

Breathing Expansion Exercise by Kay Grace

Here's an exercise to increase conscious awareness & manage emotion or repetitive (non-supportive) thoughts:

Sit comfortably, with your spine basically straight, shoulders, jaw and face relaxed.

Breathe in through the nose to a count of 5, and out through the mouth to a count of five. Breathe in calm, and fresh energy; breathe out fatigue, racing mind or negativity.

As you breathe in, imagine that your entire body, brain, heart space, and the field around you is expanding, as an inflating balloon.

As you breathe out, imagine that you are contracting into a point of light in the center of your chest.

Continue this for at least 5-10 breaths. When you notice emotion, thoughts, or feel agitation or discomfort, imagine your Higher Self (you as the internal guide or observer - you as your best self) climbing up out of your heart, and arriving at the top of your head.

Once there, your Higher Self can open a trap door at the top of your head, releasing all those distracting thoughts, shoulds, and non-supportive "voices," whether it is your own inner critic, or other people's idea of what you should do, think or be.

Keep breathing, and imagine that your Observer is just watching you as you experience whatever emotions may come up. You may want to picture whatever event is causing distress as if it were on a movie screen - you are watching, but not reliving it.

Take the attitude of non-judgment, and curiosity. As you continue to breathe gently, you might say to yourself, "oh, there's that sad feeling again," and you just watch it, or sit with it as you would sit with a friend in the hospital - it's your presence, compassion & awareness that create the healing, and allows the emotion or distress to gently dissolve.

When you feel relaxed and the feeling has reached a level you are comfortable with (often it disappears completely), you can bring in a feeling of gratitude, and end the exercise with a gentle stretch, or rubbing your palms together briskly.