

# HOW TO BEST WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR HEALER

By

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Part 1: **'How to get the most benefit from a Healing session'**

Part 2: **'The power of the mind'**

Part 3: **'The importance of correct breathing'**

Part 4: **'Visualisations'**

(Includes 'White Eagle Mountain' and the 'Sea of Purification' as well as visualisations for specific medical conditions.)

Although avoiding the use of esoteric language, the content is only suitable for the recipient of Spiritual Healing who is prepared to play a full role in the healing process and who recognises that ultimately, each of us must accept responsibility for our own physical or mental wellbeing.

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## Welcome to the world of 'Spiritual Healing'.

Perhaps you already have some understanding of what I mean by this term and have previously experienced its effect.

The information which follows is primarily intended to assist someone who is the **recipient** of such healing, to gain the maximum benefit. The text is expressed in the simplest of terms in order for you to obtain the best possible understanding. Such simplified explanations may offend some purists but my objective in presenting this introduction is to help you to gain a better appreciation of the Healing process and the important role that **YOU** must play if it is to be fully effective.

Perhaps I should first of all establish that Spiritual Healing (which I will from now on often refer to simply as 'Healing'), is not an exact Science. There are many differing opinions as to the mechanism by which such Healing is carried out and the best method by which it should be channelled. The purpose of this information is not to try to identify these differences in approach or to suggest that any one technique is better than another. There are Healers who will assert that only their method of carrying out Healing coupled with their own religious or philosophical beliefs is valid and that any differing approach is not real or as effective. In this text I am going to try and steer clear from such Dogma or enter into any debate concerning the merits of different approaches to healing.

The suggestions which follow **WILL** definitely help the recipient gain the maximum benefit from a Healing session but only if they allow themselves to be receptive and fully co-operative. If you subsequently find that a different approach seems to work better for you - then that is fine. It is the results which count and in this context personal religious or philosophical beliefs are unimportant.

However, it should be made clear that the use of the word 'Spiritual' denotes in the case of the Healer that they acknowledge that the energy or power behind the Healing comes from a Divine source, but without the need for any specific definition or understanding needing to be made as to the identity of such a source. Therefore, Spiritual healers come from various backgrounds and beliefs. Many do not belong to any specific religious organisation preferring to embrace aspects of various cultures and philosophies in their perception of the Divine Creator.

In this text therefore, there is a complete absence of what I will call 'Esoteric Gobbledegook'. Whilst the use of such abstract words drawn from various cultures and religions from all over the World both past and present may impress, they are often doing no more than feeding the ego of their originator and causing confusion in the minds of those trying to begin to unravel such complexities. In essence, the act of Spiritual Healing is very straightforward and is available to all irrespective of their beliefs or background but how effective the healing will be will as much depend on **YOU** as the recipient rather than the Healer.

So let us now move on and establish some of the fundamentals in order for you to gain the maximum benefit from a Healing session. Firstly, I should establish that Spiritual Healing is not like most other Alternative or Complementary Therapies - or what is now referred to as non-conventional medicine under EEC guidelines. When you consult a medical practitioner or most other categories of therapist for advice or treatment for a physical or mental disorder, you are performing the role as the 'patient' or 'client'. You will normally explain your condition and will invariably place the onus on the Health Care Professional to make you better, or to at least ease the symptoms.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST BENEFIT FROM A HEALING SESSION

We have largely been brought up in a culture which embraces the 'Pill popping mentality' and very often we expect to have to do nothing to help the healing process other than take the medicines we are prescribed. Too often we are not prepared to compromise on our life styles which are invariably the cause of, or at the very least aggravating, the adverse condition which we are suffering. We are content to go back to our Medical Doctor to be prescribed even more medicines or drugs which often are doing no more than masking the symptoms and can, particularly if taken over a prolonged period of time, cause harmful side effects. These can only worsen our general state of health leading eventually to the breakdown of vital components or organs in our body. At this stage more drastic intervention is necessary often requiring surgery or the use of even more powerful drugs and often it is only at this stage when everything else seems to have failed will we then perhaps consider trying Spiritual Healing or another form of non-conventional medicine.

Of course, there are conditions which cannot be directly blamed on our life style. We may have been born with a physical defect or inherited a medical condition which we could not have avoided. Other diseases are indiscriminate and appear to be contracted due to our bad luck or are the result of an accident or catastrophe which may have been completely outside our control.

Mainstream medicine most definitely has a vital role to play in treating specific conditions, and in particular serious diseases, as well as repairing our bodies following an accident or violent act, but in the vast majority of cases our state of wellbeing lies with ourselves. None of us irrespective of our physical handicap can avoid accepting at least some responsibility for our own state of health. Regardless of how cruel or unfair we feel life has treated us, we are all ultimately responsible for our own wellbeing. Nobody can take this responsibility away from us. If you approach Spiritual Healing with the attitude of the Healer being responsible for making you well and that your role is simply passive, then healing will be largely ineffective for you.

Therefore, the first and the most important principle to accept for Healing to work is to understand that the Healer is not doing something **TO** or **ON** you but **WITH** you. Your role in the healing process is equally important. There is no seniority. It is an equal partnership. If either party fails to carry out their role then there will be no positive effect.

This is why I have previously stated that Spiritual Healing is not like most other forms of treatment. If you come for Healing with a similar attitude of mind as to when you visit your Doctor or other Therapist, expecting them to make you well, then you will most probably be disappointed by the outcome.

Unfortunately, some recipients of Healing seem unable or very reluctant to accept this important principle. They are not prepared to compromise their existing life style in any way, or are so pessimistic as to a positive outcome, that they lack the will to try and improve their situation. Sometimes it can be simply a case of laziness or being stuck in a particular daily routine.

If you fall into any of these categories and are looking for someone else to take over the responsibility of your state of health, then it must be said at this juncture that Spiritual Healing is probably not going to work for you and with respect, there will be little point in you reading any further.

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If you are prepared to approach Healing as an equal partnership between yourself and the Healer, and prepared to make a concerted effort to do what ever is necessary to aid the Healing process, then please pay careful attention to the advice and recommendations which now follow.

Perhaps the most common request given by the Healer to the recipient is to "try and relax". This sometimes can be more easily said than done. The surroundings under which Healing is carried out can vary considerably and are sometimes very public. It is not always easy to relax when you are aware that others are watching you or there is a lot of background noise going on. Often at public venues there is little opportunity for any private discussion to take place between you and the Healer. Most registered Healers belong to healing organisations which require them to give you a full explanation of their procedures before treatment. In reality often the facilities and time available do not permit this to be properly carried out which can lead to misunderstanding as to what is going to take place and result in you not being given sufficient advice on how you can assist the Healing process.

Some Healing venues try to get round this problem by nominating an experienced Healer to explain the basics to you beforehand and answer any queries you may have and/or provide a separate room where you may have the opportunity to discuss in private with your Healer any aspects of your treatment. Whilst good results can be obtained from public Healing venues, some recipients find that they are too self conscious to be able to feel fully relaxed. If you feel that this applies to you, then there are many Healers who offer private sessions in their own homes. Whilst some have fixed fees, many will only accept a voluntary donation which can be for any amount that you can reasonably afford. Indeed, many Spiritual Healers regard being able to help you to restore or improve your health as sufficient reward in itself.

The Healing Trust (the working name of the NFSH Charitable Trust Limited) operates a referral service on their website: [www.thehealingtrust.org.uk](http://www.thehealingtrust.org.uk) Go to the section entitled 'Find a Healer' and enter your post code. Alternatively, you can phone The Healing Trust's Central Office Monday - Thursday 10am to 4pm Tel: 01604 603247. Note: This number is for general enquires. The Healing Trust no longer operates a dedicated Healer Referral phone number.

Even if you have experienced Spiritual Healing before, perhaps you may not have previously fully appreciated the importance of your role in the process. Furthermore, different Healing organisations can adopt a different approach in the method by which a Healing session is conducted, and this can often vary even between individual Healers in the same group. You will often be asked by a Healer who has not seen you before, if you have previously experienced Healing. If you indicate that you have, the assumption may be made that many of the formalities can be dispensed with, but this can unfortunately lead to assumptions being made by both parties which can if only very occasionally, lead to unfortunate misunderstandings. It is for this reason that a Healer who has never given you Healing before may insist in explaining his or her procedure even though in the past you may have been a recipient of Healing.

Please do not resent this, which in itself will create a barrier. You should in fact be appreciative that your Healer is prepared to take the time and trouble to explain fully to you how they wish to conduct the session. This helps to create a bond of trust between both of you which can only help the effectiveness of the Healing process.

As I have already stated, no two Healers will be identical in their method of giving Healing, although some of the larger Healing organisations, such as The Healing Trust, are now trying to apply a standard approach, at least at public venues. There are Healers who very much believe in some degree of physical contact when giving Healing whilst others will make little if any such touch. You may on occasions be given some very light massage mainly around the neck and shoulders in order to help you to relax. This does not officially form part of the Healing process and is only endorsed by some Healing organisations.

It is because of these variances in approach that registered Healers in their code of conduct are required to explain fully the procedures in their treatment. As we have already mentioned, this is to avoid the possibility of any misunderstanding. If you have a preference for a particular type of Healing for example, 'Hands Off' as opposed to 'Hands On', then you should make this perfectly clear before the Healing session begins. Most healing groups can accommodate this request but not always since some Healers will, or can, only perform Healing in a certain way. If you are making an appointment to see a Healer privately, you should establish if your specific requirements can be met. Before I leave the subject of actual touch taking place during Healing, which is often referred to as 'Laying-on of Hands', it should be emphasised that it is often NOT necessary to touch the body in the area which is effected.

For example, an arthritic joint which may be causing pain or lack of mobility does not have to be touched in the effected area. The Healing energies will travel to where they are needed. You should never be touched in sensitive areas which may cause offence or embarrassment. If a Healer should feel impressed to touch you in an area which has not previously been explained to you, then they should firstly ask your permission.

It is most important that you inform your Healer straight away if at any time during Healing you should feel uneasy over what is taking place. In reality, this is most unlikely to happen especially if the Healer is registered or approved by one of the recognised Healing Organisations, such as the NFSH.

Being relaxed and confident that you are 'in safe hands' is an important factor if a Healing session is going to be effective. It is natural to some degree for you to feel a little anxious or uncertain if you have not received Healing before or it is being given by someone who is unfamiliar to you. This is another reason why Healers will explain to you what is going to take place and describe any sensations you may feel. It gives them an opportunity to get to know you and to gain your confidence and trust. If you have a good idea as to what to expect, this will help you to shut your mind off from your surroundings and to be less conscious of what the Healer is doing.

This will enable you to focus your mind exclusively on **YOUR** role in the Healing process. Your important part is not just limited to the actual Healing session but your preparation beforehand and what you should do afterwards.

Before I move on to this important aspect, I must emphasise once again how important it is that you feel totally at ease and confident with your Healer. I have already made the point that you will be working **WITH** the Healer during a Healing session and that your role most certainly is not just to sit there and expect something to happen to you without any effort on your part. If you are not compatible with your Healer, then it is only common sense that any negativity which is created will hinder the Healing process.

If therefore, you cannot create a proper 'mind set' with the Healer - I will explain further what exactly I mean by this later on - then this situation must be recognised and addressed. Only if this cannot be resolved should consideration be given to a change of Healer. However, most Healing groups will accept that some recipients of Healing are uneasy at being paired with someone of the opposite gender and will try to provide, subject to availability, a Healer of the same sex. Some public venues may permit you to nominate the Healer that you wish to see but this may not always be possible and some groups or organisations have a policy which expects you to take the next Healer who is available. This is to ensure a fair distribution of workload and to avoid a build up of persons wishing to see a particular Healer.

If you resent not being able to see your preferred choice of Healer especially if you communicate this in some way to the Healer who has offered to see you, then these negative feelings which will have been created between you, can only adversely effect the Healing session. Remember, your Healer has feelings just the same as you, and at public venues is most probably giving their time free in order to give an expression of God's unconditional love through the act of healing. So, your rejection of help from a fellow human being is in point of fact, a rejection by you of the Divine Creator. So please try and remember that all the Healing energies ultimately come from the same source and if you approach a Healing session with that in mind and that all the Healer is trying to do is to assist YOU to make a better connection with that source, then you can be virtually assured that Healing will be effective.

We will now consider how we should make ourselves ready to receive Healing. We should in fact have already started the process before we even meet our Healer. In the case of a public venue, we will be restricted as to the choice of time that Healing is available but with a private appointment it should be easier to choose a time which allows us to arrive in as a relaxed state as possible. Try to avoid a time which follows closely after finishing work, or coming from a previous appointment. If you have had a tiring or stressful day or get delayed by public transport or heavy traffic and end up rushing to get to your Healing session on time, it stands to reason that you are hardly going to be in a relaxed state of mind and therefore, receptive to receive Healing.

Remember, that unlike other therapies, you are going to have to play a key role in the Healing process. Indeed, you should try and fix a day for your Healing appointment when you have little else planned, In other words, try and make it a 'Relaxing Day', freeing your mind as far as possible from your normal pursuits and activities. Of course, if you have for example, family commitments this may well be easier said than done, but do try and make as much free time for yourself before and after the Healing session.

When you are waiting to receive Healing, use this time to calm your mind. Close your eyes and start to become aware of your breathing. Try to take longer deeper breaths keeping the inhale and exhale of each breath of the same duration. Hold the exhale for a few moments before discharging the air from your lungs. Do not occupy your mind thinking about everyday concerns or worries or getting into any deep conversation with a friend or acquaintance who may be sitting next to you. You must try and clear your mind of such earthly matters and start preparing your mind to receive Healing energies.



When your Healer invites you to sit down (or lay on their couch), try to make yourself as comfortable as possible. By all means take off your coat or jacket and remove your shoes, if you want to. The Healer will not expect you to remove any other clothing. Usually at public venues, only chairs are available and quite often the Healer will require that you sit sideways so that the back of the chair is on your left or right. This is because many of the Healing passes or movements that the Healer will make either by actual contact or working a few inches away from you will involve areas of your back or spinal column and the back rest of the chair may hinder this process. However, if you feel uncomfortable sitting this way, particularly if you suffer from any form of back trouble, then you should not hesitate to point this out to your Healer who should allow you to sit in your preferred position on the chair.

It is more important that you feel as relaxed as possible and therefore, be more receptive to the Healing process. An experienced Healer should be able to work around any problems associated with you sitting in the normal manner with the chair back behind you. A few Healers do sometimes use a second chair to support your legs off the ground. Likewise, if this could cause you any discomfort, you should say so. Some private Healing sessions may be conducted with you lying on a couch, or even lying on the floor, but here again if you suffer from any physical disability which could prevent you from mounting a couch, or laying at ground level, you should make this perfectly clear to the Healer. It would be a good idea when you make an initial appointment to see a Healer privately, to point out any physical disability you have. This will not only ensure that they can cater for your needs but also establish that they have suitable access both to their property and the actual Healing Room. If you have for example, to negotiate stairs, this may make their facilities unsuitable for you.

