

**Relaxation and Visualisation**

*Most of us are unaware of how much tension our physical body carries – the pressures of life build up. We can learn to relax; to release the tension and the physical benefits can spin off into other levels of our being. The techniques of relaxation are simple, and the benefits are enormous.*

*In practicing relaxation, never* ***trying*** *to relax, rather* ***letting go*** *and* ***allowing*** *relaxation to happen.*

To begin…make sure you are comfortable in your chair, arms and legs uncrossed.

If you feel able, closing your eyes. Taking your attention to your breathing. Feeling the breath at the nostrils. You may notice that the inward breath is cooler than the outward breath. Feeling the breath. Remember, the outward breath is the relaxing breath. That’s the breath we let go on, and sink into the support of the chair.

Now taking your attention down to your feet. Your feet resting on the solid ground.

Taking your attention to the calf muscles… the knees… the thighs… Letting go of any tension in the muscles.

Moving your attention now to the hips…. the bottom. Releasing any tension, any tightness.

Being aware of where your back is touching the chair… your back fully supported and comfortable.

And moving your attention now to your abdomen…. your chest. Noticing the gentle rise and fall of your abdomen or chest as you are breathing comfortably.

Then moving your attention to your shoulders, releasing any tension, any tightness.

Moving to your head, releasing any tension in the scalp… the forehead. Noticing your eyes resting gently in their sockets. Noticing your lips hardly touching, your tongue resting gently in your mouth.

Now not thinking of the body in separate parts but capturing the whole body experience, gently releasing any remaining tension.

*And now I am going to ask you to use your imagination. So not to use any effort to visualise, the intention is ‘to let go’ and allow the images to arise from within your mind. Images may be sensed or felt; it may not always be a visual experience. So go with it and just let it happen.*

Now I am going to take you on a journey in your mind’s eye…

Imagine you are outside in the countryside in a safe, secure and tranquil place.

Imagine you can see a meadow. See the flowers gently swaying in the breeze. Notice their colours and shapes waving in the wind. Notice their beautiful scent.

Feel the breeze against your cheek. The beauty of the nature around you makes you glad to be here. Feel the warmth of the sun – the sun shining at a perfect temperature for you.

Notice a tree in the meadow. This is a good, old, solid tree. Make your way over to the tree. Walk around it. Then sit with your back against the tree. Feel the support. Notice how the roots of the tree go deep into the earth. The branches reaching up to the clear blue sky, bathed in the warm sunlight. You can feel the warmth of the sun, the comfort. You feel safe. Rest here for a while.

Then begin to notice the sound of a babbling brook. Listen to the sound of the water as it makes its way over the stones.

Gently walk over to the water. This is pure clear water. You may wish to bend down and scoop some of this soft cleansing water in your hands. You may wish to take a sip of it, letting the pure clear water wash through you. Feel refreshed. Hold on to this feeling. Take it with you as you return to the meadow.

Take some time to rest in the meadow. You may want to lie down in the meadow, cushioned by the soft grass, feeling the warmth of the sun on your body.

Sense the calmness and the peace... Rest here for a moment.

*(Resting quietly for a minute or longer …..)*

Now, holding on to those thoughts and feelings, bringing your focus back to your breathing.

Being aware of where your body is touching the chair, noticing the points of contact between your body and the chair, your feet on the ground.

You may wish to gently move your fingers and toes. Or, to stretch, yawn, wriggle and then opening your eyes when you feel ready.

Noticing these feelings of calmness and peacefulness. Taking them with you as you return to your daily activity, knowing that you can return to the meadow and find a safe, secure, tranquil place where you can be quiet and recharge your batteries…

Julie Milton 10/8/20