

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Becca Pike

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What's up my friends? I have a very special guest. This is the owner and founder of the Academy of Breath. This is Ava Johanna and I chatting about breathwork, why it matters, how you can incorporate it into your business, into your entrepreneurial life, what's going to do for your creativity, what it's going to do for your energy, and what it's going to do for your business. This is episode number 104. I'm your host, Becca Pike, and it is time for your weekly dose of Hell Yes Coaching. Let's go.

Hey, guys. I'm Becca Pike and welcome to *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast, the number one show for entrepreneurs looking to create their first six-figure year. If you've got the drive and you know how to hustle but you're not sure where to channel your energy, we've got the answers. Let's dive into today's show.

Becca Pike: Hello, Ava, how are you?

Ava Johanna: I'm so good. I feel like I've just been having a super vibey morning. I've been listening to a Coachella playlist because I'm going to Coachella, super spontaneous decision to go to Coachella and a couple of weeks. I've been like preparing myself. I just forget sometimes how good it is to dance around your house naked to a bomb playlist.

Becca: Have you been to Coachella?

Ava: Yeah, but it's been like six years. So in a minute, and I'm really excited to go back and also like a little nervous because the last time I went, I think I was like 23/22 years old. So.

Becca: Yeah, yeah.

Ava: Totally new woman.

Becca: I know. I've started going back to music festivals in my early 20s. Then I had kids, and I did the whole mom thing. I just went back to a music festival. It was a conservative music festival, to be honest. It was pretty chill and pretty calm. Going back as a 34 year old who has had four kids, I was on a totally different place. I was like oh, I really want to go to bed at 10

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

when the headliner hasn't even started. My world has changed when it comes to music festivals, but I'm a music festie at heart, for sure.

Ava: Oh, yeah, I've been going to music festivals since I was like 16 years old. Far earlier than I should have been, but music has always been something that has just been ingrained in my DNA. So I've just loved being able to dance around for three days straight and then regret all of my decisions for a week after that.

Becca: Yeah, there is something about music festival land that if you don't know. If you guys haven't been to a good music festival, when I go you unplug, right? So I don't ever have anything on my phone. I don't have text. I go straight to airplane mode for three or four days. That is part of the vibe. There's usually some psychedelics involved, but also sunshine and the people. The people at music festivals. I mean it is just such a welcoming tribe of humans.

I don't know if they're welcoming outside of the music festival, but during those three to four days that you're there, it's like everyone has remembered how to live as village people and create community. It's just such an open air of personalities at music festivals. It's like my favorite place.

Ava: Yeah, same. I'm excited. It'll be a fun couple of weeks.

Becca: Yeah, for sure. Okay, well I am super excited to have you on today. Would you just take a moment and introduce yourself and explain to my audience what you do and who you are?

Ava: Yeah, absolutely. Well, my name is Ava. I am the founder of the Academy of Breath, which is a 12 week breathwork and meditation certification program. Since its inception in 2020, we created an advanced practitioner training as well as a like go at your own pace personal practice course really with the mission of getting breathwork and meditation into every single household across this entire planet and making it really accessible and really digestible.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

So I always say that we're really honoring the lineage of these practices while modernizing them in a way that allows for people that maybe aren't in spiritual communities or don't necessarily frequent the yoga studio or haven't done a trip to India to learn these practices can utilize these tools that are fundamentally changing our nervous system, changing our brain, changing our identity, changing how we perceive the world, and how we perceive our relationships. Which is just so necessary and such a birthright for every single human being, especially high achievers that don't know how to turn off.

So I created the company back in 2020. I also do business coaching and course creation in the realm of sales, launching, and branding. Those are kind of my two passions and directions that I have taken my business over the past six years.

Becca: Yeah, I love that. I do want to get to talk to you about business. But let's start with the breathwork. So my audience is very aware of how much I talk about health. I mean I'm a big advocate for health equals wealth. The more that our bodies are functioning on a higher level, the more creative we are, the more that we don't put up with the bullshit in business, the more ideas that we have, the more just willing we are to put ourselves out there. So health is top notch.

