

Guided Imagery for Cancer

Harness the
Healing Power
of Your Mind to
Heal Your Body

 **e-Book**



Avinoam Lerner

Guided Imagery for Cancer

Harness the power of your
Mind to heal your Body

By Avinoam Lerner

© 2015, Avinoam Lerner

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This book contains material protected under International and Federal Copyright Laws and Treaties. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the author / publisher.

ISBN-13:978-0692401767

ISBN-10:0692401768

AvinoamLerner.com
Free@AvinoamLerner.com

Printed in Charlestown, NC

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Legal Disclaimer | 7 |
| Get Immediate Access. Register at..... | Missing |
| www.AvinoamLerner.com/guided..... | Missing |
| What is Guided Imagery? | 9 |
| Who Can Benefit from Guided Imagery?..... | 28 |
| Getting Started..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Tips for best results..... | Missing |
| CDs and Scripts:..... | Missing |
| The Successful Surgery | Missing |
| Script: Successful Preparation for Surgery | Missing |
| Script: Successful Recovery from Surgery..... | Missing |
| Successful Chemotherapy CD | Missing |
| Script: Successful Chemotherapy Track 1 | Missing |
| Successful Sleep CD | Missing |
| Script: Successful Sleep Script | Missing |
| The Healing Power of Your Mind..... | Missing |
| Script: Immune Enhancement (Track 2)..... | Missing |
| Where Did It All Begin?..... | Missing |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| How Is Guided Imagery Utilized in Cancer Care? | Missing |
| How Can Guided Imagery Benefit Cancer Patients?..... | 34 |
| What Research Has Been Done on Guided Imagery? | |
| | Missing |
| How to Put Everything Into Practice | 41 |
| About the Author..... | 45 |
| References | 48 |

Legal Disclaimer

While Guided Imagery or any other methods of conditioning i.e. Creative Visualization, Visual Imagery, NeuroLinguistic Programming has many beneficial effects, cannot and will not substitute any current or future professional medical or psychological care or treatment, and if any concerns i.e. medical or psychological arise, you should first consult a qualified health care provider for diagnosis, advice and care.

Guided Imagery or any of the scripts or products offered in this book is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure nor prevent any disease or illness. Never listen to Guided Imagery or self-conditioning recordings while driving a car or operating machinery. It is your sole responsibility to always choose an environment that is quiet and safe.

Avinoam Lerner makes no claims to how soon changes can occur or their permanency. His scripts, audio recordings, suggestions and instructions are intended for the purpose of self-help and personal use. Avinoam is a certified hypnotherapist, not a licensed physician nor licensed mental

health professional nor a psychologist. He does claim to provide any form of health care or psychotherapy and does not represent his services as any form of medical, behavioral or mental health care.

Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.

What is Guided Imagery?

Guided imagery is the process of focusing the mind by engaging the creative faculty we call imagination. It utilizes our ability to create mental visions and images and project them onto the screen of our mind's eye. We are all endowed with this ability whether we are aware of it or not... it is as simple as day dreaming or calling forth a memory from long ago.

Using guided imagery, we can explore the relationship between that which we hold in our mind and that which we experience in the body and utilize, this mind body connection, for healing and recovery.

You may already have some experience with Guided Imagery or at the very least heard about its many benefits in healthcare. It might be something that you stumbled upon while doing your research online, something a friend or family member mentioned or even something that your doctor recommended as a way to improve the quality of life between visits.

Over the past few decades Guided Imagery has gained a solid reputation and there is a lot of information (as well as misinformation) out there on the topic. This is why it is vital that before you get started with this book suggested scripts, that you'll understand exactly what it is and why it is such a valuable tool in cancer care. If you are not excited yet about the many benefits Guided Imagery offers you certainly will by the end of this booklet; because regardless of whether or not you believe it will work... it will work! The reason I know that is because you have been practicing Guided Imagery for many years. Yes, you have!

The most common use of Guided Imagery, or should I say misuse of Guided Imagery is... Worry, yes worry... and if you are human you have done much of that already.

