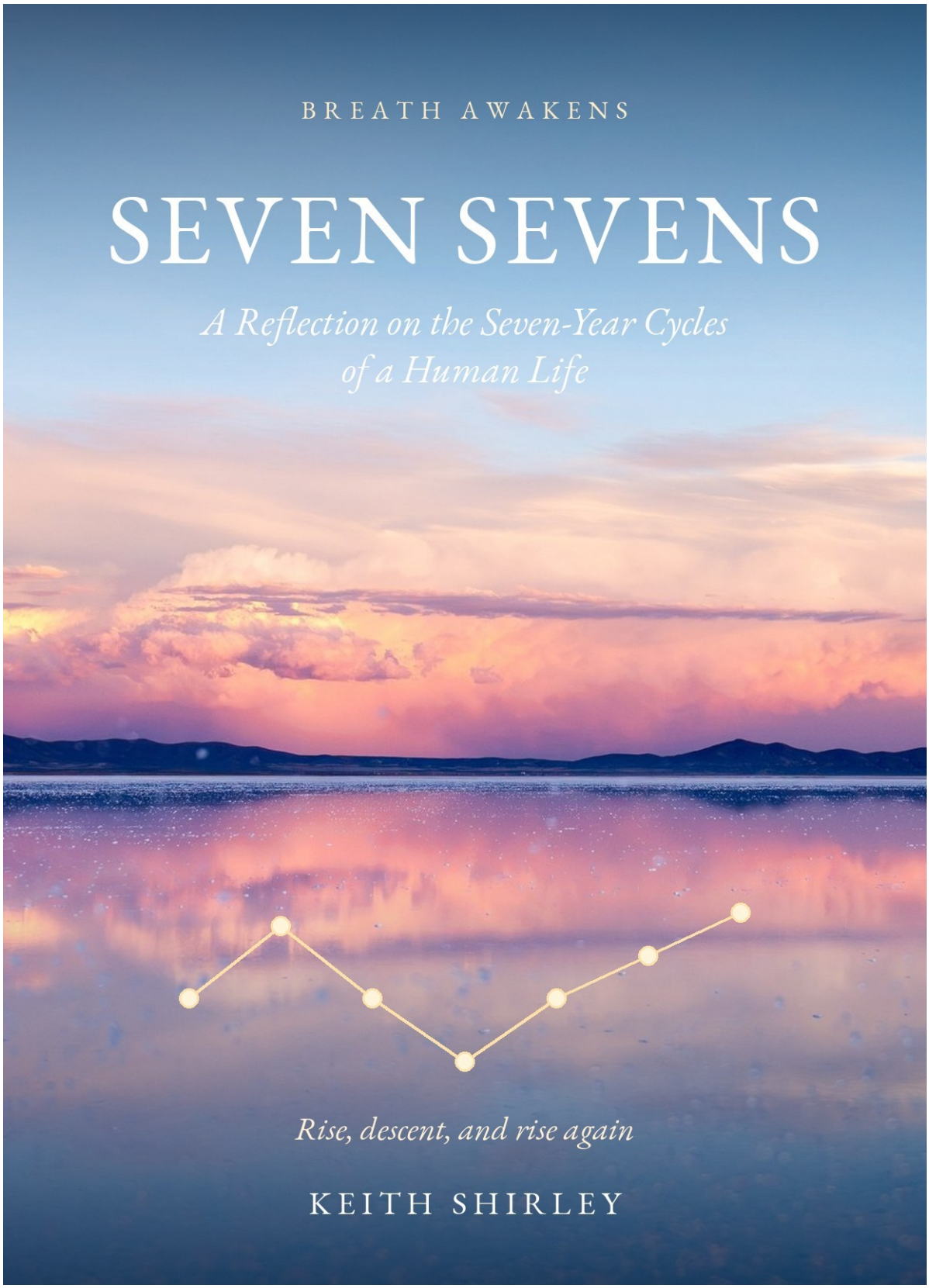

BREATH AWAKENS
SEVEN SEVENS
A Reflection on the Seven-Year Cycles of a Human Life
Rise, descent, and rise again
KEITH SHIRLEY

