

What is Guided Imagery?

The Cutting-Edge Process in Mind/Body Medical Procedures

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Abstract

The body/mind connection is a very real aspect of all relational dysfunction. This article illustrates how guided imagery allows instant access to the deep, hidden issues of fear, anger, identity, power struggles, and defensiveness that prevent us from being real with our selves and others.

The history and process of guided imagery are explored, followed by five basic, simple steps that can be used to create imageries for almost any situation, such as breaking old habits and patterns, removal of prior trauma, self understanding, symptom removal, personal growth, stress reduction, and pain control. The approach used is IntraPersonal Imagery™ (IPI).

Guided imagery is as old as psychotherapy itself. However, as a relatively new approach in the United States, guided imagery is experiencing a real wave of respect and is part of the cutting-edge process in the new mind/body medical procedures. There are many names for this process: visualization, mental imagery, guided affective imagery, active imagination, and interactive guided imagery. We call our own approach IntraPersonal Imagery (IPI).

For the first time in history, Western-styled allopathic medicine is embracing alternative healing methods, such as yoga, meditation, and guided imagery. *Life Magazine* (September 1996) reports how major universities and hospital centers are combining imagery with traditional healing practices as a major tool in healing cat-



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astrophic illness, and to promote quicker recovery from surgical procedures. Pioneers in this field, such as Bernie Siegel, MD, and Carl Simonton, MD, both oncologists and best-selling authors, have been successfully utilizing guided imagery for over 20 years in the treatment of cancer. The American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons reports that "guided imagery, a low-tech relaxation technique, reduced pain and anxiety after colorectal surgery, helping people heal better and faster."

Pictures are the universal language of the mind. These pictures provide a connecting link between the conscious and unconscious minds. Psychologist Jeanne Achterberg, PhD, often describes this process of imagery as being "the midwife that births feelings from the unconscious to the conscious mind." Freud believed the unconscious makes up 90% of the mind, and that the conscious makes up only 10% of our brain function. He proposed that all our true motives and causes for behavior are buried beneath our conscious awareness. The implication was that all of us function from unconscious motivation. Psy-

chologist Gordon Allport felt that the unhealthier you are the more you function from the unconscious, and the healthier you are the more you function from conscious awareness.

Freud further claimed that "dreams are the royal road to the unconscious." Dreams and their interpretations have been a vital aspect of understanding ourselves since the beginning of time. The difficulty with dreams, however, is that they must be remembered in order to be interpreted, and the predictability of when an epiphany or revelation occurs in sleep cannot be guaranteed. Imagery, on the other hand, can be used as dependable transportation to travel down Freud's royal road. Imagery is a dream that occurs in the waking state. A person practicing imagery is as relaxed as he or she would be in the dream state, but the conscious mind is more tuned in to listen. The dream or imagery can be created at will with no restrictions. This act of creation gives us instant access to whatever subject we wish to address; we do not have to wait for the dream to decide what subject to explore. Carl Jung called his version of imagery *active imagination* and discovered that the unconscious mind was in a constant sense of dreaming. Since the individual's attention is focused on the external, he or she is unaware of the mythic story that is continually developing unless he or she stops to focus on it. Jung remarked: "When you concentrate on a mental picture it begins to stir, the image becomes enriched by details. It moves and develops, and so when we concentrate on inner pictures and we are careful not to interrupt the natural flow of events, our unconscious will produce a series of images that makes a complete story." Jung's explanation remains one of the simplest and clearest descriptions of what guided imagery is and does. Jung further commented that this active imagination process was superior to dreams in defeating the unconscious for a quickening of maturation in analysis.

In other words, imagery is superior to dreams in overcoming or defeating the unconscious mind's resistance to allowing buried truth to come to conscious awareness. Bringing this truth to the surface, where it can be acknowledged and properly dealt with, speeds up the therapeutic growth in analysis. German analyst Hanscarl Leuner, MD, called his basic level of imagery, "A superior short term therapy that closes the gap between symptom-centered procedures and the great psychoanalytic cure."