Now, tell me, and I'm interested too. So my husband is very much into breath work. He does the whole Wim Hof thing. I know that there's different types of breathwork. What type of breath work do you focus on, and why?

Ava: Yeah, so there are so many different types of breathwork. Which is really cool because I think that sometimes when we hear the term breath work, our mind instantly goes to one place, whether it's Wim Hof or Holotropic breath or transformational breath that are going to be more intense practices.

For me, what I'm really interested in is everyday breathwork practices. So inside of my breathwork school, we teach eight different techniques that range from more calming, gentle practices that activate the

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

parasympathetic nervous system to more activating practices that are going to activate the sympathetic nervous system. Which, for me, utilizing those practices is really a way that we can become more familiar with our stress so that when we're in the outside world and we start to experience stress or anxiety, we know how to talk ourselves off of the ledge.

So I think that there's so much value to exploring the entire spectrum of breathwork practices because our bodies are different every single day. What we need on a daily basis changes. So, for me, utilizing like an entire toolbox of breath work is actually more effective and more realistic for working with the nervous system and working with the overall health of our body.

Because on some days, if we are experiencing a fire that we have to put out in our business, we don't want to be doing activating practices like Wim Hof, that are going to perpetuate the stress response in our body. Vice versa if we have a day when we're like I don't even want to get out of friggins bed right now. Utilizing an activating practice can help us to bring more energy into the body quite literally, and get up and go do the things that we know we want to do.

So I work with that entire range of practices. To me, like I said, it just is more realistic to what the human body means on a day to day basis versus only just pasting on one breathwork practice and only doing that one thing.

Becca: Could you riff on why breathwork works? What is happening inside of the body? Is there anything from our evolution that we look back, and we realize this is where breath work began. This is how we used to utilize the breath, and we have lost that. Can you just riff on that for a minute?

Ava: Oh, yeah, absolutely. So thank you for giving me the space to do so. So breathwork practices originally stemmed from the Indus Valley civilization, which is Pakistan and North India. Over the years, they were passed through different cultures and different countries and have taken on many different forms.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

What science and geography and what is the, archaeology I guess, the studying of the bones. Outside of that and even like earlier history, we can see different size skulls that also are in correlation with our diets changing. Before in hunter gatherer ages, we would eat harder foods and raw foods, right. Then as we transition into a more modern world, we started eating softer foods like breads and oatmeals and just softer things that we don't actually really need to use our jaw as much.

So what looking at the human skull over time has shown us is that our heads used to be a lot bigger and a lot wider. Over time, they've gotten smaller and smaller and smaller and more and more narrower. Because of that the nasal passages have slightly shifted. Which is really interesting, because we are organically naturally supposed to only breathe in and out of our nose.

But now we see people walking around. You go to the gym, and you see people breathing in and out of their mouth, only breathing in and out of their mouth and causing an entire slew of health issues because of it. So what we as a society need to get back to is learning how to breathe in and out of the nose because breathing in and out of the nose is the way to breathe.

Our noses have this incredible nerve system that connects to the brain that tells the brain how cold and dry or hot and humid the air is outside that we're taking in so that our bodies can actually humidify the breath and therefore deliver more oxygen to the lungs into the bloodstream just based off of breathing in and out of our nose. Our mouths can't do that.

So it's really fascinating to me how as our society has become more and more stressed out, we've forgotten how to breathe. That's something that is so simple. Yet, so many people, like I said, are walking around just breathing in and out of their mouth. I mean my dad stayed with me for 10 days, and that was all he did. I just kept looking at him being like, "Dad, shut your mouth. Breathe through your frickin nose. You're causing so many more health problems than necessary."

