

**NAME:** GOOGLE EARTH

**SOURCE:**

- Activity – James Hill (Inspired by client 2015)

**INTENTION:** This is a lovely guided imagery exercise that can lead to rapid shifts in people's perspective.

**MATERIALS:**

- Script

**SCRIPT:** Written instructions for group leader.

*Close your eyes for a moment, if you are comfortable with this. If not, let your eyes rest on some point in front of you. Take a moment to feel the contact your body makes with the chair you are sitting in. Notice sensations like temperature, texture, or pressure where your body contacts the chair. In addition to these experiences, notice sensations you experience while breathing. Notice what it is like when you are breathing in and what changes you experience when you are breathing out. It is not necessary to find words to describe what you experience, simply be aware of your sensations. Notice as you breathe that there might be subtle changes where your body contacts the chair (changes in pressure or slight movements); see if you can be aware of these little details.*

*I assume that most of you are familiar with Google Earth or using maps on your cell phone. These maps allow you to zoom-in to a close up view of a specific location and zoom-out to take a much wider view of the city, state, or country. I want you to imagine that you can zoom-in and zoom-out from your own experience in this same way.*

*When we are feeling emotional or physical pain, our focus usually becomes an extreme close-up on the difficulty we are experiencing. It fills up our entire view. So I want you to begin by focusing your attention on the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing at this time. I want you to notice the concerns that you have been walking around with; the wishes, desires, and struggles that are a part of your inner world. These may be mostly pleasant or unpleasant. There is no need to change anything, just notice what it is like to zoom-in on the thoughts and feelings inside of you.*

*Now imagine that you can step outside of your body just a bit and look back at yourself sitting here. Imagine looking at yourself with a sense of compassion and interest. Without making any judgments, imagine how you might look sitting in your chair. Notice the posture your body is in, the look on your face, the angle of your shoulders, if your torso is straight or bent. Notice anything this position might express or communicate.*

*Now zoom-out a bit more and notice what else is present in this room. Open your eyes if they are closed, and look around; if there are other people in the room notice where they are located. Notice how they might be sitting and what they are wearing. Be aware that each person also has an inner world of joys, fears, concerns, and desires; that everyone has a life experience. Notice the furniture, the lighting, the sounds that are present or absent.*

***Now zoom-out some more so you are just outside of this building. How many other people might be in this building, each with their inner-worlds? What kind of good news or bad news or challenges might they be experiencing today?***

***Now zoom-out again so you can see the entire neighborhood or area. If you are in a city this might include several blocks of offices and buildings, restaurants and stores. If you are in the country maybe this includes nearby lakes and forest, perhaps a few houses scattered here and there. How many people might be included in this view? What kind of things might be a part of each of their lives? Perhaps someone learned this morning that they are pregnant or that they have cancer. Maybe some are worried about their children or afraid of their parents. What animals might be included in this view? What might their lives be like in this moment? Notice that you are still a part of this picture, sitting here in your chair.***

***Now zoom-out so you can see the entire city or region. What would it look like from an aerial view? Imagine all the lives being lived with-in this perspective. People are working and going to school, raising children and caring for parents, hoping, dreaming, loving, fearing, trying, failing, and worrying. People are planning to get married and planning to get divorced. People are getting good news and living with bad news.***

***Zoom-out again so you can see the edges of the state you are in, with all the cities and all the towns, all the people, and all the animals going about their lives. And, notice that you are still in this picture.***

***Zoom-out so you can see the outline of your country. Imagine the individual points of view, the concerns, the advantages and disadvantages that people are living with. Some have just gotten the job of their dreams and others have lost everything. In the next 24 hours many of them will lose someone they love in a car accident. Many will be diagnosed with a terminal illness. Others will lose the ability to walk, or speak, or hear, or see.***

***Once more... zoom-out to a point where you can see the edges of the earth against the black backdrop of space. Notice the blue oceans, the white clouds, and the areas of land. Imagine the lives being lived; the joy and sadness being experienced. Notice that you are still in this picture, here sitting in your chair.***

***Take a moment to notice your breathing. Notice what it has changed as you broadened your perspective. Bring your attention back to the room, bringing with you anything you think might be valuable about this new point of view.***

**DISCUSSION:** Possible questions or topics to address

- How was that? (Start with a very open ended question giving permission for a wide variety of experiences – validate all responses and be open and encouraging for people to share pleasant and unpleasant reactions).
- What role do you think “loss of perspective” or “getting stuck in an internal focus” might play in your suffering? (I don’t try to sell a particular point of view but encourage people to get curious about the relationship between their suffering and where their attention is).