

Creative Visualizations

Developing Mindfulness in Children

*Note: These processes are not intended to replace therapy or any other form of professional counseling. If you are concerned or doubtful about the application of any of the exercises in this book, discuss your concern with a professional counselor or psychotherapist. This book is for reference only and should not be used instead of properly qualified medical or mental health advice.

When guiding a creative visualization with children it is essential that all the preparatory work has been done* (that is, release of tension, focus of the energy and relaxation into a meditative state). As you progress, the time you need to spend on each process will lessen, although you may wish to spend longer on certain processes that you particularly enjoy! Meanwhile, do take all the time needed to help your child into the right state of mind so that he or she may really benefit, from day one!

When guiding any visualization, keep your voice soft but audible, and speak slowly, with frequent pauses. You do not need to follow the script word for word – improvise over it, use your own imagination and apply your knowledge of your child’s individual needs.

Each of the following visualizations can be used for all ages, although I suggest that you adapt the language to suit the age and mentality of your child if necessary.

* CREATIVE VISUALIZATION WITH CHILDREN – A PRACTICAL GUIDE includes all the processes needed to prepare your child for a visualization, and has many more guided meditations and visualizations designed to help children relax, handle stress, build resilience, and develop the capacity for self-soothing and calming themselves.

The following are two examples of visualizations for specific issues.

WORRIES AND CONCERNS

If your child exhibits a propensity for worry and concern beyond what is normal for your child’s age, the following visualization can be helpful. It is essential that you only use it after you have done The Path a few times and your child has created her or his garden and feels completely comfortable with it. Once your child finds these processes helpful, encourage her or him to use them on their own whenever the feeling of anxiety or worry appears.

Place one hand on your tummy and one hand on your heart and breathe slowly and evenly. Listen for your heartbeat keep your attention on your breathing. If other thoughts come to you, just let them drift by like clouds in the sky and bring your attention back to your breathing. Now think of something that makes you feel good. Hold that good feeling in your heart and in your body. Enjoy how nice it feels Now picture yourself in a wide open space. See yourself being worried. See how your face looks and how it feels. See how your shoulders and neck and hands look and feel now leave that behind See instead before you your special garden. See yourself now in your garden. Doing your very favorite things, really enjoying yourself. (Pause long enough for your child to really get in touch with the enjoyment of doing their favorite things).See how happy you are. See how your face looks and how it feels. See how relaxed your shoulders, neck and hands are now tell yourself that whenever you feel yourself becoming worried or concerned, stop! Then go to your special garden and enjoy doing your very favorite thing. When you are really enjoying yourself, look again at what made you worry. See it from the comfort and joy of your garden. Is it worth worrying so much about? Know that doing this process will always make you feel safe and secure inside yourself. Now gently bring your attention back to the room..... and to your body notice your breathing again....and that good feeling in your heart.Whenever you're ready you can open your eyes.

WATER

Before swimming - This is an example of using visualization to enhance an activity or help children prepare for an activity for which they have some apprehension..

Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart and breathe slowly and evenly. Notice how your belly rises as you breathe in and drops as you breathe out. Sense your heart in the center of your breathing keep your attention on your breathing. If any thoughts come to you, just let them drift by like clouds in the sky and bring your attention back to your breathing..... Now think of something that makes you feel good. Hold that good feeling in your heart and in your body. Enjoy how nice it feels See before you a pool/lake/the sea (choose whichever one applied to where your child will be swimming) The water is clear blue and the sun is shining overhead. Dip your hands into the water and feel its softness Now focus your attention on your heart for a moment

..... Think of something you love And think of the blue inviting water. Enjoy the warm feeling these thoughts give you. See yourself slowly immerse yourself into the water Feel the water against your skin, lapping gently against your body notice the temperature ... Feel yourself floating in the water until you feel as though you are one with the waterFeel yourself moving through the water now gracefully and effortlessly gliding through the water.... Feel each stroke you take moving you along with ever greater ease... your rhythm of movement blends in with the movement of the water until it is one rhythm Enjoy being in total harmony with the water Flow with the water Play with the waterenjoy the waterNow gradually move towards the edge of the water come out of the water now and bring your attention back into this room and to your body and breathe and heartEnjoy how good you feel about the water and thank the water for being there for you so generously.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION WITH CHILDREN – A PRACTICAL GUIDE has dozens of more visualizations, meditations, physical activities (such as yoga, tension release, stretching etc.) and much more – all you need to teach your children mindfulness.

“An easily understood and very effective practical guide. Whole-heartedly recommended!” **Brian Graham, Book Reviews**

“Many people have asked me how to use this powerful tool effectively with children. Jennifer Day has created a wonderful guidebook for doing exactly that!”

Shakti Gawain, bestselling author of Creative Visualization

“A fine key to introducing visualization to children and using it as a coping tool early in life.” **Children’s Bookwatch**