

About Guided Visualization or Guided Imagery

Visualization or guided imagery is a method of deliberately using imagery to modify your behavior, the way you feel, and even your internal physiological state. Because imagery is one to the basic media in which your unconscious mind operates (along with emotions and body sensations), visualization can affect your behavior or state of being in profound ways.

Through practicing imagery many athletes achieve peak performance. Visualizing successfully negotiating a phobic situation a phobia helps sufferers master their phobias. Not only can visualization help you act in ways that are likely to lead to success, but it can alter subtle internal physiological states as well. Imagery has been used to treat a variety of diseases like cancer and visualizations can help reduce anxiety.

Although we use the word visualization or imagery not everyone “sees” pictures. Some people “visualize” by feeling a series of emotions or sensory experiences. You are Not doing something wrong if you don’t “see” pictures.

The key to using imagery successfully is to use it when you are deeply relaxed. When relaxed you’ll be able to experience the images/senses more vividly, and so they are more likely to have a profound effect.

Guidelines for Effective Visualization

- Place yourself in a comfortable position
- Ensure your environment is quiet and free from distractions
- Allow time to relax before a guided visualization. You may use a progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, or yoga.
- “See” the imagery clearly in vivid sensory detail. Utilize all the senses. Are there any smells? What sounds are there?
- If you like, accompany your visualization with anxiety reducing phrases like “I am at peace”, “I am letting go”, “all tension is flowing from my body”. Affirmations can enhance the relaxing effect of a visualization.
- Use the visualization whenever you feel stuck or anxious.
- As a general relaxation technique, try to use visualization at the same time each day preferably on an empty stomach.