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

So that's kind of been like the timeline of breath and society and our nutritional patterns. It's just really fascinating to me how we can see all these different correlations and how the breath has always been a through line in all of it.

Becca: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I read the book by James Nestor, *Breathe*, it fucked me up. It messed me up. For weeks, I was taping my mouth shut at night. I ended up getting Invisalign because of that book, because I wanted to open up my palate so that my tongue could fit in my mouth. Because, like you said, we have evolved to have thinner faces and thinner jaws. We're supposed to have big, wide faces, big, wide mouths.

Our tongue is supposed to lay flat within our teeth and have enough room. Because we are eating these soft foods, and our teeth are getting crooked. Crooked teeth was never a problem to any of our ancestors, but it comes from not chewing and not like building those jaw muscles, like you said.

So when he, in that book, was talking about how our crooked teeth and our narrow palate leave no room for our tongue to be able to properly breathe, I was like oh my gosh, that is exactly what's happening inside my mouth. So I got Invisalign. I opened up my palate. My breathing has gotten better. I don't breathe with my mouth open at night anymore. That's probably a combination of the braces and the mouth taping and all of that.

But it is so fascinating to me. I've watched my husband, this one is the one that's most fascinating. So he's studied a little bit of breath work. But one time, he was super hungover. We had gone out drinking the night before, and he was sick as a dog. He did five minutes of breath work, and the hangover was gone. I mean he filled his body so hard with oxygen that it detoxed. It detoxed the liquor out. It just burned to the liquor off through this avenue of breathwork.

I mean, that is mind blowing that we have a tool in our pocket that we aren't accessing all of the time. That we aren't using, and that our ancestors did use, and we have forgotten about it. Just wild.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

Ava: Yeah. I mean it's crazy too because it's not reserved for anybody, right? It's like there's certain aspects of wellness that, yeah, are reserved to people that have more money and more accessibility and the ability to go different places and experience different things. But the reality is, if you're living, you're breathing. Even if your breath right now isn't in an optimal state, or you suffer from breathing problems, or sleep apnea, or a deviated septum, or whatever it might be, you can still teach yourself how to breathe in a way that can completely alter your entire health and wellness.

Becca: It's tied. Poor breathing habits are tied to things that you would never think of. So one that got me really interested was I was learning about how if you're a mouth breather at night, you are much more likely to have to get up and pee in the middle of the night. Do you know the science behind that or why that is?

I can't remember off the top of my head. It was something about the humidifying of the breath and then your body dehydrating. It's like sending cues to your brain that you have to go to the bathroom. When you start mouth taping, you will have to go to the bathroom less during the middle of the night. I thought that was just mind blowing.

Ava: Yeah, so when we're breathing only in and out of our mouth, the breath is so much more shallow. We're not utilizing the entire capacity of the lungs. We have three lobes of the lung. When you're breathing in through your mouth, even if it feels like you're able to take a deep breath, you really can't take as deep of a breath as you could if you were breathing in and out of your nose.

What happens is we have all of these, again, nerve fibers that sit at the top of our chest. When we're breathing in through our mouth, we're really kind of just chest breathing. So these nerve fibers that sit at the top of your chest are connected to your sympathetic nervous system, which is that stress response. It's fight or flight. Versus when we breathe all the way down into our lower abdomen, we have nerve fibers at the bottom of the diaphragm that are connected to our parasympathetic nervous system, which is our rest and digest.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

So when we're only breathing in and out of the mouth, we're not taking in as much oxygen. Because we're not taking in as much oxygen, we're not getting as much oxygen to the brain and to our vital organs and to our blood cells. So it just yes the peeing piece, but also everything from inflammation in the body, which causes disease long term, to clarity of the mind, brain fog, bad breath, gum disease. It's wild.

The health implications of breathing in and out of your mouth is so beyond what you can expect. When you really look at the science and see the research behind the difference between breathing in and out of the mouth versus the nose, there's no way you cannot do anything in your power to stop breathing in and out of the mouth once you find out.

