



# **Imagery Scripts for Awakening Positive Emotional States**

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## TRAUMA INFORMED HYPNOTHERAPY

# BREATH-SYMBOL IMAGERY TECHNIQUE

## PREPARATION

**1. Explore your client's *desired* response to a problem or situation** by asking “*When [problem] occurs, how would you like to feel or respond?*” or “*When you imagine your mind responding in that desired way to this situation, what qualities, images, or words comes to mind?*”

If the client cannot think of what they'd like their desired response to be, you can share the attached list of positive qualities and resourceful states and invite them to choose 3 or 4 that stand out to them.

**2. Invite the client to choose 3-4 qualities that represent their desired response.** Write them in the blanks below.

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Invite your client to imagine embodying their desired qualities and to let their mind show them a symbol that would represent their mind working in the desired way.**

**Here is a script you can use:** Now that you've identified your desired qualities, take a moment to really imagine what it would be like to be feeling (*name the qualities your client has chosen, slowly, one at a time, using your voice tone to evoke the feeling of quality in your client*). Now, let's create a symbol that represents your mind working in this desired way. When you think about your mind working this way (repeat your client's desired qualities), what image comes to mind? It could be something in nature, an animal in the wild, a mythological figure, or even a song, or movement in the body. Usually, the first thing that comes to mind is best, even if it doesn't make logical sense to you at first.

**4. Ask your client to describe their symbol to you.** How do they experience it? Listen for the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic details. Is their symbol moving or still? Are there words or a physical posture that goes with it? Note the words and descriptions they use as you can use this to enhance your suggestions in the script so your client experiences it even more vividly.

*Note: If the client says they can't get a symbol, it's usually because they are trying too hard to think of one intellectually. That's not where this symbol comes from. It comes from the emotional brain and may not make logical sense at first. Clients can also have more than one symbol. Just go with whatever shows up. The emotional brain usually picks the perfect symbol!*

## INDUCTION

Okay (*client's name*) Imagine your (*client's symbol*) as you take a deep breath in and hold it for a moment.... Good. Then, slowly exhale, letting go of what you no longer need right now. Let's do it again. See your [*symbol*] and

breathe it in all the way to your belly this time. Yes, that's it. Now hold it for a moment as your mind takes it in... and then slowly exhale. Good.

One more time, imagine your *[symbol]*, breathe in... perhaps this time imagining the qualities of that *[symbol]* filling your lungs and moving into your blood stream where it can circulate throughout your body. And if you like, you can gaze down or rest your eyes closed as you slowly exhale, as you drop deeper into feeling what it is like to be *[symbol]*.

That's right... and every time you inhale, you can imagine breathing in *[name the qualities of your client's symbol]*

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## DEEPENING/INTENSIFYING WITH IMAGERY

And perhaps you can imagine what it would be like to be that *[symbol]*, as if you could inhabit it or it could inhabit you... get into it and feel what it is like to be *[symbol]*... Repeat each of the qualities of client's symbol again. *(Describe any other details the client gave you about the imagery... such as eagle soaring through sky... mountain standing strong... etc.)*

What else is your symbol showing you? How does it carry itself in the world? How does it respond to things? What can you learn from it? *(pause 30-60 seconds)*

Now I don't know really know what other insights you'll get from this *[symbol]*... it may be... (Tie your client's symbol metaphorically to their issue such as *"Just like the eagle soars above the sky to get perspective, you too can rise above this issue and now see it with new perspective..."*)

Or you might not care what it means as you just enjoying breathing in the energy of *[symbol]* as it clears, heals, organizes, and supports all of those things that are in your best interest . . . *(repeat qualities of the symbol 1 at a time)*

## POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS

And any time you want to access this state, all you have to do is imagine *[symbol]* and take a deep 3 deep breaths... and every time you practice this it will get easier and easier as you fully embody *(repeat qualities of symbol again to reinforce)*.

## REALERTING AND REORIENTING

And when you're ready, you can ever so gently find your way back here by taking a few deep cleansing breaths... as you feel the supportive surface beneath you... hear my voice... and gently open your eyes.

Source: Armstrong, C. (2019). *Rethinking Trauma Treatment: Attachment, Memory Reconsolidation and Resilience*. New York: W. W. Norton.

