

# **Eight Kinds of Guided Imagery Content\***

There are many kinds of effective healing imagery, and, because people respond differently to different kinds, it's good to be aware of the range of possibilities. Here are eight different categories of guided imagery content which are described in the book, *Staying Well with Guided Imagery*.

## **1. Feeling State Imagery**

This is simple imagery that changes mood, such as seeing yourself in your favorite place, or recalling a happy, peaceful time. Any imagery that can genuinely elicit feelings of love, care, safety and gratitude, will crowd out feelings of fear, anxiety, resentment and anger. All of this qualifies as feeling state imagery.

## **2. End State Imagery**

This is imagery that uses for its content any desired outcome or goal, in all its realistic particulars. So imagining a strong, cancer-free body; a perfectly played, confident, relaxed, focused game of tennis; or the sound of a perfectly registered high C just before singing it, would all be end state imagery, sometimes called "mental rehearsal" in hypnosis.

## **3. Energetic Imagery**

This is imagery, taken from Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine, as well as quantum physics, that uses the notion of plentiful, coherent, free-flowing, unblocked energy as the underlying dynamic of good health. Illness, in this paradigm, would be seen as stuck energy, or energy that is withheld from the general flow. This can be imagined as moving dots, a kind of sound, or an internal feeling of motion.

## **4. Cellular Imagery**

This imagery focuses on the healthy interaction of the cells, and requires accurate technical knowledge, so it isn't for everyone. For asthma, it would be imagining the mast cells being less reactive to neutral particles floating by; for diabetes, it would be insulin attaching to energy hungry cells, so they can take in glucose from the bloodstream; and so on.

## **5. Physiological Imagery**

This is imagery that focuses on larger healing processes in the body, such as sensing the widening, softening and clearing of the arteries for heart disease; imagining the feel of tumors shrinking in the body with cancer; and seeing the opening of swollen, constricted passageways in the lungs for asthma. This too requires accurate knowledge of how the body naturally operates to heal each condition.

## **6. Metaphoric Imagery**

This is imagery that works with symbols instead of concrete reality, such as seeing a flower opening its petals as a metaphor for enhanced creativity blossoming again; or seeing a tumor as an enemy encampment, being decimated by a powerful supply of tanks, missiles and guns; or sensing insulin "keys" unlocking the "doors" to hungry cells for people with diabetes.

## **7. Psychological Imagery**

This is imagery that specifically addresses a person's psychological issues by providing corrective emotional content. So, for instance, it might consist of imagining being surrounded by loving friends and allies to interrupt a sense of isolation and despair; or seeing oneself through kind and loving eyes, for someone who is relentlessly self-attacking; or perceiving the presence a beloved, recently lost parent to alleviate grief.

## **8. Spiritual Imagery**

This imagery evokes the wider perspective and peaceful or transcendent feelings provided by mystical states of consciousness and prayer. This might involve sensing assistance from angels, guides, power animals, God, or specific religious figures and symbols; or imagery that fosters a sense of oneness and connection with all things; or any imagery that deeply opens the heart.

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