Having sat on a chair or stool to receive Healing, and made yourself comfortable, please do not cross your legs, but try and keep them firmly on the floor so that you remain properly grounded. If you are restricted to a Wheel Chair, your feet may remain on the platforms. There is no need for you to try and put your feet on the ground.

As well as asking you if you have received Healing before, the Healer will also probably ask how he or she can help you, or if you have come for Healing for a specific reason or medical condition. Some Healers do like to get as much background information as possible about the recipient. This can help to create empathy between you which will aid the Healing process. It can be reassuring if one can feel that the person who is sharing Healing WITH us has a real understanding of our condition either through having dealt with others who have similarly suffered or through their own personal experience. However, some Healers prefer not to know specifically why you have come for Healing. One of the reasons for this can be that because the Healing energies will only travel to where they are needed, the Healer may feel that it is unnecessary to know the precise details of your medical condition. They may also feel that having such prior knowledge may prejudice their natural attunement whereby they may be influenced in terms of how they are impressed to conduct the Healing session.

Other Healers do not feel that the effectiveness of their Healing will be adversely affected by having as full an understanding as possible of any specific condition which may be affecting the recipient, and will sometimes tailor their approach to take account of the recipient's physical and emotional needs. Indeed, the Code of Conduct of any registered Healer will require them to ascertain certain specific details about your state of health and to establish that if you do have a known medical condition, that you have consulted a Doctor.

It must be left entirely up to you to decide how much personal information about yourself you are prepared to disclose to the Healer. Such information should be treated by the Healer in the strictest confidence. Please remember that the Healer is not there to offer a medical diagnosis and you should not invite them to express an opinion about your state of health. Sometimes they may pick up whilst channelling energy certain impressions concerning your physical or emotional wellbeing but you should respect that it may not always be appropriate for them to pass on such information. I only mention that this sometimes occurs, because of the practice which exists, particularly in some churches, to pass on any impressions they feel they have received from their understanding of the source of the Healing power. Not all Healers feel that this is necessary and indeed, can cause in some situations unnecessary anxiety. Please therefore, leave it to the discretion of your Healer to pass on to you any specific impressions which they may have received.

The Healer may agree with you a method by which you will know when the Healing session has come to an end. They will normally try to make this as unobtrusive as possible so that if you are in a fully relaxed state and have retreated into your own private world, that you are allowed as much time as possible to return your thoughts to the everyday world around you. Take your time - do not hurry back from this place which you have created for yourself where you may feel free from pain and any anxiety and be totally at peace. You are indeed, in a special way, linked to the source of your creation and it is perfectly understandable that you may feel reluctant to return to the reality of your everyday life. So take a few minutes, if you need them, to collect your thoughts before withdrawing from your special haven.

It should be emphasised that at all times during a Healing session you will remain in a conscious state and at no time is any form of hypnosis used. It is sometimes very obvious to the Healer if the recipient is fully co-operating with the Healing process. Some Healers can be very sensitive to the effects of the Healing energies and if they are being transmitted to and through the recipient. If you have not prepared yourself to receive them, or you create barriers, the Healer could feel that they are wasting their time and they may be inclined to 'switch off'. If you sit on the chair or stool just thinking about what is going on around you and what the Healer is up to next, and if you are experiencing any physical sensations, or start going over specific events happening in your life, or what you are going to have for tea that evening, then it is almost certain that Spiritual Healing is not going to work for you.

For Healing to be effective requires the creation of the correct state of mind. This is just as important for the recipient as for the Healer themselves and this is why I have spent so much time in these instructions trying to emphasise this very basic but crucial point.

Whilst dramatic results can be experienced from the first Healing session, so called 'Miracles' are extremely rare and should not be expected. Healing is usually a gradual and an ongoing process and can often take many sessions. The actual period that you spend with a Healer should only be regarded as a part of the process of restoring or improving your wellbeing. Do not allow yourself to get into the state of mind of allowing regular Healing sessions to simply become another activity in your normal routine or social calendar.

If you merely co-operate with the Healing process only when you see your Healer, and then afterwards simply carry on with your normal life style until the next Healing appointment, then any beneficial effect can often simply wear off. For any sustained improvement with your state of health to be achieved requires YOU to build on the extra energy which you have received during a Healing session.

I am now going to say a few words on the subject of 'FAITH' and answer the question - is it necessary to have Faith for healing to be effective? But what do we mean by 'Faith'? Do we mean a belief in God or the existence of a Supreme Being, or can Faith only need to mean the acceptance that there are Cosmic Forces which are around us, which although we cannot fully comprehend, we can still utilise for our own wellbeing? Maybe the only Faith we need is in ourselves, and the belief in our own body's ability to heal itself, given the right conditions.

Many leaflets and books written on Spiritual Healing will state that, as the recipient of Healing, you do not need to have a Faith - but is this statement only meant in the context of a belief in a Divine Creator or a 'Knowing Entity' from which all substance in the Universe emanates? It will often be stated that all that is necessary for Healing to work, is to have an open mind and to try and think positive, but is this really all that is required? There can be little doubt that some of the most dramatic results after receiving Spiritual Healing, come from persons who have a devout Faith. This gives them a very powerful focal point from which to direct or to receive the Healing energies. This coupled with an absolute trust in their Maker as well as their Healer, who they may in effect regard as 'Gods Ambassador' carrying out his Will, creates a very powerful interaction between the psyche and the physiology of the recipient. Therefore, whilst having an open mind to the possible effect of Spiritual Healing does undoubtedly help, a great deal more is required of the recipient if they are likely to receive any lasting benefit.

If we liken our brain to that of a Computer, we know that nothing is going to happen if we do not first load a program and we are not going to get the right responses if we do not load the correct program, or input the correct data. Regard your mind as the program, if we take the trouble to make sure we are placing into it the correct input, then it stands to reason that we are more likely to obtain the effect we are looking for. Likewise, it is with Spiritual Healing - you must create the right state of mind to receive positive results and therefore we must first **'HEAL THE MIND'** before we can address any adverse physical condition.

In the next extract entitled **'The Power of the Mind'** I am going to examine the vital role that the mind plays in the Healing process. This will then enable you to understand better the use of Visualisation Exercises, such as those given in a later extract. Understanding the theory behind such exercises will, I hope, encourage you to take them more seriously and appreciate the very powerful effect they can have on the subconscious part of your brain which controls your physical wellbeing.

## THE POWER OF THE MIND

Unfortunately, mainstream medicine has in the past been very reluctant to recognise the vital role that our mind plays in controlling our state of health, and to recognise that Mind Power can effect a chemical reaction. It may seem incredible that medical science has been so slow in accepting that our brain does in fact control our immune system and that it co-ordinates our body's ability to heal itself and to destroy harmful micro organisms.

It is indeed, only in the last thirty years or so, that medical science has begun to carry out serious research to establish how our brain can effect our general wellbeing. Much of the early research came about as a result of Astronauts returning from Space who were discovered as having low blood cell counts. These pioneers of space exploration, who had been trained to the peak of physical fitness in order to meet the strenuous demands of weightlessness in Space, were suffering from stress through working in these abnormal conditions and this was affecting the cells of their immune system. Further tests were carried out on groups of people who were subjected to other stressful situations such as students before and after taking exams and with couples who had marriage difficulties. This involved monitoring the levels of white blood cells - which are the key cells of the bodies defence system against disease. The resulting statistical evidence was overwhelming, that stress does have a dampening effect on the cells of the immune system.

Using electron microscopes and modern sophisticated scanning techniques, Neurologists - that group of medical scientists who study the function, structure and causes of disease of the nervous system, discovered that the nerve cells which are hard wired to the Brain were interacting with the 'Lymphocytes', which are the variety of white blood cell involved with the immune system. This proved that there was a physical link between the brain and the bodies immune system.

When we are subjected to a stressful situation our body is alerted by our brain releasing the hormone 'ACTH' which slows down our immune response. But does the fact that our thoughts can produce tiny changes in the cells of the immune system, prove that they are big enough to affect our health overall? Are these changes biologically significant? Further comprehensive studies carried out in the U.S.A. of people caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease (in other words having to cope daily with a very stressful situation), showed that wounds took 24% longer to heal. Thus, there is strong evidence to suggest that our state of mind can affect our body's efficiency to heal itself.

Modern research shows that the brain has two major pathways by which it communicates and controls the functions of our body. The first are the nerves which are hard wired but the second which has the greater effect on the immune system is by 'messenger' hormones travelling through the Brain and the blood. When activated by stress the Brain intervenes via hormonal pathways. First the 'Hypothalamus', which is a region of the forebrain, transmits electrical and chemical messages to the Pituitary Gland which in turn sends the hormone 'ACTH' to the Adrenal Glands where it stimulates each gland to release over thirty chemical messages. One of the messages is 'Cortisol'. The increase of Cortisol in the blood does all sorts of incredibly complicated things within the immune system. It results in white cells changing numbers and their formation. It is known through studies done on animals that changing the amount of Cortisol can change an animal that is totally resistant to getting arthritis to one that gets arthritis. Cortisol can have a profound effect on your susceptibility to getting major disease.

Scientists have now shown conclusively that the Mind can turn down the immune system - but can we harness this power? Can we indeed, use our minds to stimulate the body's defences? A German study of Sky Divers showed that Adrenaline - a hormone secreted by the Adrenal gland, increases the activity of natural killer cells - a key part of our natural defence system. But can the mind be stimulated by conditioning to produce a similar immune response? The German study took 48 volunteers who were each given over a four day period, injections of Adrenaline. At the same time they were each given tablets of the sharp fizzy taste of sherbet. Unknown to any of the volunteers, on the fifth day the injection of Adrenaline was replaced with a neutral solution. They were still given the sherbet tablet which had the effect of increasing the activity of the natural white killer cells by almost **double**. Thus, the only conclusion that could be made was that it was possible to increase killer cells by planting a conditioned reflex on the mind.

It is believed that these same killer cells are able to destroy certain types of cancer. It therefore, baits the question - can the mind be programmed or conditioned to help fight cancer? One major NHS hospital in the UK had been using relaxation and imagery techniques to help ease the side effects of chemotherapy in treating cancer (i.e., to ease nausea and vomiting). They discovered that their records collated over several years showed that patients participating in these visualisation exercises had survived longer, although not necessarily causing the cancer to go into remission. Other trials using visualisation techniques have subsequently been carried out aimed specifically at attacking or suppressing the cancer. The results have shown more active killer cells in those patients participating in these imagery techniques which may mean that there is a anti cancer effect.

At last mainstream medicine is beginning to take seriously the effect our minds can have on our immune system and such studies now have the official scientific name of: "Psychoneuroimmunology".

The consensus of medical opinion still remains that there *is* no evidence that the mind can cure disease but there is at least now general acceptance that the mind may well be able to alter the progression of the disease or your susceptibility to the disease and that in itself may well be extremely important and is well worth further investigation.

I have now given you several examples of medical research that has been carried out by respected medical institutions which have established beyond any reasonable doubt how our thoughts can effect our state of health by causing chemical reactions in our bodies. We now have to address the vital question if these effects can be enhanced by the intervention of Healing using 'Spiritual' energies. Although there is an increasing number of medical doctors who are recognising the important role that such Healing can play in at least improving the quality of life of their patients, there are still many more who are sceptical as to the merits of Spiritual Healing and dismiss it as being 'all in the mind'.

This unfortunately, is usually meant as a disparaging remark. Such medical opinion seems unable to consider any treatment as valid unless it involves actual clinical intervention in the form of drugs or surgery. What I wish to establish very clearly, is that Spiritual Healing is very much about affecting a positive reaction by stimulating our brain to deal with an adverse medical condition.

Most of what we consume through our mouths is processed by our bodies to generate and maintain cells, and to provide the energy we need to carry out our normal bodily functions. The mechanical components which make up our body, be they bone or tissue, are no more than structures of different cells working in harmony with one another through electrical and chemical messages sent out and controlled by the brain.

When we are unwell through whatever cause, it is our brain that will be co-ordinating our body's efforts to rectify the adverse situation. It is our brain that determines how to best utilise any remedies we take to augment the healing process, or to ease the symptoms. This includes any medicines prescribed by our doctor. So in reality, describing any treatment as being "all in the mind" is meaningless since ultimately all methods of intervention which are intended to bring about a positive effect to our wellbeing are regulated by our brain. What is contentious, is if methods of bringing about an improvement to our state of health which do not involve the ingestion or absorption of chemical substances, any less valid.

Medical science goes to great lengths when testing the effectiveness of any new drug to eliminate what is termed the 'placebo effect'. In medical terms, a placebo is medicine which is known to be ineffective but which may help to relieve a condition because the patient has 'faith' in its powers. New drugs are tested against placebos in clinical trials. One dictionary describes a placebo as " a medicine to humour the patient". The word 'placebo' comes from the Latin which literally translated means 'I shall please'. Unfortunately, there are those medical scientists and doctors who are inclined to categorise many of the complimentary or alternative health treatments, including 'Spiritual Healing' as being no more than a placebo effect.

When patients report an improvement in their condition, through having tried one of the so called forms of 'non conventional medicine', some doctors are still inclined to want to view the results as unreal, in other words no different than if a patient had been administered a placebo substance. But if the effect is sustained, is it not fair to acknowledge that a physiological change must have taken place, the only difference being that it has been created by a stimuli not requiring the intervention of drugs or surgery?

Because we do not fully understand the mechanism by which an improvement to our health is brought about, does not mean that it is not real and should not be treated with respect. It is too easy to dismiss what we don't comprehend by such expressions as being "all in the mind" or a "placebo effect" instead of acknowledging we have still very little understanding of the cosmic forces around us and how we can effectively use them for our own wellbeing.

Through modern scanning techniques, medical science now asserts that it has located and named most of the component parts of the brain. Neurologists now understand a great deal about what the brain does but still have little knowledge of how it works and how it controls our conscious and unconscious thoughts. Even less is understood of how the brain controls our body's defence against disease or infection or issues the necessary instructions to repair the skeletal or tissue structures of the body. It is for this reason that medical reference sources give so little, if indeed any, explanation of how our brain looks after our physical wellbeing. Drug Companies spend huge sums of money in researching the effects of various combinations of chemical substances by methods which amount to no more than 'trial and error'.

This is because they do not possess even a rudimentary understanding of how the brain creates and utilises the immensely complicated chemical substances which maintain our physical existence. Most of our very limited understanding of how our brain operates comes from observing the effects of when it sustains damage through some accident or through strokes or tumours and through observing the effects of electrical stimulation during surgery - but even with the very latest designs of microscopic probes, only the simplest explorations of the brain's tissue can be carried out.



A piece of our brain the size of a pinhead may contain up to five million cells and each cell or 'neurone' which resembles a tree like structure, *is* capable of firing an electrical impulse which is bursting along to its neighbour at approximately two-hundred and fifty miles an hour. In a tiny fraction of a second it *is* ready to fire again and an average brain has a staggering one hundred billion such neurones which together can produce enough electricity to illuminate a light bulb. The human brain uses up more energy to run than any other organ in the body. This represents one fifth of the food we consume and makes the head hotter than any other part of our body.

