

## Imagery for Caregivers

This imagery is designed for anyone who is or has been a caregiver. While the rewards of caring for a friend or loved one with an illness can be very meaningful, we also know that caregiving often requires remarkable effort. Here's an opportunity for relaxation and replenishment for the caregiver.

To begin, find a comfortable position. This may be seated in a chair, lying on your back on the floor or on a bed.....see if you can align your head, neck and shoulders in a manner that feels supported.

Begin to become aware of your breathing.....no effort is needed, simply inhale an easy, refreshing breath and exhale fully.....you're not needed by anyone, anywhere for anything.....this is a time to release and receive.....

If thoughts or feelings surface and compete for your attention, there's no need to engage, simply focus on your breath and allow any thoughts or emotions to pass through like bubbles floating to the surface and releasing.

Watch the steady rise and fall of your breath.....continue to inhale the source of life and exhale to release the remnants of spent energy.....in with peace, calm, out with any tension or discomfort you may be holding.....with each breath, releasing any weariness and receiving replenishment.....in with nourishment, out with any concern.....just watching the rise and fall of your breath.....see if you can inch your breath lower and lower into your body.....creating space within yourself....opening through your chest and torso.....feel your muscles soften, your joints soften.....you're creating capacity for each cleansing and rejuvenating breath....the sensations of releasing and softening.....

Use your mind's eye to briefly scan your body in search of any places where you may still be holding tension or discomfort....simply allow your breath to travel to any place of discomfort and watch as your breath surrounds and loosens ...and gently releases the sensation to be carried away as you exhale.....two or three breaths will soften and release any discomfort.....

And now, your mind's eye and senses are taking you on a very brief journey....to a place where you have no worries or responsibilities.....a place free of concern.....no schedules....perhaps it's a place you've visited or a place you've dreamed of visiting...maybe your current home.....you're making your way to this carefree destination.....you see it coming into view .....allow your senses to take it in.....maybe you're at a beach, or in a fresh meadow, or in your favorite room of your home or childhood surroundings....indoors, outdoors, you choose and take it in.....the colors....the aromas or fragrances.....the sounds....the light.....the sensations, perhaps a breeze or popping crackle of a fire....maybe a mountain trail or sandy beach beneath your feet.....you are safe, comfortable, free, taking it all in.....

Notice the ease within your body....your welcomed reactions to this experience...

You know that special things happen for you when you allow yourself to release and find a place of freedom.....

Just for now, picture a time when you provided care for a loved one or friend.....see if you can connect with the sense of care and love you have for that person.....what do you notice about your experience of providing care? Take a moment to just let that awareness be present....noting the deep care and respect that direct your actions.....noting your intent of providing comfort for that person.....

If emotions arise, there's no need to engage, allow any feelings to simply pass through you.....

As you recall your caregiving, notice your voice, your skill and maybe even humor as you shower this person with care.....what sensations do you notice in your body?.....Notice how you are transmitting caring, comforting, healing attention and energy toward this person....See if you can note where this energy, this intent comes from.....is it from a place within you? ....somewhere else? Where does it come from? Is there anything you need to do to keep replenishing this energy, this intent, this ability?....allow any brief insights about this to surface and take note.....

And now, take a breath or two of transition.....in this lovely place to which you've called yourself, see yourself as a recipient of care....allow yourself to become the one who receives care.....the comforting, caring, healing energy you've shown another is now being showered upon you.....what form does this caring energy take?.....allow the images and sensations to arise.....imagine your self....your every cell awash in caring, restorative, soothing energy and intent.....every good wish ever sent your way....every bit of gratitude....kindness... care-full knowing... surrounding you now and energizing the air around you...the air you breathe.....see if you can allow yourself to simply take it in....absorb it.....notice the gentle movement of energy around and within you and your being.....this caring, comforting, healing, replenishing energy....for you...within you....around you.....

Just see if you can take it in.....

You know that these sensations are available to you at any time you choose to connect with them.....any time you need or want them.....you only need allow yourself this type of release in order to receive.....and you know that with each connection you are comforted, replenished, renewed, strengthen and become more whole.....

And just for now, note your surroundings once again, this sights, the sounds, the aromas, the sensations, the light.....and make that brief trip back to your chair, floor or bed.....and when you're ready, refreshed, peaceful and calm....you are back here....