

Imagery for Our Children

A Magical Healing Garden

Charlotte Reznick, Ph.D.



Spring is a time of new beginnings: flowers blooming and seeds blossoming into lush plants that we've nurtured and cultivated earlier. Spring can also be a time of renewal for our children – to open their hearts, to share their hopes, and to expand their dreams. We can guide our children toward their right path by helping them connect with their own inner seeds - of peace - of joy - of love. We can teach them how to heal hurts of their personal dark winter – in the present, and from the past. And, we can support our children in developing their potential. The most potent technique that I have found in my twenty-five years of practice is for children to empower themselves with the healing power of imagery.

The impact of positive images while in a relaxed state is tremendous. After one group session using the magic garden and healing pond imagery, three boys were relieved of the pain of their stomachache, headache, and canker sore respectively. During another group, an adolescent girl with a pounding headache eliminated her pain without medication, and later successfully taught the simple imagery technique to her friends at school.

To inspire and to start you using imagery with the kids you work or live with right away, here are three brief guided imageries. First, use "*a rainbow light*" to reach a very deep relaxed state; second, bring in "*a magic garden*" to help grow inner seeds; and third, make use of "*a healing pond*" to heal physical and emotional hurts. They can be used separately or together, based on your goals with the children. An animal friend (or wizard) is used as a guide and helper, a valuable tool to access unconscious wisdom. "Gifts" are used as unique ways to receive power and assistance. For example, one 8-year-old girl received the gift of a spiral-moving rainbow to heal her chronic stomach pains, along with rainbow glasses to see her world in a more positive light. Another child received the gift of a golden heart to help him heal the physical heart-breaking pain he experienced during his parents divorce.

If you choose to use the following imageries, you may find your kids feel healthier and happier, while learning to expand their own healing capabilities. You'll be surprised at what wise answers their inner guides offer, what gifts they receive, and what awareness they develop that can be applied to their everyday world.

Use your most soothing, slow voice with soft music in the background if possible.

"A Relaxing Rainbow"

"Allow your eyes to gently close and focus on your breathing ...we're letting all our troubles float away ... in beautiful rainbow balloons.... Imagine a beautiful colored rainbow floating above your head ... the purples and the blues ... the greens and the yellows ... the oranges and the reds ... and maybe some gold and silver Notice what colors your special rainbow is.... And as you breathe, this beautiful rainbow grows larger and larger ... and starts to gently wash over you ... to help you relax.... And to go inside and find that special calm place that waits for you each day".

You might now suggest the child relax each part of his/her body as the rainbow light moves through. And then...

"As you breathe you are totally safe in the rainbow light ... totally safe ... totally protected ... very, very comfortable".

"Creating Your Magic Garden"

"You find yourself surrounded by the rainbow light as you walk on a special path ... there are beautiful rainbow flowers around you ... and birds singing.... In front of you is a large stunning gate. It is a gate that leads you to your own magic garden. And there is a key to open this magnificent gate ... It's found under a rock.... Notice whether your key is gold or silver or copper.... The key has your initials carved in it so you know this is your gate and your key.... And one of your special animal friends now appears from around the rock. It is an animal friend that is very wise and very loving, and is here to help you build and grow your magic garden ".

At this point have the child enter the gate and create their magic garden. You may suggest any plants, trees, flowers, fruits, etc.

"Anything you want you can plant in this magic garden ... You may even plant seeds of peace ... and of joy and happiness ... and of calmness ... or any other qualities you would like to increase or bring in your life ... This is your own space ... This is a very magical time".

"Discovering the Healing Pond"

For the healing pond, you can adjust the message depending if the child has physical or emotional hurts, or if your focus is on building their capabilities.

"Now there's a part of this garden that has a wonderful healing pond. So you go over to it ... and this too is a magical place. As you step in the water ... which is the perfect temperature for you ... there is a beautiful long rock ... with soft, fluffy moss on it so you can lie with your head out of the water where you're totally comfortable ... And as

you lie in the healing waters ... they wash over you ... and soothe your body ... and soothe your feelings ... and any pains or tightness melts away ... And it's a wonderful place to be as your garden grows . Your little animal friend has helped prepare some magic healing herbal tea for you so that when you drink it ... any sadness or hurts inside your body disappear and melt away ... so that all the goodness ... and all the health ... and all the joy that you deserve now appears".

"The Blossoming of the Garden"

"And when you are ready ... step out of the healing pond and dry off ... Your garden has turned into the most magnificent magical place that you can imagine. See what you have created ... the beauty ... the magnificence ... everything.... How incredible and important you are for being able to plant seeds that grow to be tall and healthy ... just like you are growing. Know that when you take the time to plant seeds ... and the time to care for them ... wonderful things can grow "

"The Wisdom of the Animal Friend"

"Your special animal friend points out that there is one very precious flower that is calling to you ... and you lean down near the flower and you smell it ... it smells wonderful. And notice what color it is...and how big it is ... and it's special shape. And the flower seems to be talking to you and it tells you something very important for you to know now in your life. To help your own magic grow within yourself. To help all the seeds within you ... and all your goodness ... come out. And when you look inside this flower there is a beautiful gift that springs up toward you ... Something to help you remember your own special growth ... And to know how wonderfully you're doing".

"The Return"

Now you can lead the child back out of the garden with the suggestion that they can return when they want.

"When you're ready you'll come back here ... slowly ... feeling your body ... feeling refreshed and remembering all good things.... remembering that wonderful magic garden ... and all the things you grew ... and saw ... and heard ... and felt ... remembering everything...."

If you are assisting a group, you have the option to work interactively with individuals after the guided section. This allows you to receive their feedback and provides them an opportunity to further generate their own ideas, delve deeper into their imagery, or help clarify any questions or concerns with your guidance. If you have been working with one child alone all along, feel free to interact with them throughout their imagery once you know they are quite relaxed.

At the conclusion, you may permit them to continue to rest. Or, you may suggest that the children draw any images that have come up during the imagery and share their experiences. Pictures can reveal what words do not, and the very process of drawing is often cathartic. Sharing with the group is supportive for each other and helps you as the leader notice any areas that still need to be addressed.

It is not necessary to have the perfect script, or years of experience for facility with this work. What is important is your sincerity, your respect for the children, and perhaps most significant, is your allowing these kids to touch their natural inner light of love and healing and bring it forth.

Charlotte Reznick Ph.D. specializes in helping children and adolescents develop the emotional skills necessary for a happy and successful life. She is a licensed educational psychologist and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at UCLA. Dr. Reznick is the creator of **Imagery for Kids: Breakthrough for Learning, Creativity, and Empowerment** and is the author/producer of the therapeutic CDs "**Discovering Your Special Place**" and "**Creating a Magical Garden and Healing Pond**". An international workshop leader on the healing power of children's imagination Dr. Reznick maintains a private practice in Los Angeles, California. For more information and to purchase CDs, visit www.imageryforkids.com or phone (310) 889-7859.

First published in the *Alternative Journal of Nursing* March 1, 2006 Issue 10.