

RECLAIM YOUR LIFE

An introduction to
Sophrology



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HOW DO YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW?

It can be difficult to put words on how we feel inside.

We may sense an unease but can't pinpoint what's wrong.

Some people say they feel tired all the time. Others that they are on an emotional roller-coaster.

Some people find it hard to focus. Others are unable to imagine a brighter future...

These are just some examples of how stress manifests.

Nobody's immune to stress.

Some people worry a lot about their health and that of their loved ones, others feel anxious about their financial situation...

How we react to stress varies greatly from one person to another.
Stress is a highly subjective experience.

It can show up in **physical ways** such as muscular tension (often chronic), unexplained aches and pains...

It can play havoc with **our emotions** and complicate our relationships: we become impatient, get angry...We can become depressed, withdrawn and lose interest in the world.

Stress can make us **prisoners of our minds**: we become anxious, prone to worry and fear.



We have **trouble sleeping**.

What's more: the events of 2020 have shown us that there is no way to run away from stress.

Even when we are mindful of our way of living, things happen. We all have felt the impact of social distancing, curfews, lockdowns.

It is now even more obvious that we each need to take responsibility for our physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

While a little stress can push us to get things done, chronic stress can wear us down and make us feel sick, mentally and physically.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

Some people think: "talk therapy, medication"...others "yoga, exercise", and some may just want to soothe their stress away with alcohol or drugs...

What if I told you there's another way

- A way to find relief immediately.
- A way that harnesses the natural healing energies of your body?
- A way that offers you life-long tools that give you a deep sense of wellbeing, helps develop your inner resources and gives you the energy, clarity and confidence to create a beautiful and meaningful life.

This way is Sophrology (AKA Dynamic Relaxation).

Let me tell you more about it.

Chapter 2 IT STARTS IN THE BODY

These days we live more and more in our heads, stuck in our thoughts ...

And we have so many thoughts! 60,000 thoughts per day according to studies—and 90% of these are repetitive!

We think about the past : stuff that happened, things we could have done or said differently.

We worry about the future, the bills to pay...the state of the world...

Our minds can get stuck in a loop of overthinking that doesn't make us feel good. Our constant mental activity wake us up at night and prevent us from enjoying restful sleep.

Living in one's head is exhausting!

As long as our attention is focused on our mind, we cannot fully enjoy life.

This happens because we are disconnected from our body.

So let's get back in touch with our body. Let me show you with this simple exercise. Do it with me.

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW FOR THE VIDEO



The exercise creates sensations in your body that relax you. For a short moment you have forgotten your problems. You have created a space in your inner being . You're back in touch with your body and you feel its aliveness.

This is a tiny taste of the power of Sophrology (also known as Dynamic Relaxation).

Chapter 3 THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Your mind affects your body and your body affects your mind.



Imagine you are doing your shopping, focusing on what you need and suddenly you hear a very loud alarm. Your body immediately reacts: your heart starts racing, you breathe faster and your entire body becomes tense and ready to take action. This is called the “flight-flight or freeze reaction”.

Stress is actually a natural way our body helps us avoid danger and stay alive.

But in our modern world, it seems that many of us live in a more or less constant “fight or flight”. It’s not necessarily that we are dealing with big stressors but rather an accumulation of small stressors.

Whatever the nature of our stress, as long as our bodies perceive there is “danger”, it will stay in the fight-or-flight mode and this will -in the long term-have an impact on our wellbeing.

Too much ongoing stress can wear us down. We are more likely to get sick and feel irritable or depressed. We may develop emotional symptoms or unexplained aches and pains that don’t seem to go away, such as :

- Anxiety
- Back pain, headaches
- Stiff neck or jaw
- Upset stomach
- Fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Weight gain or loss
- Poor sleep

On the other hand, our body has a direct impact on our emotional and mental wellbeing.

Constant pain makes people become depressed, anxious. (Ref: Harvard Health Publishing)

Even the way we hold ourselves can make us feel confident or sad.

Check out Amy Cuddy's 2012 Ted Talk about this fascinating subject:

[CLICK Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are.](#)

It's easy to understand that our mind and body are constantly influencing each other.

Dynamic Relaxation offers a holistic approach to wellness: it works on all the dimensions of our Being.

