

# **BREATHE, RELAX and IMAGINE : mental rehearsal for staying motivated and doing what it takes to achieve your goals**

This meditation works by inducing a state of deep relaxation, then having you focus on images of yourself engrossed and succeeding at a skill you love to perform and wish to excel at. It's a mental rehearsal to help you achieve a flow state.

## **BREATHE DEEPLY**

- Draw the air in through your nose, taking it in slowly and deeply to the bottom of your lungs while expanding your diaphragm to make room for it.
- Hold the air for a moment.
- Then slowly let it out of your lungs by drawing your diaphragm in, with your mouth slightly open and your tongue on the roof of your mouth, resting just behind your front teeth.
- Just observe your body while doing this, and, if thoughts come to you, let them go and focus on your breathing. The thoughts will subside as you continue to let them go.
- The more you focus on your breath and body, the more quiet your mind will become.

With practice, you can focus on your breathing without effort, even in the midst of other activities. With practice, you can achieve mental control at any moment in time. Once you build this habit, it will be available to you for as long as you continue practicing it.

## **RELAX DEEPLY**

Your practice of deep breathing will allow you to enter deep relaxation whenever you choose.

- Move to a quiet place where you won't be disturbed or distracted.
- Be sure you can maintain a comfortable state (no tight clothing, temperature not too hot or cold) before proceeding.
- Lie down your back with your feet apart and your hands slightly away from your body.
- Fix your eyes on point above you on the ceiling.
- Staying as still as you can, remembering how you learned to relax, take 3 long, slow, deep breaths, inhaling each through your nose, holding it briefly before you exhale it through your slightly open mouth.
- As you gently let go of each of the 3 breaths, allow your eyelids to slowly close.
- For the next 10 breaths, imagine your eyelids getting heavier and heavier as your relaxation deepens.
- Mentally repeat the word "deeper" to yourself each time you exhale, letting any thoughts and tensions that may arise dissolve with the breath as it leaves your body.
- Allow yourself to go deeper into relaxation with each exhalation.
- Should your mind drift, gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- Continue breathing and repeating "deeper" slowly to yourself until you have finished these 10 deepening breaths.
- Next, focus your attention on relaxing the muscles of every part of your body.
- Start with your toes, and begin slowly moving up your body, as total relaxation takes over.
- Focus on relaxing each muscle in your body from your toes, to your calves, thighs, abs, chests, back, arms, shoulders,

neck, face, head and scalp.

- As you visualize each muscle relaxing, allow yourself to feel a deep wave of relaxation flowing deeply into all your muscles, though your entire body. Allow yourself to go deeper into relaxation with each breath you take.

- Don't try to rush or force anything, just allow your muscles to become loose, and yourself to relax naturally as you drop into total relaxation.

## IMAGINE CLEARLY

Deep breathing and relaxation, when used in conjunction with mental imagery allows your wise inner or subconscious mind to help you get what you want. Show your mind through images and feelings what you seek to accomplish. As you feed your mind movies of your past and future intentions, it will set out to help you accomplish your goals by keeping you motivated and focused.

- As you allow yourself drift in a the state of deep relaxation for around twenty minutes, imagine watching a movie in which you are the main character.

- See yourself immersed in the process of achieving your goals, doing the actual work, taking the steps that will result in your achieving your goals. See yourself practicing what you need to learn to get there, making adjustments and improving your skills. Focus in detail on the process you must take to achieve outcome, *not* the outcome itself.

- Accept this image of yourself working towards your goals diligently, with focus and enthusiasm, as the truth. Show your deeper mind the images and feelings associated with what you want to achieve.

After 20 minutes of this success conditioning, you can slowly bring yourself back to full awareness by letting your eyelids open, inhaling, and stretching. Then, imagine a staircase with 5 steps going up. See yourself slowly walking up each of the 5 steps; at each step becoming more awake, alert and refreshed. At the top step, imagine yourself ready to go on with your day.

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This handout was adapted by Gracie Landes (<http://couplefamilyandsextherapynyc.com>) from the book "The Art of Mental Training" by DC Gonzalez