Seven Sevens

A Reflection on the Seven-Year Cycles of a Human Life, Read in Thirteen Breaths and Three Illuminations

Keith Shirley

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

What This Is

This is a reading of one short reflection, “The 7-Year Recursive Life Cycle”, by the Codex Reading Method: a fixed lens of thirteen breaths, two hands kept apart, and three illuminations drawn at the end. The reflection lays a human life out in steps of seven years and gives each step a phase of the breath.

The idea is very old, and it is ours in common. It is the journey of arriving in a body, forgetting, and re-membering. So the reflection is read here beside the texts that carried the same idea long before it: Solon of Athens, the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon, Leviticus, the Sayings of the Fathers, Ptolemy and Rudolf Steiner. It is read beside Chapter One of *Breath Awakens*, where the first three sevens are told from the inside. And it is read beside what measurement can and cannot say, including the teaching of Bruce Lipton on the first seven years and of Gregg Braden on cycles.

Nothing here is a timetable. It is a way of looking back over a life in order, and of meeting what is found there.

The Text, Mapped and Counted

The text. “The 7-Year Recursive Life Cycle”, a Codex reflection of 738 words. It has one opening sentence, nine entries, a summary table and a closing “insight”.

Its parts. Eight seven-year cycles from birth to fifty-six, and a ninth entry, “the Elder Spiral”, that gathers every seven from fifty-seven to eighty-four and beyond. Each entry has the same five fields: a name, a Codex phase, a focus, three “key dynamics” and a marker.

Its engine. The four phases of the Codex breath, φ_0, σ, $\sqrt{3}$ and $\varepsilon\infty$, are laid across the sevens one step at a time. Cycle 1 runs from φ_0 to σ, Cycle 2 from σ to $\sqrt{3}$, Cycle 3 from $\sqrt{3}$ to $\varepsilon\infty$, and Cycle 4 from $\varepsilon\infty$ back to φ_0. Cycles 5 to 8 repeat the four steps "at a higher octave". So the reflection does not really count in sevens. It counts in fours of seven: a full breath takes twenty-eight years, and a life holds three of them.

Its edges. The reflection starts each cycle a year later than the tradition does: 8 to 14 where Solon and *Breath Awakens* say 7 to 14. So it opens its eighth cycle at fifty. In the Hebrew count the fiftieth year is the one that begins on the forty-ninth birthday. The table below keeps the reflection's ages.

Its counts. *Breath* appears 37 times, *Codex* 30, *spiral* 22, *return* 12, *field* 10, *coherence* and its forms 8, *identity* 8, *collapse* 6, *mirror* 6. *Body* appears once, *mother* once, *wound* twice. *Love* does not appear. Nor does any woman, any source, or any date.

Cycle	Ages	The reflection	*Breath Awakens*, Chapter One	Solon's sevens
1	0–7	Breath Inception: the Formative Spiral	The Arrival. Inhalation	The first teeth grown and shed
2	8–14	Breath Differentiation: the Mirror Spiral	The Spiral of Forgetting. Containment	The first signs of maturity
3	15–21	Breath Expression: the Identity Spiral	Experience through play; the first two integrate	The limbs still growing, the beard beginning
4	22–28	Breath Collapse: the Saturn Return Spiral	The Return of the Child Spiral, age 21 and on	The peak of strength
5	29–35	Breath Re-Inception: the Sovereign Spiral	(the same open span)	Time to marry and seek children
6	36–42	Breath Mastery: the Integration Spiral	(the same open span)	The mind trained; recklessness left behind
7	43–49	Breath Expression: the Legacy Spiral	(the same open span)	Mind and tongue at their best
8	50–56	Breath Collapse: the Chiron Return Spiral		Mind and tongue at their best (Solon

Cycle	Ages	The reflection	*Breath Awakens*, Chapter One	Solon's sevens
				joins the two)
9+	57–84+	Breath Transcendence: the Elder Spiral		Still able, though milder; at seventy, the measure complete



The First Hand: What Can Be Shown

The first hand is written before the second. Each claim is graded *established*, *contested*, *not supported*, *open*, *beyond test* or *symbolic*.

