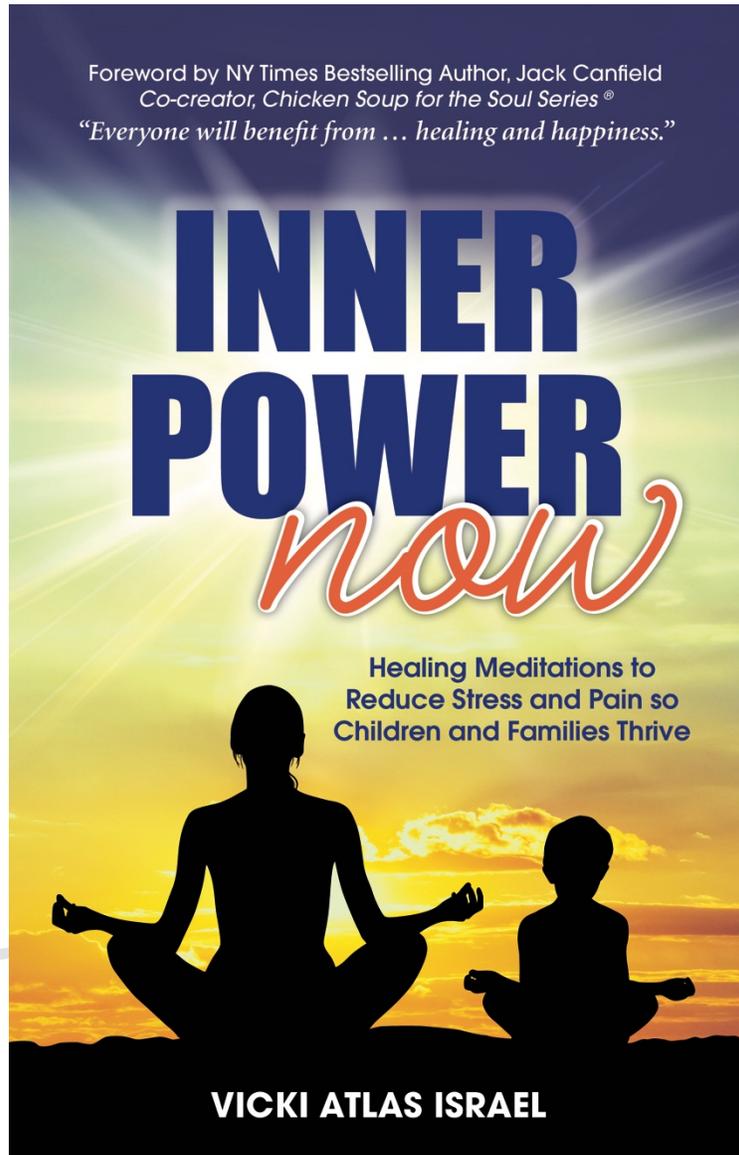


Inner Power NOW

Sneak Preview—Please Do Not Copy



Foreword

During one of my *Breakthrough to Success* Trainings, I heard Vicki speak about her book to help stressed out parents and children at pediatric hospitals and schools. I immediately knew this could be a beneficial resource to families. Right after she spoke, I joined her on stage and asked if I could endorse her book once it was done.

Now, here you hold the book in your hands—completed and packaged to help parents, children, teens, and caregivers. *Inner Power NOW* takes the mystery out of how to use meditation, mindfulness, and guided imagery for stress relief and healing. Included are helpful exercises, brief meditations, and guided imagery scripts that are easy to use. And Vicki also gives you access to free audio programs and more that go with the book.

Psychologists and doctors are just beginning to understand the awesome power of our mind/body connection. Over the past decade, thousands of research studies have proven that meditation, mindfulness, and guided imagery not only are successful in addressing stress-related illnesses, but also so much more. These techniques can provide healing before and after surgery and cancer treatments, and they can help with anxiety, depression, and sleep. There have also been studies with children showing how guided imagery benefits kids with chronic stomach pain, surgery, diabetes and Attention Deficit Disorder. With teens, research shows that embracing a mindfulness practice can help with school focus, self-esteem, and building relations.

I have personally witnessed the power of meditation, visualization and guided imagery in my work with hundreds of thousands of people around the world as well as in my personal and professional life. I taught all of my children how to meditate and use visualization to de-stress themselves both at school and in social situations. I also have benefited professionally from the practice of meditation. In fact, it was during one of my meditations that I received the title for my #1 New York Times best-selling book series—*Chicken Soup for the Soul*®.

