

## **Guided Imagery**

**for student-to-student storytelling**

### **A time you were happy.**



(Marc's note: I use this story as the example, before have the students work in groups for fours, practicing and telling their story to three different partners.)

I'm going to tell you a story and, as I do, you can *experience the story in your mind*. Please sit with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes. Relax. •

Think about a time you were happy. Very, very happy. In your mind, *experience that happy time now*. Imagine that time, that place, that happy experience. *Experience that happy time, now*.

You are in that place. Where are you? • You can *see yourself in that place*. Look around. Where are you? • Inside? Outside? What do you see? Look around...and you can *notice the place*. Notice the colors. Notice what things are made of. Notice the textures (Are things smooth? Rough?). • What else do you notice?

Are there people. If there are people, notice them. Who are they? What do they look like? What are they wearing? • And listen. What are they saying? •

And what are you saying? • And what else do you hear? Sounds in the background? Music? Other people? *Listen*. What else do you hear? •

And notice what you feel. Is the day hot? Cool? How does your body feel? • If you are standing, you *feel the weight* on your feet. If you are sitting, you *feel your body* against whatever you are sitting on. Whatever position your body is in, notice it.

And this is a special time – a very happy day. What do you *feel in your heart*? *Feel your emotions*. Are you excited? Peaceful. Relaxed? What are you feeling? •

You'll have a half minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *experience now that special time*. And, as you do,

- You can *see yourself* at the special time, now.
- You can *hear all the things* that make the time special, now.
- You can *feel those wonderful feelings*, now

(30-second pause)

**(Extra review here – optional)**

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

**Extra review** (*useful for helping learners, especially if they are going to be asked to tell the story they experienced*). –

And now, imagine that that wonderful experience is on video. And you can experience the video again – experience the movie in your mind -- and as you do, maybe you want to *watch the video* and, as you do, think about what is happening. How will you describe it in English? Practice in your mind.

OR just watch the video and *listen to the story*.

OR Maybe practice in your mind. *Practice describing it. Speak silently* – move your mouth – practice without sound or even speak softly.

(30-second pause)

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

Guided imagery hints (if you are going to have students read to each other, go over these hints (probably after you have guided them through the first story):

- Speak in a soft, relaxing tone.
- When you see the dot (•), pause to give “thinking time.”
- When you see *phrases in italics*, pause slightly before and after them. This quietly makes the phrase stand out in the listeners’ minds.
- It is best if they sit fairly straight with both feet on the floor (This idea comes from yoga. It is very practical since many students, when invited to close their eyes, put their heads on their desks and become sleepy. You want them relaxed but alert.).

These guided imagery stories are designed to move the learner through the main senses: *visual*, *auditory*, *haptic* [a combination movement (*kinesthetic*) and feeling (both touch (*tactile*) and emotion) (and, where possible, *olfactory* [smell] and *gustatory* [taste]). They start off with sensory neutral words (*experience*, *notice*, etc.). Then they move to visual words (*see*, *watch*) since everyone except blind people experience visual images strongly. Then they move into auditory words (*listen*, *hear*) followed by haptic (*feel*, *notice your body/emotion*, etc.). In this way, everyone is asked to experience the story across the range of their own senses.

Storyteller Michael Berman refers to this type of activity as “guided journeys”. Nice.

I learned a lot about guided imagery from Richard Bolstadt and from Jane Revell & Susan Norman’s book *In your hands* (Saffire Press [[saffirepress.co.uk](http://saffirepress.co.uk)]). That book includes a guided imagery called “the deserted beach” which is similar to “the beach” in this set, but at a higher level.

Teaching note: When I use these with my undergrad student, I lead them on a guided journey (A time you were happy). Then they work in pairs. Each pair gets one of the stories below. Both partners need a copy of the same story. They read it silently to themselves and talk with their partner about the meaning. Then they practice reading it aloud to their partner. The brackets on the right break the story into four part. These are good points to change parts when reading aloud to their partner. After they read it aloud and can tell the story smoothly, they change partners. The new partner is someone with a different story. They lead that new partner on the journey. Tell them to take the time to imagine the story as they read aloud and pause at the dots. When they finish, they talk about the follow-up questions. Then they change partners and continue.