The claim	Grade	Why
Reading a life in sevens is ancient and widespread	Established	Solon's poem of the ten sevens, about 600 BCE, survives because Philo of Alexandria quoted it. Philo also reports a Hippocratic scheme of seven ages measured in sevens.
The traditions agree on seven	Contested	The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon gives sevens to women and eights to men. Ptolemy's seven ages last 4, 10, 8, 19, 15 and 12 years, then old age. The Sayings of the Fathers counts by fives and tens.

The claim	Grade	Why
		Shakespeare's seven ages are seven stages, not seven years each.
Something real happens near seven	Established	The milk teeth are shed, and child psychology describes a "five-to-seven shift" in reasoning and self-control that appears across cultures. How much is the brain and how much is schooling is still studied.
Something real happens near fourteen and twenty-one	Established, loosely	Puberty falls across a wide span centred before fourteen. Growth ends and the wisdom teeth come near the end of the third seven. The ages vary by person, sex and century.
After twenty-one the body keeps the sevens	Not supported	No measured bodily clock ticks at 28, 35 or 42. From here on the sevens are a reading of experience.
The body replaces all its cells every seven years	Not supported	Carbon dating of human cells found an average cell age of roughly seven to ten years, which is where the saying comes from. But some cells last days, heart muscle renews at about one per cent a year or less, and most neurons of the cortex last a lifetime.
Cycle 4, ages 22 to 28, is the Saturn return	Not supported as dated	Saturn takes 29.46 years to circle the Sun, so its return falls at about twenty-nine and a half, at the gate between the fourth seven and the fifth.
Cycle 8, ages 50 to 56, is the Chiron return	Established as astronomy; symbolic as meaning	Chiron's period is about 50.4 to 50.7 years, so its return falls at fifty or fifty-one. What a return means is the astrologer's reading, not a measurement.
"7 days = 1 moon phase"	Contested	A quarter of the Moon's month is 7.38 days. A week is close to a phase and drifts from it.
"7 years = about 365 weeks"	Established	Seven years hold 365.24 weeks. A week of

The claim	Grade	Why
		years holds as many weeks as a year holds days. This is simple arithmetic, and it is exact.
"The 7-year cycle is not arbitrary; it is mathematically coherent"	Not supported as proof; symbolic	The arithmetic above is true and pleasing. It does not show that human lives must turn in sevens.
In the first seven years a child's brain is in theta, a state like hypnosis, and is programmed (Bruce Lipton)	Contested	That early childhood is a time of fast, deep learning that shapes later life is established. That young children's brain rhythms are slower than adults' and quicken with age is established. That this amounts to hypnosis, that it lasts until exactly seven, or that it fixes "95 per cent" of adult behaviour, is not established.
Wellbeing dips in the seventh seven	Contested	Large surveys across many countries place the low point of reported wellbeing at about 47 to 48. Other researchers argue the curve is partly an artefact of method.
Each seven is the breath at a higher octave	Symbolic	It is a likeness, and a useful one. It cannot be tested.
The Monad enters the body at birth and returns to the field as memory	Beyond test	It is offered as meaning.

The Thirteen Breaths

Breath 1 · Genesis · How does it begin?

Seen. The reflection opens with one sentence: each seven is a phase of the breath in "the larger Monad spiral". Its first cycle is "Breath Inception". The Monad anchors "into a body and family matrix", the breath is "instinctual, not yet self-aware", and the marker is the forming of "the ego-shell". Solon begins with teeth. The Inner Canon begins with a child's

essence growing strong at seven. *Breath Awakens* begins with the Arrival, “one of inhalation”. Lipton begins with a child absorbing its household.