Symptom-centered procedures refer to types of therapy that focus on immediate results by solving the problem or changing the acting-out behavior of the client, without regard for the original cause of the behavior. This differs from the Freudian approach to psychoanalytic cures, a process of finding and curing the original source of the symptom, which could take years.

What is this simple but mysterious and powerful procedure called imagery? It is a relaxation process that helps a person shut off the outside world of rational logic and bypass the censor we call the brain, enabling the person to see, experience, and learn from our intuitive, feeling, unconscious nature. Many people are afraid of their feelings, fearing they are untrustworthy, essentially bad, or destructive; they believe that their emotions will lead them astray into their animal nature. All of us, however, are complex creatures of intellect, emotion, feelings, and actions. Feelings are the barometer of the soul. They tell the intellect what the issues are; the job of the intellect is to interpret, understand, and decide appropriate reactions to those issues. To function effectively as human beings we need to understand and utilize all aspects of our selves.

Example of Guided Imagery

When a therapist works with guided imagery, he or she induces a state of relaxation and then suggests that the client visualize a scene. The therapist

then guides the client through some visualized experience that results in an insight. Consider this example of a dialogue that would take place in a guided imagery session:

Therapist: See your mother as an animal. If she were an animal what would she be?

Client: I see a rather large cow, contently chewing her cud in a green pasture. There are two little calves nearby, occasionally coming over for milk.

Therapist: What is your overall impression?

Client: Passive and quiet. She seems content.

Therapist: What do you like best and least?

Client: Best is the peacefulness and lack of stress. Least is that the cow is lazy, unmotivated, fat, and indolent, a dirty farm animal with no real purpose.

Therapist: Become the cow. What do you feel?

Client: Contented but bored. I feel judged by my daughter. My life doesn't have any real purpose.

In the scenario depicted above, the therapist could have said to the client, "Describe your mother and how you feel about her," but the client's intellect may have struggled with guilt or anger, holding back his or her true feelings, or perhaps he or she would have been more superficial in the description. By seeing his or her mother as an animal, the client is able to describe the animal as seen in the moment, rather than describe the actual mother. In imagery, the unconscious mind gives us subtle information we may otherwise avoid. And there is less guilt for the client, because the imagery is "what I saw, not what I decided to see." The value of imagery is that it can diagnose a problem, provide options for change, and even promote healing and personal empowerment. Its primary purpose is to allow the body to relax, healing the

physical and emotional aspects of self. Any new insights gained during an imagery experience are an added bonus to personal growth.

The Process of Guided Imagery

The next step in the process of guided imagery is to allow unresolved anger, conflict, and fear, which may be deeply buried in the unconscious, to emerge into the light of conscious awareness. Once seen clearly, these issues can be easily understood and related to more appropriately. This kind of imagery has been successfully used in healing cancer and other illnesses; for controlling pain; for relieving the emotional trauma of war, incest, or abuse; for overcoming phobias; for controlling habits such as addictions; and for basic understanding of the self. The technique is a powerful, fun, amazing form of personal insight that can take us from a place of personal healing to ultimate empowerment and fulfillment.

How to Interpret Imagery

Whether through guided imagery or dreams, the unconscious presents us with stories filled with symbols. An understanding of these stories' and symbols' meanings enhances their impact and the importance of the information.

Types of Symbols in Imagery

Universal Symbols. A universal symbol is one that usually holds the same meaning to all people, regardless of race, culture, time, or place. Students often ask what determines a universal symbol and how its meaning is determined. From the beginning of time, scholars have studied dreams, as well as the mythology of different cultures. Cultures, religions, myths, dreams, fairy tales, and movies of today tell the same stories with the same symbolism and meaning. Jung referred to these symbols as archetypes embedded in our psyches that have the same meaning for everyone.

There is increasing evidence that we may even carry these archetypal symbols in our DNA from generation to generation.

For example, the earth is a prominent universal symbol. It is called "mother earth" because it plays out the role of universal mother. The seed is impregnated and planted in the ground and grows for a period of time, and then it is born. Once born, it is fed and nourished by the earth, an exact description of the mother role.