You have probably picked up this book because of a serious illness or health challenge facing your child or a child you work with. I promise you that *Inner Power NOW* will make a difference and help you and your child thrive. Everyone will benefit from using these techniques to release stress and facilitate healing and happiness.

Wishing you and your children the best!

Jack Canfield

America's #1 Success Coach
CEO, The Canfield Training Group
Co-creator of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*®

Introduction

If you had told me nearly 10 years ago that I would be teaching other people how to awaken their inner power for more healing, happiness, and peace, I would have laughed. Stressed-out, anxious Vicki? The woman who has suffered from insomnia for years? I'm teaching others how to awaken love and healing? How is that possible, especially coming from a long line of worriers? I think it's in our family genes!

I'm grateful there was some spark that led me back to meditation and guided imagery ten years ago. These tools helped me to gradually turn my life around. Instead of feeling angst in the pit of my stomach, and constantly being in stress-mode, I was able to feel more at peace. It helped me reduce my anxiety, sleepless nights, and provided me with a more calm throughout my day. Now I want you, your children, and others to discover this amazing inner light of healing.

Sometimes it may be at our lowest point in life that we turn to something higher. That is what happened to me, my work, and this book. It's been a soul's journey of creation. Has it been all beautiful and flowing since waking up? The answer is no, not always. I still continue to wrestle with my lower self and ego at times. Sometimes I may feel totally overwhelmed, but it does not last as long. When I remember to accept what is, let in the light, and have faith, I can smile and be more of service to others.

There's a loving presence within each of us. When we wake up to this truth, we realize that we are co-creators. We can impact our life in more positive ways. The images that we see in our minds and the words that we use—they affect our experiences. Why not picture images of more healing and wholeness and the life that you want to create? Picture it vividly with all five senses and feel the joy of this vision happening now. With words, give yourself and your children more praise, instead of criticism. Teach your children and teens that they are lovable and they “are enough,” just as they are.

As you enhance your happiness and resilience, you also affect your children's emotional wellbeing in a positive way. New research studies show that when parents engage in meditation, guided imagery and other mindfulness practices, they may improve the wellbeing of *others* in their lives—especially their children. The beauty is that you also will be strengthening your family bond.

Today, I am a Certified Guided Imagery Practitioner through ONE Health Academy of Integrative Medicine (HealingImages.com) and a Best Mindset Coach. I've been trained by Jack Canfield, Bestselling Author and Co-creator of *Chicken Soup for the Soul Series*® and co-author of the *Success Principles*.®. He credits much of his success with utilizing meditation and visualization. I've also completed mindfulness retreats with James Baraz, author of *Awakening Joy*.

You may be familiar with Dr. Joe Dispenza, a neuroscience researcher, chiropractor, and best-selling author featured in the movie *What the Bleep Do We Know?!* I have attended his Progressive and Advanced Meditation Training. In his book, *Becoming Supernatural*, Dispenza discusses several incredible transformations by attendees at his advanced meditation workshops. Using brain scan technology, Dispenza, along with other neuroscientists, have captured images of participants' brains showing what happens before, during, and after group meditations. The

results are fascinating. This research suggests we have access to an amazing energy field that everyday people can tap into for healing.

Guided Imagery (also known as creative visualization) is a powerful, yet gentle technique that focuses and directs the imagination in helpful ways. More than just visualizing, it's a multisensory experience with feelings intended to bring the body and mind's innate healing wisdom into more conscious awareness. According to numerous studies, imagery and meditation can enhance healing and overall well-being by putting positive imagery into your deeper subconscious mind. It provides benefits for adults and children.

My family will vouch for me; they see a difference, and they like the calmer me. In fact, I became a Certified Guided Imagery Practitioner several years ago, so I could help others tune into this healing, enjoy more ease, and empower their best life. Through this book, I'm sharing these wonderful mind-body tools to spread more love and healing.

Believe me. I get it. You may think your life is too stressful and overwhelming to tune into stillness or guided imagery. Time is a precious commodity, especially if you and your family are experiencing a health crisis. Yet, this is the perfect time to begin because it will provide stress relief, healing, and strength as well as give comfort. Plus, we offer several exercises that are only a few minutes to do in the beginning.

