

The world is breathing better thanks to a revolutionary method

After losing his voice, Yann Lambiel discovered a method which changed his breathing method, a decisive watershed moment for his career as a comedian. Zoom on “respiratory coordination”

Anyone passing through the basement of Le Cazard in Lausanne comes out transformed. In a small office equipped with a massage table and a grand piano, Robin De Haas receives students who need to learn to breathe better. His method, called “breathing coordination”, has been proven with insomniacs, singers, sportspeople, speakers or actors, such that the appointment book of the 37-year-old vocal consultant is full for a whole year.

This method is different from others commonly used in singing lessons. “It is not a case of applying the off-the-peg principles such as breathing from the stomach or singing in the ‘mask’”. This is where the paradigm changes and we think about what the individual needs. If somebody has tense shoulders, it is not useful to tell him to breathe from the stomach. It is a revolution because the focus is on the individual.

Reducing tension in numerous muscles

In summary, the method consists of reducing tension in all muscles closely or distantly linked to the diaphragm with the aim of allowing the respiratory system to function with maximum effectiveness for minimum effort. It was developed intuitively by the American Carl Stough in the 1950s, then refined by his follower, Lynn Martin. But Robin De Haas formalised it so that it could be taught to others. Since 2011, he has been training practitioners operating in Switzerland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Slovenia and Los Angeles. There are 50 in the world, including 25 in Switzerland, who will be meeting in Lausanne this weekend.

A giant with clay feet

“Breathing is like a giant with clay feet”, says Robin De Haas. “No matter what you do, the system allows us to survive, but a single small factor can limit our potential.” And Yann Lambiel has experienced this limit. After losing his voice, Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) sent the comedian to Robin De Haas. A decisive turning point for his career. “In my shows, I imitate 40 singers’ voices in less than eight minutes. Some of them, such as Renaud’s, used to make my throat hurt. I never wanted to take singing lessons as I was afraid I would no longer be able to alternate my voices. With Robin De Haas, I learnt to breathe, open my voice and make it powerful. He made me realise what I was doing wrong. Now, I am no longer out of breath, it no longer hurts and I can even sing lyrics,” the comedian enthuses. He is now preparing to celebrate his 20th anniversary of performing at the Beaulieu Theatre on 20 May and to take the stage at the Maxi-Rires Festival in Champéry three days later.

It is better to replace oxygen to decrease the heart rate

Yann Lambiel is not the only one to have made the fortunate discovery. Amandine Rapin, who was among the eight finalists of *The Voice* in 2016, heard of Robin De Haas in the press a few years earlier while she was giving music lessons in primary schools. “My voice was

getting tired. I went on the search for a good singing teacher who was not a charlatan. I started with him about two years ago and I was not disappointed. He has learnt to listen to people, he has an ear for immediately spotting what is blocking the voice,” she recounts.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Crystal Barron, a vocal coach for Brennley Brown (one of the eight finalists in “The Voice” in the United States) was so convinced that she trained with Robin De Haas to give more effective singing lessons. The method not only attracts singers but also sportspeople who are able to enhance their performance thanks to their breathing method. If the oxygen is better replaced, the heart rate decreases. Andreja Sterle Podobnik won the Everest Trail in 2016 while competing in the amateur category. She never suffers from shortness of breath in the marathons and half-marathons she takes part in since she has been taking lessons with a Slovenian practitioner trained by Robin De Haas.

A relaxed muscle expands

But how does that work? The principle of the method is to identify the movement limitations in the thoracic cavity, then to stimulate the site to make it move again. The person lies down on a massage table during the session. Robin De Haas manipulates or exerts slight pressure on the muscles of the legs, the shoulders, the neck, the chest and the thoracic cavity. The objective is to create a new reference point so that the student experiences the correct way of breathing and remembers it. “The correct movement is pleasant. When the muscle relaxes, it expands” the vocal coach emphasises.

In the second phase of the consultation, the patient works on his specific needs (singing, speaking...). Thanks to exercises given at the end of the lesson, he can rediscover the correct breathing method. “You do not come out of sessions saying that you have learnt something”, states Yann Lambiel. “The brain gradually absorbs the new information. As for me, it took me nearly a year to start to feel the difference.”

To [find out more](#) about the method, a public presentation evening will take place in the large room at Le Cazard on 12 October at 8 pm.