When a particular part of the brain is working harder, extra blood flows there to provide energy for the active nerve cells. Brain power is a result of the collective effort of neurones working together. Teams of neurones take on different responsibilities i.e., different functions of the body. The thousands of branches between each neurone are not actually physically joined together. Between each neurone is a tiny gap and minute quantities of chemicals are released each time they fire an electrical impulse and it is this cocktail of chemicals which influence our thoughts and general wellbeing.

Whatever we consume into our bodies , from whatever source, can easily effect the very intricate balance of these chemicals. The medicines prescribed by your doctor, or any other health care practitioner, ultimately are given to bring about an effect on these chemical messages transmitted between different groups of neurones. These transmissions may in turn result in adjustments to the instructions being sent out to other organs of the body such as the Endocrine Glands which manufacture and regulate the secretion of hormones directly into the bloodstream. It is these hormones which are carried to other organs or tissue of the body to act to modify their structure or function.

One of the main criticisms of conventional medicine is that too many of the drugs prescribed are only masking or counteracting the effects of some chemical imbalance or deficiency within our body, rather than trying to identify the root cause. This approach contrasts, for example, with Nutritionists or Herbalists where the emphasis is on trying to identify any minerals or chemicals which may be lacking in our diet, or the elimination of foods which can, particularly if consumed to excess, have a detrimental effect on our wellbeing.

Within our brain is genetically planted a time clock whereby our bodies are slowly degrading. It is an inevitable part of the cycle of life that we must eventually grow old and die. Often we are inclined to associate our state of health with the ageing process, but how quickly this comes about is greatly affected by how we look after our bodies in terms of the quality and variety of food we eat, the air we breath, and how regularly we exercise. To this must be added the importance of cultivating and maintaining an active mind which does try to think positive.

It is believed that it is the frontal cortex of our brain which houses our long term memory. Our thoughts are stored across many individual neurones and over a period of time the branching connections of these neurones are strengthened. This is how we remember the main events in our lives, but it is also how we become conditioned in our mental outlook, and this can greatly affect our state of health.

I have devoted some time in this text to explain only a small part of the intricacies of how our brain controls our whole physical and mental wellbeing. I hope you will take on board how important it is to cultivate positive thoughts in order to encourage the optimum conditions for your brain to tackle your medical condition. The more time you devote to encouraging your mind to tackle whatever ails or troubles you, the greater your chances of a successful outcome. The visualisation exercises which are described in a supplementary text, will definitely help in this respect. These should be taken seriously and used frequently as part of your treatment.

To conclude this section on how our brain can affect our wellbeing and how visualisations can help with the healing process, I will return to the role of Spiritual Healing. Any stimuli, from whatever source, which brings about an improvement in our health, should be respected even if we do not fully understand the mechanism by which it works. Most Spiritual Healers are dedicated, caring people who very often give their services without expecting any financial reward. It is only a very small minority who are not genuine and whose motives may be questionable.

Unfortunately, there is also a small minority of Healers who sometimes feel the need to adopt what appears to the uninitiated as being rather strange, even bizarre, procedures or rituals. They may also feel the need to wear or surround themselves with occult objects or symbols in order, for example, to draw in or focus the right type of healing energies. I am not questioning the validity of these techniques and no doubt the vast majority of such Healers are quite sincere in their beliefs and their reasons for carrying out such methods. However, these techniques make it more difficult for medical doctors, or other persons with a scientific background, to give Spiritual Healing the credence it deserves. What should be realised is that these beliefs are merely a means to focus or concentrate our thoughts to produce a specific reaction. It is not the object or method in itself which causes the effect but it is how they help us to concentrate our minds to produce a positive outcome. If it was paramount to carry out certain rituals or to hold specific beliefs as to how we may receive healing energies, then any variance in approach would be ineffective. This is clearly not the case and the vast majority of Spiritual Healers go about their vocation in a very straightforward and unassuming manner.

There is no doubt that many Healers radiate a loving and caring disposition which can only help the recipient of healing feel better in themselves; but Spiritual Healing has at its core the belief that all around us are subtle energies which are constantly interacting with our physical bodies. It is when this process is impeded and an imbalance occurs that we become ill, and the Healer acts as a conduit or channel by which healing energies may flow to restore the bodies symmetry. However, the person receiving healing must do their part to help create the right conditions so that the same problem does not reoccur.

This is why the effects of healing can wear off because the underlying problem has not been addressed. For healing to stand the best chance of being effective requires the full co-operation of all parties involved. When all those involved in conventional medicine can accept the essential role that Spiritual Healing can play, then the greatest strides in medical science will be achieved. Perhaps a good starting point would be for medical institutions to explore more seriously better ways of encouraging the mind to trigger a healing response, such as through more effective visualisation techniques, or by finding better ways of harnessing and utilising Spiritual energies.

It is not by coincidence that most illustrations depicting the act of Healing show the hands of the healer a short distance from the recipients head. This is almost universal as forming part of the healing act. Healers will offer various explanations as to why they do this and increasingly these interpretations are found to be based on the Hindu and Buddhist Yogic concept of there being Chakras or vortices which penetrate the body and its aura through which various energies including the universal Life Force are received, transformed, and distributed.

The Universal Life Force is said to enter the aura through the Chakra at the top of the head and permeates down through the other Chakras to be transformed into usable energy for the function it governs. Some Healers therefore believe that they are regulating or balancing this energy or clearing blockages using their hands, starting with the vortice located on the crown of the head. I am only giving a very simplified explanation of this process in order to observe the undertaking previously given, that I would not become involved in abstruse explanations of the healing process.

However, whatever the belief or understanding may be, in scientific terms the Healer is recognising that the brain controls our physical wellbeing and therefore, first and foremost the healing energies must be directed to alter any faulty or inappropriate programming contained in our mind.

In a separate text I describe some mental techniques which you can employ to augment this process, but you should first read one other important topic which can have a vitally important effect on our physical wellbeing: **'The Importance of Correct Breathing'**.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT BREATHING

Perhaps you think that you already know all you need to know on how to breathe. It is after all something that everyone must do to stay alive and yet for most of us it is an automatic response which we seldom have to think about. Often it is only when we subject our bodies to some form of strenuous exercise or effort do we become aware of our breathing when we become 'out of breath' or 'breathless'. It is when we make a sudden or rapid demand on our body requiring extra energy that our lungs must inhale and exhale more air to meet this increase in activity. At the same time our heart has to beat more rapidly to provide an increased blood flow. So, it is not just the food we eat that provides us with the necessary energy we need to fulfil the physical demands we make on our body - the very air we breath has a just as vital a role to play in keeping our body fit and healthy. This is not just in terms of the volume of it that we need to process but like our food, how pure and uncontaminated it is. In other words, it's quality.

I have already established that the bones, vital organs and other tissues of our body are simply groups of different cells working in harmony with one another. All these cells need the oxygen contained in the air we absorb through our lungs to function properly and to re-generate and to stay healthy. It is a fact that the vast majority of us, certainly in western style cultures, do not breath properly and are often inhaling substances mixed with the air absorbed by our lungs which are at the very least impeding our bodies ability to keep itself healthy.

Let us try a simple experiment to determine the efficiency of our breathing. I will assume that you are sitting or lying down in a relaxed state whilst reading this text and have not just completed any strenuous activity. Now become aware of the rhythm of your breath. By this I mean how long your lungs take to inhale and exhale each time. Now count the number of seconds you take to complete each cycle. Start counting at the same rate of the seconds hand of a clock. Start at the moment you begin to draw the breath into your lungs and continue counting until that same breath has been discharged. Don't try to exaggerate the breath or deliberately hold it for longer than normal. Monitor your breathing for a minute or so to establish its normal rhythm before counting an individual breath.

If you are breathing in an efficient manner, each complete cycle should take about 4 to 5 seconds. If you are taking longer, then so much the better. This means that you are completing no more than about 12 to 14 breaths in a minute. Unfortunately, because of our modern life styles and the lack by many of us of any regular exercise, an increasing number of us complete each breathing cycle in about 3 to 4 seconds - sometimes even less.

This is equivalent to a breathing rate of at least 15-20 cycles per minute. Of course, during heavy physical exercise our breathing rate will increase considerably - as high as 80 times a minute, but I am referring in our exercise to our breathing when we are fully relaxed. A short breathing cycle is often an indication that our breathing is too shallow. To understand the significance of this, we need to consider what is taking place when we breathe and the effect this has on ALL the cells in our body.

I am not attempting to give a full medical explanation of the workings of our respiratory system, and certain aspects have been deliberately simplified or omitted in order to aid an easier understanding of the main points we wish to make.

Although our respiratory system provides the means by which we sense different smells and our ability to speak through our larynx or voice box, the prime function of breathing is to provide oxygen to every cell in the body. Without an adequate supply of oxygen, our body's tissue soon degrades and dies. Oxygen is an essential ingredient for metabolism to take place. This is the biochemical process which keeps our body functioning. Together with digested nutrients obtained from the food we eat, enzymes and other chemicals, the oxygen is vital to enable the cells to burn energy. This process literally keeps us alive and is known as 'aerobic respiration'.

As with a motor car engine, if the fuel is not mixed properly with the correct amount of air, or either of these prime ingredients becomes contaminated, then the engine cannot work at peak efficiency. The resultant loss of vital energy causes sluggish performance or at worse a complete breakdown. Likewise it is with our body. The oxygen obtained from the air we breathe must be of sufficient volume and purity and mixed with various chemicals brought about by complex biochemical changes. Any deficiency or contamination of the original basic ingredients (i.e. the food we eat or the air we breathe), will impede or adversely effect our body at a cellular level resulting in sluggish or impaired functioning of the vital organs. Such a situation, if not addressed, can only lead to disease and/or breakdown of these vital organs and ultimately to premature death.

Therefore, not only must we try to ensure that the food we eat is of the purest quality and contain all the essential vitamins, minerals and other chemicals that our body needs, but the right amount of pure oxygen must be provided to be mixed in the correct proportions at a cellular level with these substances so as to provide the necessary energy to maintain the efficient functioning of all aspects of our physical body.

Most of us realise that the air we breathe is taken in through our lungs. There is however, the common misconception that this air is basically Oxygen when we inhale and Carbon Dioxide when we exhale. In reality usually over 78% of inspired air is Nitrogen. Oxygen constitutes less than 21% of the normal atmosphere we all breathe. The remaining 1% or so is made up of Argon, Carbon Dioxide and a miscellany of other trace gases.

When we exhale the proportion of Carbon Dioxide increases to about 4%. In other words we are still expelling 80% of the oxygen taken in with each breath. Based on a normal breathing rate of 12 to 14 breaths per minute this represents about 3 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> pints of oxygen entering the body every minute. If as previously established, many of us are breathing too shallow or the process by which we absorb oxygen through our lungs is impeded by contamination or disease, then the correct amount of oxygen is not available to be combined with the complex chemical substances contained in each cell and efficient cellular function is compromised.

One common indication of insufficient oxygen reaching the cells of our body is becoming breathless through carrying out even the most simplest of tasks. Because our reserves of energy are depleted through inadequate oxygen absorption, our body tries to make up the short fall by increasing our breathing and heart rates. This is done in an attempt to absorb more oxygen so as to maintain correct metabolism, but as I have already established, even in a healthy body with an efficient breathing pattern, only about a fifth of the volume of the air we inhale contains oxygen and less than 20% of this available oxygen is actually absorbed by the red blood cells which pass through our lungs. These red blood cells receive oxygen by travelling along fine capillaries from the pulmonary artery and pass in close proximity to minute air sacs known as 'Alveoli'. Each red blood cell largely contains Haemoglobin which is what gives the cells their colouring. The Haemoglobin acts like a magnet and binds the oxygen chemically as it is transported to the various cellular structures of the body.

A pair of healthy adult lungs will contain more than 700 million Alveoli representing a total surface area of between 50 and 100 square yards. The more Alveoli working efficiently, the greater will be their oxygen absorbing efficiency, providing this most essential ingredient for healthy cell maintenance and regeneration.

I have now established how important it is that sufficient oxygen is absorbed in order to maintain our body in an optimum condition and this is why I am devoting quite some time to emphasise the importance of correct breathing. I am now going to describe some simple breathing techniques to aid the process I have just described. The first method is to develop a slower rhythm to your breathing which will enhance the exercises described in the supplementary text entitled 'Visualisations'. It is intended to create a more relaxed state of consciousness. Changing your breathing pattern will alter the frequency of your brainwaves and in our second exercise I am going to describe a method of establishing a theta rhythm operating at between 4 to 7 cycles per second. This will provide a gateway to deeper meditation and access to the unconscious mind. This second exercise will also require deeper and controlled breathing and will help to improve oxygen intake.

Our third and final exercise is based on the Crane Yogic technique originally practised by Chinese Taoists, and is specifically intended to develop the lower portion of the lungs which are seldom utilised. This technique is particularly useful in dealing with abdominal or intestinal problems. In Chinese Yoga as with other types such as Hatha or Raja, the air we breath is believed to be a vital source of 'Universal Life Force' or 'Vital Energy' which I have previously mentioned in relation to the Chakras energy centres. In Chinese philosophy this energy is known as 'Qi' or in Hindu teachings as 'Prana'. It is because of these beliefs that breathing techniques form such an important part of some Yogic teachings. However, I will not be delving into such matters here preferring instead to concentrate on a purely medical approach in understanding the importance of the process we know as 'breathing'.

Before I describe these breathing techniques, it will be helpful to ensure first of all that we have a basic understanding of the mechanical processes involved when we draw air into our lungs and what we mean when we use terms such as 'Abdominal' or 'Diaphragm'.

Unfortunately, many of us seem to have a wrong impression of the mechanics of the breathing process and often imagine that we are sucking in air through our nose and mouth and inflating a bag like structure inside our chest cavity known as the lungs. We could liken this procedure to when we draw liquid up a straw. In point of fact, this is a far from accurate description, which probably explains why so many of us do not know how to breathe properly or how to go about improving our breathing technique. No doubt because the movements of breathing are usually controlled in a reflex manner by the respiratory centre of our brain, known as the 'Medulla Oblongata', we give little thought to what is actually taking place. However, we CAN override this automatic response and teach our brain to regulate our breathing differently. Indeed, every time we speak or cough, we are imposing a change in our breathing pattern.

The lungs and heart, together with their associated tubes and pipework, virtually occupy the whole of the chest area. They are protected by a bony cage consisting of the ribs on each side, the breastbone at the front, and the spine at the back. The lungs are surrounded by a double membrane known as the 'Pleural Sac'. One layer of this membrane lines the chest cage, the other layer covers the lungs themselves. the two membranes are kept separated by a thin smear of lubricant known as the 'Pleural Fluid'. This pleural sac keeps the chest cavity airtight, the only way in being down the 'Trachea' or windpipe which is the part of the air passage between the larynx and the main bronchial tubes serving the lungs.

