



BREEMA: A New Relationship with Myself

by Carrie Gray

To truly support others we need to be present with them. The holistic system of Breema recognizes this relationship in every hold, every lean and brush, every movement, every breath. Breema is the art of being present, and presence is at the heart of relationship with myself, and thus with all of life.

Founded in 1980 in Oakland, California, and with instructors worldwide, the aim of Breema is to bring us to a tangible experience of presence that becomes the foundation for a new dimension of consciousness and self-understanding. Breema uses partner bodywork, self-care exercises and harmonizing principles to address a process of self-discovery through the body, and cultivate a new relationship with being present.

Breema starts by recognizing that we habitually live with mind, body and feelings involved in separate activities, with very little connection between them. By fostering a bridge between mind and body, a receptivity is created to a new experience—a taste in the body of being present. This taste is a tangible quality that the mind alone cannot produce. Taste signifies the presence of conscious energy; of a receptivity to life as it actually is. This lets me know when I am connected versus just thinking about being present. This distinction enables a profound shift and gives me direction to come out of the mind and into an experience of the moment.

Breema's Nine Principles of Harmony—Body Comfortable, No Extra, Mutual Support, No Force, Full Participation, No Hurry/No Pause, Gentleness and Firmness, No Judgment, Single Moment/Single Activity—offer practical and directional support. Each principle guides me from a one-centered ac-

tivity (mind or body only) to a three-centered activity (mind-body-feelings together), because to actualize any of these principles the mind has to become receptive to the actual experience of the body; to that which is.

As a body-based practice, Breema brings the emphasis on relationship with myself into the context of interaction with another person. With the anchor of bodywork sequences, I practice working with the principles, becoming familiar with taste. I learn by experience that Body Comfortable within myself can have a profound effect not only on me but on another person as well. Breema also works with No Judgment. When I see I have judgment, my direction is to not try to change but just to see.

As I connect with body's weight and breath and become present, I have an opportunity to accept what I see. This translates to my partner as well. Body is manifesting however it is, and my aim is to simply be with that. Mutual Support naturally enters as I trust another person to support my weight, or recognize their body as a reminder to help me stay with my own experience. Here, giving and receiving take place simultaneously. This aim of being present with myself while in interaction with another is a rich source of learning and exchange.

The principles readily translate into support for everyday life. The other day, I was talking with a family member about a sensitive family issue. As I felt myself starting to react, I remembered to connect with the weight of my body standing. I took a breath. I saw I had a choice, and instead of arguing I decided to simply listen and to stay with body breathing. After a few minutes, I was able to look into what he said and ask myself if

there was something useful in that exchange. How could I benefit? As I spoke, I heard my own words and the principle of Firmness and Gentleness was alive. Our interaction had a completely different quality, and afterwards I was grateful for the deeper level of receptivity and communication I had experienced.

With Breema bodywork and Self-Breema exercises, I learn to become more unified and balanced. As my relationship to myself grows, I learn how to benefit from my activities instead of being drained by them. I naturally gain energy as I let go of unnecessary tension and unneeded reactions. I cultivate an inner harmony that can relate to everything around me as a form of mutual support. This is the foundation for sustainable relationship; the fruitful posture of being a student of life.

As my relationship to the actuality of this body deepens, my ability to disidentify with what I see and think also increases. I can have experiences of knowing that are free from the concepts of "me" and "mine," and that differ profoundly from my ideas about myself and life. In brief moments, I may recognize that I am not simply this mind or this body or this personality. By connecting with that which is, by tasting life and my own existence, I am building a new essential relationship—with myself.



Carrie Gray is a certified Breema instructor and practitioner and has written articles about Breema for Shift magazine and Share Guide. For more information about Breema classes, workshops, and practitioners in Southern California and the Southwest, see www.breema.com — or call (510) 428-0937.