Enjoy.

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# Student-to-student storytelling: *Guided journeys*

## The beach



1. Practice reading the story in a slow, smooth, relaxed, peaceful way.
2. Invite your partner to close their eyes. They should sit up straight, with both feet on the floor. Read the story. When you see a dot (•), pause to give your partner *thinking time*.

Relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

In your mind, you are at a beach. You are alone. It is a beautiful, peaceful day. You're alone at this beautiful, peaceful beach.

In your mind, you *see the beach*. Look closely. What color is the sand?  
Brown? White? Black? •

*Look past the sand*. What do you see? Trees? Rocks? Anything else? •  
*Look at the water*. What color is the water? Is it smooth? Are there waves? •

*Are there birds*, flying above the water? What else do you see?•

And listen. What do you hear? Birds? The waves? The wind making a slight breeze?  
What else do you hear? •

Listen to your mind. What are you thinking? What are you saying to yourself? •

Now take a deep breath. As you breathe, you can smell – and taste that fresh, salty air. • And notice your body. What do you feel? The sand against your body? The warm sun? A breeze?

And now, what would you like to do?

- Walk along the beach. Maybe you want to take off your shoes and walk in the water.
- Or go for a swim.
- Or maybe just lay on the beach and enjoy the sun and this beautiful, peaceful place. •

You can do what ever you like. You'll have a half-minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *enjoy this beach, now*.

### • (30-second pause)

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

- Follow-up.**
1. Storyteller and listener, describe your beaches.
  2. Think of the five senses. What did you see, hear, feel, smell or taste?
  3. Draw a picture of your beach.

## Student-to-student storytelling: *Guided journeys*

### Your best vacation



1. Practice reading the story in a slow, smooth, relaxed, peaceful way.
2. Invite your partner to close their eyes. They should sit up straight, with both feet on the floor. Read the story. When you see a dot (•), pause to give your partner *thinking time*.

Relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Think about the best vacation you have ever taken. • Where did you go? • Who did you go with? • What did you do?

In your mind, you are on that vacation, now.

In your mind, you can *see yourself*. Look closely. Where are you? Are you inside or outside? *Look around*. What do you see? Buildings? Nature? What colors do you see? What are things made from? Notice the shapes. The size. *What do you see?* •

Who are you with? Friends? Family? Are you alone?

*Notice the other people*. What do they look like? What kind of clothes are they wearing? Who are they? Do you know these people? •

*Listen*. What are they saying? • What are you saying?

What else do you hear? Sounds? Music? Birds. Other people. *Listen* to everything you can hear. •

What else do you notice? Smells. What do you smell? Tastes? Are you eating?

And *what do you feel* today? Is it hot? Cold? Is there a breeze? What clothes are you wearing? How do they feel on your body?

This is a special vacation – your best vacation. *What do you feel* in your heart? Excited? Relaxed? Maybe a mixture of emotions. What do you feel?

And now, you'll have a half-minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *experience this wonderful vacation, now*.

And as you do, you can *see*, and *hear*, and *feel* and *taste* and *smell* and *enjoy* the wonderful *experience* of your vacation.

#### • (30-second pause)

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

**Follow-up.** 1. Storyteller and listener, describe your vacations.

2. Think of the five senses. What did you see, hear, feel, smell or taste?

## Student-to-student storytelling: *Guided journeys*

### Your future success



1. Practice reading the story in a slow, smooth, relaxed, peaceful way.
2. Invite your partner to close their eyes. They should sit up straight, with both feet on the floor. Read the story. When you see a dot (•), pause to give your partner *thinking time*.

Relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Think about the future. Your life. Your job. Your family. Your dream. And think about your success.