Relaxation is key to dealing with stress and helping us return to a state of calm, both physically, emotionally and mentally.

Breathing and Mindful Movement

Sophrology (aka Dynamic Relaxation) uses both breathing and gentle movement to train the nervous system to move out of the "fight, flight, or freeze" response associated with stress into the "rest and digest" response—increasing our overall well-being.

1. Breath is the essence of life.

Most of us go through our day breathing in a shallow way or even holding our breath ...Yes, holding our breath!

For example, do you hold your breath when you are trying to put a key in a door?
Do you hold your breath when you are trying to listen to a noise?
Do you hold your breath when trying to remember something?
We hold our breath a lot

Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts.
Whenever your mind becomes scattered, use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again.

Thich Nhat Hahn

more than we think.

Sophrology teaches us to breathe deeply in a way that allows our body to relax.

Breath awareness brings us back to the present moment; it helps us get out of our thinking minds back into our body.

2. Mindful movement to release, relax and restore our energy.



Another great way to reconnect our mind and our body is to use gentle mindful movement. These exercises are one of the pillars of Sophrology.

We learn to pay attention to our bodily sensations, our position in space and our gut feelings and intuition.

Using movement is a great way to relieve anxiety; to gently ease our emotions out of our body so we don't "store" them.

With regular practice, these exercises help us become aware of where we're holding tension in the body, release it and restore a sense of aliveness.

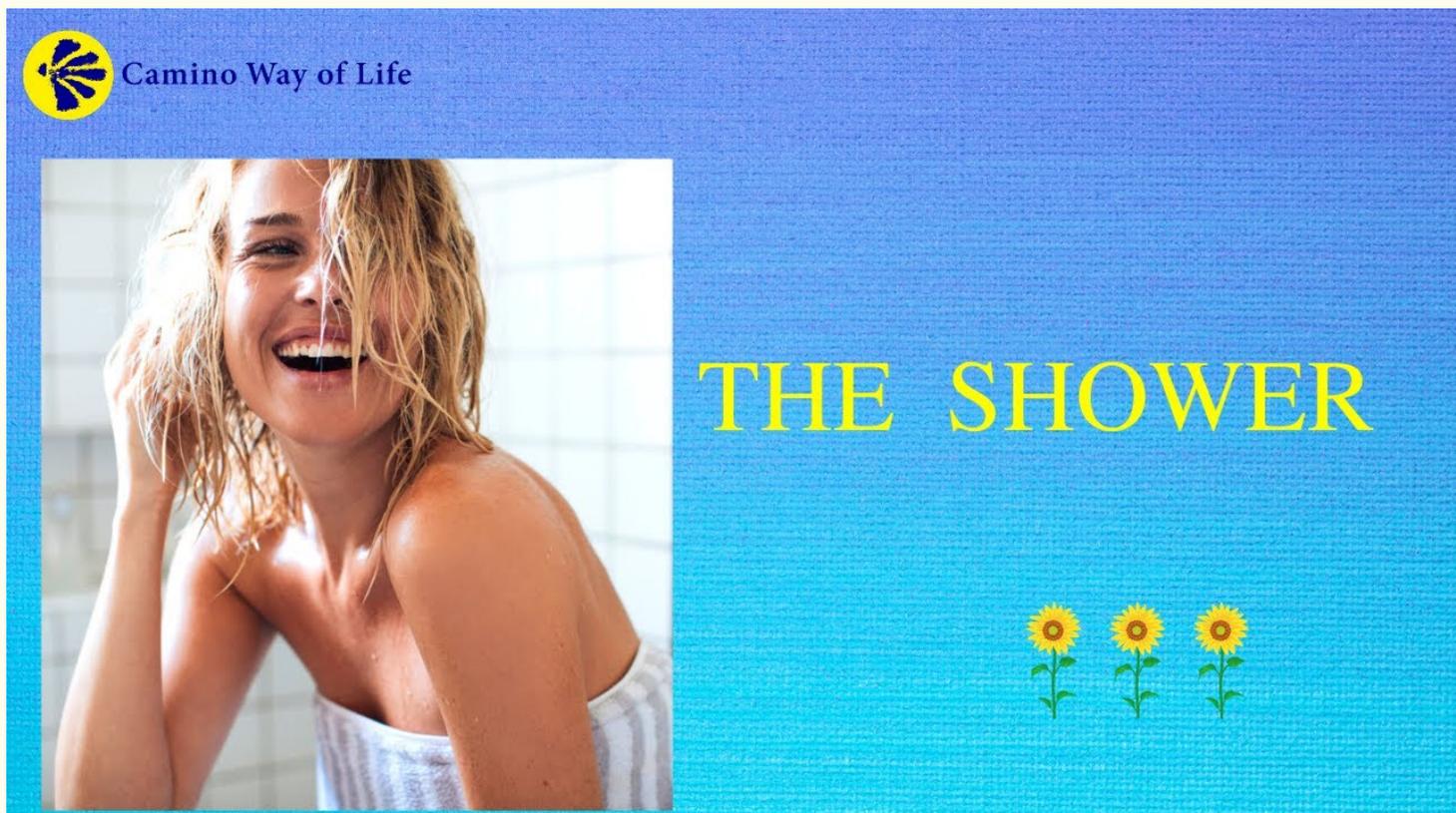
Mindful Movement brings us - naturally - into the Present Moment.