I have designed this book to be used by you and your child or teen. You might feel a bit silly at first. That's normal! Let go of judgment and put into practice these ancient spiritual practices that may really benefit your body, mind, and spirit. *You* are each a superhero, endowed with qualities from the Divine. It's truly possible for you to tap into your inner wisdom at any time. It's just a matter of letting go of the endless mental chatter to unleash your Inner Power NOW!

Explanation About This Book

This book is divided into three parts. Part One is for parents, therapists, healthcare providers, and educators who work with children. It describes the latest research, studies, and stories as to why and how breathing techniques, guided imagery, and meditation can aid healing.

Part Two is geared for children and teens. This section is more playful and introduces a loveable character, Lucy the Llama. I suggest you read the stories and exercises to your child first and then share the exercises together as a family. Part Three features more guided imagery especially for teens, parents, and caregivers.



Lucy the Llama

At any time, you may skip to the fun exercises and imagery tools. For example, the breathing techniques begin at the end of Chapter 1. The child’s section begins with Chapter 4, which also includes a message to teens.

To make these exercises and guided imagery easy, you have access to recordings, so you can simply relax and listen. Using the recordings allows you to gain the most benefit of the guided imagery scripts because it becomes a multisensory experience. By listening to each guided imagery, any concerns about doing or saying it right is eliminated. Instead, you can relax and let the audio program work its healing magic.

The recordings can be found on this companion website. To get you started, we have bonus gifts and more.

A Special Note to Parents:

How can I begin to understand the heaviness in your heart? It can be so difficult to see a child suffer, especially your own. Being a parent myself, I can recall that moment—one of joy and of being overwhelmed when my first child was born. I remember thinking, “Wow, now I’m responsible for this tiny, human being. What if I mess up?” Although frightening and magical at the same time, we both know we would do anything for our child.

Having sons with chronic health conditions, I understand a little of what you may be facing. One son was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD); the other was thought to be on the autism spectrum but was later diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as well as asthma. Both have experienced physical, emotional, and social challenges.

You may feel uncertain and overwhelmed at times. I know I sure did. Please know that you’re not to blame for your child’s disease, chronic health condition, or illness. Honor your feelings. Hopefully, you will allow a power greater than yourself to help you through these challenging times. One thing you can do is to take one breath, and then another breath. Do what you need to do to take care of you, so that you are better able to help your precious child. That’s how real comfort and healing will take place for you and your family. You will come through this together.

My gift to you is to offer support and to give you tools to relieve suffering and stress. For a few minutes a day, or whenever you have time, go inside yourself for a little peace and calm. You and your child will be able to experience the fun games and guided imagery journeys together. Some are very short, some are five minutes, and some are a little longer. My aim is to provide comfort and healing.

A recent study conducted in hospitals found parents feel out-of-control with more stress and anxiety when they don't know what to do to help their child. Using the tools in this book will help you feel more in control and be an aid in supporting your child's healing.

Please know this. You are the one with this inner power that is connected to All-That-Is, a power greater than yourself. Some call this God, Source, Spirit, or Universal Power. Whatever that is, you are the one that will bring healing to yourself and others, not me. Being still and listening to guided imagery is meant to relieve suffering and hold you up to the light. Sharing this time is such a gift and doing these visualizations together with your child may help build a stronger bond. I love your beautiful willingness to try. It's no accident that you found this book at this time.

To Health Care Providers, Therapists, and Child Life Specialists

You are the bright star and leader to help your patient, families, and caregivers. By sharing this book with families, you will help them discover a holistic way to relieve pain and suffering. You will help them uncover a powerful love and light that connects them to their inner healer.

Do not doubt your part in this spark of loving care to bring comfort and relief. You hold magic in your hands as well as a beautiful compassion and hope for this family and child. If you are suffering from stress or discomfort, you won't be as available to those patients and families who need you most. Please feel free to also use these meditations and tools for your own health and happiness. By being more aware of a loving, calming presence within your heart, you will bring more comfort to those in need.

Chapter 1: Inner Power NOW for Healing

I will always be grateful to a special client, Judy, and her daughter, Hana, who took my “Stress to Inner Peace” course together. Before that, I hadn’t considered working with multiple family members. At the time, Judy was feeling stressed and overwhelmed as she cared for her aging mother. Judy’s emotional pain and her mother’s increasing care also affected her daughter Hana. As a high-achiever, 15-year-old Hana had been experiencing more pressure at school and at home, so Judy thought Hana could benefit from these tools as well. Since I was already coaching Judy, I thought, “Why not?”