Think for a moment about the practice of WORRY. When you worry you engage your imagination in things that have not happened yet. They have not happened and may never happen and still your mind is generating scenarios, most if not all are negative and based in fear. Now, when you worry, do you feel good? Is it pleasant? Of course not,

nevertheless you engage in it because you feel threatened and have legitimate concerns.

In this booklet I will show you how to engage the same mental faculties you do when you worry but in a healthy way, a way that will promote a sense of wellbeing and comfort rather than fear and discomfort. All you need is an open mind and the willingness to follow my guidance. If you will, you will certainly benefit from this practice in the same way every other person in my care have.

Guided Imagery is similar in many ways to daydreaming but the difference will be that Guided Imagery is structured and has a specific goal. The Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms officially defines Guided Imagery as a “mind-body technique involving the deliberate prompting of mental images, used in the treatment of mental disorders, for performance enhancement, and in helping patients cope with diseases and their symptoms” (2001). That may sound vague but, in practice, it is not so different from the basic act of imagining which we all do every day.

For a few brief moments each day, we all lose ourselves in our thoughts. You might be at work or lying in bed and suddenly find your mind has transported you somewhere else. Suddenly, you are no longer aware of your physical surroundings. Your brain has taken you somewhere far away and you hadn't even realized that it was happening. It can happen when we are worrying about something or looking back on a fond memory.

Like so many other innate tools, we can use our minds and thoughts to create positive experiences or negative ones. We can lift ourselves out of a mundane experience or we can drown ourselves in the concerns of daily life. It is truly but a choice for each and every one of us. It may not always feel this way but it is true, and while it might feel like our circumstances have created our states of mind, in reality, it is the other way around.

Every person has his or her own unique journey in life and we will all face a vast array of challenges, illness and cancer is but one of them. These challenges in and of themselves do not define us. What will define us is how we

choose to look at these challenges. While cancer is a major obstacle and undoubtedly has many negative connotations, we can still choose how to view and experience it. We can make the best of it or we can allow it suffocate us. Guided Imagery seeks to teach its practitioners how to release their minds from the grip of stress, anxiety and fear that burden our minds and inhibit the healing capacity of our bodies.

As I have said, you can think of Guided Imagery as similar to daydreaming but there are many important differences. We know how to daydream from childhood but most of us never really learn to harness the spectacular power of our imaginations. Our minds can truly accomplish impressive feats and it is important to learn how to use this incredible instrument.

You wouldn't begin driving a car without reading an instruction booklet first and I believe that we can look at our imaginations in a similar way. Our minds have so many different facets that even hundreds of years of scientific study has not yet given us a complete picture of how it all works. Guided Imagery gives us a small piece of the manual

that we need to begin using our brains to their fullest potential.

One thing that makes Guided Imagery distinct from daydreaming is the direction that you receive through the narration. In this Guided Imagery for Cancer program, we aim to teach you where to direct your thoughts and how to use them productively. Now, if you simply tell yourself to just think of something positive, you often get lost in thoughts. This happened to me all the time before I began using Guided Imagery. I would be in a stressful situation and just tell myself to think about something positive. It was a great idea, in theory, but it was never effective for me. It would not last. It was only once I learned how to harness the power of imagery that I could actually stop dwelling on the negative things that were cluttering my mind.

To use imagery productively, you need some guidance. You need to learn how to let go of your negative emotions and focus your brain before you can realize all of the profound effects of Guided Imagery. One of the great things about it is that, after practicing Guided Imagery, you

will be able to use it anytime, anywhere and without guidance. You will not need to get into a quiet room or use any other stereotypical aspect of meditation. After some practice, it will simply become second nature to you.

Guided Imagery has been described as “a gentle but powerful technique that focuses and directs the imagination” (Naparstek, 1994). As your guide, my goal is to teach you exactly where and how to direct your imagination. We are all unique and therefore relax in different ways. My goal is to help you find your best way to relax. You don’t need to be creative or have a vivid imagination, you simply need to make an effort and have a true desire to allow your mind and body to relax.