The pumping action which regulates the air flow into and out of the lungs is created by the chest cage and two sets of muscles. The first major set of muscles constitutes what we know as the 'Diaphragm'. This consists of three crisscrossing groups of muscle fibers overlapping one another and are joined at their edges to the bottom of the bony cage of the chest, which we have previously described. The diaphragm therefore, forms the floor to the chest supporting the lungs and is domed shape when in a relaxed state (i.e. when there is minimal air in the lungs). This dome, or partial bell shape, is caused by the pressure of the abdominal organs below and projects up into the chest area to within an inch or so of the nipples. Therefore, when we refer to the 'Abdomen' or 'Abdominal Area', we are referring to those organs separated by the diaphragm which are associated with digestion - the stomach, liver, intestines etc and the organs involved with excretion - kidneys, bladder etc.

The lungs are inflated by the diaphragm contracting and becoming flattened which also partially impresses the abdominal organs. This causes the lungs to be pulled down by suction existing between the pleural sac and the diaphragm. The stretchy spongy structure of the lungs enables them to expand as they are pulled down. This increase in volume creates a pressure drop inside the lungs resulting in a partial vacuum. This causes extra air to be forced into the lungs through the respiratory tract as the atmospheric pressure outside rushes in to remove the void. This is how we breathe in. The diaphragm is assisted in expanding the lungs by a second set of muscles connected to the rib cage, known as the 'intercostal'. These intercostal muscles aided by certain other muscles in the back and neck, contract in unison with the diaphragm and pull the ribs upward.

The ribs are actually jointed at the spine and breast bone allowing the rib cage to swing up and outwards so as to enlarge the chest and encourage further expansion of the lungs, thus increasing their volume area even further. The lungs themselves play a purely passive role in the actual process of drawing in air. When we exhale, the diaphragm and chest muscles relax. The chest cavity elastically recoils to its previous volume. The elasticity of the lungs in conjunction with gravity pushing down on the rib cage, aids the lungs to contract and to blow air back out the same way it came. The rib cage is designed so that it is slightly slanting downward to assist the lungs to deflate.

From the foregoing, it should now be apparent that correct posture also plays an important role in efficient breathing. If we slouch, we are compressing our rib cage and preventing the efficient operation of our diaphragm - thus impeding an adequate flow of air entering our lungs. This is why posture plays such a crucial role in Yoga in establishing correct breathing principles.



I will now describe the first of our breathing exercises. In this first exercise we will be creating a more relaxed state of mind in order to make us more receptive to the visualisations which will be described later. It is important that you feel totally relaxed which you will not be able to do if you are not sitting or lying in a comfortable position. I am going to try to get you to adopt a slower rhythm to your breathing. I have already explained how to determine your normal respiratory rate. In this exercise, I am going to try to slow your breathing down and establish a new rhythmic pattern. This will be personal to you and it is not the case that you should be trying to complete a certain number of breathing cycles in a given time or expanding your lungs by taking in more air than normal. Neither should you be attempting to hold your breath at any stage of the breathing cycle. I am merely trying to get you to adopt a slower rhythm to your normal breathing pattern.

We are not in this first exercise so concerned about correct breathing posture. You may indeed, have got into bad habits in the way you normally sit, and not find it comfortable to adopt one of the recommended more erect sitting positions. When you have practised the 2nd and 3rd breathing techniques, you will find that your posture will automatically improve. If you sit now in what is an uncomfortable position which you are not accustomed to, then your muscles will soon begin to ache and your mind will become focused on the discomfort that you feel. This will distract you from establishing a more relaxed, meditative state of breathing. Having established a comfortable sitting or laying position, try to switch off from your normal everyday thoughts.

Don't at this stage think about your breathing, just enjoy the quietness of the moment and let your body become more relaxed. Try to keep your mind empty. Whatever you do, don't use this period of relaxation to mull over worries or anxieties that may be affecting you at the present time. Some of us lead such hectic life styles, that we find it difficult to switch our minds off from our every day activities. We get into the habit of thinking that our minds must be constantly active and when we are not at our place of work or physically involved in some activity, we should be planning or working out other matters which are affecting our everyday lives. This is how we become stressed - we do not appreciate that like our bodies, our minds require rest and not just when we are in a sleep state. Our conscious mind needs periods of quiet relaxation every day. This first exercise is helping us to establish this more relaxed state.

If you are succeeding in blotting out most of your random thoughts, you may find that you become more aware of your body's heart beat and the normal momentum of your lungs. Focus your mind now on your breathing. Without attempting to adjust the amount of air you are breathing in, determine if the inhalation is equal to the exhalation. It is important that the period of time you take to draw air into your lungs is the same as when you discharge a breath. Count at your own rate to determine if this is the case. If the exhale is, for example, shorter - then consciously make an adjustment in your breathing cycle so that you are taking as long to breathe out as when you breathe in. In this exercise, the delay between each breath is unimportant.

Continue to monitor your breathing pattern so that you are consciously making sure that both parts of the breathing cycle are the same. Having established an equal rhythm, we are now going to try and regulate the breath by slowing it down. I should again emphasise that you should not try and take deeper breaths. Simply slow down the inhale and exhale so that they are being let in and let out more gradually. If you have previously monitored your breathing rate and established that you are taking only 3 to 4 seconds to complete a cycle, then try to slow this down to 4 to 5 seconds. Practice breathing at this slower rate ensuring that each part of the breath (that is the inhale and exhale), are both equal. After a period of time you will find that this revised breathing pattern will become perfectly normal to you.

In conjunction with the deeper breathing patterns that follow, you will probably find that your lung capacity will naturally increase allowing you to lengthen the time taken to inhale and exhale, particularly when you are in a relaxed state. Do not attempt to take longer breathing cycles so that it begins to feel uncomfortable. Start altering your breathing pattern slowly and practice this exercise regularly so that in a short time it will become normal to you and you will no longer have to think about it. You will then be ready to practice meditative breathing exercises such as the examples which I explain later on. This first exercise is merely a preliminary stage to establish a slower, more rhythmic, form of breathing.

I have already explained why it is so important to maintain an adequate air intake. In our second breathing exercise we will be attempting to increase the amount of air entering our lungs by increasing the 'inspiratory reserve volume'. This is the amount of additional air that our lungs are capable of holding over and above that of a normal breath. In a healthy pair of adult lungs this can mean at least an additional 5 pints of air to the 1 pint we normally inhale during restful breathing, known as the 'normal tidal volume'.

For our diaphragm and lungs to be able to work to full efficiency, it is important that, together with the rib cage, they are not impeded. This means that we must ensure that our posture is correct by not slouching or bending forwards. Unless some physical disability prevents you, one should either sit on a firm upright chair or sit cross legged on the floor.

The important thing is to maintain your back in an upright position so that the small of your back is slightly hollowed. Do not sit in an armchair or on a sofa which invariably have a seat or back which slopes downwards or backwards preventing you from sitting in a proper upright position. If you are restricted to a wheel chair, ensure that you have a firm cushion in the lumbar region of your back to help keep your chest out.

The correct posture is bolt upright like a soldier standing to attention. Keep your head tilting back slightly so that it is properly balanced on the top of your spine. In the correct position your chin should be parallel with the ground. Keep the spine straight with your chest out and shoulders back and your abdomen tucked in. Your hands should be resting on your thighs or knees either palm upwards or downwards, whichever feels the most comfortable.

If you are sitting on a chair, keep your feet firmly on the ground. If you have become used to sitting in soft furnishings, whereby you are usually leaning forwards so that your abdominal area is compressed, then you may find that the straight upright position that I am advocating, will cause you to develop back ache or other muscular pains. However, if you persevere, your body will soon adjust to this proper sitting position whereby it will become your normal preferred posture. Not only will this facilitate easier breathing but it will strengthen your back and prevent curvature of the spine in later life and other abdominal problems.

Having adopted a correct breathing posture, just relax for a few minutes taking normal breaths, as I have just explained in our first exercise. Now place your hands immediately underneath your rib cage so that the tips of your middle fingers are just touching when you exhale your breath. Your little fingers should be approximately in line with your naval, or just above it. Your thumbs should be touching the bottom of your rib cage. Do not attempt at this stage to take deeper breaths, just observe how your middle fingers touch as you exhale and part slightly when you inhale. If they do not separate, then this may be an indication that you are breathing too shallow.

Having made sure that you are fully relaxed, now determine how much your rib cage expands and hinges up between each breathing cycle. Typically, the space between your middle fingers should widen to about 1/8th of an inch, but this can vary depending on your fitness and physical stature. Whatever is the amount of expansion between your middle fingers, this will be used to measure how much your lungs are expanding as we employ a more deeper breathing pattern.

Firstly, try to expel as much air from your lungs as possible. Pull in your abdominal muscles so as to push up the diaphragm and then let all the air out. When you think that the lungs are empty, try to force out more air by making some exaggerated gasps - but only whilst trying to let more air out. This will resemble the sound of 'huh, huh, huh', as you use every effort to empty the lungs. It may take some practice to learn to force the belly upwards as you exhale. Having discharged all the air you can from your lungs, start to draw the breath in gradually whilst at the same time pushing the abdomen DOWNWARDS.

In fact, many of us are inclined to push our abdominal organs up making it more difficult for the diaphragm to stretch - thus impeding the lungs from fully expanding. I will be mentioning this aspect further in our third breathing exercise. Continue to draw in as much air into your lungs as you can, slowly and steadily. Do not draw the air in rapidly. As you inhale, become aware of your middle fingers separating as your lungs begin to fill with air. Observe how much more the gap between your middle fingers has increased as the lungs become full. Practice taking in as much air into your lungs as possible. When the maximum gap between your fingers starts to become constant, after having completed several breathing sessions, then you will know that you have reached your full lung capacity. Now concentrate on lengthening the period of each breathing cycle. Try to slow this down as much as possible.

Learn to hold the breath for a few seconds between inhaling and exhaling. Similarly, when letting the breath out, try holding it for a moment and take as long to exhale as you did with the inhalation. By practising this exercise regularly you will find that it will become progressively easier to slow down the breathing cycle and to take in a much larger volume of air. Do not be discouraged if you experience some discomfort. Certain muscles involved in your respiratory system have got to be trained to do their job properly, and they may complain by creating a few aches and pains.

There is the old adage that 'consciousness expands with breathing'. It is medically accepted that our brain waves can be modified by adopting different breathing patterns and this can enable us to influence such things as our heart rate and pain threshold. Biofeedback machines are now extensively used to teach people to deal with stress by showing how their heart rate can be slowed down through relaxation and altering their breathing pattern. According to American research, a brain wave of between 4 to 7 cycles per second, known as the 'Theta Rhythm', represents the best frequency for carrying out visualisations and gaining access to the unconscious mind. It is also the best frequency for carrying out lower abdominal breathing which forms the basis of our third breathing exercise. Having practised developing deeper breathing, it should now be relatively simple to adjust your breathing pattern to a Theta Rhythm. Adjust your breathing cycle so that the inhalation and the exhalation each take about 4 seconds. Similarly, make the pauses between each, about 4 seconds. Continue this cycle for a few times and then increase the duration of the exhaled breath only. In other words, breathe in for a count of 4. Hold your breath for 4. Breathe out over a count of 4. Pause for a count of 4, before breathing in again. Continue this cycle for a minute or so, and then regulate the out breath only, over a progressively longer period. Keep the in breath and pauses to the same count of 4.

Our third breathing exercise is based on the early Chinese Taoists method known as 'The Crane'. It is intended to energise and strengthen the abdominal area and is called 'The Crane' after the bird, which is often observed stimulating its abdominal area by folding one leg into its belly. This exerts pressure on its abdominal muscles and the internal organs. In Chinese Yoga is the fundamental belief that to lead a long and healthy life, one must maintain a strong internal system. The Crane method is primarily intended to strengthen all parts of the digestive tract, recognising that weaknesses in this area makes us more prone to all types of diseases, particularly diverticulitis and cancers of the stomach, intestines and Colon. Other conditions such as constipation, diarrhoea, and ulcers, as well as what has become commonly known as irritable bowel syndrome', are all indications of weakness in one or more parts of the digestive tract. Since this tract is normally controlled by involuntary muscles, the Crane technique teaches us how to bring these muscles under our control whereby the abdominal organs are encouraged to move, and so become strengthened.

The Crane method causes the lungs to push downwards, thus pressing the abdominal organs against the surrounding muscles. This has the effect of expanding the belly. This exercise not only strengthens the digestive tract, but also encourages greater movement of the diaphragm and therefore, more air into the lungs. Although this third exercise may be carried out in a sitting position, it is preferred if it can be performed laying flat on the ground. It is best to practice this exercise early in the morning and always on an empty stomach. Alternatively, you may perform this exercise when retiring at night, when any food or drink has had plenty of time to be processed by your digestive system. Women should not perform this exercise during pregnancy.

Place your hands, palms down, on the lower abdominal area so that they lie either side of the naval. This is a lower position than we used in our second breathing exercise to measure the expansion of the rib cage. Begin to exhale slowly whilst at the same time pushing gently downwards on your abdomen so that it creates a hollow cavity. The action of pushing down on the lower abdomen will help to push the abdominal organs up against the diaphragm, thus helping to deflate the lungs and discharge the maximum amount of air. When you have completely exhaled, begin to inhale slowly, but concentrating your mind on pushing the upper part of your abdomen down towards your naval. If you are doing this properly, your belly should expand like a balloon. Whilst inhaling using your abdominal muscles, try to avoid expanding your chest. As I have already explained, the action of the lungs expanding automatically causes the rib cage to rise. With Crane breathing, we are trying to encourage the lungs to inflate DOWNWARDS, by using the lower abdominal muscles. Try to consciously restrict your chest from expanding as you perform this exercise, so as to force the diaphragm to push down on the organs within the abdomen. At the same time focus on the naval area and imagine that you are only using your lower lungs to breathe in.

Use your hands to assist the abdominal muscles by pressing in the appropriate direction. Once you have mastered the technique and the abdominal muscles are working efficiently on their own, your arms can be laid down to the side of your body. Practice this exercise regularly to maintain optimum performance of your respiratory system. Now try the second breathing exercise again, allowing your chest to expand to its fullest capacity. Position your hands just below the rib cage, as previously explained, and measure the increase in capacity between a maximum exhalation and inhaling to your fullest extent. You will probably be pleasantly surprised to realise that what you thought was your lungs maximum volume, has now increased.

Any discussion on breathing would not be complete without mentioning the subject of 'Hyperventilation' or as it is often referred to - 'over breathing'. With this condition, contrary to popular belief, any exercise which encourages deep breathing is in fact making matters worse. Often hyperventilation is associated as being a symptom of stress and may be the root cause of a variety of conditions such as panic attacks, chronic tiredness, heart palpitations, aching limbs, and chest pains.

People who suffer from cold hands and feet and who put this condition down to 'poor circulation' may in fact, be suffering the consequences of over-breathing. Even many digestive disorders which cannot be identified from intensive medical tests or examinations and which often are conveniently categorised as being 'irritable bowel syndrome', may be the consequence of hyperventilation.