As it turns out, they experienced a beautiful mother-daughter connection through our work together. Judy and Hana became accountability partners and helped one another to remember to practice. In between our sessions, the two would do the meditation tools and techniques together reinforcing their learning and bond. Learning these tools enabled them to involve other family members. After this experience, I understood how powerful a family practice could be. I now encourage families, if possible, to learn these tools together.

Over the past decade, thousands of research studies have found meditation and guided imagery to be effective for reducing the effects of stress-based illnesses, alleviate emotional problems like depression and anxiety and aid in physical healing. Stress and our fearful thoughts can also worsen just about any health condition. Stress seems to increase the risk of obesity, heart disease, immune disorders, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, depression, gastrointestinal problems, and asthma. Researchers have shown how chronic stress breaks down the body, making it susceptible to disease.(1)

We now have scientific proof that the use of complementary medicine may help relieve stress and repair the body so it can overcome disease. This includes guided imagery and meditation. Some of the other modalities include; Reiki, Healing Touch, therapeutic massage, acupuncture, chiropractic care, herbal medicine, supplements, aromatherapy, and more.

Guided imagery and meditation may also enhance brain function. Neuroscientists, through brain scans, can see how meditation lights up the creative part of our brain, the neocortex, and lowers brain impulses in the amygdala, also known as the “Fight or Flight” part of the brain.

What this means is that you can improve your health and happiness through a regular practice of meditation and guided imagery. This may affect your genes and how they are expressed, called epigenetics, or even your DNA. In Bruce Lipton’s book, *Biology of Belief*, he points out how you perceive your reality affects your genes and whether or not you may get a certain disease. Lipton discovered that genes and DNA are constantly evolving and that DNA is controlled by pulsating signals beyond the cells. Positive or negative thoughts also play a huge role in how genes unfold.

Seeing benefits from meditation and guided imagery doesn’t take that long either. One Harvard study (2) showed changes in the brain can appear after only eight weeks of mindfulness training, meditation, and guided imagery. The scan results seem to indicate more gray matter has developed. The scan also reports more cognitive functioning and a reduction in the size of the fear areas of the brain. I’ve witnessed changes in my clients within a few weeks.

Guided imagery has been shown to be helpful to children. A study by the University of Arizona, Tucson, found that chronic stomach pain was reduced by sixty-seven percent in children who participated in guided imagery exercises and practiced relaxation techniques compared to those who did not receive these treatments.(3) In their book, *ADHD in Preschool Children: Assessment and Treatment*, authors Jaswinder Ghuman and Hariwinder Ghuman note that meditation and guided imagery taught to school-age children with ADHD report significant improvements in overall ADHD, inattention, anxiety, and depression.(4)

In my own practice, we tested a guided imagery program that I had created for naptime at early childhood and daycare centers, called *Sleepytime Dreams*. We received anecdotal evidence from six different testing sites. Childcare directors reported the children fell asleep easier and stayed asleep longer and woke up more refreshed. It even calmed children with autism and ADHD, and those living in foster care.

For centuries, spiritual masters believed that if we could still the body, we could calm the mind. As a Certified Guided Imagery Practitioner, I've seen positive results within a few weeks after clients start practicing meditation and using guided imagery. Initially, I ask them to set aside just five minutes and then slowly add minutes as it becomes more ingrained. It's like building a muscle—the more you use these tools, the stronger and more resilient you become. Over time, the benefits of this practice multiply.

Many people have the notion that you must sit on a cushion on the floor in a pretzel position. You might be happy to read that this isn't necessary. What is essential is to be comfortably seated, whatever that means for you. Most of the time, I sit in a chair with my back supported. If you choose to sit on the floor, make sure you have a pillow under your hips.

Once you're comfortable, close your eyes, and focus on your breath. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. How you breathe during this stillness is essential. Breathe in deeply, expanding below the diaphragm into the belly. The breath first fills the lower area and then expands into the upper chest, as though you are filling up a balloon. The Balloon Breath exercise, as well as a breathing technique used by the U.S. Military and Navy Seals, will be outlined later in this chapter. Both will help you master your breath for calm and focus.

