

Forty-nine words in six steps for stress reduction

Recent reports stress the emotional impact of COVID 19. This short, imaginative exercise may help you or someone else reduce those anxieties and worries and achieve some goals that are individually meaningful.

Overview

As a first step, imagine a personal intention for yourself; something satisfying that you would like to do in your world. It is just for you, private and personal.

Perhaps it is to be relaxed so that you can move easily and comfortably in whatever you do.

Maybe it is to tune your ears so that you hear everything that's important around you, and easily ignore any distractions that might make you anxious or upset.

Maybe you want to sharpen your vision, so that as you look carefully, you see everything that is important where you are.

Maybe you want to feel calm and peaceful, more optimistic about what you are doing.

Go ahead and imagine doing something personally important, that will help you increase your calmness and skill. Imagine something you can actually do, not just a wish.

**In this box write an individualized, appropriate, goal.
For ideas, see the Catalog of Goals on pages 3 of this
handout.**

Take time to store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Here are the **Forty-nine words** in bold

(the text in italics is a suggested explanation)

Step1. Prepare a personal suggestion.

Something that will solve a problem, make you happier, more satisfied.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

Pick a spot that is relatively isolated, without surrounding distractions, where you feel comfortable. A light switch, a doorknob or a flower would work.

Step 3. Focus on the spot....inhale.....hold it.....exhale slowly.

Fill your lungs but don't strain, let your shoulders move naturally.

Step 4. Increase focus....inhale...and as you exhale whisper

“Deeper”.

End the whisper the same time you end the exhalation.

**Step 5. Continue breathingand whispering “Deeper”..... until
you see the spot change.**

Some people see it right away, for some, change takes a little longer.

**Step 6. When the spot has a halo of light.....recall your
suggestion.**

The faint light is a sign your brain has changed, that you can see and plan and do things with more concentration and calmness. Try it.

Catalog of Goals

Clinician Stress 1. Not feeling good enough for the job.

Maybe you need to remember something about your job.

You know why you decided to do this humanitarian work. Think about all the people you cared for and find the memory of a time when you intervened in a way that was special, when you did extraordinary work. A situation when your ability was just what someone needed. Think about your successful interventions, how it felt knowing your skills and decision made somebody's life better, longer, and more comfortable. Would that feeling of proud confidence be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

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Clinician Stress 2. Feeling lack of energy for work, tired, burned out.

Maybe you need to remember something about your life.

You know why you decided to do this important work. Remember when you were still in school, your first year, all the late hours? Was there ever a time when you were exhausted, and then something changed? You felt refreshed and kept on working. What was it that changed, that helped you feel great again? Let yourself bring back that good feeling. Spread it all through your body. Would that be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

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Care Giver Stress

Maybe you need to remember something about your job.

You know why you decided to do this work. Can you remember how excited you felt the day when you first started? Think about the good things you have done since then. Maybe you remember the proud feelings when you did the best you could, and promised yourself that tomorrow you would do even better? What helped you do your very best? Would that be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

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Partner stress for committed couples

Maybe you need to remember something about your relationship.

You know why you decided to connect. Recall the good things you did together since then, how you listened to each other, what you saw and discussed. As

you recall all those times past, you can also pay attention to how it feels to remember the sharing and helping. How easy and natural it was, to say what came to mind, listening to what your partner had to say. Would that be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

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Daily living stress

Maybe you need to think about something you do just for fun.

Can you remember a time, walking in a garden or someplace outdoors, when you felt particularly content? When you were inspired by an idea, or by some music, or by a person you wanted to emulate? Or a time when you created a piece of art? When you thought about developing a new hobby? Recall those feelings of contentment and wonder and creativity. Would that be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus.

Kidney Dialysis stress

Maybe you need to remember when you first heard about your kidney disease.

What did you think? Were you worried about how you'd do your job, or tell the people who cared, or even continue living? And then someone told you about dialysis, how you could make a change and keep on living. When did you get the idea that you wanted to do that? A picture of how you would live your life going forward. Would that feeling be a good goal?

Before you go back and start the exercise, take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus

Template for Building More Goal Suggetions

I know how I'd like to

do my job at.....

be a better partner to.....

have more energy for.....

I remember when I

decided to....

spoke up and.....

finally

I remember how I felt when I

learned how to....

discovered that I.....

listened to.....

Right now I want to.....

Take time to imagine and store your goal some special place in your memory, where you can find it later.

Go back to page2.

Step 2. Look around and find a spot for focus