Our body has a complex mechanism for monitoring the ratio of oxygen to carbon dioxide within our respiratory system. In fact, it is levels of carbon dioxide, rather than oxygen, which play a much greater role in determining our breathing pattern. This is regulated by chemically sensitive cells located in the brain stem known as 'chemoreceptors' which monitor the level of carbon dioxide in the 'cerebrospinal fluid'. This is a clear watery fluid which surrounds and protects the brain and spinal cord. The chemoreceptors monitor the level of carbon dioxide which diffuses from the blood into the cerebrospinal fluid. If the level of carbon dioxide builds up, the chemoreceptors send nerve messages down the spinal cord to the diaphragm to increase breathing, so as to lower the carbon dioxide levels in the body.

With hyperventilation, we are breathing too rapidly when our bodies are in fact at rest and not requiring extra oxygen. The respiratory centre of the brain tries to compensate for this by calling for more oxygen - in other words, we over breathe. Our brain is misreading the cause of the situation and is unwittingly making matters worse. This is why people who are suffering from a chronic bout of hyperventilation, or a panic attack, are encouraged to breathe into a paper bag so as to increase the level of carbon dioxide in their blood stream. This will be sensed by the 'chemoreceptors' which transmit the correct message to slow down our breathing rate. Our body also controls the amount of air we inhale by expanding and contracting the bronchial tubes. This process is known as 'Dilation' and will be described in further detail later on in respect to the other major respiratory disorder known as 'Asthma'.

If you suspect that you are suffering from hyperventilation, you should not attempt the 2nd and 3rd deeper breathing exercises which I have just given. The first method which I described, to encourage slower and gentler breathing, will help to establish a more balanced breathing pattern. It is important to learn to pause between breaths and to only breathe through the nose. When you have retrained your brain to breathe properly, you can then practice the other deeper breathing exercises to improve your oxygen intake. If you require further advice and instruction in what is termed 'Chronic Hyperventilation Syndrome', then you may wish to contact a Physiotherapist who has been given the necessary training to help people deal with this condition. Look for a chartered physiotherapist who will hold a state recognised qualification. A list will normally be found in your local 'Yellow Pages'. When phoning, be sure to ascertain that they have the necessary experience to help people to deal with hyperventilation - not all physiotherapists are familiar with treating this condition.

One of the most serious respiratory disorders is 'Asthma'. This can be a very debilitating condition and reported cases are unfortunately, on the increase. It is estimated that over three million people in the U.K. alone are affected by this condition and every year chronic attacks kill hundreds of people. Conventional medicine has still to unravel all the causes of Asthma which vary from person to person. The commonly held belief is that the condition may be aggravated by some infection, or irritant being breathed in, or a food allergy, or allergens such as pollen, or even some emotional upset. Whatever triggers the reaction, the result is a severe narrowing of the bronchial tubes or bronchi. These are a branching system of tubes conducting the air we breathe from the windpipe to the lungs. These bronchi are lined with muscles which can contract causing a severe restriction to the amount of air which can enter our lungs.

This contraction is primarily caused by the Vagus nerve in the brain releasing the chemical 'Acetylcholine' at the nerve endings controlling the bronchial muscles. Some control of these muscles is also caused by the body releasing 'Histamine' to an allergic reaction. The bronchial muscles can also expand to allow an increase in air flow in response to the body requiring an additional amount of energy. The body can release chemicals known as 'Bronchodilators'; the most important of these is 'Adrenalin' which has the effect of relaxing the bronchial muscles allowing more air to pass into the lungs.

Conventional medicine basically treats Asthma by giving drugs to counter the effect of the body releasing an excess amount of histamine or acetylcholine which as we have just determined, will cause the bronchial tubes to contract. These chemicals can be released by the body malfunctioning and producing an excess of antibodies to deal with some infection or other irritant being breathed in. Therefore the drugs prescribed are intended to encourage the bronchial tubes to relax or expand in a similar manner to the body's own bronchodilators. With emergency treatment administered by a medical professional, Adrenalin or Aminophylline will normally be injected. The steroid, Hydro-cortisone may also be administered which has a similar effect. Self medications to prevent or minimise an attack, normally involve taking tablets or the use of an inhaler. Drugs like 'Cromolyn' taken by inhalation may be prescribed to decrease the release of histamine. Bronchodilators such 'Isoproterenol' or 'Ventolin' may be given in various forms such as tablet, or as an aerosol inhalant or as an ampoule for a nebulization spray. In severe cases of Asthma, steroid drugs may be prescribed.

Now I have given a basic explanation of the conventional methods for dealing with Asthma, it should be apparent that these methods of treatment are largely treating the symptoms rather than dealing with the root cause. I am now going to describe what is a controversial theory as to what usually causes the Asthmatic effect and how to CURE it. It is based on the premise of breathing less will improve or even eliminate the Asthma condition. This proposition may in part seem to contradict some of my previous statements but in fact, it reinforces them and extends our understanding of how our body regulates the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

This theory is based on research carried out by the Russian physiologist Professor Constatine Buteyko. He asserts that the narrowing of the bronchial tubes, as I have previously described, and which causes the characteristic wheezing and feeling of breathlessness associated with Asthma, is the body's attempt to stop us blowing off essential carbon dioxide. If you stop hyperventilating, carbon dioxide levels will rise and the bronchi will re-expand naturally. When you hold your breath, you increase the level of carbon dioxide which opens your airways enabling more oxygen to be breathed in. In other words, when you hyperventilate, you have less oxygen. Your bronchial airways narrow because your body wants to hold onto the carbon dioxide. If you now use drugs to open the airways, then you may relieve the immediate symptoms but the underlying problem still remains.

Professor Buteyko also believes that in the long run the use of bronchial dilating drugs can make the Asthma worse particularly if they are provided in large doses via nebulizers. In fact contrary to popular belief, the use of steroids is considered preferable in the short term as they do at least successfully combat any inflammation which may exist in the bronchial tubes. Once the inflammation has been eliminated the object should be to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of them as quickly as possible. Many patients believe that the biggest side effects are due to steroids and prefer the use of nebulizers. In fact, according to Russian research, the reverse is true.

The 'Buteyko Technique' of breathing which we will now describe, emphasises the importance of maintaining any prescribed level of steroids but to ease off and preferably not to use nebulizers. This may alarm some doctors who will regard this as inviting an Asthma attack with possible serious consequences. It should be emphasised, that I am not suggesting that any patient should discontinue any prescribed medication by their doctor or other health care professional. I am merely describing a special breathing technique which has been proved very successful in Russia over a period of more than twenty years for dealing with Asthma. The vital rule of the Buteyko treatment is to only breathe through your nose. Therefore, any nasal disorder must be addressed first before this breathing technique can be practised. At night, or when you go to sleep, it may be necessary to even tape up your mouth to ensure that you do not unconsciously hyperventilate.

Establish a steady breathing rhythm as I have already described in our first breathing exercise. Do not attempt to take deeper breaths. When you breathe out, pinch your nose shut with your fingers and delay taking in a new breath for as long as possible. You will probably find that you will only be able to resist inhaling again for a few seconds. It is much harder to delay breathing in following an expired breath than to hold a total inhalation. Continue this process of taking slow regulated breaths. Do not breathe rapidly. Take the breath in gradually. Hold it for a second or two, and then let the breath out in the same gradual manner. When you have exhaled, pinch your nose shut and start counting the number of seconds you can resist taking in a further breath. Take as long as you possibly can before inhaling another breath.



Try to find at least 10 to 15 minutes every day to practice this breathing exercise. Make it part of your daily routine. Do it as often as you can. It is better to devote several shorter periods each day than to have one extended session. You will find that you will be able to extend the breath by standing up and walking around a room with your nose pinched shut. If you persevere, it will become progressively easier and soon you will be able to delay taking in a further breath for periods of well in excess of half a minute. With continued practice, your brain will learn a different breathing pattern ensuring that the correct level of carbon dioxide is maintained in your blood. This will make it much less likely that you will hyperventilate and an asthma attack will have been prevented.

I started this section on breathing by emphasising that it is not just the amount of air we breathe which helps to keep us healthy, but how free that air is from any pollutants. I cannot therefore, avoid mentioning the subject of smoking. There seems little point in me quoting from the overwhelming statistical evidence which proves conclusively that your chances of contracting one of the many potentially fatal or disabling lung disorders such as cancer, emphysema, and bronchitis are greatly increased by smoking. Quite a few doctors and other health care professionals, who should know better, still smoke, so clearly pointing out how smoking WILL affect ones state of health is not sufficient a deterrent to make most people give it up.

For those of an older generation who were brought up believing that smoking was a perfectly acceptable social habit and did not originally realise that they were partaking of one of the worlds most addictive drugs; it is more easy to understand why, having become hooked on the nicotine, most of them find it so hard to give it up. For younger people who have been made aware from the time they started smoking of the potential risks, it is more difficult to understand why some of them should still choose to start smoking in the first place. For this younger category, the reason in most cases is probably to be more accepted by their particular social group and to feel 'grown up'. Nearly all of us when we are young, and when our body is relatively fit and healthy, believe that we will always be this way.

We take for granted that our body will cope with, or recover from, the often constant abuse we subject it to. Our body does have a marvellous ability to repair itself and to ward off many common ailments, but if we do not look after it properly, eventually our body will start to rebel and begin to break down. Most young people have very little understanding of what it is like to suffer constant, unrelenting pain. They think that these things will never happen to them.

Unfortunately, some of them become complacent and are quite prepared to take the risks associated with smoking or the partaking of other even more potentially lethal drugs. They have no perception of how their quality of life could be seriously adversely affected by the taking of these substances.

Keeping specifically to the subject of smoking, if we have any respect for our body, we should not smoke. Even if we choose to ignore the risks of contracting one of the serious lung disorders, we should realise that our body's natural filtration system is ineffective at repelling the harmful toxins contained in cigarette smoke. The toxic components include carbon monoxide, nicotine and tar. I have already explained how our body absorbs oxygen and transfers it to every cell in our body via our red blood cells. If these cells are being constantly contaminated by the poisons contained in cigarettes, then this can only have a harmful effect on our basic metabolism. So, it is not just our lungs which are being put at risk through smoking, but literally every part of our body.

Yes, EVERY part of our body is being affected. The consequences are incalculable - cells will be destroyed or become malignant or mutate. Their correct functioning will be impaired, thus creating a chain reaction affecting the body's ability to maintain healthy function. It is my assertion that any adverse medical condition will be made worse, or aggravated by, the inhalation of tobacco smoke. As previously stated, our body is no more than a complex cellular structure. Some types of cell die and are replaced. Some are being constantly rejuvenated. Others die and can never be replaced. It is no more than common sense to realise that by contaminating living cells through polluted air, containing harmful toxins, will at the very least impede their proper function.

I made reference just now to our body's filtration system. I am primarily referring to the method by which impurities are removed from the air we breathe rather than how our kidneys purify the blood. There are two lines of defence to ward off harmful dust particles, bacteria, and other air born pollutants from entering our lungs. The first defence mechanism is located in the nasal cavity and in particular, those parts medically described as the 'Middle and Inferior Conchae'. These are coated with respiratory mucous membranes which trap the impurities and carry them on waves of hairlike cells to the throat, to be swallowed and dealt with by gastric juices.

If any harmful particles evade the nasal filtering system, there is a second line of defence located in the bronchial tubes. These airways are similarly lined to the nasal cavity with mucous membranes containing goblet cells producing an endless supply of sticky mucous to catch the offending impurities contained in the incoming air. On these membranes are similarly borne millions of hair like strands known as 'Cilia', which beat rhythmically to push up the contaminated mucus from the lungs and down the throat.

Prolonged cigarette smoking paralyses the cilia, and eventually destroys them. The body's ability to remove harmful irritants from the air we breathe has now been impeded. The lungs will now have increasing difficulty to clear the mucous and in an attempt to do so develop what is commonly referred to as the 'Smokers Cough'. More serious, is that the lungs have now no defence against the ever increasing level of pollutants that are contained in the air we breath. These begin to attack the alveoli air sacs, whereby the vital exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide, which I have already explained in some detail, is now seriously compromised.

Therefore, smoking has not only affected our respiratory system, which can lead to obstructive lung disease, but eventually chokes and destroys sufficient alveoli to prevent an adequate supply of oxygen reaching all the cellular structures of our body. These cells are also at the mercy of all the toxins absorbed by our red blood cells as they take vital oxygen from what are now critically contaminated lungs.

It is small wonder that our overall state of health deteriorates and we begin to develop all sorts of physical disorders which we may not at first have associated with smoking. It must be conceded that the air we breathe does unfortunately, contain an increasing level of toxins caused by industrial pollution and the burning of fossilised fuels. The air we breathe in towns and cities also contains a much higher level of dust particles which irritate our respiratory system. Of course, the food we eat may contain chemicals which can damage our health. It is known that more than 20 chemicals used in agriculture, can cause cancer. Modern methods of farming often mean that the fruit and vegetables we eat are devoid of vital minerals and vitamins necessary for healthy cell maintenance. We are yet to know the full effect of genetically modified food on our physical wellbeing.

All these factors can affect our state of health and make us more susceptible to contracting one of the many dreaded diseases. Smoking is by no means the only culprit and cannot be blamed, for example, for all the 40,000 new cases of lung cancer reported each year in the U.K., alone. However, the vast majority of reported cases of people with respiratory disorders are those who smoke and since most of us cannot avoid the other sources of pollution, it stands to reason that those who do smoke must be putting themselves at greater risk. Since the early 1960's smoking has been recognised as being the U.K 's deadliest drug addiction which kills one in two regular smokers.

Although now regarded as an anti social activity, 12 million people in the U.K. still remain hooked on the glamour, comfort, and the addictive power of smoking. Ironically, you may smoke because you believe that it helps you to cope with a particular medical condition. In fact, smoking may be the biggest contributory factor which is making your condition worse - if indeed, not the root cause. Cigarettes are regarded by many smokers as being a great comforter, to help relieve stress and depression. They seem to create a calming effect and an increased feeling of wellbeing. This is in fact a fallacy and the latest medical evidence suggests that long term smoking may make you more depressed. Cigarettes contain a number of chemicals which affect the brain and smokers are twice as likely to develop depression as non smokers.

It therefore becomes a vicious circle - the more depressed you are, the more you smoke. Perhaps you smoke because you feel it 'soothes the nerves' and helps you to cope with the pain that your medical condition has created. You therefore, take solace in the 'Nicotine Buzz'. Like any drug, the effect is short lived and increasingly you feel the need to take more. Those toxins have now permeated through the blood stream to every part of your body agitating your nerve cells making the pain and discomfort even worse. So what do you do now? - Probably, if you are true to form, smoke another cigarette.

These are some of the facts concerning smoking. Ignore them if you wish or pretend to yourself that they are untrue - but please do realise that Spiritual Healing, or any other form of therapy or treatment, as well as taking any pills, potions, or quantities of vitamin and mineral supplements, will not have any lasting beneficial effect on your health if you refuse to give your body the best possible chance of recovery. This includes inhaling the cleanest air possible and in sufficient volume.