3. Sophrology uses guided imagery

Have you ever read a story to a little kid? It's quite fascinating to see how they react. They identify easily with the characters. They feel strong emotions; they laugh, they cry, they feel scared or find courage along with the heroes of the story.

Guided visualization is not that different. Let me tell you a story...

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW FOR THE VIDEO



How do you feel? More calm, relaxed?

Less in your mind, more in touch with the sensations in your body?

This is a simple example of a guided visualization....

Evoking well chosen images can have a powerful impact on how you feel...but it goes even further..

Research shows that the brain doesn't know the difference between something imaginary and something real.

In a guided visualization you live the stories ..feel all the sensations and emotions as if they were really happening.

Guided Visualization allows you to tap into your inner resources, change your perspective, overcome what's blocking you and deal positively with the challenges of life.

In a Guided Visualization you imagine yourself overcoming your problems, handling stress in a calm and controlled way of reaching a certain goal you set for yourself.. You create the conditions for a positive change.



This can make a huge difference next time you go to the dentist's.. In fact in any situation that generates fear, doubt or anxiety.

You can harness the power of Guided Visualization to boost your confidence, your self-esteem, release your stress, your anxiety and to mentally rehearse & prepare yourself for stressful events, control your impulses , find more energy, and live a happy and creative life.

Chapter 4 THE WISDOM OF THE BODY

We live in a world that values mental logic over intuition.

There's nothing wrong with logic. It keeps us safe, and it allows us to make "intelligent" choices.

The problem is that we, humans, are also wired to worry. The choices we make -out of pure thinking- are not necessarily the best.

There is another form of "knowing" which is intuition and we -human beings- function at our best when we use both our brains and the wisdom of our body.

Our mind and body are not separate. The brain is entwined with the whole body through the nervous system. They are constantly influencing one another, reacting to one another.

*There is a voice that
doesn't use words.*

Rumi

1. What is intuition?

It's that hunch, that "gut feeling", that moment when you have a feeling "something doesn't feel quite right". It's not a logical reaction ; it cannot be explained by fact or thought.

It's an awareness . Only we, on an individual level, can ascribe meaning to our intuition. It comes through our body.

Jung defined intuition as "**perception via the unconscious.**"

We all have that capacity to access that intuitive part of ourselves.

But how do we access it and how can we use this wisdom of the body?

The first thing you need to do is to take some time and remember the situations in your life where you had a hunch, a gut feeling that you acted upon or not.

The last time your "inner voice" told you something, did you listen to it? Did you cast it away because it made no logical sense ?