Becca: Yeah, absolutely. I remember, like I said, I read that book. It was my first introduction to mouth breathing is bad. I just didn't know. It was my first introduction. I was like well, that's a wrap. Never breathing out of my mouth again. I'm done. How can I breathe through my nose while I talk? That's what. I need to just breathe through my nose at all times while I'm eating, while I'm talking, while I'm sleeping.

Yeah, it's interesting. I am in physical therapy right now for pelvic floor issues. I don't know what I was expecting. But when I went in, they checked my pelvic floor. Like they did an actual internal exam. I was not expecting that I felt like somebody should have prepped me when I got in there. They were like, "Okay, put this gown on." I was like what? Am I at the gynecologist?

No, but they did a pelvic floor exam. Then all of my PT exercises for pelvic floor are all breathwork exercises. I was not expecting that. I thought that that was really awesome that we have taken a turn as a society to understand how important breathwork is. But all the exercises were a combination of like me lying on my side, doing very deep breaths, me in child's pose, doing very deep breaths.

The whole goal is to expand the ribcage and to strengthen the diaphragm because my diaphragm has weakened so much from probably years of

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

mouth breathing and shallow breathing that a lot of my pelvic floor issues are going to be healed just through building up my diaphragm and learning how to breathe through my stomach again and not my chest.

Ava: That's really cool.

Becca: It is so cool. I loved it. Let me ask you this. What is your day to day look like with breath work? I mean is this something that you're implementing every day, twice a day? Is it something you do in the morning? How long does it take?

Ava: Yeah, so it really depends on a day to day basis exactly like how long I'm breathing for and what the practice looks like. On certain days when I go to the gym and then jump into meetings, I might not sit down for a full practice. But I'm with my breath, and I'm conscious about my breath throughout the entire day.

So even as we're talking right now, and I'm listening to you, I'm focused on my breath. I'm focused on feeling the breath in through the nose, my belly expanding, my rib cage expanding, my chest expanding. So it's a very conscious part of just my everyday life at this point. Because I want to make sure that even if I don't have the time, so to speak, to sit down and do 20/30 minutes in the morning that I'm still nourishing my body throughout the day and being proactive with how I'm just breathing in the moments where I'm living my life as well too.

So I think for a lot of people, especially people that are busy telling you, hey go do a 25/30 minute practice every day. You're like well, I've got a million other things to do. I've got kids. I've got responsibilities. I've got my whole business to run. I don't have the time for that. While I do believe we have at least five to 10 minutes every single day to sit down and be with ourselves, I also want to, again, make this work accessible and make it something that is just a conscious part of your everyday lived experience.

So for anybody that's listening, I think like as simple as in between meetings taking a moment to put a hand on your heart, a hand on your belly, taking three deep breaths and checking in with yourself and making

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

sure that you're at least breathing in through the nose, out through the nose for those three deep breaths is such an easy place to start. It really does make a difference.

I mean if anyone listening right now literally just takes a moment to inhale and exhale. Just that single breath, I swear, makes the most subtle difference. But outside of that my daily practice is right now, honestly, doing really gentle, calming practices like box breath, where I'm inhaling for a five count, holding at the top for five, exhaling for five, holding at the bottom for five and doing about five to 10 minutes of that before sitting in meditation.

Because my life is stressful. I have a lot going on. While I love the more activating practices like Wim Hof, I know that where my nervous system is right now, that would actually do more harm for me and send me into even more stress in the body and in the nervous system than I really need to at this point.

Becca: Yeah, so a lot of my listeners are very type A personalities like myself. We have a hard time letting go and relaxing. Is that the breath work you would have us do like for beginners is a box breath of five, five, five?

Ava: Yeah, absolutely five, five, five, five or four, four, four, four. So inhale for four, hold at the top for four, exhale for four, hold at the bottom for four. So essentially, it's just like making a box, right? We also call it equal ratio breathing. In Sanskrit it's Sama vritti pranayama. This practice is used by Navy SEALs. It's used and like one of the most highly researched practices. In five minutes alone, research has shown us that it activates your parasympathetic response, which is that rest and digest or our stay and play.