Particular or Personal Symbols. The second type of symbol is a particular or personal symbol that refers to what the symbol means to the individual. For example, George has a dream that he is walking a narrow mountain path and the earth gives way beneath his feet. He slips and falls 20 feet and breaks his ankle. The universal interpretation might suggest that he is walking a narrow path "on the edge" with mother and she disappoints or lets him down so that he breaks an ankle. George says he has an excellent relationship with a very supportive mother; thus that interpretation doesn't fit.

The therapist might ask, "What's going on in your life, George?"

He replies, "A climber friend of mine invited me to go hiking next week and I'm afraid I can't keep up or will injure myself."

Now the dream is more personal and makes sense.

Someone else might share, "Last night I dreamed I was attacked by a 10-foot black widow spider." This dream is loaded with universal symbols. Black is a symbol of evil or something bad. In the old cowboy movies, the guys in the black hats and clothing were the outlaws and those dressed in white were the good guys. The black widow spider is a female who is poisonous and kills. Being 10 feet tall is a symbol of exaggeration. The dreamer is blowing his or her fear out of proportion to reality.

On the other hand, women often love

this story. They consistently complain of men using them for sex and then casting them aside. Here the female, the spider, gets even for them all. She uses her mate to fertilize her many eggs and when she no longer needs him, for he is only a sperm donor, she poisons and kills him and has him for dinner.

In interpreting this dream the therapist might ask, "Who is the woman who is overwhelmingly scaring you to death?" She could be a mother, wife, daughter, sister, boss, or even an event such as a final exam. Suppose, however, that there are no women in the client's life, which means the dream can't represent a female figure. A further question to ask in this situation might be, "Is that why there are no women in your life, you see them as black widow spiders?" After further probing, if you're convinced that the universal symbol or interpretation doesn't fit, you must ask further questions, such as "So, what was going on at the time of the dream?" With some confusion, the client might answer, "Nothing really. I'm working 12 to 14 hours a day and feel totally overwhelmed by responsibility. I don't feel I can possibly catch up or do it right." In this case, the job itself is symbolized by the black widow spider that is overwhelmingly destructive and is killing him.

The particular interpretation could also be a literal one, where the client has a very real fear or phobia of spiders. But even if the literal meaning is true, the deeper symbolic interpretation underlying the obvious could be that this person feels like a victim in life. No matter how many spiders he kills or how many problems he solves, he will inevitably wind up a victim or loser.

Types of Interpretation

Objective Interpretation. Objective interpretation is how we see our outside world. That means every symbol in a dream or imagery represents someone

or something in the world. Using the black widow spider as an example, the spider objectively represents someone or something: mother, wife, daughter, or job. If there were six different symbols in a dream, all of them would represent someone or something specific. A literal interpretation would be a fear of spiders.

Subjective Interpretation. Subjective interpretation means how we perceive our inside world. All the symbols in a dream or imagery also represent a part within us. Therefore, the black widow spider may represent the poisonous, feminine, evil side of us.

Which is better: the objective or subjective approach to interpreting symbols? The exciting answer is that it doesn't matter. They are highly correlated and either will accomplish the same goal.

The correlation between objective and subjective interpretation is the basis on which we wrote our book, *The Conflict Between Us is The Conflict Within Me*. If you are the black widow spider, evil, dominant, and destructive, who will you marry? The incompatible opposite is indeed a passive, obedient, submissive little wimp.

Incompatible Opposites

If you seek therapy to save your marriage and you become less mean and dominant, and your partner becomes more assertive and self sufficient, you have both moved to the middle, moderating your traits, and so will save the marriage.

In the imagery process, the

couple may heal the black widow spider within by using the external problems to heal the inner ones. For point of reference, either spouse could be so fearful of the spider within that it is denied and disowned. As a result, the individual becomes nice, generous, and passive. This nice person would then marry the spider, reversing the process.

On the other hand, the woman could go to therapy alone, because her partner wouldn't go or because she preferred to work on herself through individual therapy. She would learn to deal with her own spider-meanness and work toward the center by making peace with unresolved anger, which heals the personal spider within. How does that affect the relationship? As she moves toward the center, the woman begins acting differently toward her partner. If her husband responds appropriately and likes the change, he in turn moves toward the center and the relationship is improved, maintaining balance. One spouse can go to therapy and save a marriage without the other spouse attending. If, however, your mate is repelled by the changes you make and your consequential move toward the center, he or she will move further away, throwing any balance gained through therapy askew. In that case, one of you, at some point, will leave because you no longer complement the other's extremes. The balance, however precarious, will be destroyed.