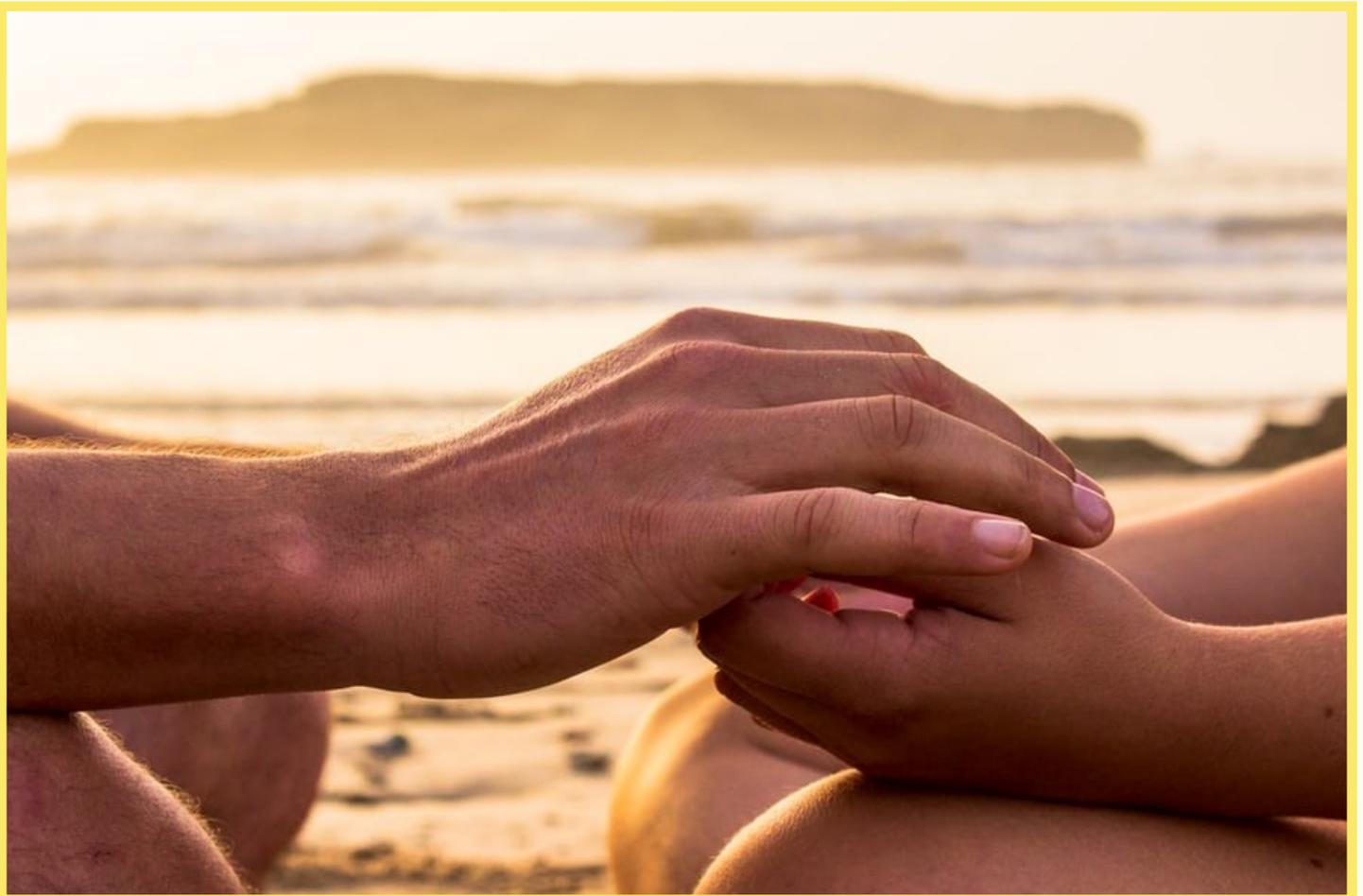
One of the most effective ways to get in touch with our intuition is to slow down our “monkey mind”.

Meditation, going for a walk, especially in nature, gentle movement and breathing exercises...are all good examples of how we can quiet our mind, stay relaxed. This create opportunities for your inner wisdom to surface and be heard.

With Dynamic Relaxation, we also learn to pay attention to our bodily sensations... We learn to pay attention to body responses to information, people and situations.

2. Making decisions are a whole mind-body being. An embodied person.

What are the physical sensations that you feel in your body when you're considering a decision ?



When you have a decision to make, ask yourself what your are feeling right now as you are thinking about it : do you feel a tightness in the chest?

Does thinking about this problem make you feel tired?

Can you feel that your body is saying YES or NO?

Is it a feeling of expansion or contraction?

Chapter 5

COMING HOME TO THE BODY: EMBODIED LIVING

Sophrology is a mind-body approach to healing that works on the 3 levels of Being at the same time: mind+body+spirit.