Finally, before I close this section on breathing, and our reference to smoking, I will provide just two statistical facts:- A recent European report states that passive smoking - by which we mean non smokers who have to frequently breath in the air containing the smoke produced by smokers, will kill more than 22,000 people per year in Europe. Passive smoking also increases the risk of heart disease. Non smokers who live with smokers have a 30 per cent greater risk of contracting heart disease at the age of 65 than non smokers who are not exposed to tobacco smoke. Believe it or not, that's equivalent to smoking just one cigarette a day.

For those who do smoke, particularly in a home environment shared by friends and family, do you really think that you have the right to gamble with their lives and physical wellbeing? Just trying to avoid being near people when you are smoking in public is not, with due respect, sufficient. If you can be considerate to people who may be complete strangers, is it not somewhat illogical that you do not show the same consideration to those who are close to you and who may be sharing a much more confined space containing much higher concentrations of toxins from your cigarette smoke? Irrespective of the fact that it happens to be your home, please try to give consideration to their wellbeing and refrain from smoking. Better still, take notice of what I have said in this text, and give up smoking. It will be the best decision you have probably made in a very long time. If you need help to fight the addiction, consult your doctor who will be able to prescribe treatments to help you.

In the next topic entitled 'Visualisations', I am going to describe some relaxation techniques and powerful visualisations to help combat some specific medical conditions. I would suggest you leave reading this until later on when you have had the opportunity of mastering the breathing techniques which I have previously described.

In '**Visualisations**' we will be embarking on what could be described as a 'magical journey' so please try to ensure that you are in a relaxed state and are not likely to be interrupted.

## VISUALISATIONS

Become aware of the rhythm of your breath. Begin to adjust its cycle as we have already explained in the separate text entitled 'The Importance of Correct Breathing'. Clear your mind of normal earthly matters. Try not to think about whatever ails or troubles you. If you are in pain, be it physical or emotional, try as best you can to push it to one side and concentrate your mind on the images that I am now going to create for you.

Imagine that you are standing outside a door. It does not matter where this door is located. It might be down a corridor or a means of access to a shrine or temple hidden away in your own special place. Turn the handle of the door to open it and step inside. You have now been immediately transported to a beautiful valley surrounded by rolling hills covered with majestic trees and exquisite vegetation. It is summer time and the sun is shining down from a clear blue sky. Ahead of you is a lush green meadow. Take off your shoes and in your bare feet walk out towards the centre of this meadow. Feel the pulse of Mother Earth beneath your feet as you walk through the grass. You find a clearing and you lay down so that you are looking up at the delicate blue which is all around you.

Occasionally a fluffy white cloud sails by effortlessly. You feel the warmth of the sun touching every part of your body. There is the gentlest of breezes to keep your body at a comfortable temperature. The air smells sweet and fresh. You can hear a skylark singing his heart out overhead and the subtle noise of winged insects going about their business of pollinating this exquisite diversity of flowers pushing their way up through the grasses all around you seeking out the sun. You then become aware of this beautiful butterfly which has rested amongst a cluster of wild poppies growing nearby, its wings are of a most delicate shade of turquoise glistening in the sunlight. Enjoy for a few moments the peace and serenity of these tranquil surroundings.

Now concentrate again on your breath. Feel your lungs filling to their fullest capacity as they take in the freshness of the air around you rejuvenating every cell in your body. Become aware as you take in every fresh breath how much lighter you are becoming until you become so light that you are now no longer resting on the ground but are being held up by the tips of all the blades of grass beneath you which are pushing you up towards the sun. Suddenly the breeze increases and gently lifts you up into the sky. You are carried higher and higher but still remain totally relaxed and content to allow the breath of Mother Nature to take you to a mysterious destination.

Keep up the momentum of your breathing. Gradually you feel yourself descending as the breeze dies away. You have now returned to Earth. Get to your feet and survey your surroundings. The meadow and the valley you were in have now disappeared. Your visibility is obscured by a strange mist. You become aware of the stillness and the complete absence of any sound other than that of your own heart beat. You have no idea where you are or why you have been brought to this strange place and yet you still feel totally at ease. A tingling sensation ripples through your whole body in anticipation that some cosmic force has carried you here and that you are now about to embark on the second stage of a wonderful journey linking the physical World as we know it, with that of another dimension, not subject to our understanding of time and space. Suddenly the mist begins to dissolve revealing ahead of us this golden sphere which pulsates and glistens brightly and yet there is no sun or sky overhead - just a dark emptiness.

As you approach the sphere which seems to be smooth and solid all over, an opening appears in front of you. It is as if a doorway has just appeared from nowhere revealing that this sphere or globe is indeed hollow and is bidding you to enter. You proceed through the opening to find this luxurious bed which you know instinctively has been provided for you to lie down on, supported by the softest and most beautifully coloured cushions to make you feel completely comfortable. You become aware that the doorway has again disappeared and that you are now cocooned inside the globe like being within the shell of an egg completely protected from any negative or harmful forces on the outside. You feel safe and are content to curl up amongst the inviting cushions and enjoy the feeling of being at peace with the World. Here in this special haven all your worldly problems and anxieties are forgotten.

As you lay there savouring every moment of this wonderful experience you become aware that the globe has lifted off and is now ascending into the heavens. As if by some sort of one way mirror, you can see out through the walls of the globe and see Mother Earth falling away beneath you. As you lay in your cosy environment you look up and wonder at the clarity of the millions of twinkling stars and at the immensity of the Universe which is all around you. For just a moment there is complete darkness - you are entering one of the portals which links the far corners of the Universe. These are the arteries of time and space, like motorways joining all 'being' and through which the Life Force travels. Here you are between different dimensions. Way ahead of you in the distance you can see this pin point of pure white light. Your sphere is hurtling along at a speed which is beyond our comprehension.

You are in fact, being pulled along by the current of the Life Force itself in its continuous cycle to and from the 'Source' of all creation. Gradually this speck of white light grows bigger and brighter, its brilliance now reflecting off the shell of our sphere creating the most beautiful cascading effects of golden yellow. You are now being bathed in the power of this light creating within you an indescribable glow of love and wellbeing. This white light is now all around you, its intensity now obliterating any shape or form within your special resting place.

At the very moment of its greatest brilliance, it subsides and you are aware that the sphere that

has been your vehicle has suddenly dissolved as if it was never there. As your eyes become accustomed to the different level of light, out of a strange type of haze you can see the outline of figures coming towards you, their arms outstretched as if to welcome you. You are indeed, visiting in a conscious state, the origin of your Soul - your very being. You are at one with the source of your creation. Here all makes sense and all those things which have adversely affected you on Earth no longer seem to have any relevance.

Because your thought processes are still operating in a physical form and cannot relate to an existence outside your own body, a special environment has been created for you in which to enjoy this temporary stay, for your time has not yet come to leave your physical body and to be re-absorbed into the collective consciousness. In this special environment has indeed been created for you the most idyllic surroundings you could imagine.

We will pause here for a few moments for you to create your own images of a paradise full of wonderment and creating within you a feeling of true contentment.

As you savour every moment of being in this very special place, you hear from a distance this voice calling out your name. You are curious as to its identity which keeps whispering your name seemingly inviting you to search out its source. You follow the direction of the sound down a long winding path lined with the most exquisite fragrant flowers - their powerful aroma fills your head with this marvellous feeling of wellbeing. You become aware that the path is gradually descending, when suddenly, you turn a corner and realise that you are at the edge of a cliff top. Below you is this magnificent secluded bay with a beach of the purest golden sand. You look out at the glittering water which is of the most delicate shade of aquamarine. It is calm like a mill pond with the gentlest of ripples lazily creeping up the beach.

You become aware that there is no horizon. This is not like your own world - it is a very special place known as the 'Sea of Purification'. It exists outside the Universe, as we know it. The voice continues to call you down a series of steps which descend the cliff face to the beach below. You walk across this beautiful textured sand and sit down at the waters edge looking out in wonder across this expanse of the purest aquamarine where there is no distinction between the sea and the sky.

You undress and place your clothes further up the beach. You lay out on the warm sand looking up at this mass of beryl like colour which creates within you this immense feeling of joy and happiness. You can here the water lapping up close to you. You close your eyes still visualising this marvellous colour all around you and then gradually, you feel yourself drifting off to sleep. Here time has no meaning and at some stage you become aware that you are floating in this bluish-green liquid. It is not like any water you have ever bathed in. It possesses the most miraculous healing powers....

Feel it being absorbed through every pore of your skin.

Feel it entering every cell in your body, rejuvenating every part of your being.

Feel the purification effect , cleaning out all the toxins and dead or diseased cells.

Feel it creating new healthy cells restoring your wellbeing.

Feel it systematically travelling around every part of your body searching out damaged or infected tissue and repairing or replacing it.

Feel it permeating through your mind removing all those negative emotions -all those fears and anxieties.

Feel those dark depressive thoughts being washed clean out of your mind creating a feeling of inner joy and confidence that you WILL surmount all your worldly difficulties.

Feel that each vital organ and limb in your body is being restored to full efficiency - that you are being made whole again.

Feel the tide of this 'Sea of Purification' wash through your whole body from head to toe cleaning out all impurities, creating balance and harmony at all levels of your being.

Feel all these things. Repeat several times those that seem particularly relevant to your state of health, creating in your mind the cycle of this translucent liquid with special healing properties destroying whatever is bad within you and cleansing and purifying your whole body before revitalising every part of you.

When you feel completely renewed, feel yourself once again drifting off into a sleep like state. The gentle tide of this cosmic sea has laid you back on to the sandy beach. Lay there for a few minutes feeling this new found energy surging through your whole body. This is the 'Life-Force' now flowing freely through you. All the blockages have now been removed impeding your physical and emotional wellbeing.



Now get dressed again and slowly in your own time, make your way back again up the steps to the top of the cliff. Look back just once more at the indescribable beauty all around you. Fix in your mind the picture of this marvellous sight and always keep it with you. Remember you have seen but a glimpse of the very origin of your soul. You have through your conscious mind been reunited with the 'Source'- your God, your Creator. Hold on to this thought and never let it go. The Divine Spirit is always with you to help you through any adversity. Take strength from this unique experience.

You return to your arrival point and find your golden globe has reappeared. Once again you see these figures through this strange haze and sense that they have come to say goodbye and are radiating these immense feelings of love and wellbeing. You settle down amongst the soft cushions of your sphere and fall into a deep sleep. The next thing you remember is your name being called and you wake up to find that you are now lying again in your meadow amongst all these beautiful sounds, sights and smells of Mother Nature.

You then realise that the voice that had woken you from your sleep was the very same that had guided you to the Sea of Purification. You feel reassured to know that this voice of comfort is still with you. Indeed, it feels like a part of you which in fact it is. This voice that has comforted you, guided you and helped you to find an inner strength is YOUR HIGHER SELF. It is the larger part of you that remains with the Source. Only a minuscule part of your soul inhabits your physical body. You are never alone. You are for eternity linked through Spirit to your Creator.

Refocus your mind on the tranquil surroundings of this beautiful valley. Become aware of your breathing filling your lungs to their fullest capacity with this purest of air. Smell the scent of the flowers and fresh grass around you. Offer up a prayer to your Maker thanking him for this marvellous experience and for the Healing which you have received.

If you have used this visualisation during a healing session, stay in your meadow savouring every moment until you feel the touch, or the voice, of your Healer indicating that it is time for you to return to the realities of your physical existence. Walk to the edge of the meadow to discover a doorway. Open and walk through it and return to your normal conscious state.

The visualisation exercise which has just been described is potentially immensely powerful — but only if you are prepared to open up your mind. It contains several specific elements to enhance the effectiveness of the Healing process, and no part should be left out. The whole visualisation has been created to last approximately 15 to 20 minutes; which is roughly the time allocated for individual healing sessions at public venues. Private sessions can last longer and any of the separate sections can be extended or developed, as you prefer. By all means use your own imagination to build on these images. You may like, for example, to take yourself on a mystical journey before you reach the doorway through which you are taken to the beautiful valley.

Those of you with a deeper understanding of the Healing process will recognise that the images created in this visualisation have a more profound significance and are intended to help meet important criteria such as grounding and creating for yourself a protected space. It is also vitally important that you feel connected to the Source of these Healing energies. It does not matter if you see this Spiritual connection through a God head or some cosmic force. What is important is that you feel that you are drawing in this Healing power. Healers refer to this process as 'ATTUNEMENT' and it is just as important for the recipient as for the Healer.

Many of us find it difficult to visualise having a connection with a divine entity. This is why this visualisation takes you to the Spiritual Source, and it is quite intentional that these images are somewhat similar to what many of us imagine is the journey we take when our physical body dies and our Soul returns to the Divine Creator. Of course, we have not yet died, or to be more precise our physical body has not yet died, so in our visualisation we have created a physical means of transportation in the form of a sphere, to take us back to the very beginning of our existence.

The use of colour has long been recognised as having a beneficial effect in the Healing process and can aid the treatment of various medical conditions. There is some disparity between reference sources as to the application of specific colours, but it is generally accepted that the blue part of the spectrum is the main healing ray. Green is also widely used for its soothing effect and for treating the nervous system.

You will find several references to these colours or a blend of the two in the journey that we have described. Other colours are also mentioned for their specific therapeutic effect. When you are having Healing, sometimes the Healer may be impressed to utilise a specific colour. He or she may ask you to assist in this process by imagining this colour whilst the Healing is being conducted. I will give you some advice on the best way to do this more effectively later on. It is not unusual for the recipient to see through their minds eye beautiful colours at different stages of a Healing session. These are often shades of blue, violet or purple but may be of any colour. Why this should happen is speculative but should be taken as an encouraging sign that something positive is happening.

Some Healers do like to talk to you during the Healing session. This is often to get confirmation of what they are picking up, or any effect you may be experiencing, as they are scanning or touching you. Other Healers will rarely talk to you whilst the actual Healing is taking place as this can interfere with their attunement. It can of course, disrupt any visualisation being conducted by either parties. If you intend to use the visualisations given in this text or try another, then it is not going to be as effective if you are interrupted in the middle of a session. Check with your Healer before they begin on how they intend to communicate with you when the Healing has finished and explain that you will be using visualisations to help the Healing process.

The Healer should welcome such co-operation and be unlikely to break in whilst the Healing is taking place. If you build up a rapport with your Healer and learn to share a common visualisation taken from this text or somewhere else, then this can considerably enhance the Healing effect. Indeed, if you become very close and form a bond of complete trust, you may become travelling companions and share the same Healing experience. Remember, that it is a partnership and the Healer can also benefit from such a relationship.

I have explained some of the thinking behind the visualisations described in this text in order for you to appreciate that they are intended to be a lot more than just a collection of words to help you feel relaxed. By you having this greater understanding will, I hope, give you the incentive to try them out and to take them more seriously.