In any relationship, there has to be a dance of balance or a dance of distance and polarity. There really is no other



choice. When there are unresolved issues within us, the tendency is to externalize these issues within a relationship. All outer conflicts are balanced by inner ones. Cure one type of conflict and the other heals, too.

Imagery and the Mind/Body Connection

Just as there is a connection between the interior battle of dominance and passivity within all of us that externalizes in our romantic relationships, there also has been a similar turf war between the scientific and therapeutic worlds about what effect the mind and body really have on each other. For over a century, therapists have witnessed clinical, anecdotal evidence that relaxation procedures, such as imagery and hypnosis, promote both physical and emotional healing, but there has been no way to measure this scientifically.

Years ago, biofeedback gave evidence that we can control the autonomic nervous system; today, with new, modern technology, scientists can now track activity in the brain or use blood samples to prove that behavior, thoughts, and feelings bring about instant changes in the physical body. In the conflict that raged for years over whether heredity or the environment had the most influence, there has been increasing evidence that heredity is not necessarily locked in at birth, and that it is constantly interacting with the environment to bring out a new and different self every day of our lives. In the words of best selling author Caroline Myss, "Our biography becomes our biology." The very way we think, feel, act, and believe is affecting and changing our physical bodies.

People have often interpreted "psychosomatic" symptoms as an imaginary illness created in one's head. *Psycho* refers to the mind and *somatic* refers to the body. The true meaning of psychosomatic is that the mind can make the body ill (or well), and that the body can do the same to the mind. All physical

and emotional issues are connected. The advantage of guided imagery is its ability to approach all problems from either the physical or the emotional side and yet heal both, often simultaneously.

How Does the Body Get Sick?

Most of us would like to credit outside influences—the flu, infections, or diseases that are spread from the environment—as the causes of our illnesses, but even in an epidemic, not everyone gets sick. We all carry germs and disease in our bodies daily, and yet we do not necessarily get ill. The immune system is designed to kill these germs to keep us well. So why do we sometimes become sick?

In simple terms, we do not listen to ourselves and often violate or contradict our basic belief systems. The body, therefore, goes out of balance and the immune system becomes less efficient. Anything unresolved, such as anger, stress, or pain, creates inner conflict. The various sub-personalities within us start fighting among themselves to solve the unresolved problem. The body fights to compensate and keep a sense of order. For instance, your right shoulder tenses up and throws your left hip out of alignment, causing sciatic pain. This is a defensive attempt of the body to balance itself.

Guided Imagery as a Proven Method to Correct Inner Struggles that Occur within the Body

Over the years, the authors of this article have found a rather simple five-step approach for using imagery as a healing tool. Guided imagery is used by many people in a myriad of fashions, as can be said of any other medical or therapeutic technique.

For simplicity and clarity, the illustrations of imagery that follow will address the physical side of healing, but the physical is interchangeable with the emotional. You could be directed to find an infection or tumor in your body, or you could also be directed to locate where your



mother resides in your body. The healing process would basically be the same.

Five Steps to Healing the Body through IntraPersonal Imagery

Step 1.) Relax the body. The first step in imagery is to induce a relaxed state of being. A study was conducted in the mid-1990s by Weiland and Murphy to research the rate of healing while in different states of consciousness, such as being awake or being asleep. The study used burn victims, making it easy to literally watch the rate of growth of new skin cells in newly grafted areas. It was discovered that while these patients were awake, the average cell regeneration was approximately 8 to 19 new skin cells per square millimeter of space. While these patients were asleep, this regeneration increased to 100 to 150 new skin cells per square millimeter of space. Curiously, the experiment was taken one step further, and while these patients were in a state of meditation, doing guided imagery, visualization, prayer, etc., the regeneration of new skin cells increased dramatically to between 400 to 450 new skin cells per square millimeter of space. Indeed, while being relaxed in the process of doing guided imagery, the body starts to physically shift: the heart rate slows, the blood pressure likewise decreases, the immune system is strengthened, and the metabolism

speeds up. As a result, the body can heal more quickly.

