

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.

The creative visualizations in this book are meant to be integrated with the meditations and used within the structured context outlined. That being said, there are many ways to implement them and you will undoubtedly discover and develop your own personal way in time.

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!

As in the meditations, 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.

If your use any sound effects or music remember, it is there to help concentrate the energy, add to the atmosphere and support the process.

The following **CREATING A GARDEN – THE PATH** is a basic visualization to help children find a special, safe place to go in their imagination. It is also designed to be used as a foundation for all the other visualizations in the book, and can often be essential in ensuring the most effective results from each of the many visualizations in the book.

* [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.

CREATING A GARDEN

THE PATH

Ensure a quiet time and space for your child or children to sit, or lie (flat on their backs), comfortably. (Optional: A sheet of paper and crayons for each child for after the visualization).

First, have the children breathe slowly and evenly, and focus on a point in front of them and slightly upwards. As they focus on this point, suggest that they may be feeling their eyelids becoming heavier. Tell them to close their eyes as soon as it feels natural. Read the following script to them, making sure your voice is calm, soft and audible, and that you speak a little slower than usual. Try not to sound monotonous, and pause regularly so that all you say may be absorbed. (..... indicates a brief pause).

Gently place your hand on your heart and breathe slowly and evenly. Listen for your heartbeat Feel the rhythm.....keep all your attention in your heart. If other thoughts come to you, just let them drift by like petals on a river and bring your attention right back to your heart. Now think of something that makes you feel good – a puppy or a hug for example. Hold that good feeling in your heart and in your body. Enjoy how nice it feels.....Now I want you to see before you a path in nature. It can be any way you want it to be, wide, narrow, straight, winding. Now I want you to walk down this path until you come to a tree, a very large tree with many branches. This is your Trouble Tree, the tree where you hang up all your troubles and worries. Pause for a moment and offload all your troubles. Hang them all up on the tree, no matter how big or how small When you have finished, continue on down your path. If there are any rocks or twigs or other obstacles, gently move them aside. Give them some of all that love you have in your heart and move on. Soon you arrive at a gate covered in your favorite flowers. Smell their lovely fragrance as you push open the gate and step through it and enter into the most beautiful garden you have ever seen. It is exactly the way you want it to be. It's has anything you want in it, it's a perfect garden and it is all your very own..... All the colours in your garden are your favourite colours, the ground beneath your feet feels just perfect, and the sun is shining. You feel very safe and peaceful here. Wander through your garden exploring for a while..... (Pause for a few moments or for as long as your child's attention span holds).

Now before you leave your garden, I want you to thank your garden for being there, and know that you can come back to your garden any time you like. It will always be perfect and it will always be there whenever you need it

Now bring your attention back to your heart. Notice your heartbeat, has it slowed down at all? Feel the love, that good feeling in your heart and send it all around your body. Feel how good that feels. Now bring your attention back to your breathing....has it slowed down? Now very gently bring your attention back into this room..... and whenever you're ready you can open your eyes.

You may want to have paper and crayons ready for the children to draw or write about their experience (or part of it), so that their experience becomes grounded. Some children like to do this visualization at bedtime, in which case the drawing afterwards is obsolete.

[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