the initial period of clinical application of Coherent Breathing in combination with simultaneous neurofeedback and RSA training. One afternoon, circa 2007, Elsa called me to say, “Steve, I just saw something that I have to tell you about.” Please do... “When a client was already instrumented with EEG, I turned on Vocal Instructive Sequence, and when the client took the first breath, I saw alpha amplitude rise instantly.” She went on, “I want to ask you why this would happen? How can the single first deep breath make alpha amplitude increase?” I knew that Dee had seen the same thing many times. My reply, was that it had to be the “Valsalva Wave” washing through the brain. (Later Tato Sokhadze, Ph.D., of the University Of Louisville, School of Medicine, and I would prove this to be true.)

Dee and I were both instrument geeks, her background being cardiac catheterization and soon thereafter, neuro-metrics, under the tutelage of E. Roy John at NYU. My entire career had been in the field of electronics, where I’d had a tremendous amount of hands-on electronic instrumentation experience, and am still actively involved in ongoing investigations of the human electrical system. And of course, I was in pursuit of the protocol for eliciting the Awakened Mind, where not by the same nomenclature, Dee was in pursuit of the same fundamental goal with her clientele, helping them resolve their impediments and “empowering” them to live to the fullest. There are countless examples of impediments overcome, health crises averted, glowing grades in school, wins in sports, career aspirations exceeded, family problems resolved....many thousands of client/sessions over the years. Dee and I remained close friends and colleagues for 20 years, sometimes speaking frequently, sometimes not, but as with good friends we never felt separated by space or time. Dee’s pride and joy was her family, her siblings, her sons, her grandchildren. She touched countless lives, including my own.

Stephen Elliott, President, COHERENCE LLC

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