Have you ever experienced a charley horse (a muscle cramp or spasm in your leg muscle)? Most of us tense up to fight the pain these cramps cause, and this makes the pain even worse, a result of tension against tension. It is impossible to relax the cramp, so you must relax into the pain. If you relax the rest of the body, the pain can spread out and be released more easily. Preparing for childbirth uses the same principle; contractions are needed to deliver the baby, so by relaxing the rest of the body, the pain becomes more bearable.

Step 2.) Visualize the pain. In this step, you visualize any painful spot in the body and describe it, using terms such as tight muscles, red inflammation, a cut or tear, an actual tumor, or just a blackened area. Some individuals will not see body afflictions, but will see symbols of the pain instead: fire, demons, an arrow or knife, an iron band squeezing the head, or a knotted, tight rope. The unconscious has a great sense of humor and often uses puns to make a point. If a person sees bugs crawling all over a part of the body, the question might simply be, "What's bugging me in that area?" If a stabbing pain in the rib cage is symbolized as a sharp knife stuck deep between the ribs, one might ask, "Who or what is stabbing me or inflicting pain in my life?" If a client sees a monkey clinging powerfully to his or her back, he or she can inquire, "Who is the monkey on my back?"

Step 3.) Talk to the pain. Once we have an image of this physical/emotional pain, the next step is to talk to it. Amazingly, the symbol will usually be very happy to respond. There is no wrong way to do imagery. We may see, sense, hear, or just know, but answers will be there. Here are sample questions you may use to identify what the pain is connected to and what can be done to relieve it:

- What is the original cause of this pain?

"For over a century, therapists have witnessed clinical, anecdotal evidence that relaxation procedures, such as imagery and hypnosis, promote both physical and emotional healing..."

- What is the most important thing you want me to know about you?
- What do you want from me that you're not getting?
- How would my life be different if I gave it to you?
- What do I need to do to allow this pain to heal?

It is very important to see all pain as a messenger of truth. The pain is either trying to tell us something or trying to hide something from us. How are we to distinguish between the two choices? The following examples may help you make this determination.

One client had a 20-year history of migraine headaches that were so severe she considered suicide. This woman was in an abusive marriage but carried a religious belief that divorce was a sin and, therefore, not an option for her. In imagery, the headache told her the only solution for her was to get a divorce. The day she left her husband, the headaches went away and never returned. Before she learned to use guided imagery, we could say the headaches were trying to distract her from a bad marriage and provide distance from her abusive husband so she could stay in the relationship.

Another woman suffered from chronic backache throughout years spent in a troubled marriage to an alcoholic. When her husband died, the backaches spontaneously went away. The body may become ill as a way of creating a dependency to justify staying in a marriage. It is extremely important to get as much information as possible from one's pain before action is taken.

Step 4.) Remove the pain. There are

several steps involved in removing pain. Many people are not capable or ready to remove pain, even if they want to. The pain often becomes a part of their identity, "If I'm not a victim of this pain, who am I?" In the words of the famous Carly Simon song, "Suffering is the only way that makes me feel alive." The pain might also be protecting individuals from having to take responsibility for themselves before they are ready to do so.

- Without hurting yourself or the symbol (pain), take it in your hands and gently remove the symbol from your body.

- While holding the pain, send it love. In its own distorted way, this pain is trying to protect you from what it perceives as a greater threat or pain. What happens to the pain when you send it love? Does it change in some manner?

- You are now being offered a magic solution. This solution is made up of chemicals from your own body, which knows better than you or a doctor or a therapist exactly what is needed to heal this pain. Spray or administer this magic solution liberally. What happens to the symbol or pain when you do this?

- Put the pain or symbol on a shelf. Even if you are not ready to let it go, put it on the shelf for a short time. Tell the pain that it needs a rest from working so hard, and your body does too. You can always go back and pick it up again later.

- Fill the space in the body where the pain was removed with the magic solution. What happens to the body spot?