It is important to recognise that you now have to build on a Healing session if you are to obtain the maximum benefit. Do not simply switch off and go about your normal everyday life until you next receive Healing. You must keep the momentum going. Without your full co-operation, the effect could easily wear off and you will be back to square one. This will seldom have anything to do with the Healer or the quality of the Healing - it comes down to your attitude and how much effort YOU are prepared to make to help yourself to become well, or at least improve your condition or state of mind.

I am now going to make some suggestions on what you can do after the Healing session has finished to ensure the maximum effect. Firstly, it can be the case that following Healing you will feel sleepy or light headed or even slightly disorientated. This is nothing to worry about and is quite normal. It is always advisable, if facilities permit, to sit down afterwards quietly on your own and give yourself time to return to your normal state of consciousness.

The extra energy that you have absorbed during Healing must now be utilised to full advantage. Try to find time for yourself each day for relaxing the mind and for carrying out supplementary visualisations similar to those which I am about to describe. Ensure also, that you continue with your breathing exercises. Do not say to yourself that you haven't got time. If you should think this way, then what you are really saying is that you are too busy to look after yourself properly - that you would rather go on behaving in a manner which is going to adversely effect your health and probably make you suffer even more. Then what? Where would all your rushing about have got you when your health deteriorates to such a degree that you can no longer lead a normal life? Even if it is only ten minutes, you must find time each day outside your normal family or work commitments to relax and work on helping your own body heal itself. I am now going to tell you how to do this.

It is best, if possible, to fix a regular time each day for what I will now refer to as 'Mind Therapy'. Once it becomes part of your normal routine, you will not want to miss it - indeed, it will become an essential part of your daily life helping you to cope with any adverse physical condition as well as the stresses and strains that we all must face as part of our human existence. The best time when the mind is at its most receptive, is usually for most people in the evening after you have finished your normal work activities and taken care of any family responsibilities. Sometimes, the only suitable time will be early in the morning before the rest of the household wakes up so that you can take advantage of the quietness.

Choose a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted. If you can lock yourself away, then so much the better. An ideal place can often be the bathroom. Why not make your period of 'mind therapy' coincide with your bath time prior to retiring to bed? It will help to relax you and considerably increase your chances of enjoying a good nights sleep.

Also, having started to condition your mind to the positive thoughts that you have created in your visualisations, will maximise the effect on your subconscious. If you decide to use the bathroom as your retreat, try to make your surroundings as inviting and relaxing as possible. Take a portable cassette or CD player in with you to play some gentle, restful music. Several companies produce music specifically to relax you and to aid the healing process. Your Healer or Healing group will probably be able to suggest some suitable titles for you and where they can be obtained. Add some aromatic oils to your bath water or other fragrances. If it is dark outside, why not light some candles or oil burning lamps - turn off the main light and just lay back in the soothing warm water. Focus your eyes on the flickering flames, reflecting different patterns of light across the water. The effect can be almost hypnotic and will help to create the perfect conditions for our next visualisation.

Now close your eyes and just let your mind focus on this lovely feeling of wellbeing. Begin to adjust your breathing to a Theta Rhythm, as we have previously explained. When you feel totally relaxed, you can start your next journey. Imagine yourself walking through a forest where you are surrounded by these tall majestic Redwood trees, their huge form reaching up towards the sky. Through the canopy of leaves, rays of sunlight fall onto the forest floor below illuminating clusters of bluebells.

Occasionally where there are clearings in the forest you come across the most brilliantly coloured orchids. You stop to admire their fantastic and beautiful shapes. Smell the freshness of the air intermingled with the diversity of the plant life all around you. Feel the softness of the forest floor beneath your feet. Visualise the roots of these noble trees growing deeper and deeper into Mother Earth anchoring their huge bulk, so that they can withstand the strongest winds. Go up to one of these trees and put your arms around its trunk. Feel the nutrients being drawn up through its roots to provide strength and vigour. Feel the sap rising up the trunk and being directed along every branch and twig from which each leaf bursts forth.

Know that the very air you breathe is being provided by this tree and its companions around you. Accept that each living thing has its role to play in the cycle of life and that each of us is but a minuscule part of the Divine Creator. Only through true humility can each of us draw closer to the 'Source'. Feel your hands absorbing through the pores of your skin, the energy being channelled from deep beneath the earth's surface. Feel that energy permeating to every part of your body, restoring and revitalising every cell. Feel that you are a part of this tree, just like another branch, connected to this immense power and strength which is securing you firmly to this planet we call Earth.

Now bid farewell to your tree and continue on your journey through the forest. For just a moment the sunlight peering through the tops of the trees is interrupted by what you sense is the shadow of a huge bird circling overhead. In the distance you can see this patch of bright light illuminating a glade, and can hear the sound of running water. You proceed in the direction of this sound and discover a beautiful waterfall with crystal clear water tumbling into this pool, sparkling with the sunlight bouncing off each individual droplet, as it dissipates across the surface. The sun is shining brightly in this grassy clearing where there is a profusion of wild flowers. The air is full of their scent and that of the Redwood trees all around you. You take a refreshing drink from the pool and sit down to rest on this large flat stone in the middle of the glade.

You then become aware, once again, of this huge bird gliding in the warm thermals overhead, when suddenly it begins to spiral down towards you. Something tells you that you have nothing to fear and that this noble bird has been expecting you and has come to meet you in this secret glade hidden deep inside the forest. It lands beside you. It is truly larger than any bird you have ever seen. It has the head of an eagle with a plumage which is as white as snow which dazzles you as the sun reflects off its shiny surface.

This magnificent creature of the sky squats down, and you know instinctively that you must mount its neck to be taken to your final destination. With one flap of its enormous wings you are airborne and sailing higher and higher into the sky. The Redwood trees which had seemed so huge when you were inside the forest, now appearing to be minute as your ascent continues. In the distance you can see this tall mountain range and a single pinnacle.

You are now amongst the clouds and can no longer see the earth beneath. Our white eagle has brought you to the very roof of the World and placed you down on the top of this pinnacle where it has built a nest for you lined with the softest and warmest down feathers in which you can lay down and relax. You look around at the breathtaking view of the mountain peaks below, before settling down.

The sun goes down but your nest is bathed in the light from a million twinkling stars. Here there is total quietness. You are completely detached from any negative or harmful influences, but you are not alone - you are with your Maker. Feel the life force radiating down upon you from the Heavens above penetrating every part of your body creating within you this immense feeling of wellbeing. Take as long as you like, whilst soaking in your nice warm bath, to imagine this beneficial effect.

Your body has now been fully charged with healing energy ready to do battle. Your white eagle has now returned to take you back to the outskirts of the forest where your journey began. This is the end of the first stage of this visualisation but there is a vitally important second stage which should preferably be left until you retire to bed and your conscious mind is preparing for sleep. You have through both the 'White eagle Mountain' visualisation as well as the 'Sea of Purification', been equipped with the necessary strength to go on the offensive and seek out and destroy whatever is adversely affecting your state of health.

For the second part of this visualisation I want you to feel 'ANGER'. Yes, that's right - 'anger', as intense as you can make it. Does it surprise you that I should want you to feel 'anger'? Perhaps you regard 'anger' as a negative emotion and not appropriate for a text about Healing. In both the visualisations just described, I have tried to create images to relax you and create within you a profound feeling of wellbeing; so why am I now apparently suggesting that you become enraged? Firstly, we should not confuse 'anger' with 'violence' or being out of control. Anger simply means, having a strong passion or emotion of the mind which has been excited by real or supposed injury. Anger is not inherently bad; it is a very necessary human emotion for our healthy wellbeing.

Like physical pain tells us that something is wrong with our body. 'Anger' is our minds way of telling us that it is emotionally disturbed. It is how we use this 'anger' which will determine if it has a beneficial or detrimental effect. If we try to suppress our anger, and allow it to go inwardly, it will create feelings of resentment, of injustice, of bitterness. We are storing up all these harmful negative emotions which can eventually make our mind unwell and can lead to depression and affect our physical wellbeing.

Often disease and illness are created out of our attitude of mind and how we deal with everyday situations. If we through our upbringing are conditioned to suppress our natural feelings, such as 'anger', then at some stage our state of health will be affected. Anger is our minds safety valve and if we learn to control it effectively, then it can become our ally. It is when we do not use our anger in a reasonable or responsible way, but instead allow it to take us over, that it can become destructive.

We are going to use this powerful emotion we call anger, on ourselves. Instead of perhaps feeling sorry for ourselves and just giving in to our illness, we are going on the attack. Feel 'ANGER' that your body has let you down. Be 'hopping mad', be outraged, that you have been physically invaded by this disease or illness which is making you feel so ill and preventing you carrying out your normal pursuits. Make your mind know that you are not going to put up with feeling this way - that you want something done about it - that you are declaring 'WAR' on this enemy that has had the audacity to attack you.

Tell yourself that it is not 'God's Will' that you should suffer this way. If you must regard it as some sort of test, then regard it as a test of your strength of character and how you are prepared to face adversity. Focus any feelings of resentment on the disease itself and not on why this has happened to you or what you have done to deserve it. Don't waste precious energy on recrimination - you will need all your strength to repel the invader.

You now want your subconscious mind to muster all your troops ready to mount a counter attack. Through the Healing you have received, you now have the necessary resources to go on the offensive and to 'knock the stuffing' out of this aggressor. Don't allow this marvellous boost of energy that you have received through Healing to be wasted. You must now utilise it to your full advantage. How you will go on the offensive against your illness will depend on the nature of your condition. You should choose a visualisation which is most appropriate. I will now give you some examples so that you may appreciate the general principle. Use these as the basis to create your own images which are the most suitable to eradicate your particular illness.

We will first consider a visualisation to help heal the mind and to remove negative thoughts, particularly those which have been allowed to build up over a prolonged period of time. It may also assist in dealing with what is clinically termed as 'Mild Depression'.

However, if you suspect or know that you may be suppressing some trauma or other deeply disturbing experience, you should not attempt to unlock such memories without proper professional help. I should also make it clear that coming to terms with a bereavement or loss of a loved one, should not be treated in the same way as eliminating negative thoughts. It is perfectly understandable that we should grieve the loss of someone who we hold dearly, but it is not a case of removing such thoughts from our mind but how we can properly come to terms with such a loss and retain only our fondest memories.

With all these supplementary visualisations, you should first of all make sure that you are feeling comfortable and relaxed and are unlikely to be interrupted. Try to incorporate them as soon as possible after a Healing session or after having carried out a visualisation, such as I have previously described, to replenish your energy reserves. Briefly remind yourself how invigorating was the effect as the Healing energy permeated through your whole body.

Regard your mind as being a huge library containing millions of books. These have all been filed away under your human experiences and the emotions and feelings they created within you. Some of the titles are covered in dust because they bring back painful memories which you would prefer to forget. These have been well hidden from view so that they cannot be easily retrieved - just the same as being buried deep in your subconscious.

Unfortunately, your library has become cluttered with books on one particular subject which is - "HOW TO CULTIVATE NEGATIVE AND DEPRESSIVE THOUGHTS". You have collected so many books on this subject that nearly every title you retrieve from your library seems to be on this one topic. You know that somewhere in this library of yours are other subjects - if only you could remember where they are filed away. One particular subject you have been searching for desperately is "HOW TO CULTIVATE POSITIVE THOUGHTS AND REMOVE DEPRESSION", but how ever hard you try, locating any books on this subject seems to elude you. Perhaps it is because it has been so long since you added any books under this category, that they have been pushed to the back of the shelves and are now out of reach. Of course, if you do go looking for books with a positive theme, you might unwittingly discover one of these dusty relics containing painful memories which you have tried so hard to bury away.

So perhaps you have convinced yourself that having a library full of depressive memories is a lesser of evils and easier to deal with - or is it? Do you really want to go on living this way, always feeling so miserable and worthless? Presumably not, if you are reading this text and have received Healing. Now use this Divine Power to give you the necessary courage to lead an army of workers to purge this library of yours which has become full of all these negative thoughts.

Let us now imagine that you are sending in a regiment of workers armed with large trolleys to go down all these aisles of books pulling out those titles which represent your negative thoughts. Visualise that they are all being stacked on these trolleys to be taken away and dumped. Imagine a second contingency of this army of workers armed with cleaning materials wiping down and polishing the shelves of this library of yours, ready to bring forward from the dusty archives those books which represent happier memories.



Open some of these books and turn the pages and recall some of those occasions and circumstances in your life which you found exhilarating and more uplifting. If you should accidentally turn any pages which expose memories which make you feel sad or depressed, recognise that they represent the past and however painful or distressing they may be, say to yourself that you are not going to allow your chances of future happiness and improved health to be prejudiced by these past events. Make a resolution to yourself that you are now going to cultivate a life style and attitude of mind which will attract positive feelings and emotions. Start putting these positive thoughts which you have represented as books onto the now cleared shelves in your library and add to them as often as you can. Soon your mind will become conditioned to think more positively since each time it goes away to access your library of thoughts, it will now be much more likely to find books with titles which you find uplifting.

Of course, from time to time you will discover these old relics of books full of depressive thoughts, which some how have got overlooked when you carried out this purge on your library. However, you will now be much stronger to resist their negative influence. Remember, that what you have been doing is reliving the emotions you felt when these events or circumstances originally happened. They may have happened many years ago and even go back to your childhood. You have allowed yourself to be trapped in time and are seeing these events, or periods in your life, as you were then. You have to say to yourself that you have now moved on and are now a much stronger and wiser person.

Whilst you can never undo these experiences, they have brought you to where you are today. Let these events help to mould and strengthen your character, to be more understanding and sympathetic towards others who may have, or be going through, similar experiences. Only through our own trials and tribulations can we learn compassion towards others and begin to understand the true meaning of 'Unconditional Love'. So try to let go of all those depressive feelings which are spoiling your life today. Let go of the sadness, the resentment, or whatever are the negative emotions which are affecting your well-being. Perhaps it may be regrets for missed opportunities or a wish you could turn the clock back and change past events. Let go of what has already happened and which cannot be changed. Say to yourself that you are not going to become down trodden by past events or mistakes. Turn adversity into triumph and use these past experiences in a positive way. If you can learn to put love back into your heart, then all your sadness and despair will soon disappear.

It can be devastating when we are first diagnosed as having what many regard as the most dreaded of all diseases, that of 'CANCER'. We are in our next visualisation going to vent our 'anger' on that group of conditions which come under this category. There are those who will automatically regard being struck down with Cancer as a death sentence and surrender their body to this disease without putting up any fight. In doing so they have unwittingly instructed their subconscious mind to shut down their bodies defences which are constantly destroying abnormal cells. It is when our immune system breaks down that these abnormal cells will survive and form a cancer which unfortunately, is tolerated by our body and not recognised as an invader.

Most cancers are treatable by conventional medicine if diagnosed at an early stage. We are using Healing as a complimentary treatment to accelerate the production of healthy cells and stimulate our immune system to recognise the threat posed by these malignant tumours. It will be to your advantage to obtain from your hospital or doctor, information on how cancerous cells develop into tumours and therefore, be able to adopt the most effective visualisation to help eradicate them.

