

## Konstantin Buteyko

“The little things are infinitely the most important”  
Sherlock Holmes

For many, Dr. Konstantin Buteyko’s gift to the world still remains wrapped in ribbons and paper, a present waiting to be opened for the improvement of everyone’s health and probably for the betterment of society. Dr. Buteyko dedicated his life to researching the adverse affects of carbon dioxide deficiency (hypocapnia) on the body caused by dysfunctional breathing patterns. His path to unearthing a clear understanding of respiration and its role in maintaining optimal health was a journey of intellectual pursuit and of an unwavering commitment to alleviate suffering and disease in his patients.

Prior to Dr. Buteyko’s study of medicine he pursued an Engineering degree at the Polytechnic College in Kiev. This was a natural progression for a young boy born in 1923 in Ivanitsa, Ukraine who clearly had inherited a strong analytical aptitude from his father, a mechanic. Engineering for him was a process of figuring out how all parts should interact harmoniously as a whole to run well. With the beginning of WW II Buteyko enlisted and worked as a mechanic and as an assistant in the medical aid tents. His realization that he wanted to be a doctor grew from his frustration of not being able to do more for the wounded soldiers. He also realized that the human body was the most glorious of all “machines” and that his life goal would be to apply his keen analytical abilities to restore the harmonious functioning of a body for the benefit of his patients.

Dr. Buteyko believed that it was impossible to cure a disease

without knowing its cause. This belief led him to study hypertension at the prestigious First Medical Institute in Moscow because he suffered from hypertension and was driven to discover, “what is the cause of my disease”? He experimented with various drug therapies and worked closely with his professors to understand all aspects of hypertension in an effort to cure himself, but to know avail. And then, yes, *ON A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT*, a bolt of lightening flashed and as Dr. Buteyko averted his eyes downward from the bright light he noticed how rapidly his chest and abdomen were heaving with the movement of his breath.

This moment illuminated a moment in the life of Dr. Buteyko that would guide him through the discovery that CO<sub>2</sub> deficiency correlated with numerous diseases or, symptoms of diseases, SODs\*. His first attempt to understand his breathing, as it pertained to his personal health proved significant: He increased his breathing and his symptoms worsened, he decreased his breathing and he felt better with an improvement in his health. Dr. Buteyko continued his investigations focusing first on asthma patients in the pulmonary ward of the hospital where significant improvements were achieved as asthma patients reduced their breathing to lessen the number and severity of their asthma attacks. Buteyko continued to research and apply his findings to other patients suffering with “SODs”, Buteyko stated that often the only disease that causes many symptoms is the disease of “Deep Breathing”.

Dr Buteyko continued his work during the 1950’s in Novosibirsk at a new Academy of Science, which had abundant funding for cutting edge medical research and treatment. What some consider the zenith of Dr. Buteyko’s career, occurred during the 1960s as his research continued with

funding by the Ministry of Space and Aviation. Yes, lightning did strike twice, as Dr. Buteyko's research was propelled forward by the "Space Race": Russia had gained the upper hand with the launch of Sputnik and the failure of the United States' "Project Vanguard". The next space exploration hurdle of putting a man in space provided an intense focus for scientific research in Russia and, Dr. Buteyko's knowledge and understanding of air, breathing, and health became paramount.

With opportunity and hardship, along with an unwavering commitment to alleviate the pain and suffering of his patients, Dr. Buteyko pioneered an understanding of the function of CO<sub>2</sub>. His life was dedicated to optimizing the life experience, which for him, included mind, body and spirit.

"The main conclusion, which should become evident - for prevention and treatment of the most common diseases of man, which concern damage to the nervous system, lungs, blood vessels, and metabolism."

Dr. Konstantin Buteyko