## POSITIVE QUALITY IDEAS FOR BREATH SYMBOL IMAGERY

|               |             |              |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Active        | Empowered   | Perceptive   |
| At ease       | Flexible    | Purposeful   |
| Assertive     | Focused     | Positive     |
| Authentic     | Firm        | Prepared     |
| Balanced      | Forthright  | Present      |
| Bold          | Free        | Playful      |
| Brave         | Grateful    | Resilient    |
| Calm          | Grounded    | Resourceful  |
| Capable       | Honest      | Satisfied    |
| Clear         | Healthy     | Secure       |
| Comfortable   | Humorous    | Self-assured |
| Compassionate | Insightful  | Skillful     |
| Confident     | Intentional | Spiritual    |
| Connected     | Joyful      | Strategic    |
| Content       | Liberated   | Strong       |
| Courageous    | Loving      | Sturdy       |
| Creative      | Motivated   | Supported    |
| Curious       | Open-minded | Trustworthy  |
| Determined    | Optimistic  | Whole        |
| Energized     | Passionate  | Wise         |



## DESIRED FUTURE SELF SCRIPT

### **Preparation**

Before you begin this imagery exercise, invite your client to identify three positive qualities they would like for their future self. If they need ideas, you can invite them to choose from the list of words on the last page of this script. Incorporate the client's desired qualities and beliefs into the following script to make it more personal.

### **Induction**

So, (Client's name) you can begin by taking a nice deep and cleansing breath.... noticing the rise of the body as you breathe in... and the way the body can release and settle back down as you exhale... that's it... and any unwelcome thoughts can also be sent out with the breath and set aside for now... as you imagine breathing in fresh air, new thoughts, and energy... so you can tap into that well of comfort, strength, wisdom and healing that exists within. *(pause 10-15 seconds)*

And when you're ready, I'd like to invite you to imagine yourself in a peaceful, healing place... you can close your eyes as you do this or just cast your gaze down as you bring a peaceful scene to mind... this place can be outdoors or indoors... it could be a place you've been before, or a place you just make up... this is your special place... so you can make it be anything you want... and you can have anything there that would feel healing, safe, and comforting for you...

Let yourself look around your peaceful place so you can take in the beautiful scenery... noticing the natural beauty, comforting objects, or any other pleasant things you like to look at... *(pause 10 seconds)*... and perhaps you can imagine any soothing sounds that you would hear there... *(pause 10 seconds)*... and any fragrant aromas or tastes you would enjoy there... and the pleasant feel of the air... *(pause 10 seconds)*... you can take this place in with all your senses so that it feels even more real, tranquil, and healing for you... *(pause 10 seconds)*... if you like, you can even imagine surrounding it with a protective boundary or bubble of energy, so that you can see out, but only those things that are safe, loving, and supportive are allowed in... and when you have a good sense of your peaceful place... just nod your head to let me know...

### **Desired Future Self**

And in this special place, you have the power to envision and create what you want for your life... so today, I would like to invite you to take a moment to imagine what you would like for your desired future self... perhaps somewhere in your special place you could see or imagine future you having moved forward in a positive way towards a goal, or a past a challenge you've been dealing with... you can create them to be any way you like, focusing on the internal qualities you'd like them to have such as inner strength, wisdom, courage, peace... fortitude... this future self doesn't have to be perfect, and it's not necessary to get a clear mental image, just let yourself sense and feel what it would be like to be on the other side of that challenge right now... What is the best possible outcome you could imagine for yourself? What does your future self look like? What positive qualities do you notice on both the inside and the outside of this person? What can they feel inside and realize about themselves now? *(pause 10-30 seconds, or for 1-3 breaths)*.

See your future self releasing anything from the past that was not useful and only keeping what is of benefit... such as increased wisdom, depth, experience, compassion... and using those strengths to make their life better...

How would your future self be taking care of themselves? *(pause 10-20 seconds)*. Who are they spending time with? How would they be interacting with the world? Notice what feels good, and exciting, and satisfying for you... *(pause 10-15 seconds)*

And if you like, you can talk to your future self ... What advice would they give you?... How have they adjusted things so that they can feel more alive, secure, and satisfied? Let your future self show you what they did to get there... step-by-step... You might even imagine it like a video rewinding... as they pause and show you each small step they took... little by little... day by day... each small change that they made whether that be changes in thoughts... actions... resources... or relationships... to get to where they are now... *(Pause 30-60 seconds)*

And know that your future self is on your side... see them thanking you and reassuring you because right now you are making their life possible... feel their excitement and gratitude as you set your intention to move your life in this direction... just intending it awakens it... feel it now awakening in you as you step into your future self... feel the power, the energy, the excitement... growing... expanding... and fueling you... as the steps towards your goal become easier... knowing this is your time... so you can take your time... as you gather up anything you want to remember and bring back to integrate into your present life... before we bring this session to a comfortable close... *(pause 15-30 seconds)*

### ***Realerting***

And so *(client's name)* knowing you are creating this version of yourself right now.... And that life holds even more positive possibilities for you that you will soon discover... you can once again become aware of the sound of my voice.... and feel the supportive surface beneath you as you take a nice deep refreshing breath... and notice the light behind your eyelids as you ever so gently open your eyes... looking around the room... and find yourself safe, secure, and hopeful in this present moment.