While traditional “talk therapy” focuses on the analysis of thoughts, emotions and behaviors, Sophrology incorporates the same aspects but integrates the body.

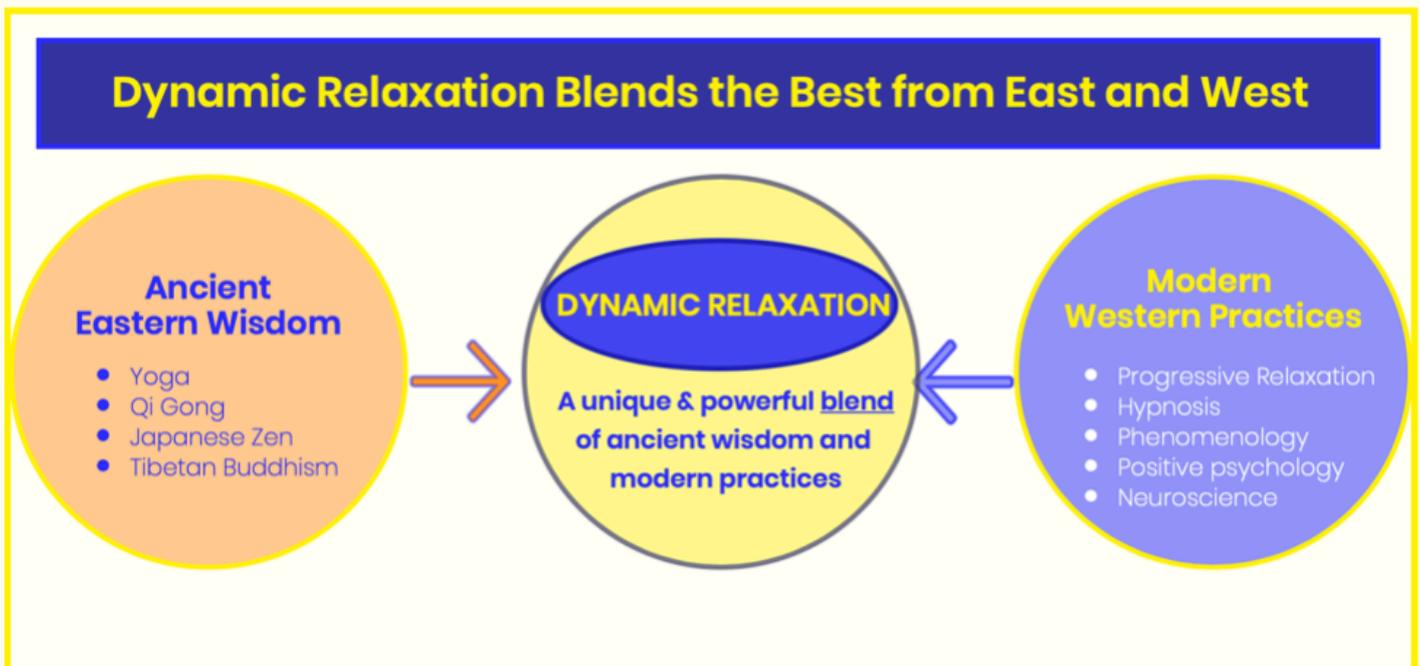
Our bodies, which store our emotions, memories and sensations are the gateway to a more conscious life.



**The powerful practice of Sophrology
rewires your nervous system.**

Sophrology (aka Dynamic Relaxation) exercises:

- help you deeply relax,
- connect you to the sensations in your body, to your inner world,
- deepen your consciousness and capacity to deal with the challenges of life.



Sophrology is a unique & powerful blend of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Practices that help you:

- Harmonize your mind, body and spirit.
- Realize you have everything within you to grow.
- Trust yourself -and life- more and more.
- Live a conscious and harmonious life.

Sophrology takes you on a path of Embodiment.

- You learn to feel safe and at home in your body.
- You are grounded in the present moment and feel at peace.
- You welcome all of your emotions even if they are not comfortable.
- You stay focused on what really matters even in the midst of chaos.
- You hear the whispers of your soul.

Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.

Matsuo Basho

Chapter 6 EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

We are not robots. Feelings and emotions are what make us human.

As a drama teacher, I used to tell my students that our emotions are beautiful. We certainly should not judge ourselves for experiencing them. They are in fact the number one reason why people go to the theatre and to the movies : they love seeing actors going through the motions of emotions!

