



# VISUALIZING THE CALM

This will show you how to use the power of visualization, or mental rehearsal, to find a greater sense of calm when faced with a situation that is distressing or anxiety producing.

*(For example, mental visualization has been shown to be effective with athletes because it helps them actually practice, as well as prepare for, dealing with the high stress levels of competition)*

This practice works because the brain responds as if it is actually experiencing the visualization. The key is to engage all of your senses in your in your mental imagery. Picture your calming scenario with as much detail as possible. Notice all the sights, sounds, smells, textures, and other sensations that surround you. Like in the film, Avatar, where the main character was linked to an avatar that was controlled through his mind, think of this visualization as your own 3D avatar.

## **PRE-VISUALIZATION**

Identify an activity during which you feel anxiety.

## **IDENTIFY THE SENSATION**

Once you first start to experience it. What is the sensation?

What were you doing just prior to the start of that anxious feeling?

What were you thinking?

What were you feeling?

## **VISUALIZATION**


Picture yourself at the point before you notice any sensation of anxiety. See yourself as totally relaxed, calm, at ease -- even as you know that you are going to be encountering a situation that has historically produced feelings of anxiety.

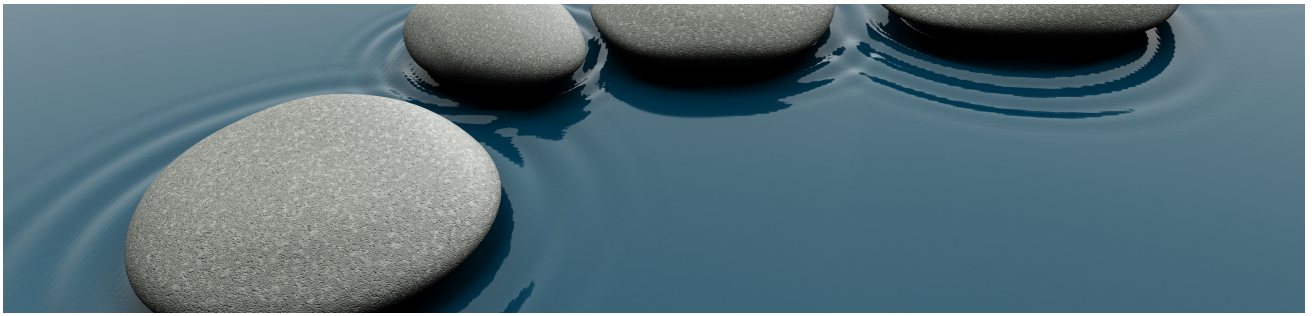
Picture yourself, or your avatar, entering that situation while continuing to be totally at ease and relaxed. Notice all the people that are in the space. See yourself as being successful at being calm and at ease. If you feel tense or anxious at any time, remember that this is **your** visualization. You can freeze-frame the action, put the visualization in reverse, and back up to the point where you again feel secure and calm. Rehearse and begin again. Practice. Practice. Practice.

Imagine yourself as more confident and relaxed. That flexibility helps you prepare for any unpredictable events that might happen to you in "real" time.

## **REFLECT**

Congratulations on completing this mental rehearsal. How did it feel to complete it? Could you practice this daily for 5 minutes? Where and when could you practice?





## 3-MINUTE VISUALIZING THE CALM RIGHT NOW

Here is a second visualization practice, for those times you need to calm down and counter general feelings of anxiety and chaos in the moment, before it overwhelms you.

Draw upon your personal history. Is there something or someone from your past that has helped you to find peace and calm?

Visualize that object, sound, color, or person (*for example, a caring family member or friend*)  
Even if this resource is not available at the time of your anxiety, draw upon your memory.

Rehearse a detailed visualization that brings relief.

For the next 3 minutes, visualize your favorite reassuring and uplifting items in as much detail as you can.

- Colors you love
- A wise person you admire
- Food that is healthful that you love
- A favorite song
- Your favorite peaceful place
- A beloved animal
- A calming natural setting
- A soothing activity