Part of the fear associated with Cancer, is that many of the conventional treatments can have unpleasant side effects, such as Cytotoxic Chemotherapy which can cause hair loss, nausea and a lowering of the blood count. This is perhaps when we need healing the most to help boost our depleted energy reserves and strengthen our resolve to combat the effects of this terrible disease. Our attack on the cancer must be on two fronts. Firstly, to help destroy the invader and secondly, to accelerate the production of healthy cells. Unfortunately, both Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy do not discriminate between normal and cancer cells and we are using Healing to help our body's ability to regenerate healthy tissue, at an accelerated rate. This visualisation is going to be very much planned like a military campaign.

Firstly, we are going to send in our commandos to search out and destroy any tumours. Let your imagination rip, and use any means you like from your unlimited arsenal to blow this cancer to smithereens. Use guns, bombs, missiles or whatever you like to completely eradicate this aggressor. If you want to conduct the battle on a more personal level, or find it difficult to imagine adopting such a warlike approach, then visualise that you are leading your own army of white blood cells to totally engulf and destroy this invader. If your cancer has unfortunately reached the lymphatic system and the blood stream whereby malignant cells may be carried to other parts of the body and form secondary growths, imagine heading a fleet of miniature submarines travelling around your blood stream, the lymphatics and lymph nodes, searching out those tumour cells and firing torpedoes at them whereby they explode and immediately disappear. You can use the same approach for dealing with abnormal white cells which have mutated such as with Leukaemia.

Secondly, create in your mind conditions to encourage normal cells to split into two and multiply and regenerate any damaged tissue. You could try imagining sending in a contingent of gardeners each armed with a watering can containing this special Healing liquid obtained from the 'Sea of Purification', which has the power to stimulate healthy growth. Imagine your gardeners gently watering the healthy cells like delicate flowers, encouraging them to grow and multiply.

In our third visualisation we are going to turn our attention to that most painful and disabling of diseases known as 'Arthritis'. This condition in its various forms is probably the most common complaint presented to Healers. Unfortunately, conventional medicine seems unable to offer a cure for this condition, but can merely prescribe drugs to ease the pain, or as the last resort offer the intervention of surgery. According to medical statistics in our society 98% of us will develop some form of Arthritis before the age of 70. It is however, a common misconception that it is a disease associated purely with old age. It can manifest itself at any age - even babies can get it.

In using the most suitable visualisation to combat this disease, it is necessary to distinguish the various types of Arthritis. The two most common conditions are Rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis. There is Osteoporosis and Spondylitis as well as Gout. In young children and infants it is known as Juvenile Arthritis or Still's disease. Unfortunately, the usual remedy of only prescribing stronger and stronger pain killers to mask the effect as the condition worsens, often eventually leads to unpleasant side effects. One of the most common consequences of the use of pain killers over a prolonged period of time can be the creation of circulatory disorders caused by the build up of harmful toxins in the body. Skin complaints and the susceptibility of soft tissue to bruising, are all indications of the body being increasingly adversely affected by the constant use of these pain killing drugs. Of course, when we are in pain, particularly the type of constant, unrelenting pain which Arthritis can bring, we will do practically anything to obtain some relief. I am not suggesting that you should stop taking any medication that you have been prescribed by your doctor, but to realise that they are not curing the condition but merely trying to make your quality of life more tolerable.

We will now consider a visualisation to help with Rheumatoid Arthritis. It is what doctors refer to as a 'auto-immune disease since one part of the body is attacking another part of the body's own tissue, specifically in and around the lining membrane of the joints, known as the 'Synovium', causing inflammation, swelling and pain. In creating a suitable visualisation for Rheumatoid Arthritis, we are in a way trying to create a reverse reaction by our immune system to that when dealing with malignant cells. With cancer our immune system has failed to recognise any threat presented by the tumour and accepts it as a normal part of our body; whereas with Rheumatoid Arthritis, the commonly held theory is that a chain of chemical reactions has taken place, possibly originally triggered by a severe illness or a shock, which is reacting against our body's own tissue.

Therefore, with Rheumatoid Arthritis we should try to create a visualisation to suppress the production of these chemicals and impress on our subconscious mind the detrimental effect they are having on the various joints in our body.

Unlike the war that we waged on the cancer cells, we have with Rheumatoid Arthritis the situation that some of our troops have failed to receive the message from Head Quarters that a previous battle against some other adverse affect to our body has already been won. These troops which somehow have become detached from our main army are still fighting an enemy which has already been defeated. By continuing to fire rounds of ammunition against what is now an imaginary foe, these isolated troops are unwittingly doing damage to their own side. We want to issue the command to these troops to "Cease Fire". We must use a very different approach to that of Cancer in dealing with this harmful effect to our joints, without causing further casualties on our own side.

Imagine that your body is like a large building containing a sophisticated fire sprinkler system which has been activated having sensed the presence of intense heat. The fire which created this condition has been extinguished, but some of the valves which control the release of water have failed to shut off and unnecessary damage is now being done to the building by the continual presence of the very water which was first activated to protect it.

Liken your veins and arteries to the pipes along which are located these valves, which instead of discharging water are releasing powerful chemicals into your blood stream. These chemicals are being taken to the different tissues of your body as part of your body's immune system to repel any foreign invaders. Some of these valves, or what are called 'glands' in your body, are not responding to the message being sent out by the Central Commuter, which is your Brain, that they can now shut down, having destroyed the invader. These valves, which are failing to respond to instructions, are still releasing chemicals into your blood stream, trying to repel what is now an imaginary foe. They are now causing harmful concentrations of chemicals to build up at the ends of some of the pipe runs, which are the joints in your body. Using the same fleet of miniature submarines as in our previous visualisation, imagine sending this fleet around your circulatory system to search out these valves which have failed to close.

Create frogmen to swim up to each of these faulty valves and to systematically turn them all off. Keep in your mind all the time the reason why these glands must be shut down, to prevent any further damage being done to the protective tissue around your affected joints.

This visualisation can easily be modified to deal with other defective glands in the body, such as the Thyroid or to deal with problems relating to the Endocrine system.

Osteoarthritis is more associated with the ageing process and particularly affects load bearing joints such as the spine, hips and knees. With woman, in particular, the hands are also often affected. The condition is basically caused by degeneration of the cartilage which protects the surfaces of the joint. Since it is regarded by mainstream medicine as being caused by 'Wear and Tear', treatment in all but the most severe cases usually only consists of anti-inflammatory and pain killing drugs.

Any visualisation for this condition must concentrate on the re-building of cartilage, which means re-generation of the 'Chondrocytes', which are the cells contained within this tough elastic tissue. Focus your mind on each affected joint in turn and use any of the visualisations we have previously used for cell re-generation. This could be the 'watering can' technique or the 'Sea of purification', to target specific problem areas of your body.

In our last example of using visualisations to treat specific medical conditions, I will describe those that come under the general heading of the 'Digestive System', which includes stomach and intestinal problems. This is a vast medical area and there may be many causes for these types of adverse conditions. They may be caused, at least in the initial stages, by an unfriendly micro-organism which even if subsequently eradicated, may bring about damage and unfortunate after affects. An excessive production of stomach acid may result in a break in the duodenal wall causing ulceration, and the soft tissue underneath being exposed and eaten away with potentially serious and painful consequences. The over-use of antibiotics can result in yeast overgrowth creating all sorts of unfortunate side effects and has been identified as one of the triggers which can cause 'M.E.' or what is now more commonly referred to as 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome'.

Since the cause and affect of problems of the digestive system is so vast, it is impossible to be specific as to a suitable visualisation. In general terms, one should first of all try to identify the root cause. If it is a bacterial infection, it should be dealt with using an aggressive approach, such as described previously for combatting cancer. If the damage has been done to the stomach or intestinal lining then a visualisation which effects a repair is probably the best approach. This may be in three stages. Firstly, let us send in once again our army of cleaners which we previously employed to remove any negative thoughts.

This time we will arm some of them with scrubbing brushes to remove any debris or impurities from the walls of the Stomach, Colon, and Intestines. Now despatch a second contingent equipped with powerful hoses. Imagine the jets of water being aimed at the inside walls, cleaning away any residual debris or harmful micro-organisms, leaving the surface scrupulously clean. Now let's travel through the whole of the digestive system looking for any breaks in the tissue lining, or evidence of gastric or duodenal ulcers. Imagine any cracks or defects in the lining being filled with a special Healing compound which immediately fuses itself to the surrounding area. As a final stage we can visualise a special protective film being sprayed over the whole lining of the digestive system making it impervious to any attacks by bacteria or other irritants.

I hope that these examples of visualisations which we can use to augment the Healing process will enable you to create suitable images to help trigger your own body's capacity to stimulate healthy cell growth and repel disease. It is an unfortunate fact that most of us are conditioned as we become adults, to reject the creation of images based on fantasy and which could be construed as childlike. We are inclined to be dismissive of such techniques to influence our subconscious mind simply because they are not based on our understanding of reality - and yet, most of our fears and phobias are based on irrational thinking which can have a profound effect on our behaviour and general wellbeing.

Likewise, the images which I have presented can have an equally powerful affect on our physical body, if like the child we are prepared to believe in them. It does not matter if these images are fictional. What matters is that they are creating in our mind, images which correspond to our level of understanding. Despite enormous advances in medical science, we are still very limited in our knowledge of the workings of the human body. Because we still don't fully comprehend how the immune system works and why it sometimes breaks down, only helps to validate our use, like the child, of pictures which represent our best perception of what we think is taking place. It really does not matter what pictures we create from our imagination if it is going to bring about the required affect. All we need to believe is the power of positive thought - and that is precisely what these visualisations are trying to create.

I will conclude these visualisations by returning to our earlier reference to the use of colour in the Healing process. If your Healer has been impressed to use a specific colour to aid your Healing session, he or she may ask you to join them in visualising this colour. You may have quite independently of your Healer, learnt from some other source that the use of a particular colour could be beneficial in treating your particular medical condition. To think of a colour and hold it in your mind is easier said than done particularly over a prolonged period of time. Our mind finds it difficult to retain the image of any colour without it being associated with a specific shape or form.

Try it for yourself - you will most likely find that your mind will tend to wander away from the colour if you do not associate it with some object or a scene in which your chosen colour is dominant. It is usually found easier to focus the mind on an item of beauty which radiates the selected colour. This will often be a variety of flower either as a individual specimen or collectively. Changing the images in your mind from a close up view to that of a wider perspective, similar to when adjusting the lens of a camera from telephoto to wide angle, will help keep the mind interested and prevent it wandering off onto other subjects. I will take just one colour to illustrate the technique for holding a colour in our mind. The colour I have chosen is the golden shades of yellow.

In a purely Healing sense, it is very uplifting and purifying, creating a feeling of wellbeing. Yellow is also regarded by many healers as being the colour of the intellect improving clarity of thought. We can select various flowers, such as Daffodils or Sunflowers to create our picture of golden yellow. If a more subtle shade of yellow seems more appropriate for your particular visualisation, then why not try the tender colouring of a Primrose. Focus first of all on an individual specimen of the flower. Examine the delicate texture of each petal.

Wonder at how Nature has created such an intricate item of immense beauty. Examine how each individual petal folds with such precision with those around it. Look at the centre of the flower and how the stamens and pistils are inviting insects to come and pollinate. Now expand your field of vision to reveal a carpet or cluster of this variety of flower which you have selected. Let this beautiful golden yellow completely absorb your whole being. Introduce other flowers of a similar colour.

Staying with yellow, think of a field of Buttercups, or some narcissi, or some yellow tulips or lilies. Picture a hill-side covered with a lemon grove, the fruit glistening in the ripening sun. Indeed, why not picture the sun itself as a beautiful golden globe, bringing all of nature's wonders to life. Think of these warm golden rays penetrating every part of you, restoring and revitalising every part of your body. Make your images as varied and enjoyable as possible to draw to you the colour yellow. This way your mind will be quite content to continue to receive for as long as you desire, the Healing effect of this selected colour.

With all the supplementary visualisations that I have described following an actual Healing session, we should go through a final cleansing procedure. This is to flush out all the toxins, harmful micro-organisms, mutated cells, or negative thoughts which we have now eradicated. To do this, why not return to the Redwood Forest and to the waterfall and pool of crystal clear water where we first met the White Eagle? This time undress and stand under the waterfall and feel the invigorating effect of the water beating against our body. Imagine this purifying water permeating your skin and progressively flowing through you from head to toes, flushing out all the impurities.

Now bathe in the pool which possesses the same Healing properties as the 'Sea of Purification'. Feel once again every cell in your body being rejuvenated. Think how marvellous you are feeling now that all that horrible muck has been cleansed from your system. When you have finished bathing, leave the pool and lay on the flat rock under the warm rays of the sun to dry your body. Smell the freshness of the air and the scent of the abundance of plant life all around you. Hear the hypnotic sound of the waterfall as it cascades over the rocks to the pool below. Hear the birds singing and calling to one another, and the noise of bees and other winged insects flittering from flower to flower, searching out pollen. Sense the presence of your White Eagle gliding overhead, keeping a watchful eye on you. You now feel completely contented and at one with your Maker.

Stay in these idyllic surroundings for as long as you like before dressing and returning to your normal conscious state. Or, if you are already in bed and this is the last part of your visualisation, why not stay in your glade in the Redwood forest and just allow yourself to drift off to sleep, leaving you mind full of this marvellous feeling of wellbeing.

Before we leave our examples of Healing visualisations and in particular the cleansing procedure just described, I would like to suggest a variation for those undergoing Radiotherapy for the destruction of malignant tumours. Although modern techniques, such as Cobalt Therapy, minimise side effects, some degree of soreness may be still experienced around the area the machine is being targeted at. Cases of actual burning or blistering of the tissue around the effected area are now rare with the better control of the actual doses of radiation. To help prevent any soreness to the surrounding tissue and to accelerate the healing process whilst you are actually undergoing a course of radiotherapy, take regular trips to the waterfall in the Redwood forest. Imagine that the source of the water is the snow capped mountains, the tallest peak of which we have previously visited in our 'White Eagle Mountain' visualisation. Feel the tingling effect of the water beating down on the affected area of your body, cooling it down and preventing any burning.

Make the cascading water as cold as you can tolerate so that you feel goose bumps forming on your skin. Take a swim in the pool below, imagining that it is collecting the thawing water from the surrounding mountain peaks. Feel yourself shivering as you gradually descend into the icy cold water for your invigorating dip. The more cold you can make your body feel, the less chance will there be of any soreness after your Radiotherapy.

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This text giving advice on how you can maximise the effect from a Healing session is the last in the series. I hope that the information provided will have proved of assistance and that you will try to incorporate as many of the suggestions given in tackling your medical condition.

Remember, that Spiritual Healing will be largely ineffective if you do not make every effort to ensure that your lifestyle encourages a healthy body. Poor diet and a lack of regular exercise will hinder your body's ability to fight infection or disease.

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**Kenneth W. Leeks MNFSH**