**“We can change the whole world just by
altering the way in which we perceive it. “**

Avinoam Lerner

The power of our minds never ceases to amaze me. We can change the whole world just by altering the way in which we perceive it. If you are dreading walking outside on a cold day, you can make yourself shiver just by picturing the

icy air hitting your face. On the same chilly day, if you recall the last time that you were lying on the beach relaxing under the sun, you might find yourself warming up and forgetting about the cold for a moment. Our brain is a profoundly potent tool. We can use it to worry about things that may never happen or allow ourselves to be soothed by wonderful experiences that we may never have.

Before you begin practicing the scripts included in this booklet or listening to any audio or even the CDs included in my Guided Imagery for Cancer program, I would like you to try this very quick exercise of your imagination. It will help you experience first hand the power of your own mind and imagination.

Look at a picture of a lemon, any lemon. It doesn't matter if it's an actual lemon you got you're your kitchen or just a picture you found online or in a cooking book, just spend a moment looking at it and try to notice if it affects you in any way... there may not be much of a reaction and that's ok. If there is simply take a mental note of it and how intense or real it may feel.

Now let's try to do the same thing but this time we're going to involve our imagination. First, read the next few lines so you'll know what you need to do. Then, close your eyes... and imagine that you are holding a ripe and juicy sour lemon in your hand... allow the lemon to become real to you in all of its dimensions and in your mind's eye, see its bright color... smell its citric scent, and even feel its weight in your hand, how heavy with juice this slice is. When you have, imagine that you cut that lemon in half, making sure to not get the juice all over your shirt... and gently bring that half a lemon toward your mouth. As you do that, imagine that you open your mouth wide and squeeze all that sour sour lemon juice right into your mouth... feel the juice pour onto your tongue... feel the lemon juice surround your tongue and begin pooling up inside of your mouth. Give the sour juice a good swish so you can savour the stingy taste and notice what is taking place within and around your mouth.

Done correctly, it is likely that you have felt some kind of tingling sensation in your mouth, perhaps even salivation; this is very normal and even expected. If you have

not, do not despair, some people really like lemon juice and therefore the experience is different. Simply try the same exercise but this time with a very sour pickle. Imagine yourself biting into that sour pickle etc.

This imagery exercise demonstrates the power of your imagination. When we just looked at the image of the lemon we only engaged one of our senses (sight), we were not truly involved with what we gazed upon. To fully engage with the lemon we need to utilize multiple senses, sight, taste, smell etc. This is the power of imagery and our imagination.

Think about the difference between chatting with a friend online or by telephone and actually seeing them in person. When we send messages online, we are only using our eyes. You may be able to recall what your friend wrote to you but you won't be able to create the same vivid memories that you can when you actually see a person. It can be a bit more engaging to talk on the phone but it often still feels like something is missing.

When we are physically together with people, all of our senses are engaged in the activity. Even the simple act of sitting at a table with a person whom we see every day engrosses our bodies. You can see the person, feel the chair underneath you, and smell the air around you. Every aspect of the experience will influence how you perceive the interaction. If there is a sweet smell in the air, you might find a dull conversation more enjoyable. If the chair is uncomfortable, you might quickly tire of experience.

It is rare that we realize it on a conscious level but our senses are working together all of the time. Our body is constantly taking in new sensations and sending messages to our brain. This interaction between our mind and body creates a profound impact on the way in which we perceive everything and everyone around us.

When we are talking about Guided Imagery, it is critical to remember the importance of using each one of your senses. Some people consider the idea of things like meditation or Guided Imagery to be dull because they just envision themselves sitting in a room doing nothing. While

it may be true that your physical body is doing nothing, your mind is being extremely active. If you think back to the times that you have spent daydreaming, you know that you don't have to physically do anything to feel like you are being active.

Remember back to a time when you were truly excited about something. When we think about something that we are looking forward to, we are fully engaged in our thoughts. There is nothing boring about just sitting still and picturing what it is that we are craving, especially when we envision ourselves thriving with health and vitality. In contrast, when we misuse Imagery as in the case of worry and anxiety they consume us. When we are using our mental capacity to dread something, it can exhaust us.

