

Visualization is often used as an adjunct to meditation. It is helpful in meeting goals you set for yourself. Your imagination is engaged to assist you, to impress upon your body/mind what it is you wish to achieve....a better golf swing, loss of weight, a new job, freedom from an addictive habit, or whatever. Many clinics and doctors are using visualization techniques in health care...controlling pain, strengthening the immune system, etc.

Imagery refers to the pictures you paint or the script you write for yourself to use in your visualization exercise. You "see" yourself in your desired improved condition, acting out your goal. People get very creative with their images. One child used Star Wars aircraft to zoom through his body attacking and killing the invading cancer cells they found. Another woman considered her tumor "unwanted garbage" so she had a little pink pig go in to eat it up! For problem solving, you might create for yourself a wise guru complete with robes and a long white beard to whom you can go for needed answers.

It is pointed out by trained therapists that **THERE IS AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEDITATION AND VISUALIZATION**. Meditation is not goal oriented. It teaches the body/mind to let go, to observe the self without interference from the conscious mind, to be receptive to inner wisdom. Visualization and imagery feed a desired goal into the receptive state produced by the meditation.

## BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

The relaxation response brought about by meditation has shown measurable physiological benefits. Heart rate, metabolism, oxygen consumption, and respiration slow down, blood pressure is lowered, muscle tension is lessened, and brain waves slow down to the alpha state. Joan Borysenko's Body/Mind groups have shown that many diabetics are able to use relaxation to reduce their need for insulin. According to Dr. George Fuller-von Bozzay of the Biofeedback Institute of San Francisco and Dr. Paul Lehrer of Rutgers Medical School, relaxation training has helped asthma sufferers, and there are many statistics relating to people with chronic or acute pain who have been helped.