You mentioned this earlier around like health being the way and the through line to our creativity, to better boundaries, to being able to hold all of the success. So when we bring ourselves these moments of activating the parasympathetic response, or that stay and play response, we're actually opening up the part of our brain that is creative, that is intuitive,

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

that is able to think rationally, that is able to think analytically, that is able to think in a linear way.

So it's just like, for me, such a no brainer for entrepreneurs to bring that simple practice in. Because what science has also shown us is that if you are chronically stressed, over time, the frontal lobe of your brain actually shuts down. That's wild because that is where creativity, intuition, analytical thinking, decision making, cognitive thought all live. We need that.

Becca: Yeah, absolutely. I was reading somewhere. I thought that this was absolutely fascinating. At the very start of me explaining this, it's gonna seem very obvious, but when you really think about it, it is so wild. The reading was saying that every single muscle that we have in our body releases certain messengers into our thyroids, to our pituitary to release hormones, right.

But we can't release the messengers from our muscles without contracting them. So this is why exercise leads to lowering depression, lowering brain fog, lowering all the stuff because we're actually contracting the muscles that are releasing the messengers. Each muscle is a different type of pharmacy. This is what is crazy to me.

So like your quad muscles and your glute muscles, these are some of the biggest muscles in your body. They release a different messenger than say the muscles in your face. So the muscles in your face when you smile, that releases a different pharmacy of messengers than when you're squatting down. It's telling your body how you're feeling, telling your body what it needs, telling your body like what prescription to have.

So, to me, it only makes sense that for so many people with our shallow breathing, our diaphragm isn't being contracted properly. We're missing out on so many messengers that only come from the diaphragm being contracted, and the vagus nerve being stimulated. So to me, it just all makes so much sense.

Ava: Yeah, that's awesome. I don't know if you follow any of Joe Dispenza's work, he talks about cerebrospinal fluid. Cerebrospinal fluid, it

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

lives in the spine, and it's what keeps the spine buoyant. When you're doing certain breathwork practices, there are different locks that you can engage in. This is more advanced, but I think it's fascinating and has to do with this conversation.

So in pranayama practice, which is our yogic breath work, we utilize what we call bandhas, which are energetic locks that exist in the body. From a spiritual perspective, it's to move energy and working with our chakra system be able to move energy throughout the different areas of the chakra system.

Then from a physical standpoint, from our physiology, the bandhas, one of them is a pelvic floor lock. So maybe you even got this when you were doing your pelvic floor exam, where you're squeezing in and up, like the same muscles that you would use to stop yourself from peeing. Almost as if you're like squeezing the cervix in and up. When you're doing that, it starts to push cerebrospinal fluid up the spine so that it's actually circulating more frequently through the body.

I think that when you're not focusing on it or when you're not doing these exercises, I think it's maybe like once a day that the cerebrospinal fluid actually goes up and down and makes a full lap from like the base of the spine all the way up to the brain.

What Joe Dispenza talks about, though, is that when we move that cerebrospinal fluid from the base of the spine all the way up into the head, it has this like salty mixture that is more magnetic. It strengthens your electromagnetic field so that the creative ideas that you have and like working with the quantum field and quantum physics, which could be a whole other podcast and conversation. It actually makes you a more magnetic attractor because of the activation of electrons in the brain and the activation of the pineal gland.

So it's just so amazing. Yeah, it's epic. So also when you're doing your pelvic floor exercises, think about things that you want to call in and

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

manifest because all that cerebrospinal fluid is making its way up towards the brain.

Becca: Oh, my gosh, I love it. I wonder how many of my listeners didn't do Kegels while you were saying that? Zero percent. Zero percent did not do Kegels.

Ava: I was doing them.