It is tiring to us not just mentally but also physically. If you are stressed for a long period of time, your body might start to feel like it is barely dragging along.

This relationship between our body and mind is nothing short of spectacular. When we look at our favorite food, we can almost taste it. When we recall a fond

embrace, it is as if we can actually feel it. When we smell certain scents, we feel like we have been transported through time.

Do you remember the lemon/pickle exercise and how it made your body react? This is one of the amazing tricks performed by our body that has prompted researchers around the world to really take a close look at Guided Imagery.

When we sense our salivation over the mental imagery of the lemon, we realize that our imagination affects more than our mind, it affects our body. The physiological response shows that we can use mental imagery to create very real responses in our bodies. Having said that, we of course do not need to practice Guided Imagery for our bodies to create the physical response, it does it all by itself. All we are aiming to do is to tap into this remarkable relationship between thoughts, imagination and the physical body to improve our experience and ability to recover.

The best part about this fascinating mental power of imagination is that we can harness this ability to do far more than just make ourselves drool. We can promote certain mental experiences that will lead to true physical changes. It may sound too good to be true but it is every bit real and imply amazing.

Guided Imagery is based around this simple principle. If we are able to create physical changes with our minds, why not use our minds to make ourselves healthier and happier? We may not be able to fix everything just by thinking blissful thoughts but we can definitely have a positive impact. If you create harmony and happiness within your mind, your body will grow stronger and better be able to face the challenges of life. Let me be very clear, Guided Imagery is not wishful thinking; it has a real scientific foundation that has been established through decades of research.

With practice, all of us can learn to make healthier and more resilient “blue prints” for our brains. We can create memories of times when are bodies and minds are

engaged in something that they truly love. It doesn't matter if we look back on positive experiences that we have had or if we just think up some new ideas that make us happy.

Often when we are facing the unknown realm of illness, fear sets in and we activate the fight-or-flight mode that wears our bodies down quickly. When faced with long-term stress, our bodies begin to feel like they are perpetually in this fight-or-flight mode. It impacts us both physically and emotionally. This physical response was lifesaving to our ancestors. It enabled them to react quickly to dangerous situations and was an extremely powerful tool.

In modern life, when we are rarely in a life or death situation, our brain still acts by constantly being in the "ON" mode when we encounter stress and this is where our new and improved "blue prints" can come in handy. Once we create our blue prints, we can use them anytime that we need them.

With some guidance and practice, anyone can learn to transition from having basic daydreams into using Guided Imagery productively. You may have heard advice before on

the value of recalling positive memories when you are under stress. You often see people with photos on their desks or images on their computers of vacations, family members, or just relaxing scenes. They do this, of course, because it reminds them of happy times in their lives. It is a great way to deal with the stress of work or just relax whenever you need it.

It is not enough, however, to just look at a photograph. If you remember my previous example of the lemon or pickle, you know that a two-dimensional photo is just not enough to really transport a person. To truly change your state of mind, you need to use more than just your eyes. Your entire Self needs to be transported to a different place.

If you have a fond memory of yourself lying on the beach and want to use it as a tool for relaxation, you need to recall all of the sensations associated with it. You need to feel the sun on your skin, smell the scent of salt in the air, and taste a fresh sip of lemonade circling around your tongue. The more present your body is in this memory, the

less aware you will be of the present moment and its stressors. In basic terms, this is the foundation of Guided Imagery. It helps you to take your mind to a peaceful place that allows the entirety of your body to relax and feel at ease.

The objective of Guided Imagery is to teach you how to create these positive states of mind and use them productively. Stress is negative to our minds as well as our bodies. By relaxing your mind, you feel better in the short-term while facilitating your body's natural ability to fight illness in the long run. And, of course, even if we can't have healthy bodies at every moment, we can have healthy minds. One of the goals of Guided Imagery is keep your mind at the peak of health.

Like most things in life, Guided Imagery becomes easier with practice. You may be a bit tense and apprehensive the first time you work through a program but each time it will get progressively easier and feel more natural. It is really so simple that you may feel like you are

doing something incorrectly. We have been so conditioned to believe that true reward only comes after struggle but that is simply not always the case.