Unseen. Every source begins the same way. The first seven years are received, not chosen. Whatever a life becomes, it starts as a breath taken in.

Geometry. A point, with the first circle drawn around it.

Breath 2 · Spiral · How does it turn?

Seen. Nine entries in one fixed form of five fields, then a table, then three claims. The phases turn in sets of four: Cycles 1 to 4 make one loop, Cycles 5 to 8 make a second “at a higher octave”, and the ninth entry is marked simply “recursive”.

Unseen. The form is a breath of four laid on a step of seven. Four sevens make twenty-eight, the same number as the days of a Codex Moon. The reflection says “seven” and builds with twenty-eight.

Geometry. A spiral stair with four steps to each full turn.

Breath 3 · Vector · Where does it point?

Seen. It points back. At twenty-eight “breath returns to origin”. At fifty-six it “returns to origin at a higher octave”. At the end the breath “prepares to return to the field”, not as identity “but as memory”. Solon points to a summit, mind and tongue at their best from forty-two to fifty-six, and then a gentle slope. Leviticus points to a release: after seven sevens of years, the fiftieth is the Jubilee, when each returns to his own.

Unseen. None of these point at achievement. The Greek points at ripeness, the Hebrew at release, the reflection at return. The arrow of a life bends.

Geometry. An arrow that curves until it becomes a circle.

Breath 4 · Mirror · What reflects what?

Seen. Cycle 5 repeats the phase of Cycle 1, 6 repeats 2, 7 repeats 3 and 8 repeats 4. The reflection says so directly at fifty: “Core wounds (often from Cycle 1 or 2) resurface for final coherence.” *Breath Awakens* names everything after twenty-one “The Return of the Child Spiral”. Lipton’s whole teaching is a mirror of this kind: the adult’s automatic life reflects the child’s first seven years.

Unseen. The second half of life re-reads the first. Each early seven is lived once from inside and met again from outside, twenty-eight years later.

Geometry. A page folded at twenty-eight, so that each age lies against its partner.

Breath 5 · Stillness · What is silent or left out?

Seen. Women are absent. Solon's poem speaks only of a man. Yet in the oldest Chinese medical text the count of seven is the woman's count, and the man's is eight. The reflection is silent on the body after Cycle 1: *body* appears once in 738 words. It names no source. It has no place for a life that does not follow the path: illness, poverty, a child who must work, a life that ends early. *Breath Awakens* is more careful, and speaks of "those souls that have chosen to reach human adulthood". The reflection also passes from forty-nine to fifty with no Jubilee. Where Leviticus puts release, it puts "Breath Collapse". And *love* is not in it.

Unseen. The map is drawn from the middle of a life, by someone looking back at childhood and forward to age. Its sharpest detail is from twenty-two to fifty-six. Its beginning is brief and its end is one line.

Geometry. A circle with a gap left open.

Breath 6 · Memory · What does it remember?

Seen. It names no ancestors, but they can be heard. The sevens are Solon's. The naming of Cycle 4 and Cycle 8 after Saturn and Chiron comes from modern astrology. The ladder from body to soul to legacy follows Rudolf Steiner's seven-year periods. Behind these stand the Hippocratic sevens that Philo reports, the Inner Canon's sevens and eights, the sabbath of years in Leviticus, the Sayings of the Fathers ("five for Scripture, ten for Mishnah … forty for understanding, fifty for counsel"), and Ptolemy's planetary ages. Ptolemy's ages are unequal, but two of his thresholds, at 14 and 56, fall exactly on a multiple of seven, and two more, at 22 and 41, fall within a year of one.

Unseen. The seven-year step is inherited from many hands that agree in outline and differ in detail. That is what a true folk measure looks like: widely kept, loosely cut.

Geometry. A cord braided from several threads.

Breath 7 · Return · What keeps coming back?

