

# A Review of the 20<sup>th</sup> Global Inspiration Conference

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Therapeutic breathwork, breathwork in combination with movement, voice, dance, art, visualisation and ritual – breathwork in all its dynamic manifestations forms the core of the Global Inspiration Conference (hereafter, GIC), the annual week-long gathering of the International Breathwork Foundation. This year, the conference took place in Bhimtal, northern India, and next year it will be held in the beautiful Delphi Valley in Co. Galway, Ireland.

Many psychotherapists have a store of breathing techniques in their tool-kit. Some focused breathing can help clients manage stress, ground themselves and deepen their awareness. The Global Inspiration Conference showcases a vast range of breathwork techniques, from full-on breathwork therapy such as Holotropic, Rebirthing and Transformational Breath, to techniques that can be used as adjuncts to other forms of psychotherapy. The GIC is a treasure trove for therapists of all persuasions who want to develop their existing skills, or who want to learn new techniques.

Breathwork has to be experienced, so naturally a conference devoted to breathwork is almost entirely experiential. Absent from the GIC are the neat rows of theatre-style seating, the bank of tables separating panels of experts from conference participants, and the hours of polite listening that define many other conferences. At the GIC, learning is primarily workshop-based, and the workshop agenda is set by the participants themselves.


Every morning at the general assembly, up to 20 people offer to lead workshops during the afternoon. In addition to daily group breathwork sessions, this year's offerings included: Sound and Movement, a new technique called 'Thirteen Breaths', Rites of Initiation and the Awakening of Archetypes, Holographic Breathing, a men's group, Finding Stillness in Motion, Breathwork and Self-esteem, and Breathwork and Sensuality. The dilemma for participants is choosing amongst so many diverse offerings.

Evenings are filled with keynote lectures given by leading breathworkers. Australian breathwork trainer **Alakh Analda** talked about ancient breathwork techniques rooted in the Hindu tradition. **Julie Gerland**, Chief Permanent

UN Representative for the World Organisation of Prenatal Education Associations, spoke about mystical experiences, and the role of breathwork in birth and the formation of the parent-child bond.

As a seven-day residential conference, the GIC is also a social event. Learning, experiencing, connecting and networking all flow seamlessly together in a surprisingly affordable package. Informal breathwork and bodywork sessions are offered as participants get to know each other and freely share their time and talents. Work collaborations take shape over the week, and dates made to run workshops in each other's countries.

The first GIC took place in Sweden in 1994. It has grown since and now attracts participants from over 20 countries. In 2014, it will come to Ireland, and though the line-up of speakers is still in negotiation, the lecture schedule in Mayo plans to showcase long-term studies of breathwork for the treatment of addiction, as well as the use of breathwork with cancer patients. Other speakers will focus on breathwork for psychological development, the role of transpersonal experiences in therapy, and much more.

More information about the 2014 GIC can be found at <http://www.ibfgic.com>, or by contacting the organiser Michael Blake at [breathe@ibfgic.com](mailto:breathe@ibfgic.com) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Global.Inspiration>. Information about the venue, can be found at <http://www.delphimountainresort.com>. Finally, you can read more about therapeutic breathwork in *The Healing Breath: A Journal of Breathwork, Psychology and Spirituality* at [http://catherinedowling.com/?page\\_id=58](http://catherinedowling.com/?page_id=58) 

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**Catherine Dowling** wrote *Rebirthing and Breathwork: A Powerful Technique for Personal Transformation* (2000), with articles on breathwork therapy also published in *The Healing Breath: A Journal of Breathwork, Psychology and Spirituality*. A former breathwork therapist in Dublin and past president of the International Breathwork Foundation, Catherine now lives in California. Her next book, *Getting to One: Five Keys to a Fully Lived Life*, will be published by Llewellyn Worldwide in 2014. <http://www.catherinedowling.com/blog>