



Visualizing a Healthy You

by Lori Hartwell, RSN President



I see so many doctors, take so many meds, and have a gazillion health issues to stay current on that it makes me feel

like my brain needs a memory upgrade. Sometimes my mind is so cluttered with the daily difficulties of kidney disease that it's important to step back and clear my head.

Using mind techniques shifts my thoughts away from the frustration, fear, and anxiety that can go hand-in-hand with living with kidney disease. Visualization is one

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weKAN Patient Activists serve to mobilize, educate, motivate, and empower fellow chronic kidney disease survivors to advocate for themselves and for one another. Together we *can* make a difference.

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tool I use to gain some control.

One of my favorite visualization techniques comes from Wayne Dyer, PhD, a psychotherapist, author, and motivational speaker. He suggests the following exercise, which I've paraphrased for simplicity:

Picture a digital basketball scoreboard. Once you have a strong visual of the scoreboard, picture a score of 24. Slowly visualize the scoreboard counting backward: 24, 23, 22, 21.... Focus only on the score. If another thought comes to mind, you have to start over.

I have a hard time getting past 15 without thinking about something else, but the first time I tried it I only got to 22. I got better with practice, and it helps.

Louise L. Hay lectures about metaphysics, teaches, and is a best-selling author. She believes that anger, resentment, and guilt do the most damage to our health and that all healing begins with self-love. Here's a paraphrase of her visualization exercise:

I love the visualization of standing at the seashore looking out at the vast ocean and knowing that this ocean is the abundance of all good things available to us. Look down

While we may not be able to control all that happens to us, we can control what happens inside us.

— Benjamin Franklin

at your hands and see what sort of container you're holding. Is it a teaspoon, a thimble with a hole in it, a paper cup, a glass, a tumbler, a pitcher, a bucket, or a washtub? Perhaps you have a pipeline connected to this ocean of abundance. Know that there's plenty for everyone and that you can't drain the ocean dry. Your container is your consciousness, and it can always be exchanged for a larger one.

I hold a giant oyster filled with

pearls. These are all the gems I have in my possession, with many more that await my discovery. Next to my giant oyster



are a red bucket and a shovel so I can find more treasures in the sea.

For centuries, people have believed that the mind has the capacity to heal. The Navajos used imagery to encourage sick people to "see" themselves as healthy. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks believed that visualization released spirits in the brain, which stimulated the heart and other parts of the body.

I'm not suggesting that everyone is able to think or pray illness away, but there's strong evidence suggesting that people have more control over their well being than the medical community or our culture currently accepts.

Visualization is a mini-massage for the mind that helps me quiet my thoughts so I can breathe through the really tough days.

Chronically Yours,

Lori Hartwell
President & Founder
of the Renal Support Network