With Guided Imagery, you will find your greatest rewards come after you give up your desire to struggle. When you allow your mind to be at peace, your body will begin to relax and it will radiate through the entirety of your being. All you need to do is follow the simple instructions of the narration and permit your mind to drift away.

When you let go of the tension that you have been carrying, you will find that you feel lighter. A burden will lift from your shoulders. While you can only realize this on a cognitive level, your body will also realize it on a physical level. As you begin to feel more at peace internally, your body will react to and be able to function more productively.

Once you have created your new and improved mental blueprint and have a favorite “place” to go to in your mind, Guided Imagery will become second nature. You will no longer need to sit down at home with your CD or MP3

player. Your mind will be able to recall the path that it took in the past to achieve contentment.

Once your blueprint is readily available to you, you will be able to harness a great level of power. Whenever you are feeling overwhelmed or just down, you can take out your blueprint and allow your worries to drift away. The best thing about this is that you can do it anywhere at any time. There is no preparation to be done and you don't need any special tools. It is a gift that will forever be held within your mind.

Who Can Benefit from Guided Imagery?

Guided Imagery is a great tool for anyone who wishes to take part in their own healing and care. One of the best things about it is that it can be used anywhere at any time. You don't need any special skills and it is not difficult to learn how to do it. Everyone needs a bit of practice to truly use Guided Imagery productively but you will quickly improve your skills with a bit of practice.

While serious conditions merit medical care and the use of medication, Guided Imagery is a wonderful accompaniment to it. It can help to lessen fear and anxiety, reduce severity of side effects, improve sleep and quality of life and so much more.

In cancer care, Guided Imagery can help patients mentally prepare for medical procedures, as well as recover from these procedures more rapidly. It can help strengthen their emotional, spiritual and physical resilience and enhance their resolve to heal.

Guided Imagery can also be great for those who are supporting a friend or family member who has cancer. Even

though they are perfectly healthy, it may start to feel like cancer is taking over their lives. It is easy to forget how stressful it is for our loved ones when we are facing a major struggle in our lives. When you are trying your best to support someone important in your life, you are always trying to put your own concerns and needs at bay. Guided Imagery can be a major asset for managing anxiety and depression for those going through cancer care as well as the people in their lives.

Major life changes also cause major changes to our daily routines. We often don't realize how important the mundane parts of everyday life are until we can no longer do them. When we have days where we can't go to work or go for evening walks or whatever other things we used to do every day, it is easy to become disheartened and anxious. When we are ill and spending extra time in bed or at home, feelings of sadness can creep up quickly. It can start to feel like we have too much time alone with our thoughts. We can start to feel sorry for ourselves or feel like we're drowning in our thoughts. If you are feeling a bit of cabin fever or just need to clear your mind, Guided Imagery is a

priceless tool. The idea of spending quiet time alone with your thoughts might feel a bit intimidating but it really should not be, especially once you have learned how to use imagery to guide your mind.

Guided Imagery is much more than just an instrument for relaxation. It can help people cope with pain management, overcome nausea, prepare for biopsies and transplants and even spring our immune system into action. Now, rest assured that in order to benefit you don't need to be a creative person or have a strong imagination. You don't need to be a relaxed person or have experience with meditation. The only thing you absolutely need is a bit of dedication. You don't need to go to a retreat or spend hours learning the skills of a monk. You just need to keep your mind open to that which naturally arise within you, and keep practicing it for a bit until something clicks with you. It is not solely a mental exercise so it doesn't matter if your concentration level isn't great or if your attention span is short. You only need to let go of yourself a little and allow your entire body to give into your mind. You need however

utilize your emotions and all of your sensations to embrace the experience.

Even if you have tried other relaxation techniques in the past to no avail, Guided Imagery might be right for you. Everything has a time and a place and there is no reason to despair if you have previously tried a relaxation method that didn't work for you. It may not have been the right time in your life to try it or you simply may not have been in the right mood that day. Every relaxation program is different.