Emotions play an important part in our interactions with other human beings: they help us understand others and to be understood.

Yet many of us are disconnected from our emotions—especially strong emotions such as anger, sadness, fear—often because we’ve been taught to keep them to ourselves and not to express them publicly.



They were often not tolerated in our homes: the one place where we should have felt safe enough to express them.

Strong emotions are not welcome in social environments: our schools, our work place...

We’ve learned to be embarrassed by our emotions.

As a result we try to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

While we can try to numb our emotions , we can't eliminate them. Unless we learn how to process them, they stay "inside".

Actually bottling up our emotions endangers our health and well-being.

What do we do when we feel overwhelmed with our emotions?

Let's take anger for example.

It's not always easy to express anger. We are often criticized or judged for expressing anger. Yet, if we feel angry there's a valid reason for it.

It could be because we feel:

- Disrespected or treated unfairly
- Frightened, or attacked
- Powerless or hopeless..

It could also be because we're under too much stress and can't handle it, feel hungry or simply that we need to sleep.

We can learn to be comfortable with our emotions, to be in tune with them.



When we are experiencing a “big emotion” it’s very important to give ourselves some space to understand what’s happening.

First we need to know how to identify it, validate it, understand why we are experiencing it and what its message is.

Once again, this brings us back to the mind- body connection.

Body awareness, breath awareness, emotional awareness are the tools we use to bring ourselves back to a feeling of calm and develop emotional intelligence.

If we have something important to say, if we want our message to be fully heard, we need to be calm. It isn’t always easy but it can be learned.

Sophrology is a great way to find our inner calm and develop the emotional intelligence that helps us be better communicators.

As we learn to do this for ourselves, we also develop our capacity to understand the feelings of other people: we learn to put ourselves in other people ’s shoes. We become more empathic, an important skill to diffuse conflict.

When we are able to express our emotions without being controlled by them, we are practicing self-care. We are being loving towards ourselves and allowing real connection to take place.

It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

Epictetus

Chapter 7

CREATIVITY. CAPACITY TO LEARN AND MEMORIZE

Move yourself into flow.



Our “western” way of living is bad for our brain.

We spend long hours in front of screens...at work and at home.
We’re constantly bombarded with notifications, alerts, messages.
And I’m not even talking about what we eat and the lack of good healthy nutrients needed to help our brains function better.

This is all very stressful and exhausting, It can even cause “brain fog”: our mind becoming as blank as our screens.

Dynamic Relaxation movements offer a great and simple way to spark our CREATIVITY, increase our ability to FOCUS and enhance our capacity to MEMORIZE.

Research shows how moving one's body promotes brain plasticity by stimulating growth of new connections between cells in many important cortical areas of the brain.

Dynamic Relaxation offers simple, easy-to do exercises that you can do anywhere and anytime: they help to both relax and energize you and, stimulate cognitive functions, such as **MEMORY, CONCENTRATION** and **IMAGINATION**.

With regular practice of just a few simple, mindful movements, you literally move yourself into a state of flow.

CHAPTER 8

SOPHROLOGY : A WAY TO LIVE

Sophrology (practiced widely in France) is a mind-body training program that helps you develop a sense of profound wellbeing and serenity.

It offers a powerful set of tools grounded in Ancient wisdom and the latest findings of neuroscience.

It weaves together in unique and easy to learn- way:

- breathing exercises,
- gentle mindful movement,
- awareness,
- posture,
- guided visualisation and meditation.

With a regular practice of Sophrology, you get to better understand who you are, you learn to love and accept yourself and stay calm and focused as you deal with the challenges of life.

You fall in love with the beauty and mystery of life. Life becomes an amazing adventure.

As you deepen your practice you naturally gain a sense of confidence in yourself : You know you have "what it takes" (ie the inner resources) to achieve your goals. You're not scared of asking for help when you need it, of learning new skills.

YOU FEEL CONFIDENT AND TRUST LIFE



Confidence is the most important key to living a happy life.

As you deepen your practice you naturally feel more at home in your body, more harmonious in your thoughts and feelings. Your sleep becomes restful.

You develop a sense of BALANCE.

When you have confidence, you can do anything..