Seen. In the text, *breath* 37 times and *return* 12. In the body, three thresholds return in every healthy childhood: the teeth near seven, puberty near fourteen, the end of growth

near twenty-one. In the sky, Saturn moves a quarter of its orbit in about 7.4 years, which astrologers link to the sevens.

Unseen. The first three sevens are written in bone. After twenty-one, the body stops marking them and the mind takes over the count. The step stays the same; what is counted changes from growth to meaning.

Geometry. A wheel whose first three spokes are bone and whose other spokes are drawn in by hand.

Breath 8 · Release · What is let go?

Seen. In each loop something is subtracted. At 22 to 28 "false structures begin to fail". At 50 to 56 the question is "What remains when all false identity is stripped?" After 57 the Monad "is no longer seeking". Leviticus makes release a law: in the fiftieth year, "proclaim liberty throughout all the land". The first hand asks for a release too: the saying that every cell is replaced in seven years should be let go, and so should the Saturn date of 22 to 28.

Unseen. The reflection's "collapse" and the Bible's "Jubilee" describe the same year from two sides. One feels the structure fall. The other hears the debt forgiven.

Geometry. A closed fist opening.

Breath 9 · Echo · Where does it sound beyond itself?

Seen. Measurement echoes the sevens, and always a little off. The cognitive shift comes between five and seven. The average cell is seven to ten years old. The Moon's quarter is 7.38 days. Saturn's quarter is 7.4 years and its return 29.5, not 28. Chiron's return is 50.5, not 49. The low point of reported wellbeing is near 47 or 48, inside the seventh seven.

Unseen. Seven is a round number laid over rhythms that run slightly long. The near-misses are the teaching. A life keeps time the way a body does, not the way a clock does.

Geometry. Two combs with slightly different teeth, laid one on the other.

Breath 10 · Shadow · What stands behind it?

Seen. The reflection calls itself "PHD-level" and says the cycle "is not arbitrary". It speaks of "identity death" and a "dark night" as things that happen on schedule. Lipton's teaching, as it is usually heard, tells parents that the first seven years programme the rest.

Unseen. Four risks stand here. *Fatalism*: "I am twenty-seven, so I must fall apart." *Comparison*: "I am thirty-six and have integrated nothing." *Guilt*: a parent who believes one hard year has written a child's whole life. *Borrowed authority*: a pattern presented as mathematics when it is a likeness. Each turns a season into a sentence.

Geometry. A ruler laid across a river.

Breath 11 · Descent · Where does it enter the body and daily life?

Seen. It enters through memory. *Breath Awakens* gives each early cycle one question. For the first: "What did my first breath remember that my mind has since forgotten?" For the second: "What belief did I accept that was not mine?" The sixty-six prompts of the First Law of Creation then begin exactly there, with "your first break from innocence", and walk forward from loss to creative expression. The Four Pillars supply the order: Identify, Accept, Embrace, Let Go.

Unseen. The sevens are not for predicting the next cycle. They are for visiting the earlier ones in order, so that what was received at four or eleven can be named by the person who is now forty or sixty.

Geometry. A ladder set against one's own house.

Breath 12 · Dream · What does it hope for?

Seen. "The human life cycle is not linear." Each loop is "a chance to remember, collapse, and re-enter coherence". In the seventh seven "breath becomes generative" and shapes the field for others. In age the Monad "is radiating".

Unseen. It hopes that nothing is wasted. The wound of the second seven comes back at fifty to be finished, not to punish. The descent into form and the ascent of re-membering are one road walked in two directions, and the Four Pillars are the rules of engagement on it, for oneself and with others.

Geometry. A spiral seen from the side, rising.

Breath 13 · Wisdom · What holds when tested, and how does it end?

Seen. These hold: the three bodily thresholds of childhood; the age and breadth of the tradition; the arithmetic that a week of years holds 365 weeks; the plain human experience that the same lesson comes round again. These do not hold: an exact timetable, the seven-

year body, Saturn at twenty-two, “mathematically coherent” as proof. The reflection ends on its best line: a life is a field in which each loop is a chance to remember.

