

Visualization exercise

Please lie on the floor and make yourself comfortable. Close your eyes. Relax your arms and legs. Let your feet flop to the side. Place your palms upward. Relax your shoulders. Let go of the tension in your jaw. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. With each breath, take in clean air and let it circulate through your body. With each exhalation, let go of tension and stress. Breathe deeply.

As you relax, I want you to feel your body melting to the floor. Notice the sounds around you. As you continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, try to picture in your mind the place I describe.

You are entering through the automatic glass doors of a hospital. Perhaps you have flowers, a balloon or some other gift in your hand. You walk towards the elevator, and press the up button. The arrow pointing upwards lights up. You hear the ding and the whoosh as the doors open. When you enter, you press 5 on the control panel. The doors shut and you hear a ding as the numbers above the door light up 2, 3, 4, 5. You feel that drop in your stomach as the elevator stops and the doors open. You notice the walls as you step out of the elevator and see the sign that points to the nursery. As you approach the glass windows that begin about waist high, you see the rows of tiny beds filled with new infants. Some are wearing pink sock hats, others blue. Some are sleeping soundly, and others scream for attention. You find the one new life you are looking for. What do you feel at this moment? Sum it up in one word and I want you to remember the word.

Suddenly, you feel yourself being pulled backward into a swirling vortex. You see a swirl of lights passing by in the darkness and are moving at a great speed. You wonder where you are headed. Finally, the pace begins to slow and it becomes brighter as your world comes into focus. You find yourself in a hall of a nursing home. You hear the blare of the TV coming from one room where the residents sit and stare at it. As you walk down the hall, you nod to one elderly woman sitting in a wheelchair, clutching a lap quilt. A thin, balding gentleman pads down the hall and says hello. Some doors are closed. The floor has a sheen and you can smell cleaning fluids. Bulletin boards give an indication to the time of year and a calendar of events. The door of one room is open, but dimly lit. You see gray hair on a pillow, and a body that is curled beneath the covers. Three family members quietly murmur to each other. You try to decide whether to enter the room. What are you feeling at this moment? Sum it up in one word.

Become aware of your surroundings. Notice your breathing – in through your nose and out through your mouth. You feel the floor beneath you and you can

hear things around you. (List what those things are). When you are ready, roll over to your right side and then push yourself up. Please return to the circle.