

Using Guided Imagery for Surgical Support



**A Comprehensive Guide for Nurses, Massage Therapists, Doctors,
Energy Workers, and Anyone Who Believes in Our Healing Potential**

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authors of HEALING WITH LANGUAGE:

YOUR KEY TO EFFECTIVE MIND-BODY COMMUNICATION

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Inclusion of *Imagine Healing: Guided Imagery to Help You Heal* (Appendix), is for educational purposes only.

Thank you for instructing others with whom you work to purchase their individual copies of *Imagine Healing: Guided Imagery to Help You Heal* at www.ImagineHealing.info.

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Preface

“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.” —Herophilus

No one knows better than you that, although healing is the most natural of processes and people know how to heal, many are suffering horribly. In 2006, an estimated 53.3 million surgical and nonsurgical procedures were performed during 34.7 million ambulatory surgery visits and the numbers in all areas of illness and disease are increasing exponentially. Have you thought about what might have cut so many off from their innate healing capacity? Imagine that for many their greatest (mostly untapped) resource is right between their ears!

Research about emotions, beliefs, attitudes—about brain function— and immune response is proving to us that, in fact, being able to *imagine healing* is the solution. Because humans process their subjective experience, in part, as pictures, when one says, “I just cannot see how I will get through all of this,” according to Dr. Emmett E. Miller, author of *Deep Healing: The Essence of Mind/Body Medicine*, we are not just hearing words, we may well be witnessing destiny. Miller’s work shows clearly how beliefs and images become actual physical events in the body.

One evening I (Debra) was on my way into an open house as a woman I know casually was coming out. Making a bit of small talk, she mentioned an upcoming surgery. She was going to have a toe amputated. I know her well enough to think of her as pretty AWARE, so I said, “Well, since they are going to be removing that, what else would you like to have removed? A memory? A belief? An attitude? A behavior? Whatever you know you would be better off without. It can be removed at the same time.”

Her eyes got wide, and she said, “A memory....”

I walked out with her to get our surgical support audio from my vehicle for her. As she was getting into her car, she was euphoric, saying, “This is so good. I am so lucky. Gosh, I can hardly wait for Tuesday!”

I was pretty euphoric when I got into my vehicle, too. Research indicates that individuals who are well-prepared for surgery emotionally and mentally can, on average, experience: 20 percent less blood loss during surgery; 23 to 50 percent less need for pain medication; earlier discharge from the hospital; fewer complications following surgery; and greater satisfaction with their surgical experience, doctor or surgeon, and/or facility.

As desirable and predictable as these good outcomes are, sometimes other good things happen, too. That was the case with a patient at Mayo (a good friend of mine): “Here is an interesting fact, which I must attribute to the deep relaxation you taught me. When I arrived and was getting ready for ‘the event’ my blood pressure was 110/68. I find that

amazing since it normally runs about 120 over 80.” We used this comment on the cover of *Imagine Healing: Using Guided Imagery to Help You Heal*, the guidebook for patients.

Our program draws from the most current neuroscience, but it is not scientific research that makes the change that changes everything for people. The most powerful component in this program is your learning to utilize the person’s own wonderful unconscious mind. You are teaching others to make the changes in brain neurology that may just save their lives.

I tell people it is not something I am doing *for* them or *to* them. It is as though they had a million dollars in the bank but had forgotten their pin number. Besides, we have all heard the phrase, “What good is money if you don’t have your health...”

Just as is written on the cover, this book is “*A Comprehensive Guide for Nurses, Massage Therapists, Doctors, Energy Workers, and Anyone Who Believes in Our Healing Potential.*” Whether you consider yourself already having a thorough understanding of guided imagery, or if you see this as a new and important tool in your tool kit, and whether you read the book first or attend a workshop, *Using Guided Imagery for Surgical Support* provides you with a proven method for providing surgical support or helping people heal using guided imagery.

If you are already a clinician, you will appreciate how *Guided Imagery for Surgical Support* complements other practices, such as counseling, social work, and bodywork therapies. With groups or individuals, sessions can be done conveniently over the phone, by the Internet, or in person. Using the step-by-step guide, in just about an hour, you will provide support before, during, and after a surgical procedure or treatment by teaching them how to effectively use guided imagery to help them heal.

Joel started doing hypnosis when he was in high school. At first it was mostly “stage” hypnosis: bark like a dog and scratch your nose. By college, his friends were asking him to help them use it to study. I discovered Healing Touch™ through a personal healing crisis. Over a decade of pulling it all together, our sacred intention is to share with all of you who are working with others. Now people can *Imagine Healing*, and the healing they will imagine is more than skin deep!

Debra Basham
Joel P. Bowman

1. Guided Imagery and Altered States

“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.” — Herophilus (Greek physician, 335 B.C. - 280 B.C.)

According to the January 2008 issue of the Mayo Clinic Health Letter, Aristotle and Hippocrates believed in the power of images in the brain to help a person heal. Their belief has now been proven by scientific research to be correct. Fortunately, guided imagery is now helping more and more patients optimize their healing capacity.

Altered States Are Healing States

Using guided imagery is a process of learning to listen, learning to go within, to relax the breathing, and to consciously engage and direct the ability to use the imagination, sending a message to the emotional control center of the brain, passing it along to the body, including messages to the endocrine, immune, and autonomic nervous system. These are the systems that control many of the physiological functions, including heart and breathing rates and blood pressure. The benefits from guided imagery are part of a larger body of mind-body medicine that can be called “altered states.”

Although defining an “altered state” precisely is difficult, we do know that brainwaves actually change frequency, dropping from about 14 cycles a second (cps) and up (known as *Beta*) to somewhere between 7 and 14 cps (*Alpha*) or lower (*Theta* or *Delta*). Along with the lower frequency of the brainwaves, the rate of respiration decreases, and the heartbeat slows. Such terms as *altered state*, *creative visualization*, and *guided imagery* were developed so that therapists could avoid using the word *hypnosis*.

Altered states are natural and occur with regularity throughout the day. For this reason, everyone can use altered states to promote health and well-being.

The altered states most useful for promoting health and wellness are between what we usually consider fully alert (*Beta*) and what we normally think of as sleep. Meditation, daydreaming, and other activities that allow for deep relaxation automatically produce an altered state of consciousness.

When a person enters a state of deep relaxation, several outward signs of trance can be observed in all subjects. These signs cannot be simulated or “faked” by the subject. The subject will exhibit at least one and, in many cases, multiple signs.