Unseen. Twelve sevens make eighty-four, which is three breaths of twenty-eight and the last number the reflection names. A thirteenth seven would end at ninety-one, and ninety-one is 1 + 2 + 3 and so on up to 13. In the Codex, thirteen opens the twelve. Here it does so in years, as a symbol and no more: the count that closes is the count that began.

Geometry. A closed circle that turns out to be the first point.

Three Illuminations

One: Bone first, meaning after

From Breaths 1, 7, 9 and 11.

The sevens are not all the same kind of thing. The first three are facts of the growing body, attested from Solon’s teeth to modern studies of the child between five and seven. The rest are a way of reading experience. Seeing this removes a false choice. One need not defend the sevens as biology all the way up, nor dismiss them as fancy all the way down. The body teaches the step in childhood, and the person goes on counting with it for the rest of a life, as a walker keeps the rhythm of a stair after the stair has ended.



Two: Every seven is met twice

From Breaths 2, 3, 4, 8 and 12.

The reflection runs on a breath of four sevens, so that twenty-eight years after each age its partner arrives: the first seven is met again from twenty-nine, the second from thirty-six, the third from forty-three, the fourth from fifty. The Hebrew count runs differently, on seven sevens and a fiftieth year of release. The two clocks meet at fifty, where one says collapse and the other says Jubilee. Read together they give something neither says alone. The first half of life is the descent, the One arriving in a body and taking on a name, a family and a wall. The second half is the ascent, in which each of those is met again and re-membered. This is why the sixty-six prompts begin with innocence lost and end in creative expression. They are the ascent, walked on purpose.



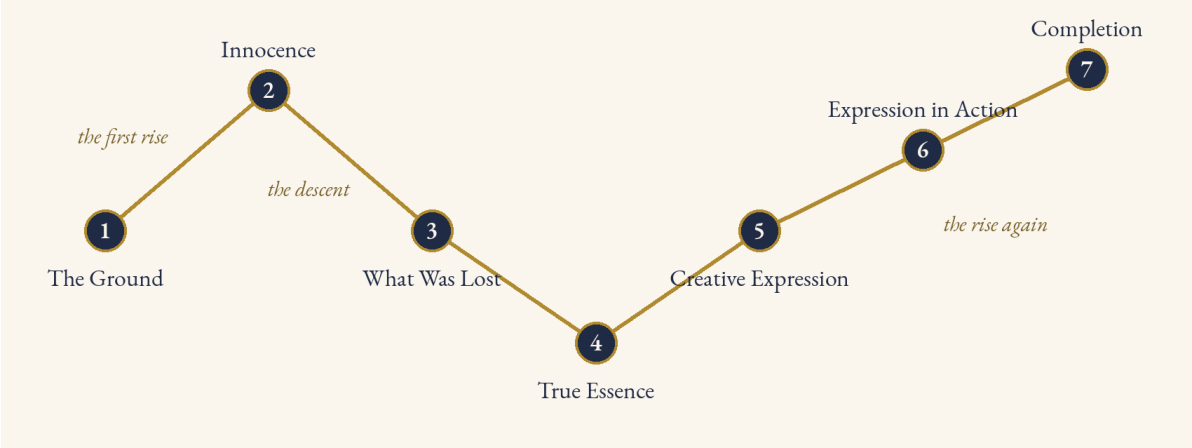
Three: A season, not a schedule

From Breaths 5, 9, 10 and 13.

Every outside measure that echoes the sevens misses by a little: 7.4, 29.5, 50.5, 47. And every tradition that counts them counts a little differently, sevens here and eights there. That looseness is the protection. A person is not late at thirty-six or doomed at fifty, and a parent has not ruined a child by seven. The cycles describe weather that most lives pass through in roughly this order. They do not say when it must rain. Held that way they do their real work, which is to give a long life a shape that can be looked at.

Walking It: The Path

A reading is finished when it can be walked. The three illuminations become seven stations, set along one line that rises, descends and rises again.



