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Mind-Body Medicine

“For many patient groups, research has shown that relatively brief and inexpensive mind-body interventions can improve the patient’s recovery process, speed healing, shorten inpatients stays, and reduce the cost of treatment” (Moss, 2002, p. 4)

Self-Care

- Self Awareness
- Self Hypnosis
- Exercise
- Imagery
- Nutrition
- Prayer
- Fun/Play
- Animals
- Self Expression
- Relaxation
- Autogenics
- Biofeedback
- Meditation
- Nature

Activating the vagus nerve

- ✓ Reduces inflammation
- ✓ Helps regenerate your organs and cells by activating stem cells
- ✓ Increases your heart rate variability
- ✓ Thickens your brain which normally shrinks with aging
- ✓ Boosts immune function
- ✓ Modulates your nervous system
- ✓ Reduces depression and stress
- ✓ Enhances performance
- ✓ Improves your quality of life

Soft-Belly Breathing Exercise

Now you may place your hands on your belly if you like to bring your awareness to your belly rising and filling with air as you breath in and deflating as you breath out. Sit quietly with eyes closed if you feel comfortable or with a soft gaze downward. Breathe slowly and deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Allow your belly to be soft, expanding on the in breath and relaxing on the out breath. You may say to yourself, “soft” as you breathe in and “belly” as you breathe out. When thoughts come, let them come, and let them go, as a wave might flow in from the sea and flow out again...returning your mind to “soft...belly”. Sometimes I like to say the words peace as I breathe in; imagining a sense of peace coming in with each breath and love as I breath out, envisioning sending love out with each breath. And now when you are ready allow your attention to return to the room.

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Imagery Script

Purpose: Helps access subconscious information and guidance; Fosters trust in one's own inner wisdom

Lie or sit in a comfortable position. Allow your eyes to close if you are comfortable, or stare with a soft gaze downward. Feel your body against the floor or the chair. Allow your body to soften and just let yourself be. And now allow your awareness to move to your breath. Aware of the in-breath...Aware of the out-breath...Breathing in, feeling calm... breathing out, at peace, preparing to go on a mental journey. Each breath allows you to become more and more relaxed and comfortable.... Let any outside sounds only serve to allow you to go deeper inside. A reminder of how good it is to leave the noise and stress of the outside world and journey into the quiet and peace of your own inner world.... As you breathe, feel the tension drain from your body, leaving you relaxed and at peace. As you sink deeper into the warmth and safety of your inner world, know that there is no right way to do this process.... Anything that comes up for you or presents itself is absolutely perfect. Take another deep breath and let go as you exhale....

Now I would like you to see yourself in a very special place...it could be a real place – a place you may actually have been – a beautiful spot in nature or a comforting place in your own home. Your special place may be an imaginary place – a place in fairy tales – indoors or outdoors – it doesn't really matter. Should more than one place come to mind, allow yourself to stay with one of them.

The only thing that matters is that it is a place in which you are completely comfortable and at ease.... You feel comfortable and at ease. Appreciate this scene with all of your senses. Hear the sounds – smell the aromas, feel the air as it caresses your skin – experience the ground securely under you – touch and feel the whole environment that you are in.

*Notice what you are wearing
Notice what you have on your feet
What time of year it is, what time of day
How old you are*

*Notice whether you are alone or with another person or people
Notice the colors that surround you
What is the temperature? Is it warm? Is it cold?
Notice the qualities of the place that make it special and comfortable.*

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And look around you to see if there is anything else that would make this place more comfortable for you.... Perhaps something that you need to remove from the place or something you need to bring in.... And then notice how your body feels in this place...Enjoy being in this place for a few more moments, having the sense that it is longer.

Now give thanks, knowing that you can return to this special place whenever you like. Know that you will take some of the calm and peaceful feeling from this place back with you. And when you are ready...at your own pace... let your breathing deepen.... Very gradually let the awareness of your body against the chair return...Bring yourself back slowly and comfortably.... And now when you are ready...gently open your eyes with a smile on your face.

You cannot always control what goes on outside. But you can always control what goes on inside. ~Wayne W. Dyer

There is a voice that does not use words...Listen ~Rumi

Suggested Reading List

Greenspan, M. (2003). *Healing through the dark emotions: The wisdom of grief, fear, and despair*. Boston: Shambala.

Gordon, J. (2008). *Unstuck: Your guide to the seven-stage journey out of depression*. New York: Penguin Press.

Hanh, T. N. (1991). *Peace is every step*. New York: Bantam.

Hartwig, D., Hartwig, M. (2012). *It starts with food: Discover the whole 30 and change your life in unexpected ways*. USA: Victory Belt Publishing.

Kornfield, J. (2002). *The art of forgiveness, lovingkindness, and peace*. New York: Bantam.

Wolff, R. (2010). *The paleo solution: The original human diet*. USA: Victory Belt Publishing.

Allender, D.B. (1990) *The wounded heart: Hope for adult victims of childhood sexual abuse*. NavPress: Colorado Springs, CO.