

Imagery

1. Imagery is just daydreaming, but a little more structured and purposeful. It can be very helpful when you're upset or stressed out. The rule of thumb for imagery should be "more than a minute, less than an hour." It is a short escape from an upsetting situation.
2. There are lots of ways to use imagery to relax. You can imagine any one of these:
 - a. Relaxing place
 - b. Soothing person
 - c. Secret lockbox
3. There are two KEYS to effective imagery:
 - a. Get all your senses involved: sight, sound, taste, touch, smell. The more sensorily-rich your imagery is, the more effective and relaxing it can be.
 - b. Breathe deeply and calmly throughout
4. For **relaxing place**: Think of a place you have been to, or seen in a movie, or read about in a book, or otherwise imagined. This place should be safe. Some people like to think of the beach, a forest, or grandma's porch swing, for example. Once you have that place in mind, really focus on what it feels like to be there. What are you wearing? What do you hear? What are the smells? Focus on the space between your feet and the floor. Now what do you hear? Is there a taste in your mouth? Focus on the space between your teeth and tongue. Are there people around? Is there a breeze? Ask and answer these questions gently, as they come up. And if you don't like the answers, imagine them changing.
5. For **soothing person**: Imagine someone who is kind, sees the best in you, and is never cruel. (Crushes don't work for this; the person is probably an adult or close friend). This might be someone in your life right now. Or a fictional character. Or, if you believe in a higher power, it could be this, too. Once you have the person in mind, imagine in detail what they look like, what they are saying, and what you feel like with them.
6. For **secret lockbox**: Imagine—in great detail—a place in your mind where you keep what is most special to you: your favorite memories, your good feelings, your hopes and dreams. Very clearly construct in your mind what the lockbox looks like, and where you keep it. Open the box (do you need a key? A code? Is it at the bottom of the ocean?) and sift through the lockbox, finding some or all of the pleasant things you keep in there.

