

Inner Advisor or Council Imagery

Hello, I'm Claire Casselman of the Complementary Therapies Program of the University of Michigan's Comprehensive Cancer Center. Welcome to this podcast of guided imagery designed to assist you with managing the often stressful aspects of cancer diagnosis, treatment or life after treatment.

Whether you are a person with cancer, have been treated for cancer, or a friend or loved one of someone with cancer – you are aware that this time requires constant attention to the details of appointments, schedules, healthy eating, and maintaining family and work routines. More and more, research has shown the benefits of practices such as guided imagery to support a person's ability to cope, manage and heal. The good news is that you may choose when and where to use this very simple, very powerful, non-invasive strategy.

For more information about the benefits of guided imagery, how it works and tips for optimal use, please see the webpage.....

This particular imagery is designed to assist you with finding and experiencing the support and wisdom of a “guide” or “council of advisors.” The desire for support or guidance when we are in stressful circumstances is very common – and often a sign of health. In the next few minutes, this imagery will suggest a way for you to obtain insight or wisdom or the supportive presence of those whom you trust or treasure.

With all guided imagery, the first step is to release physical and mental tension and be comfortable. For now, find a comfortable position. This may be seated in a chair or lying on a bed or on the floor. See if you can align your head, neck and shoulders in a fashion that feels supported and comfortable....

Begin to become aware of your breathing. You don't have to change anything or work at it, just notice it....the steady rise and fall of your breath....breathing in nourishing, cleansing breath, and releasing any tension or spent energy as you exhale....in with the life-giving force of breath, out with that which is no longer serving you.....in with peace, calm – out with worry or discomfort...

If thoughts should arise and compete for your attention, there's no need to engage or analyze. Likewise with emotions – if feelings or emotions compete for your attention, there's no need to engage. Simply let them be as bubbles in the glass that float to the surface and are released. If you lose your way, just return your awareness to your breathing.

See if you can inch your breath lower and lower into your body. With each breath, bringing in vitality and releasing tension....the steady rise and fall of your breath....

Notice your muscles softening, your joints softening....perhaps you're aware of creating easy, open space within your chest and torso....Feel the drain of tension from your head

to your fingertips and releasing.....Gently flowing down from your throat to your chest, your abdomen, flowing across your hips and buttocks, your legs, feet, all the way to the tips of your toes and released.....a gentle flow of release, leaving soft openness throughout your body.

Now that you are comfortable and free of tension, allow your mind's eye to take you to a pond, lake, river or large body of water. You choose.....watch as it comes into view.....you are protected from sun or wind, safe from any insects or any potential discomforts of outdoors...you are simply taking in the beauty of this place.....notice the colors....blues...greens...sky, water, vegetation....notice the aromas and fragrances....perhaps sweet blooming plants....freshness of the slight breeze....notice the sounds....perhaps lapping of the water as it reaches the shore....birds.....the breeze in your ears....frogs.....notice the other sensations of this place.....the light warmth of the sun...perhaps it's early morning or evening...perhaps the brightness of mid-day....it's your favorite time of day to be at the water's edge... perhaps your own sensations mirror the water's serenity, the gentle movement, the reflective shimmer of the water.....

And you become aware of the approaching sound of wings flapping in the air overhead...whosh, whosh....you can actually feel the stirring of the air in concert with the whosh of wings....and you see the large white bird, just passing overhead, making a line for the water...it's a swan coming in for a landing on the surface of the water. Notice the large wing-span... the brilliance of its white feathers....gracefully gliding downward, lightly skittering momentarily on the water, then easily transitioning to swimming....watch as it paddles upon the water's surface, seemingly effortlessly...

With the swan's arrival has also come a slight increase in the energy of this place....a tingling in the air....a sense of expectancy....you are aware that something special awaits you....

Perhaps you've been aware of a longing for comfort or a caring presence.....in the midst of demands for time and energy....in the midst of fear or concern, you've desired the support, wisdom, or "knowing" of a trusted advisor --- an entity who can provide wisdom or comfort.

This place and time offers connection....connection with a person, animal, pet or other type of guide for support and counsel.....and as naturally as the swan glided onto the water, your trusted other appears....watch it come closer to you....coming more clearly into view....perhaps you recognize a treasured loved one or friend.....maybe a person from history you've admired.....perhaps an animal whose qualities inspire you.....maybe a beloved pet....perhaps the one who comes is living, perhaps no longer living

There's no need to analyze or interpret why this particular entity has joined you...love and care for you have brought it here..... You may also find that more than one has joined you. Perhaps it is a duo or trio or more....all here at your request, motivated by care.

If any emotions or feelings arise in response to the arrival, simply let them pass through and be released....no need to engage in feelings....

Perhaps you have already exchanged greetings with your visitor...if not, go ahead.....Perhaps you have a request or a question to ask.....perhaps there's something you'd like to tell your trusted other.....if so, go ahead.....and receive their response. There's no need to analyze the interaction, simply tuck it away for later --- it's power and meaning will come to you when you need or want it.....Perhaps your advisor has come with a message for you....go ahead and inquire.....again, without analyzing or interpreting, simply take note and tuck the message away. It will come to you when you need or want it.

You carry this connection within yourself at all times....readily available whenever you choose.....you may travel to this or any safe, freeing space and issue an invitation. They will come when you need or desire their presence.

For now, knowing that you may return at any time, prepare to send your special entity on their way.....watch them go...perhaps there's something for which you're grateful for having had this experience. If so, take note and tuck it away. It, too, will come to you when you want or need it.

As you take one more look around at this place of beauty, peace and connection, note the colors, sounds, aromas and sensations --- all are readily available to you whenever you desire. Your mind and body know the way and will bring you here.

Notice the peaceful sensations within your body.....

Make the brief trip back to your chair, or bed or floor. Find yourself there. And when you are ready, comforted, calm, wiser and grateful, you are here.