Think about your dream. Think about your goals. Think about your own success.

In your mind, imagine you are going forward through time. This year. Next year. Forward into your future. • And now it is five years in the future, You have graduated from university. You are started on the road to success. And what is *success* for you? A good job? What kind? Your relationships with other people? Your family? The place you live. It is 20\_\_ (this year + 5). In your mind, see yourself. What do you look like? Where are you? Who are you with? • What are people saying? What are you saying? What are you doing? • You feel successful. What is your success? • What is your dream? •

And now, you are moving further into time. It is 10 years in the future. You are successful. • In your mind, experience your success. What are you doing? Where do you live? What is your job? Are you single or married? What is family like? What is your lifestyle? •

You are successful. Take this moment to *think about your successful life*. You move toward your dream. •

And now, you are moving further into your future. You are reaching your dream. And you can see yourself, and hear yourself and feel your success. • And your happiness. • You are successful. And in your mind, you know what you are experiencing. •

And now, you take the time to look back. You look at your success and how you achieved it. •

What were the little things you did to *reach your dream, step-by-step*? •

What did you do at work? • What did you do in your relationships. •

What did you do all the way back in university that lead to your success? •

You'll have a half-minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *think of those step you took to achieve your goal*. • **(30-second pause)**

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

**Follow-up.** 1. Describe your goal.

2. Describe the steps you took (in your mind) to reach your goal.

3. What are three things you can TODAY to start reaching your dream.

## Student-to-student storytelling: *Guided journeys*

### The gift



1. Practice reading the story in a slow, smooth, relaxed, peaceful way.
2. Invite your partner to close their eyes. They should sit up straight, with both feet on the floor. Read the story. When you see a dot (•), pause to give your partner *thinking time*.

Relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

I'm going to tell you a story. It is a happy story. It is a story about you.

In your mind, you *see yourself*. You are walking down a road. You are in a beautiful forest. This might be a magic forest. Look around. What does your friendly, magic forest look like? What colors do you see? What shades of color are the trees? The sky? The clouds. What other colors? What else do you see? •

- And what do you hear? Birds singing? Animals playing? What are you saying to yourself? What are you thinking on this happy day? What else do you hear?

- And now, you see something move. It's an animal – an animal you like very much. The animal looks at you. You look at it. You smile.

- Slowly, shyly, the animal comes to you. You hold out your hand. The animal comes to you.

- The animal loves you. It wants to do something special for you. The animal starts to move. You follow it. The animal is taking you down a small road. Look around. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

- And now, you see a small, pretty house. You go in.

- On the table, there is a box. Look at the box. How big is it? What color is it? What is it made of?

- There is a label on the box. It says, "for you." This is a present for you. You open box. Look inside.

- *Wow!* This is *wonderful*. You look at your present. You hold it. This is *fantastic*. •

You'll have a half-minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *enjoy the rest of this story in your mind*. What happens next? *See* what happens, and *listen*, and notice *what you do* and *feel* as you *enjoy this experience*.

- **(30-second pause)**

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

**Follow-up.** 1. Storyteller and listener, describe the forest, the animal, the box and the present.

2. Listener, tell your story. What did you see, hear, and do after you opened the present?

## Student to student storytelling: *Guided journeys*

### Frame (for making your own) **Your**

1. Practice reading the story in a slow, smooth, relaxed, peaceful way.
2. Invite your partner to close their eyes. They should sit up straight, with both feet on the floor. Read the story. When you see a dot (•), pause to give your partner *thinking time*.

Relax. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Think about

In your mind, you are

In your mind, you *see your*. Look closely. Where are you?

And now, what would you like to do?

You'll have a half-minute of real time – which is equal to all the time you need to *enjoy*.

(30-second pause)

And when you are ready, take a deep breath. Relax. Smile and open your eyes.

- Follow-up.**
1. Storyteller and listener, describe
  2. Think of the five senses. What did you see, hear, feel, smell or taste?