Meditation is different from Guided Imagery and, even within the category of Guided Imagery; there are many types and styles. It is simply a matter of finding the program that is right for you. You would never try a potato then say that vegetables aren't for you just because you didn't like that potato 😊. Of course, we know that there are many ways to prepare potatoes and that they certainly don't represent all vegetables. It's therefore important to remember this idea and apply it to other areas of our lives.

The bottom line is that everyone can practice Guided Imagery and benefit from it. Women and children tend to

take to it more quickly but nearly anyone can use it productively. Your education level, age, gender, race, and health are irrelevant. It's a nature ability inherit in all of our brains.

A fascinating study was recently done with congenitally blind patients. Researchers found that not only are blind people able to have visual dreams but they are also able to use imagery. The study found that blind patients were using their visual cortex to process the things that they had heard and touched. They used the information from their other senses, such as sounds, textures, and smells, to create a visual image in their mind (Bertolo, 2005).

One of the most interesting aspects of this study is that means that we don't need to every have experienced something to imagine it. Even if we are not creative people or if we don't have any idea what an actual experience would be like, we can image it. We can create images that can trick our brain into momentarily believing that we are actually having these experiences.

The key aspect of Guided Imagery is that it helps your body to relax. Needless to say, this is useful for absolutely everyone, especially while undergoing treatment or while recovering from one. As we so often hear, stress takes a toll on your body. If you can negate the negative effect of stress, you help your body to embrace the treatment and allow the medication to work its healing. Researchers have found that even just ten minutes of Guided Imagery will reduce your blood pressure, lower your glucose and cholesterol levels, and heighten immune cell activity.

How Can Guided Imagery Benefit Cancer Patients?

As I have discussed, Guided Imagery is highly effective and offers many benefits in cancer care. With only ten minutes of Guided Imagery, you can feel more confident, more prepared and less anxious, speed up recovery and healing and even increase your immune cell activity. Even more so, you can lessen headaches, ease depression, turn nausea to healthy hunger and fatigue to vitality. It may sound like the effects of a miracle drug but it is totally natural. If you learn to harness you mind's natural ability, you can really transform your life and learn to manage your cancer.

All this can be achieved because Guided Imagery override cognition and allow your mind to communicate directly (and unconsciously) with your body. Imagery is received through feelings and sensations rather than analyzing and deciding. As a cancer patient, Guided Imagery can help you see through your treatment. It can help you maximize the effectiveness of your medical treatment and in doing so increase your odds for recovery.

In 1978, radiation oncologist Dr. Carl Simonton examined the effects of Guided Imagery by studying patients over a four-year period. Amazingly, when the results were being published, he had found that the still-living patients who had utilized guided imagery lived, on average, twice as long as those who had solely received standard medical treatment. While there are no guarantees in life, those can only be seen as encouraging results.

Imagine if I told you that you had the potential to increase your lifespan so dramatically simply by closing your eyes and relaxing. It seems impossibly simple yet, at the same time, we know how difficult true relaxation can be to achieve. Even with good intentions, we often become too busy and procrastinate.

Of course, it is easy to get together everything you need to begin a Guided Imagery program but how difficult is it to actually do it on a consistent basis? On one hand, it is very simple. You just set aside a few minutes per day and listen to the program. It should be as easy as watching your favorite television program. At the same time, however, it is

extremely difficult to develop new habits once we are set in our ways. It is so easy to say that we will start something tomorrow or that we will just skip our new routine for one day. I strongly encourage you to avoid this type of thinking. You have read how profound Guided Imagery can affect your cancer care treatment and quality of life. If you use this knowledge and consistently follow the program, you are giving yourself a true gift.

Another study in 1988 done at the Medical Illness Counseling Center in Maryland found that Guided Imagery increased white blood cells and allowed the body to better fight against cancer cells. They also found that Guided Imagery helped with pain management, pre- and post-surgical procedures, and promote the general well-being among numerous other benefits. These benefits can aid patients long after their cancer care is complete. You don't need to have cancer for Guided Imagery to positively impact your health and well-being. Long after cancer, you can use it to prevent and manage any type of physical or mental ailment.

