Waiting for Gu_ru

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Guided Visualization A Rewarding Fifteen-Minute Escape

Summer's here and I ponder whether summer is a time and place or merely a state of mind? Besides the regular tumult of children, elderly parents, work and the upkeep of your home, the temperature is climbing into the 90's and the humidity is keeping close company. Sunburns abound, the pollen and pollution are making many of us miserable. We rush to adjust our thermostats to cool, we hasten to the nearest air-conditioned retreats where we are confronted with the high price of gas, rising food costs and generally the cost of living in a society that offers luxury at lowest prices in the world for the rich and the highest cost for necessities such as health care for the working class. You are asking, where is she leading?

I am leading to **a mini-emotional- fifteen-minute-vacation-cure-all.** (I said only mini)

At the end of all my Yoga classes I lead my Yoga participants in a "Guided Visualization" of one kind or another. The response is always the same as they awaken refreshed and smiling. "I feel so good I wish I could sleep right here" or "I don't want to move to go home."

You can be the master of your own visualization. You probably have a small fountain or a scented candle stashed in some closet or storage room that you received as a Christmas, office or Birthday gift. If these are not available just go into your kitchen and look on you condiment shelf. Mint, Vanilla, Cinnamon, Lavender, Nutmeg and/or your favorite Perfume will do. Just rub a little under your nose. If you have an eye pillow to put over your eyes bring that along with you. If you do not have an eye pillow just dampen a washcloth with cold water (remember to ring it out) find a quit corner where you can put down a special towel, a Yoga mat, a prayer rug, or even a large colorful scarf, and put on a CD of some relaxing music that you like.

Get comfortable, close your eyes, (put your eye pillow or your damp cloth over your eyes) adjust your back and shoulders so that your are relaxed and begin to breath through your nose inhaling to the count of eight, holding for the count of one and exhaling through your nose to the count of eight, and holding for the count of one. By bringing all the air down to and filling your lower abdomen, your esophagus, your lungs and upper chest and then releasing all the air from your upper chest, your lungs, your esophagus and your lower abdomen, you are performing what is called in Yoga the "Complete Breath". Breathing like this will bring more air into your system and help you relax. After five or six complete breathes let your breathing relax to your natural pace of inhaling and exhaling through your nose.

Now that you are relaxed we will work on the visualization part of the exercise.

Think of a place you have visited, read about or seen in a move. Visualize the landscape, the people, the climate and the smell of the air. If you are visualizing a beach feel your feet on the sand, and smell the salt water. If you are visualizing a mountain slope feel the cool breeze on your face and the rock or the grass beneath your feet. If you are scuba diving feel the cold of the water on your skin and the sense of silence you experience under water. Now that you've got the knack of it let yourself explore and enjoy your imagined locale at a leisurely and unhurried pace. I said only fifteen to twenty minutes. It is time to come back home. Start to visualize yourself coming back to your surroundings and wiggle your fingers and toes to gently awaken yourself and slowly bring yourself to a sitting position. When you are ready to stand up do so by keeping your head above your heart to avoid getting dizzy.

In this hectic world we live in give yourself a daily fifteen to twenty minute vacation and see how it helps relax your body and revive your spirits.