

RELAXATION INSTRUCTIONS ¹

The instructions which follow have been designed to help...you ...learn...too...relax. Although these instructions do have a hypnotic quality, it is not intended that...you should be hypnotized by them; but keep your mind alert, while your body learns...too...relax.

Before we begin, would you please ensure that your clothing is loosened, so that your breathing and circulation are not obstructed; and in your mind's eye, open yourself...to the experience...of relaxation.

Take a few moments to make yourself comfortable. And after you have made yourself comfortable, just close your eyes gently, and think of peace...of quiet...of tranquillity...of slowing down. And as you do so, you will...notice...that...your breathing is becoming slow and regular, and you are becoming more and more...relaxed. Enjoy the relaxation, the comfortable breathing, the feeling of calmness and peace, as nervous tension gradually gives way to relaxation.

Now, take a deep breath, and let it all out. Stretch the muscles of your chest and throat, and let them...relax. And let your breathing become even more slow and regular, as you...sink even more deeply...relaxed. Let the muscles of your arms...relax. Let them go. Let...both your arms sink soft and loose. And now your legs: let all...the muscles of your legs...relax. The muscles of your lower legs...relax...the muscles of your upper legs...and thighs relax. And now, relax...the muscles of your stomach...relax...the muscles of your abdomen and lower back...relax...the muscles of your chest and shoulders...relax. Let your shoulders hang loosely; very, very peaceful and calm. Smooth out your forehead. Relax...the muscles of your eyes. Remember that it requires effort even to maintain a facial expression, and let your face become vacant, and completely without expression. Nothing is important at this moment...except the sound of my voice, and attaining a state of deep, pleasant...relaxation. An alert mind in a relaxed body. A state of peacefulness and calm. If you wish, you may yawn; stretch the muscles of your throat, and now...relax. So tired and peaceful, so sleepy. Imagine, if you wish, that...someone is coming to the door, and you want them to think that...you are sound asleep. Take a peek, and...see them at the door, but then...close your eyes and imagine that...you are sound asleep; and drift and dream with me, while you experience the peacefulness of deep, pleasant...relaxation.

And now, as you...continue breathing deeply and comfortably and rhythmically, I would like you...to...imagine yourself standing at the top of a gentle carpeted stairway. It doesn't matter whether...you can...see it clearly, or vaguely, or even not at all. You've been at the top of a stairway before, and you will be again. All that matters is for you to...know that in a moment, I am going to ask you to...begin to count backwards with me from twenty, while you go slowly down the stairs. And just...notice how much more comfortable and relaxed you can feel, as you...go slowly down the stairs.

Twenty...nineteen...eighteen...seventeen...sixteen. Pause, and notice that...with each number that you

¹ “...” is intended to represent a slight hesitation – a sort of verbal “stutter-step” – to mark out the words which follow , or to introduce a bit of verbal ambiguity.

count, and even with each even breath that you take, you are becoming even more deeply relaxed. Fifteen...fourteen...thirteen...twelve...eleven. Already half-way down the stairs, and perhaps beginning to...notice that...you can...easily understand these instructions, even though you may not consciously attend to what I am saying, and these instructions can stay safely tucked away in the back of your mind, available for you to...use whenever...you need to become deeply relaxed again. Ten...nine...eight. And perhaps beginning to...notice that any sounds that you hear can become part of your experience of comfort and well-being, so that nothing bothers and nothing disturbs. Seven...six...five. And perhaps...you can...experience those feelings of heaviness and warmth spreading throughout your body; or perhaps...your body feels as if it is floating on soft, billowy clouds, as light as a feather, as if it could just float comfortably away; or perhaps...you may...notice that you don't even have to be aware of your body at all. Just the feeling of comfort and well-being, as you become more and more deeply relaxed. I really don't know, and it really doesn't matter at all. Four. Almost to the bottom of the stairs, to a place of safety and security, where nothing bothers and nothing disturbs. Three. Feeling more and more the real enjoyment of deep, comfortable relaxation. Perhaps beginning to wonder what to experience when you reach the bottom of the stairs, and yet knowing already how much more ready you can feel to...become even deeper and deeper relaxed, more and more comfortable, where nothing bothers and nothing disturbs. Two. And you can just...enjoy the experience, as much as you like. Enjoy the relaxation, the comfortable breathing, the feeling of peacefulness, as you...let your body become even more deeply relaxed. One. And you are almost there.

And now, ahead of you there stands a blackboard. Beside it is a big can of paint with a big paint brush in it. Take the brush and paint the board red. Slap the paint on; dip the brush as often as you need; cover it completely. When it is all red, picture in the middle of it a big number 7. Take the brush again, and paint the board orange. Cover it completely, slap the paint on, get around the edges, dip the brush as often as you need. When it's all orange, picture in the middle of it a big number 6. Take the brush again and paint the board yellow. Get into the corners, around the edges, dip the brush as you need. When it is all yellow, picture in the middle of it a big number 5. Take the brush again and paint the board green. Slap the paint on, get in around the edges, cover it completely. When it is all green, picture in the middle of it a big number 4. Take the brush again and paint the board blue. Slap the paint on, dip the brush as much as you need, cover it completely. When it's all blue, picture in the middle of it a big number 3. Take the brush again, and paint the board purple. Cover it all over, get in around the corners, slap the paint on. When it is all purple, picture in the middle of it a big number 2. Take the brush again and paint the board violet. Cover if all over, slap the paint on, get around the edges. When it is all violet, picture in the middle of it a big number 1.