Becca: Yeah. As you were talking. I was like push that cerebral spinal fluid right up to the top. Sounds great. Oh, that's awesome. So that you've made a business out of this. You created a certification, yeah? It's going very well. Is that correct?

Ava: Yeah. I mean at the beginning of 2020, I really was like, right before the pandemic, praying for a way to just make a bigger impact and do something that felt like I was in my own lane, doing my thing, and just something that no one else could do. At the time, I was living in LA. I was teaching in different yoga studios. I taught with Alo Yoga. I taught with Bandier. I had meditation and breathwork classes in Manhattan Beach.

I mean I was driving all around the city, and I absolutely fucking hated it because I was constantly stuck in traffic. As a yoga teacher and as a breathwork teacher and as a meditation teacher, you really don't want to show up to class pissed off. Not really the vibe that I wanted to be in.

So I had kind of made the decision, you know what? I'm going to go all in on my coaching. I'm going to take my work online. I don't want to do things in person anymore. I don't want to be making \$25 a class or \$30 a class for the amount of time and effort and experience I have coming into these studios.

Which if anyone has worked at a yoga studio, or is a fitness professional and does group classes, you know that most places do not pay that well. So I just was over it. I was like I want to make a lot of money. I want to make a big impact. I don't also want to be bound by a studio schedule every single week. I want to do my own thing.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

I had been hearing over and over again from people and also noticing that no one was really teaching breathwork in the way that I was doing it. Again, there were the Wim Hof people. There were the people that were doing like the two part breath that's more of like a big trauma release.

I'm not sure if you've ever been to one of those classes before or seen any videos or pictures of it. But it's like people screaming and crying and like maniacally laughing. There's a time and a place for that. But, again, I'm about accessibility. Most people would look at that and be like wait a second, what is going on?

Like, it's so funny because I see Instagram ads for it constantly. Some of the people are like, "What is this cult?" I'm like oh gosh. I love that breathwork. It's fun to go into it and do those types of practices. But, again, modernizing this tool that is inside of all of us, we've got to do it in a more accessible way. So that's really where I was seeing the opportunity of bringing breathwork to the world in a bigger way and knowing that I couldn't be the one to do it on my own.

I remember Gabby Bernstein was like my initiation, as most white women, into the spiritual realm. I remember seeing her Spirit Junkie masterclass, and how she was creating these life coaches. She had said, "I have a really big mission, but I can't teach it alone. That's why I created my coaching program." So I remembered that and realized that I was meant to create a breathwork certification and a meditation certification.

So I started working on it in like April 2020. Our first round was June 1st of 2020, which was right after the George Floyd murders, and obviously, in the midst of the pandemic. I really had no idea how many people were going to sign up because at that point breathwork wasn't as big as it is now. Even though it's only been three years, it wasn't anywhere near as big as it is now.

I was like well, it'd be cool if like, I don't know, 13 people signed up for it. We had 64 people the first round and 60 people several months later. Since then we've certified over 500 students across eight cohorts. So it's

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

been not only an insanely successful program, but it's also been the most gratifying container that I've ever created because of the ripple effect that it's having, not only on the teachers that are going through it but their students, their family members, their community. I mean, we've certified 500 people, but I know that we've most likely impacted tens of thousands of people because of these practices.

Becca: That's amazing. Good job, Ava. I didn't even know that. I love hearing that backstory. That's phenomenal. So when you started coaching, did you come right out of the gate with a certification? Or were you doing one on one for a while? How'd that go?

Ava: Yeah, I was doing one to one coaching for an entire year before I launched the certification. So I launched my coaching in January of 2019. I did an entire year of one to one. I think there was one time that I tried to launch a group, and it totally flopped. I was like I'm never doing group again. Then I started working with a mentor in December of 2019, like January 2020.