Sloane Stevens

As you deepen your practice you naturally feel a **sense of HOPE.**

You are not scared of life and its challenges...you know that nothing is set in stone...**your inner guide is there to support you and help you FLOURISH.**

So: if you feeling stressed, worried, tired all the time,

if you have trouble sleeping, focusing, memorizing,

if you want to find more confidence, clarity,

If you want to choose the way you respond to...

If you want to develop better relationships

If you want to reconnect with your intuition, your joie-de-vivre

If you want to feel joyfully alive and trust

Join me and discover how the power of Sophrology can help you!

BOOK a FREE introductory session (30 min)

contact me at:

kateforrester123@gmail.com

Chapter 9

My Story

My passion is to help people love and accept themselves.

I haven't always loved and appreciated myself.

In fact, I spent a huge chunk of my life plagued with stress and worry. My ex gambled all our money away: stress is something I know intimately.

It wasn't until I was well into my 40s and working as a drama teacher in Paris that I found the courage to say: **ENOUGH** and to change my life.

I owe a lot to my students...

Actors can be very vulnerable and so I was always eager to find the best stress-management techniques to help them overcome their fear of being on stage, of being judged by others...

I also wanted to help them be authentic, daring in their creativity, access and express the strong and deep emotions of their character and also be able to release the emotions once they got back home.

I wanted them to feel confident.

I experimented with and wove together many exercises that used:

- Breathing
- Posture
- Movement
- Body Awareness
- Emotional Intelligence

We had a lot of fun! We also got great results but the icing on the cake was when my students told me how this work helped them in their personal lives.

And I thought...

"If it works for them, it could work for me."

It changed my life.

Some students mentioned there was a similarity between what I was teaching and a popular "French" mind-body practice widely used in Europe known as Sophrology.

I decided to learn more about it.

I went back to school and became a Certified Sophrologist.

I also trained in Hypnotherapy, Laughter Yoga and NLP.

My Commitment

Today I help people suffering from the stresses of modern life, anxiety and worry, burn-out, lack of confidence, poor sleep...

I help them deeply relax and regain a sense of vitality and confidence in themselves and their capacity to deal positively with the challenges of life.

I also help people who want to boost their creativity and unlock their full potential to create a life they love.

I use the tools of Sophrology combined with the other healing modalities I have trained in to create a tailored program that fits in their particular schedule and way of life.

If you feel that Sophrology can help you ameliorate your life and achieve your goals, book a free 20-30 min session so we can discuss your needs.

You can also find out what some of my clients have said about working with me on :

<https://www.caminowayoflife.com/dynamicrelaxation>

Don't wait until you are totally exhausted and feeling depressed.

Start feeling good NOW!

Chapter 10

Sophrology and The Camino Way of Life

The Camino de Santiago is an ancient pilgrimage on routes from across Europe that converge on the ancient city of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, North West Spain.

For more than a thousand years, millions of people have walked to visit the ancient shrine to St James- Santiago.

I was living in Paris, France when on a beautiful morning in September 2014, I woke up and felt inspired to do 2 things :

- Walk one of the Camino de Santiago routes
- Study Sophrology

I walked my first Camino in 2015. I met my husband thanks to the Camino de Santiago.

You can read our beautiful story [here](#).

In many ways the Camino de Santiago is a path of awakening.

It leads us to become aware of our body.

As we journey on the route, shielded from the "noise of the world", we discover how very little we actually need to feel happy.

We also discover the joy of sharing a little bit of the route, or a meal with other pilgrims. We share common humanity and that fills our hearts with joy.

As we walk we also -naturally- find that "stuff" comes from deep within to our conscious awareness and is given a chance to be processed.

There is not much that a true Camino cannot heal. 30 days of walking, simple living, connection to nature and feeling the love and support of our fellow pilgrims changes our perception of life.

I went through huge emotional healing on my Camino. Memories of things I didn't know I had forgotten came to be "held" and acknowledged. It was hugely liberating.

After that my life became centred on that simple and powerful joy of living - my "joie de vivre".

This path of awakening is also one that we are invited to take in the work of Sophrology.

Once we start living truly connected to our body, our breath, we embark on a magnificent journey of self discovery.

As we deepen this understanding of who we are, we also are able to establish true connections with our fellow human beings.

Life takes on another meaning.

Ultreia!