Now, turn so that, you can see in front of you a screen of trees, bushes and shrubs. And when you are ready, step through that screen of trees, bushes and shrubs and find yourself in a quiet place. This place might be any place, perhaps that you remember from your childhood. A place where you felt happy and absolutely safe. If you would like, you could put some loved ones there from your childhood. If you put loved ones there, take a few moments to greet them and renew fond feelings, in any case enjoy the safety and happiness you feel in this place. Then, when you are ready, look ahead and make a gentle slope going upward toward a hillock or knoll. Slowly make your way up that gentle slope toward the top of that little hill. On your way, you might notice the blue sky above you, the soft white fluffy clouds in the sky, and the smell of the earth and grass. Feel the gentle

warmth of the sun. When you reach the top of the rise, you look over and down a gentle slope towards the ocean. And notice that, between you and the ocean, there is a big rock, and sitting on the rock there is a cup, and beyond that there is a stream. Begin to walk down the slope, and when you reach the rock, take off your troubles and worries and put them under the rock, and slide the rock over them, burying them for all time. Then, take off those things that you will need when you return, your shoes, coat and the like and put them on the rock. Take the cup off the rock. And when you are ready, go on past the rock and step into the stream. Feel the warmth of the sun on you, and the coolness of the stream on your feet. Look down into the water and see the clean, clean, crystal water of the stream. Listen to the stream bubbling over your feet. Stoop down and dip some water from the stream into the cup. Take a sip of the water. The water is serenity and peace. Feel the water course down into your stomach, and transfer to your bloodstream to circulate all through your body, down your legs and arms, through your trunk into your head. Take another sip of the water. The water is serenity and peace.

When you are ready, pour the rest of the water back into the stream from which it came. Leave the cup beside the stream and walk on down to the ocean, and walk slowly along the beach. It is mid-July, and it is very pleasantly warm. It is five o'clock in the afternoon. The sun has not yet begun to set, but it is getting low on the horizon. The sun is a golden blazing yellow, the sky a brilliant blue, the sand a dazzling glistening white in the sunlight. Feel the cold, wet, firm, hard-packed sand beneath your feet....Taste and smell the salt in the air. There is a residue of salt deposited on your lips from the ocean spray. You can taste it if you lick your lips. Hear the beating of the waves, the rhythmic lapping to and fro, back and forth of the water against the shore. Hear the far-off cry of a distant gull as you continue to walk....

And suddenly you come to a sand dune, a mound of pure white sand....Covering the mound are bright yellow buttercups, deep pink moss roses. You sit down on its crest and look out to sea. The sea is like a mirror or silver reflecting the sun's rays, a mass of pure white light, and you are gazing intently into this light. As you continue to stare into the sun's reflection off the water, you begin to see flecks of violet, darting spots of purple intermingled with the silver. Everywhere there is silver and violet. There is a violet line along the horizon...a violet halo around the flowers. Now the sun is beginning to set. With each movement, with each motion of the sun into the sea you become deeper and deeper relaxed. [It is important to pair physical sensations such as breathing with elements in the image so that the imaginal elements will cue relaxation.]

The sky is turning crimson, scarlet, pink, amber, gold, orange as the sun sets...you are engulfed in a deep purple twilight, a velvety blue haze...you look up to the night sky. It is a brilliant starry night. The beating of the waves, the smell and taste of the salt, the sea, the sky,...and you feel yourself carried upward and outward into space, where you become one with the universe. Looking down, you can see beneath you the past stretching off into the distance in one direction and future stretching off into the distance in the other direction. This is your time-line, on which are recorded your memories of everything that has happened to you in the past and everything that is going to happen in the future, with the present as the point through which the future pours into the past. let yourself float gently down until you are floating just above your time-line. Now, turn and look towards the past, and notice those special times when you experienced a particular feeling of strength and competence.

look over down into your old quiet place. Make your way down the gentle slope to your quiet place. Then, when you are ready, make your way through the screen of trees and shrubs and bushes, to the bottom of the escalator, this time going up. When you are ready, get on the escalator and let it carry you up. Feel the breeze on your cheeks; feel the vibration of the step under your feet; see the escalator carrying you up, up, up. When you reach the top step off. In front of you is a board all violet with a big number 1 on it. Stare at the board. As you do it changes from violet to purple, and when it's all purple on the middle of it is a big number 2. As you watch it some more it changes from purple to blue, and when it's all blue in the middle of it is a big number 3. You watch it some more and it changes from blue to green, and when it's all green in the middle of it is a big number 4. You watch it some more, and it changes from green to yellow; and when it's all yellow in the middle of it is a big number 5. As you continue to watch it it changes from yellow to orange, and when it is all orange in the middle of it is a big number 6. As you watch it some more it changes from orange to red, and when it's all red in the middle of it is a big number 7. And as you watch it some more it changes back to a blackboard, and you feel alert, yet you feel rested and relaxed.