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### ***Positive Qualities for Desired Future Self***

|               |             |              |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| At ease       | Flexible    | Purposeful   |
| Assertive     | Focused     | Positive     |
| Authentic     | Fair        | Prepared     |
| Balanced      | Forthright  | Present      |
| Bold          | Free        | Playful      |
| Brave         | Grateful    | Resilient    |
| Calm          | Grounded    | Resourceful  |
| Capable       | Honest      | Satisfied    |
| Clear         | Healthy     | Secure       |
| Comfortable   | Humorous    | Self-assured |
| Compassionate | Insightful  | Sincere      |
| Confident     | Intentional | Skillful     |
| Connected     | Joyful      | Spiritual    |
| Content       | Liberated   | Strategic    |
| Courageous    | Loving      | Strong       |
| Creative      | Motivated   | Sturdy       |
| Curious       | Open-minded | Supported    |
| Determined    | Optimistic  | Trustworthy  |
| Energized     | Passionate  | Whole        |
| Empowered     | Peaceful    | Wise         |

## PEACEFUL PLACE + EGO-STRENGTHENING SUGGESTIONS

*Before you begin, ask your client to recall a peaceful place that feels relaxing, safe, and pleasant for them. Jot down the visual images, sounds, tactile sensations, or smells they mention in the blanks below, so you can make the script personal.*

### INDUCTION PHASE

So, (client's name) make yourself comfortable... and if you like, you can take a nice, deep, cleansing breath... and when you're ready... you can close your eyes and let the scene of (Name of peaceful place or type of peaceful place—beach, garden, mountains) begin to come to mind... you may or may not get a clear mental image... it really doesn't matter... just let yourself get the sense of what it's like to be there...

**A. Visual cues:** Feel free to look around and explore your special place... just letting yourself take in all the natural scenery.... perhaps enjoying the sight of the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ... and \_\_\_\_\_ (pause 5-10 seconds) ... or maybe something else catches your eye... Just observe what you are drawn to... as you allow the place to become more real and comforting to you... so tranquil... so beautiful... (pause 5-10 seconds)

**B. Tactile cues:** And perhaps you can also notice the things that *feel* so nice to you in this place such as the \_\_\_\_\_... and the \_\_\_\_\_  
... so soothing... so comfortable... (pause 10 seconds) ...

**C. Sounds:** And as you relax into the feel of this place, perhaps you can tune into the soothing sounds there, such as the \_\_\_\_\_..., or the \_\_\_\_\_  
... so calming... so peaceful (pause 10 seconds)

**D. Smells/tastes:** And you may be aware of some pleasant tastes and aromas in this place too... I don't know if you'll notice the fragrance of the \_\_\_\_\_, or the \_\_\_\_\_  
Just breathe it in... and let it fill and nourish you... (pause 10 seconds)

And if you like, you might create a special area in this place where you can sit or lie down... so you can get even more comfortable... or you may enjoy walking around and exploring the place... just notice what feels safe and comfortable for you today... (pause 5-10 seconds)



## DEEPENING RELAXATION

And, as you take it all in... perhaps you can imagine the energy from this place being absorbed by your body... bringing soothing comfort as it softens the muscles in your face and jaw... relaxes your neck and shoulders... and flows through your arms and hands... perhaps you can imagine breathing in the wonderful energy of this place as it spreads comfort through your chest and across your back... then that energy can travel down... loosening any tightness in your low back... abdomen or hips... as you continue to breathe it in... letting it relax your legs... and flow down all the way to your toes... so you can just hang loose and enjoy this mini-vacation... *(pause 10-15 seconds)*.

## EGO-STRENGTHENING SUGGESTIONS

And as you breathe in the energy of this special place... perhaps you can realize that the reason you like this place so much is because it is a reflection of a part of you... a reflection of the peace, wisdom, and beauty that you have inside you... and we know that these qualities are inside of you because you are accessing them right now... they are not just inside that place... they are inside you...

And more and more you'll be able to access these increased feelings of peace, calm, and strength inside whenever you need them... because they are a part of you... they are a part of your essence... you have thoughts, but you are not your thoughts because your thoughts can change... you have behaviors, but you are not your behaviors, because behaviors can change... you have a body, but you are not you are not your body, because your body can change... you have feelings but you're not your feelings because your feelings can change...

So who are you? Let's think of who you are as that light of peace and excitement that you got in touch with in this special place... and even the tiniest pinpoint of light can penetrate the darkness... so more and more this light within you can glow brighter... as it begins to spread... spreading throughout your mind and body... healing... soothing... strengthening... transforming... as it supports your highest good... and nurtures what is true and best for you...

## REALERTING AND REORIENTING

So, *(client's name)*, knowing this light exists within you and will continue to lift, soothe, and support you, I'll begin guiding you back here... if you like, you can take one more look around your peaceful place... and bring back anything you want to remember about this experience with you... and each time you return to this place of light, peace and comfort, you'll be able to access it even more quickly and easily...

And so, when you're ready... bring your awareness back to your breath... letting each breath lift and restore you... as you feel the supportive surface beneath you... and hear my voice... and when you're ready gently open your eyes... feeling filled with light.

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