While researching the effects of Guided Imagery, Dr. Remen, the director of Commonwealth, a health research center, talked to patient who reported having “vividly experienced 93 surgeries.” He had only had three operations but could clearly recall the details of 91 other imagined surgeries. I can’t tell you how it pained me to read his story. I think it is something that we can all easily relate to on many levels. Even from childhood, we have a tendency to dread and relive experiences in our minds over and over. We imagine ourselves going through dreadful experiences so many times before they even happen. Sometimes these dreadful experiences never actually end of happening. We have caused ourselves such a great deal of stress for nothing.

On the other side of things, if something stressful does happen we feel that we must live it over and over. It does not matter how trivial the event was, we feel compelled to replay it in our minds again and again. Of course, there are times when we can use this to learn from our past mistakes but often it only results in stress. In order to thrive in our lives and be able to bounce back from trying

times, we need to do everything in our power to fight against this tendency. Therefore, the next time when you are spending your energy to image and relive stress events, try Guided Imagery. Try to reverse this pattern by putting your mind at ease before a difficult time. After stressful events, use Guided Imagery to push the negative memories away. You will be shocked to see what a profound and lasting change it makes.

Like I mentioned earlier, research has shown us that our brains do not truly distinguish between the events that we imagine and those that actually take place. If you are dreading an event and keep picturing it in your mind, it is as if you are having the event take place over and over. Similarly, if something traumatic or stressful has happened and you continue to dwell on it, you are causing your brain to relive the experience time after time. This type of stress is bad for you psychologically and physically. It is bad enough to have to live through certain events one time, say nothing repeating them again and again. One thing that Guided Imagery can help you do is let go of these thoughts.

Studies have shown that emotional depression suppresses the immune system. When presented with negative imagery, the body will undergo a negative cardiovascular change. However, when presented with positive imagery, like that used in Guided Imagery, the body will have a positive reaction (Achterberg, 1985).

Over the course of many years, doctors have noticed that patients who experience a medical crisis will often turn to spirituality. You may have even noticed this in your own life. When you are forced to face your mortality, you begin to start thinking more existentially. Religion can offer a great deal of solace during trying time for some. Guided Imagery can enhance this or offer deeper meaning on its own.

Like most aspects of life, Guided Imagery also has a financial side. It has been noted that patients experiencing emotional distress of any form require more visits to the doctor and are hospitalized more often. Patients are often visiting their physicians even when there is no apparent physical issue. A recent three and half year study of

Medicaid patients found that 80 percent of costs were associated with only 20 percent of Medicaid users. After introducing this group to relaxing techniques, each of participants were able to save more than \$85 in just six months (Mental Medicine Update: The Mind/Body Health Newsletter IV(4), 1995). Of course, I believe that this just goes to show what a profound effect the mind has on the body. It is often difficult to truly see if we are facing physical symptoms or are under emotional distress.

While some amount of discomfort and distress is nearly inevitable when working to manage cancer, there is so much that you can do to make your journey easier. While it may sound intimidating to try to learn a new skill while during a hectic time in your life, don't let that discourage you. Guided Imagery is similar than you may be imagining. All you need to do is relax. There is nothing more to it. Just begin listening to the program and allow it to

How to Put Everything Into Practice

As I've said, one of the most valuable gifts that you can give yourself is self-empowerment and self-mastery. If you are engaged in the process of your care, you can lessen your discomfort. You have already taken the first step by reading through this book. From here, each one of our audio programs will tell you exactly what to do. All you need is an open mind and the desire to heal. In order to get more familiar with the experience, you may want to designate a place in your home where you will be comfortable and hopefully will not be disturbed. Then you can settle down and begin listening to whichever program you choose.

Your Guided Imagery program will walk you through every step on the process. You don't need to worry about doing it incorrectly. There is no right or wrong way of going about it. The worst thing you can do is to not make the effort. As long as you keep coming back to the program day by day, you will feel the impact. Just begin playing the audio and allow yourself to be gently guided, become immersed

with what is being played. The more you listen and practice, the more effective you will find the program.

You have already taken the most important step by deciding to play an active role in your care. As we have discussed, this simple act will empower you and strengthen your resolve to heal. When you believe that you are in control of your life and your destiny, everything changes for the better.