Image 1 - Beach Scene

I am now going to count to 3. At the count of 3, you will open your eyes, you will feel completely refreshed, totally relaxed. 1,2,3. (The subject is always brought out of hypnosis by reciting the above three lines.)

The 1st two lines in this image should produce a feeling of detachment and often dissociation.

doorway to a room that is all your own, a room of comfort and tranquillity, of peacefulness and calm. Perhaps you would like to...move out from the stairway, move out from the stairway...to that room which is all your own, furnished however you may wish, where nothing bothers and nothing disturbs. That place of safety and security of peacefulness and calm.

And find your comfort in that room, while I talk to you about something that you already know a lot about --remembering and forgetting. And I say that it is something that you already know a lot about because you do it every waking moment of your life. You remember, and then you forget, so that you can remember something else. No one can remember everything all at once, so you...let some memories move quietly to the back of your mind. I wonder, for example, whether you can remember what you had for lunch yesterday. Perhaps you can. And yet, I wonder whether you can remember what you had for lunch a month ago. I would guess that it would just take too much effort to dig up that particular memory...although, of course, it is there somewhere in the back of your mind. No need to remember, do you don't.

And I wonder if you will be surprised, or curious, or pleased to...discover that the things that I have told you today are just the same kinds of things, things that you may remember tomorrow, or the next day, or next week, or even next month. I wonder if...you will decide to...let the memory of these things rest quietly in the back of your mind, or if...you will remember gradually, or all at once. I wonder if you may remember completely, or only partially. Perhaps... you will be surprised to...notice that this is the place for memory to surface, or it may be more comfortable for you to...remember at a different place, or at another time. I don't know when...you will remember the things that I have been telling you, or where...you will remember the things that I tell you, but you will remember: whenever you...make yourself comfortable in preparation for relaxation, it can serve as a reminder...of the instructions which I have been giving you. So whenever you...remember, however you...remember, wherever you...remember, if ever you...remember, it will be just fine, and perfectly natural. Whatever I have said, has been said, and is safely tucked away in the back of your mind, available for you to...use, whenever you...again make yourself comfortable in preparation for relaxation.

And I wonder...if you will...feel surprised to...notice that you can...become so deeply relaxed in such a brief period of time. And perhaps...you will...feel curious about that surprise. Surprise, curiosity, and I wonder...if you will...feel pleased to...notice that, any day you wish, you can...remember the pleasant feelings of relaxation can come flooding back to you quickly and automatically whenever you...make yourself comfortable again...in preparation for...relaxation.

Resting as you are, you can...continue to relax in the safety and security of the knowledge that, whenever you may wish to become fully awake, you may do so simply by sitting up, taking a few

deep breaths, and directing your attention back to the objects around you. In the meantime, however, you are gaining more and more control over the muscles of your body. You are becoming more and more skilled at relaxation. This skill will enable you to...think about and deal constructively with life's problems without interference from unnecessary nervous tension. Again, let me remind you that relaxation is a skill that comes with practice, and as you...continue to...follow these instructions, you will...find it more and more easy to relax, when you again make yourself comfortable in preparation for relaxation, and throughout your daily life as well. Of course, it will always be entirely up to you, whether...you will let yourself become deeply relaxed, and if, at any time in the future, you may find it inconvenient to relax, you will stay just as tense as you may wish to be. In addition, you will recall, if at any time while deeply relaxed, you may wish to become fully awake, you may do so simply by sitting up, taking a few deep breaths, and directing your attention back to the objects around you. However, when you...do let yourself become deeply relaxed, you will...find that it is a very pleasant and rewarding experience, and that, when you awake, you will...feel refreshed and rested. But rest now, rest, whether with your eyes closed or with...your eyes open. That's right, you have...not left...your pleasant state of...relaxation. Just listen to the music and...continue to...relax.

In a few moments, I am going to ask you to arouse yourself, but till then, just remain resting peacefully, and really enjoy the feelings that your body can give you, so that, in a moment, when I count from one to five, you will be able to...feel yourself returning up the stairs, walking or floating gently, and feeling refreshed and rested and oh, so good all over. More alert with every number that I count. No need to hurry; you can have all the time that you want. After all, time is relative, and you can...feel yourself returning slowly, comfortably up the stairs; more alert with every number that I count; perhaps surprised that...you can...feel so well. Comfortable, and feeling well. One: it is now time to...leave that special room and begin that journey up the stairs to full waking consciousness. Two: beginning to arouse yourself. Three: open your eyes wide and look around you. Four: take a few deep breaths and direct your attention back to the objects around you. And five: wide awake. Wake up...rested, refreshed, and feeling well. I trust...you...enjoyed these few brief moments of relaxation.