



BREEMA: Presence and Fulfillment in Daily Life

by David Pratt,
ATH Co-Editor of Meditation

Note from David Pratt: *Breema is an art that is dear to my heart because it helps bring harmony into every area of my life. When I work with this art's principles, even something as simple as picking a turnip can be a source of nourishment and balance and reminds me that I am not separate from all of Existence.*

I was in a friend's garden and had just picked two white turnips. As I stood up, I noticed how much force there was in this action, how roughly I had grabbed and snapped the second turnip, and how my mind was not with the activity of my body at all.

Right then, I decided to pick one more turnip, and this time to let myself experience this Single Moment, this Single Activity. As I bent down, my mind had already begun to wander. I saw this with No Judgment, and registered the movement of the body easing forward, and there was body-mind connection. When I placed my fingers and thumb Firmly and Gently at the turnip top, I was present with the

body, mind and feelings working together. This taste of being present continued as I turned the little root and stood up with Full Participation, easing the turnip from the earth as I rose.

There was No Force, and I had a sense of the bigger picture, as if all of Existence had picked that turnip with me. Then my mind quickly came in and began to comment on all of this, and I again lost that simple body-mind connection. Thankfully, losing that connection is nothing to get upset about. As a student of Breema: The Art of Being Present, I have many tools to help me take a step towards harmony when I remember that this is my wish.

When I first encountered Breema, I was most interested in it as a form of bodywork. Since then, the picture has gotten bigger and richer and more fulfilling. The beautiful choreography of support between giver and receiver in Breema partner bodywork was like nothing I had seen before. As an enthusiastic massage student and a meditator, I was interested in letting my work be a meditative practice. The photographs of smiling Breema practitioners kneeling on rich, oriental carpets with their relaxed recipients were very inviting and seemed to fit. As I read more about Breema,



I discovered that the emphasis during each treatment was on the practitioner. For example, as he or she leaned back stretching an arm or leg, the lean was guided by the practitioner's comfort!

In fact, Body Comfortable was one of Breema's key principles, (See bottom for list of the 9 Principles) with each one aimed at helping the practitioner to be present. What I soon discovered as I attended Breema classes and began to work with the principles, was that I could let go of all my ideas of what I thought I knew and instead bring my mind to the activity of my body. I found out that doing this could support a new sort of vitality. This was so simple, yet I also saw how much my mind could resist staying with the activity of the body. There was plenty of material to work with here, but there was also plenty of desire to keep practicing, because in the simple tastes of being present that Breema helped me experience, there was complete fulfillment.



Self-Breema exercises are another essential element of this holistic system. They are similar to the bodywork and include nurturing brushes, leans, holds and rocking movements, but these are done with your own body. I still remember the first time I really let myself fully participate in a Self-Breema exercise. It was a Saturday morning, and I was sitting on the floor in my office. I decided to do one seated Self-Breema, and as I rocked, there was such satisfaction and a sense of Unity. I can still reconnect to that moment when I experienced a renewed energy come in and knew I was present. It was as if every cell in my body had joined in the celebration of being alive. What joy!

Now going into my 12th year as a student of Breema, and an instructor myself, I also know from experience that I really can take a step to bring mind and body together in any moment. This could be when I am walking up a flight of stairs, putting on my shoes, or, of course, picking a turnip. (You could even give it a try right now by experiencing the movement of breath in and out.)

If you fall in love with Breema, like I have, you risk falling in love with life, because any moment can become an opportunity to wake up, to be present. Like me, you will probably see that much of the time you are not present. Even this can support us, because we begin to learn that we are not what we think we are. Ultimately, this art provides practical tools to help us take the desire for a more meaningful life into our day-to-day existence.

Jon Schreiber, D.C., founded the Breema Center and the Breema Clinic (both in Oakland, California) in 1980 with a core group of people who all had a similar wish for a truly holistic approach to health and life. Although Breema is now taught and practiced around the world, the original aim remains very much alive: to support true health by using the Nine Principles of Harmony and connection to the body as practical tools to cultivate the art of being present.

Breema's principles include:

- Body Comfortable
- No Extra
- Firmness and Gentleness
- Full Participation
- Mutual Support
- No Judgment
- Single Moment/Single Activity
- No Hurry/No Pause
- No Force



About the Author

David Pratt is a Licensed and seasoned Massage Therapist, Certified Breema Instructor and author of over 170 articles on wellness and the healing arts. He and his wife are the owners of True Nature Holistic Retreats, in Millersburg, Ohio. Their guests receive Yoga and Self-Breema classes,

Breema bodywork and massage therapy treatments, organic meals and the delicious medicine of nature.

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