Rather than sitting back and waiting for help or, even worse, declaring that help will never come or that there is no hope, you are being proactive. You have chosen a path in which all of the doors are open to you. This is a critical mindset when you are facing the challenges of treatment. It is also a skill and way of thinking that will serve you well long after your battle with cancer has finished. Those who have empowered themselves and feel that they are in control of their lives will find every aspect of life to be more manageable. I hope that after you learn the skills of Imagery, you continue to use them in your everyday life

whenever you are facing a challenge or just need to put your mind at ease.

So how do you learn these skills? Well, through this program. Simply sit back and relax in the same manner that you would if you were preparing to listen to your favorite music. When you are listening to music, you don't need to concentrate deeply to take in all of the words and sounds. When you listen to a song a few times, you suddenly realize that you can start to sing along with parts of it. The more you listen to the song, the more you remember. You would never sit down with a pen and paper and take notes about song. You don't need to do this because listening and picking up information comes innately to us.

Do not think of your Guided Imagery program as an exercise in listening. There will be no exam afterwards and you don't need to feel anxious about doing any portion of it wrong. Just relax and listen to the narration, it is designed to quiet your mind and help you enter into a heightened state of relaxation and comfort

Both your body and mind want to relax. Out of habit, your brain might put up a bit of a fight but it will not last for long. Soon you will find your mind craving the relaxation. We tend to forget how necessary and natural relaxation is for us. As a culture, we tend to confuse the concepts of laziness and relaxation and think that we always need to be busy.

About the Author

Avinoam Lerner is a holistic therapist and the author of *The New Cancer Paradigm – Increase the Effectiveness of Your Medical Treatment with Immersive Healing*.

His innovative approach to cancer recovery highlights the multidimensional nature of our being and the need to treat illness not only on the level of the body but also on the level of Mind. He offers patients seeking to play a more active role in their care, a practical, meaningful and effective path to engage the creative power of their Mind to revive their body's innate immune response and strengthen its capacity to defend and fight cancer.

Avinoam guiding belief is that for true and lasting recovery we must transcend the mechanistic-reductionist-Newtonian view of disease and recognize that illness is a whole person event. As such he works with patients in all stages at his Watertown MA private practice to strengthen their body's innate immune response, increase physical and psychological resiliency and enhance their outlook and attitude toward a favorable outcome.

After earning his degree in Holistic Health from the Ridman College for Complementary Alternative Medicine in Israel in 2000, Avinoam was certified by the National Guild of Hypnotists (NGH) as well as the National Federation of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in the USA.

Much of Avinoam's work is founded on the work of [Dr. Ernest Rossi](#) as described in his breakthrough book [The Psychobiology of Mind Body Healing](#) and Dr. Al Barrios, a clinical psychologist and a pioneer in the field of immunotherapy.

Avinoam is also inspired by the work of Stephen C.Parkhill, a noted hypnotherapist and the author of *Answer Cancer – The Healing of A Nation*.

For more on information on

Holistic Cancer Care

Visit

AvinoamLerner.com

While there sign up for the

FREE WHITE PAPER on

[Hypnotherapy for Cancer Care](#)

You can also shop for Guided Imagery CDs

at AvinoamLerner.com/shop

or join our community and like our

[Facebook page](#)



www.facebook.com/HealingBeyondTherapy

References

Campbell-Gillies, Lynne (2005). The Effect of Guided Imagery and Relaxation on Patients Receiving Treatment for Non-metastatic Cancer.

Naparstek, Belleruth. Gifts of the Imagination: Surviving and Thriving Beyond Cancer

Davenport, Leslie (1996). Guided Imagery Gets Respect.

Dayton, Tian (2011). Reduce Anxiety and Depression with Guided Imagery.

Battino, Rubin (2007). Guided Imagery: Principles and Practice.

Naparstek, Belleruth (1999). Clinical:Case Study: Guided Imagery Part I: Use in Medical Practice.

Thomas, Valerie (2009). Using Mental Imagery and Visualisation Techniques with Cancer Patients.