Step 5.) Healing and transformation. By removing the pain or symbol, the healing process has already begun. Sending love and the magic solution continues the healing process at an even deep-

er level. Remember, when we do this, we are not removing a part of ourselves. Infection, cancer, even emotional pain are not a part of us. We can now deal with these issues (physical or emotional, including parents, marriages, and careers) from outside the body. When touched by love and the magic solution, the symbol itself will often turn from something ugly and menacing to something smaller, more colorful, and pleasant. If you see red infection, it may turn to skin tone, demons could change to small children, fires may diminish or go out. The body has been given permission to heal itself. Negative energy can be transformed to positive energy as perceptions change and fears subside. Sometimes the client or the therapist will create a ritual of healing to



complete the process, such as floating in a jacuzzi of the magic solution to cleanse and purify the entire body.

This simple five-step process can be modified to work with any emotional or physical pain or issue in your life. The imagery process just described may sound mysterious or even preposterous to someone who has never experienced it, but thousands of people have found that this method provides a relaxed, safe, and loving environment that enables healing, restoration, and empowerment for new perceptions, choices, and opportunities.

Research is continually validating that the body knows how to heal itself. We can allow and give permission to our incredible anatomy to heal naturally if we allow our bodies to do so. Through this process of imagery, we can identify and remove these blocks from our body, whether they are physical or emotional, and return to health and well-being.

Imagery is equally effective for healing physical ailments as well as relationship dysfunction, which can be applied to a marital relationship. The following imagery scenario may help you improve your relationship with your spouse.

Imagery Experience

Visualize your spouse as an animal. If your spouse were an ani-

mal, what would he or she be? Go with the first animal that appears in your mind, and try not to edit your response. Describe the animal's type, size, color, and attitude. In what setting do you find it? What is your overall impression of this animal? What do you like best about this animal? What do you like least about the animal? How does the animal respond to you? What happens when you approach it?

Now, it is time to *become* the animal. See if you can actually be the animal and feel what it is feeling. What do you feel as the animal? As the animal, look back at the person in front of you (this person is yourself). How do you feel about this person? As the animal, make a statement to the person.

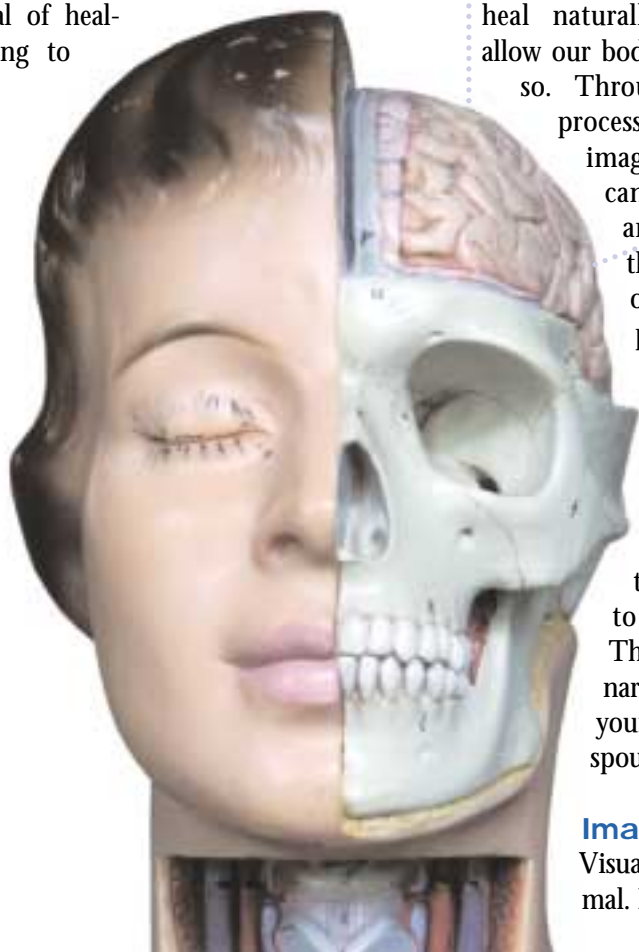
Become yourself again. How do you feel about what the animal said to you? You can change the animal in any way you choose or leave it the way it is. You can put the animal anywhere you choose or leave it where you found it.