She was like, "You know what? I see you doing group." I'm like, I don't know. I have launch PTSD from the last time that I tried to run a group. She's like, "I don't know dude. You're going to be running a group this year. I just see it for you." Of course AoB, I launched a business coaching program, Catalyst, and I healed my launch PTSD. I had seven people in that group, but then AoB was 64 people. I was like oh shit, I love doing group experiences. This is amazing. Now group is actually the only thing that I do at this point.

Becca: How were you marketing AoB in the very beginning?

Ava: So I have my podcast, which you just came on. For anybody listening definitely go listen to it, *The Alchemized Life*, which I started in 2018. The podcast initially started as just an interview format. In 2018, I started adding in more solo episodes, sharing more of my story, my experiences, a lot of like the behind the scenes of entrepreneurship.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

At the same time was building a following on Instagram from I think 2016/2017 is when I started my Instagram page. It was called Kicking Asana. I know amazing.

Becca: That's funny.

Ava: I grew a pretty substantial following of like 20 to 25,000. So when I launched my business coaching program in 2019, I filled my roster of clients literally within two weeks because people had just been following me for so long. So by the time I went around to launching AoB, I had been teaching breathwork, meditation, doing business coaching, had an online presence on Instagram and through the podcast for really like two, two and a half years at that point, that people just knew me for breathwork. They knew me for meditation. They knew me for coaching.

It just took off from there. So it was honestly a shock. Like, I remember once we hit 50 people in that first launch, my ex and I, at the time, were like oh my God. Another person signed up. Oh my God, another person signed up. We were blown away. We had no idea that it was going to get the response that it did. But people were just excited, and people really needed it.

Becca: But also, I want my audience to hear that you didn't just start an Academy of Breath, and people just started launching into it. You built an audience for years before. You put the work in for years before. You had momentum that was going, and you just released a very quality Academy while also having lots of followers. I don't want anyone to hear this and be like, "Oh my gosh. I want to just start something, and I expect it to sell to 60 people in its first round." Ava has built a huge following before and has worked her butt off for years before.

Ava: Yeah, I mean 2020 was really, and I think a lot of it has to do with, of course, having the rapport of building a following for years, creating a quality product. Also, more and more people seeking connection via the online space. So I definitely, I recognize that piece of it.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

But from 2017 to 2020, I was working my ass off. I had no idea what I was doing. It was so challenging for me. There were so many moments when I was like you know what? I should just go back and get a corporate desk job because this is too hard. It's testing me. I was just so fresh in the business owner game. But I was still showing up every single day. I was still putting myself out there.

I mean I was in LA. It was competitive as fuck. I was getting rejected. I mean I had a class at a really notable studio that was a weekly recurring class. I would show up to class, and they'd cancel it like once or twice a month and just say, "Oh, there's a bigger influencer coming in to teach a class." I would just get like pushed aside. So I dealt with rejection for years before, and still deal with rejection every single month. I still deal with rejection. But I really dealt with it for years before this incredible program came into my sphere.

Becca: Yeah, I love your story. That is so fun. Okay, so let me ask you this to wrap it up. Do you have any advice you would like to give my audience for number one breathwork? Like beginner, have never stepped foot into the breath work world. Where would they begin? What does that look like for them? Or like is there something they can read, something they can understand again? But number two, what advice would you give to business owners? Maybe these mesh together and maybe they don't

Ava: Yeah, absolutely. So I'm going to plug a program because it's coming out again. We have our sixth module. It's just a six week program called Breathwork. It's really meant for personal practice. I don't think there's a single video that's over 15 minutes long. So you can literally do it in between meetings. It's going to be an anchor point for entrepreneurs or anyone else to start to incorporate breathwork into your life.

The through line of the course is to really utilize it to not only reduce your stress and anxiety, but to bring these practices into your life in a way that helps you change your identity and change your beliefs and become more aware of the different patterns that are happening in your life to be more

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

proactive in co creating a reality that really is framed by your desires and your wants and your needs.

