

Guided Imagery Exercise

This exercise is adapted from Dale Schwarz and Anne Davidson's book, *Facilitative Coaching: A Toolkit for Expanding Your Repertoire and Achieving Lasting Results*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2008.

1. Help the client get calm and relaxed. Offer prompts such as the following:

Close your eyes if you're ok with that, or just cast your eyes down. Get comfortable in your seat. Feel your feet connecting to the ground, feel your shoulders relaxing, your jaw softening, your forehead melting. Notice your breath. Take a couple of slow breaths. Inhale for five counts, hold your breath for three and then exhale for seven counts. Notice your body feeling very relaxed and calm.

2. Guide the client through an imaginary experience using sensory language.

- Use the client's goals to inform the imagery—who does the client want to be? What does he/she aspire to? Help to create that picture—but don't add your own expectations or projections to the image.
- Use language that invites. For example, "Allow yourself to..." or "Imagine..." or "Let yourself..."
- Use simple sentences.
- Speak slowly and calmly, pausing for a few seconds between suggestions.
- Trust your words and intuition.
- Keep it short—especially at the beginning, five minutes is probably enough.

3. Debrief the experience with the client. Invite his/her reflections. You can ask questions such as:

- What if anything would you like to share about your experience?
- What did you feel?
- What did you see?
- What did you think?
- What stayed with you?

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The easiest way to learn how to do guided imagery is by listening to recorded guided imageries. These are widely available on the internet—do a search and you'll find many!