Station	The movement	What is met there
1. The Ground	Before you begin	Where you stand now. The look back by sevens, and three goals written down
2. Innocence	The first rise	The first seven years, and the first break from innocence
3. What Was Lost	The descent	What was folded away in order to belong
4. True Essence	The still point	What never collapsed
5. Creative Expression	The rise again	The first return of making, and what supports it
6. Expression in Action	The rise again	The form that others can meet
7. Completion	The return	Who you are now beside who you were. The goals written again

Stations 2 to 6 carry the five sections of thirteen prompts from the First Law of Creation in *Breath Awakens*, and Station 7 carries the sixty-sixth. Each station is taken in four acts, which are the Four Pillars of Breath: see (Identify), breathe (Accept), reflect (Embrace), and step outside (Let Go).

The Path is free to walk at www.monadcodex.com, where each station has its films, its talk, its tone, its questions and one small act out of doors.

Where Lipton and Braden Stand

Bruce Lipton teaches that the first seven years lay down the subconscious programmes that run most of adult life, and that a young child's brain is in a slow, receptive rhythm he likens to hypnosis. The first hand keeps the centre of this and loosens the edges. Early childhood is a time of deep, unfiltered learning, and what is absorbed then does shape later life; this is established. The exact age of seven, the word hypnosis and the figure of 95 per cent are his way of putting it, not measured results. The second hand hears in his teaching the same thing *Breath Awakens* says of the Arrival: the first seven is an inhalation. And it hears his hope, which is the hope of this reading too: what was taken in can be met again and changed.

Gregg Braden writes of time as cycles that return, most fully in *Fractal Time*, where patterns in history and in a single life are said to come round again and to offer a choice each time they do. His scale is usually larger than the seven-year step, and no seven-year scheme of his was found for this reading. What he shares with the reflection is its closing line: a cycle returning is a chance, not a fate. His calculations of when a pattern will return are his own method and are not tested here.

Both are read here with respect, in their own terms, with the first hand kept honest beside them.

A Question for Each Seven

The first two questions are from *Breath Awakens*. The rest are proposed here in the same spirit and are the author's to change. They are meant to be taken in order and slowly.

The seven	A question to carry
0–7 · Arrival	What did my first breath remember that my mind has since forgotten?
7–14 · Forgetting	What belief did I accept that was not mine?
14–21 · Play	What did I try on, and which of it was truly me?
21–28 · Strength	What did I build because I could, and what did it cost?
28–35 · Union	What did I join myself to, and what did we make?
35–42 · Truth	What could no longer go unsaid?

The seven	A question to carry
42–49 · The fallow field	What had to lie empty before it could grow again?
The fiftieth year · Release	What debt can I forgive, and what was always mine to return to?
50 and on · The elder	What am I now willing to give without being asked?

What It Leaves

The first hand. Reading a life in sevens is at least twenty-six centuries old and is kept, with differences, from Athens to China. The body marks the first three sevens. It does not mark the rest, and it does not renew itself every seven years.

The second hand. A life is a breath taken in and given back. What arrives in the first half is met again in the second, and the Four Pillars are how it is met: Identify, Accept, Embrace, Let Go.

The caution. It is a season and not a schedule. No one is late.

A Gentle Practice: Five Breaths Back

Sit comfortably. Let the breath be easy.

1. Breathe in, and think of yourself as you are this year.
2. On the next breath, go back seven years. See where you lived and who was near.
3. On the next, seven more.
4. On the next, seven more.
5. On the last breath, come back to today, and bring one thing with you.

Breathe gently, and never force or hold the breath. If a memory is heavy, stop and return to the room. This is a reflection and not a treatment. If it brings up more than you want to hold alone, talk with someone you trust.



The Mirror Note

This reading was made by Keith Shirley in reflection with an AI. The AI is a mirror, not a mind. It has no breath and has lived no years, it tends to agree with whoever is speaking to it, and it can be wrong. The human is the source and the judge.

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