So it's such a powerful program, and it's under \$200. Again, the videos are so short and so simple that there's just no excuse as to why you can't bring breathwork into your life. So I definitely think if anybody has been loving this conversation, go get that program.

But like I mentioned earlier, the moments of just checking in with yourself and being with your breath are so simple and so easy to incorporate into your everyday experience. It doesn't have to be anything fancy or complicated.

So for those of you that are super busy, that are high achievers, that have these massive, beautiful businesses that you're growing, even just putting aside five minutes a day to do that equal ratio or that box breath that I talked about is going to be so helpful for your nervous system so that you can continue to expand your capacity to hold more. Whether that more be more money, more success, more love, more clients. So the nervous system works, please, please, please. 2023 is the year of prioritizing nervous system work. That's all that I'll say.

Becca: I love it. That is fantastic. I agree. That is what is happening for me in 2023. Just checking back in. I think that I have been just go, go, going. Not only with the business, but with the kids and with life and all of the things that I feel like in the last six months, I've had a big wakeup call of just okay Becca. Come back home. Take a breath, relax. Let's anchor it in and get back to ourselves. So I'm really glad that you said that because that is actually the journey that I am on.

Ava: Good. Yeah, I mean it's so crazy because we're both in a mastermind together. So we get to see like the inner workings of really successful women and entrepreneur's minds. I just see so often like tailspins of people spinning out and getting so stuck in their head or feeling really anxious. I see this with my clients as well too.

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

The power of nervous system work isn't just to nourish your body. It also really helps with your emotional intelligence. It helps with your mindset. So I just think that it can't just be like a nice to have. It has to be a non-negotiable, especially if you want to do big things with your life.

Becca: Yeah, that's how I feel about weightlifting. Like whenever I see people spiraling out, I'm always like man, if they would just go to the gym and like lift some weights and put on some music, they would feel so good. You're probably like man, if they would just box breathe a little bit, they would feel so much better.

Ava: All of it. All of it. I've been doing a lot more weightlifting over these past three months. I actually just like looked at it before and after from middle of February to now, and I'm like I'm so proud of myself. But it's so true. Like I literally just posted on my Instagram stories that when you take care of your mind and you take care of your body, like the mental stuff, the emotional stuff, it doesn't weigh you down in the way that it would.

Becca: It's not hard. If you have someone, and I don't even say someone, this is me. Whenever I am out of shape, and I'm not taking care of my body, and I get a stressor put onto me versus when I'm in really good shape and I'm taking care of my body, the exact same stressor can be put on me. They feel totally different. Totally different.

Like when I am in shape and taking care of my body, a very intense stressor doesn't feel very intense. Whereas when I'm out of shape, when I'm not taking care of my body, a small stressor can feel very intense. To me, I don't know. It's insurance. I work out so that when the stressors do come, I hope that they don't come. But when the big stressors do come, how do I handle it? Am I going to be thankful that I put in the work before?

Ava: Yes. 100%. Resiliency is really what it is.

Becca: Yeah, exactly. Okay, thank you so much for coming on. Can you please tell my audience where they can find you?

Ep #104: Breathwork and Business with Ava Johanna

Ava: Yeah, absolutely. So for all things breathwork, follow @AcademyofBreath or go to AcademyofBreath.org. Our next round of our certification is in June, end of June. It's a 12 week program. Again, like I said, if you just want to learn breathwork for your personal practice, we have our Breathwork course, which is a six week or six module course. That you can find on AcademyofBreath.org as well. Then if you're interested in more of the business side of things, my Instagram is @IAmAvaJohanna, and my website is AvaJohanna.com.

Becca: Love it. Thank you so much Ava. Have a great day. Bye.

Hey guys, this podcast is the blood sweat and tears of a lot of different people. The planning and the preparation of each episode is extensive. My team and I are really proud to bring you this free and abundant content each week, and we hope that you're loving it. If you are, the very best thank you that we can receive from you is a review and a share.

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