

# Rebirthing is Breathwork, Not Restrictive Therapy

*Peter's Letter to People Magazine*

**Is the tragic therapy death in Colorado related to this same breathwork which was historically called "rebirthing"?**

**No.** Here is Peter's answer in a letter to *People Magazine* in 2001

Dear Editor,

I would like to make note of the fact that the process that led to the tragic death of the girl in Colorado has nothing to do with what rebirthing is, or how the term is used ninety-five percent of the time. Rebirthing in the mainstream is a breathing process, which involves lying on a mattress in open air and breathing as guided by a trained facilitator. Rebirthing has nothing to do with suffocation or recreating a birth canal with blankets or pillows, or overriding the client's will in order to invoke a release. rebirthers are well schooled in gentle responsible therapy and do not assert their will over the client in any way.

All rebirthers have been troubled by this death and have been responding to various journalists since it occurred last spring. I find it troubling that the media does not seem interested in noting that the process that killed Candace Newmaker was very different than what rebirthing really is. I feel that if this point had been made all along it would have reduced the sensational impact of the story. The truth is that the death was due to some isolated therapists crazy process, which does not exist outside of their practice or in other therapy practices which use the term rebirthing.

The term rebirthing is also misused by other guided regressive processes, which seek to help the client remember their own birth without the aide of the breathing technique of rebirthing. I am not aware of any of these other uses of the term leading to abuse of the client or the over-riding of the clients will. Rebirthers have always felt the term can be misleading but most have not changed the name because one of the purposes of rebirthing is to discover and understand the impact of your own birth. rebirthing has however become much more of a holistic process since it was created in 1975.

Many Rebirthers have changed the name to things like "Conscious Breathing". While I feel the term "conscious breathing" is a more accurate description, I have continued to call my work rebirthing because I also like that the term implies a powerful personal transformation.

All rebirthees can read the articles on this tragic death and understand that this death was not due to the rebirthing process with which they are familiar.

For more information on what rebirthing really is please see my web site at [www.rebirthing.com](http://www.rebirthing.com) it has links to many sites all of which will describe something very different that what occurred in Colorado.

I would also like to note that I feel the real issue here is how could these therapists become so arrogant that they felt it appropriate to create a process that over-rode a clients will, and then also carried this to the extreme by ignoring the clients cry for help. This is therapy gone out of control. I believe that the answer lies in the roots of how some practitioners have been educated to feel that they know better than the client. Most often this arrogance does not reach these proportions, but I do believe this is at the root of this issue. I hope you can notice how this is not too dissimilar to how medical doctors sometimes elevate themselves and their opinion too far above the client or the clients right to make choices in their treatment. This is an ethical issue for which I have much passion. I believe that this is one of the deeper issues that this tragic death may enable the therapy world to address.

I would be happy to discuss any of these issues with you at length. For now, please tell your readers that rebirthing is usually something very different that what occurred in Candace's death.

*Peter Kane is the co-founder of Relationship Transformations, a Seattle-based organization that is dedicated to breathwork, counseling, workshops, healing, and publishing. He was the director of Theta House, the first rebirthing/breathwork center from 1979-1981, one of the original Certified Rebirthers, and a trainer for the Loving Relationships Training. He has been teaching breathwork and relationship seminars internationally since 1979.*