Now, slowly and deliberately, let yourself come back to the room you are in.



Discussion

Once the imagery has been completed, take some time to write down what you actually saw and experienced. Then come back to this section. Use the script to help you remember the events you experienced. What did you learn about your spouse by seeing him or her as an animal? The type of animal can be very revealing: a grizzly bear or a teddy bear, a cunning fox or slimy snake, overwhelmingly large or small and inadequate. What was the general attitude of this animal? Was it friendly, trusting, angry, loving, dominant, or submissive? What was your first overall impression? Remember, there is no judgment here. Whatever you saw and felt is OK; it's



your experience.

What you liked best and least about the animal can add to the meaning of the experience. In the worst there is always a best, and vice versa. This can supply important clues to hidden or obscured feelings. One husband described his wife in glowing terms as a beautiful, fluffy Siamese cat, warm and loving, but finished by saying he was always aware that hidden in those soft, gentle paws were claws of steel that could tear him to shreds. His wife saw him as a knight in shining armor on his horse, always ready to defend her, but she never lost sight of the fact he could easily use his sword on her.

Becoming the animal is an important step toward empathy. Experiencing someone else's world through his or her eyes can be quite revealing. One woman saw her husband as an angry, wild, hostile bear. When she became the bear, she was shocked to feel frightened and helpless, terrified of being wrong or inadequate.

What was your experience? What did you learn about your spouse, yourself, and your relationship by conducting this imagery exercise?

A Final Word

Is imagery for everyone? We have found a few people over the years who were not able to relax enough to do imagery for a variety of reasons: fear of what information might come up, fear of exposure to self or others, fear that they "couldn't do it," or fear of being hypnotized and under someone else's control. Because imagery is very similar to hypnosis, this issue sometimes comes up. The difference between the two is mostly the manner in which the therapist or facilitator was trained. Much of hypnosis training concerns behavior modification for breaking addictive habits or phobias, or for giving positive affirmations. The way that any therapist would use either imagery or hypnosis would be

greatly influenced by his or her theoretic orientation and background. As for control, people who have seen stage hypnotists have a difficult time believing that the person maintains choice during the event. In our approach we explain that there is no need for control or a desire to change someone. The emphasis of our imagery is to reveal information for better understanding, clarity, and choice. It's the patient's journey, not the therapist's.

About the Authors

Charles D. Leviton, EdD, DAPA, is a licensed marriage and family therapist and certified hypnotherapist with over 36 years of experience as a full-time college professor and psychotherapist. Along with his wife Patti, Dr. Leviton now devotes his time to training both professionals and laypeople to be certified in the unique and powerful process of guided imagery. Author of *There is No Bad Truth – The Search for Self* and co-author of *The Conflict Between Us is the Conflict Within Me*, Dr. Leviton is a nationally recognized lecturer and authority on the therapeutic use of imagery, both for use by professionals and in one's personal life and growth. Dr. Leviton is a Diplomate of the American Psychotherapy Association and is the past president and a current board member of the American Association for the Study of Mental Imagery. He recently retired from Orange Coast College, where he taught courses on marriage, family life, and guided imagery for over 34 years. He now devotes his full attention to facilitating the Synergy Seminars Certification Program.

Patti Leviton, MA, CHT, has over 20 years experience with guided imagery. A former stockbroker and trader, Leviton had a miraculous healing from cancer over 15 years ago and now devotes herself full time to her work as a certified hypnotherapist, working with numerous cancer groups and women's support

groups, and at weekend seminars with her husband, Dr. Leviton. A popular and entertaining speaker, Leviton has presented her story at international conferences and seminars. She is a board member of The American Holistic Health Association and runs ongoing guided imagery groups for Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, California. Patti has written a book about her healing journey titled *The Miracle of Words*, and, together with her husband, has co-authored a book about using imagery in relationships, *The Conflict Between Us is the Conflict Within Me*. Patti also has a complete library of guided imagery CDs and tapes to be used for surgery, cancer, relaxation, etc., and creates personalized tapes for specific issues.

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