Being More Mindful: Connect to the Breath

We hear so much about mindfulness these days. Author Jon Kabat-Zinn is credited with developing the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at hospitals to help patients dealing with chronic pain or other physical or mental problems. Now it's used in many settings.

The practice of mindfulness is really the act of being aware of the present moment and accepting this awareness exactly as it is, without judgment, not trying to change it, just noticing and appreciating. The definition from Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (5):

1: the quality or state of being *mindful*. 2: the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis; also, a state of awareness.

In essence, you are allowing yourself *to be* in a neutral state, focused on the NOW. By being present, you aren't experiencing anxious thoughts in the future or guilt from the past. You are only observing the present moment, without judgment.

Anytime I feel myself in an anxious state and not breathing deeply enough, I know I need to take a mindful breath in and then let it out very slowly. If I do this for one minute just breathing in and out slowly with my eyes opened or closed, it brings me to the present moment. This calms my brain and body and awakens me to the now. And, of course, as I am writing this section, I'm doing this relaxed breathing. I invite you to do the same. Breathe in deeply and then let it out very slowly. As you do this, I invite you to close your eyes for two minutes. You will be amazed at how calm you will feel in that brief time.

Navy Seals' Box Breath for Calm

Most of my guided imagery scripts and recordings for adults begin with my *16-Seconds to Bliss* because it's one of the fastest ways to calm the body. It turns out, the U.S. Military trains elite Navy Seals with this same technique, except they call it the *Box Breath* because they maintain focus by picturing a box and breathing around its sides. (6) If these elite warriors who face trauma and the unknown can practice this breathing technique, so can we to help us feel more centered and calm.

As a side note, every time you see Lucy the Llama character, it's a reminder of a breathing exercise, meditation, or guided imagery script to try. When you see Lucy the Llama with hearts and flowers in her mouth this means the exercise or guided meditation is especially suited for children, ages five and up. Yet, parents and teens are welcome to join in, too.



When you see Lucy Llama with sunglasses that means the exercise or guided meditation is meant for teens, however, parents and adults are also welcome to use them.



When you see Colorful Lucy, this illustration is used to signal helpful exercises for the whole family or that we have “Cool Tips” to share.



Our first breathing exercise together is *Breathe like a Navy Seal for Calm and Focus*. Let's first practice this 16-Seconds to Bliss or the Box Breath for two minutes. Later, you may try it for five minutes. The elite Seals use this before and after important missions to remain calm and sharp.



Breathe Like a Navy Seal for Calm and Focus

To help relieve stress and tension, we're going to take a few deep breaths in and out in a certain way to bring calm and focus, like how the Navy Seals are trained. It's known as the Box Breath or 16-seconds to Bliss. For those who have breathing difficulties, you may reduce the count to three or two. Choose what is best for you. For younger children, you may have them practice this same breathing technique. Instead of counting to four, they would breathe in, then hold for a second, breathe out, then hold for a second, and repeat for a minute or so. It's the holding briefly that signals the body to relax. This audio recording is for older children, teens, or adults.

Let's first breathe in and out slowly from our belly. You should feel the belly and ribs on your side expanding, as you breathe in. Now let it out. Good. Put your hand on your belly this time. Try this one more time breathing slowly and deeply, your belly pushing out. Now let the air out. This is how singers are taught to breathe. As you practice, you will get better at this deep breathing.

So now, get comfortable, either sitting up straight in a chair or lying down. Uncross your arms and legs. Now close your eyes, if you will, or find a spot on the wall or floor to focus on while you practice this box breathing. Okay, let's get started. Begin first by blowing out your air... Great. Now, take a breath in deeply on the count of four, 1,2,3,4. Hold for four, 1,2,3,4. Now breathe out on the count of four, 1,2,3 4. Hold once more for four, 1,2, 3, 4. Breathe in

again on the count of four, this time on your own... (Pause for counting) Hold for four...Breathe out on four.... Hold for four...Breathe in again ...Hold.....Breathe out.... And Hold...Keep breathing and counting for the next minute or so on your own... (Pause for 1-minute more.). Beautiful... You're doing great! Now let's gently open our eyes if they were closed. Notice the sensations in your mind and body. Hopefully, you are feeling calmer, focused, and alert.



You and your child will benefit greatly from learning how to control your breath. As you master breathing in and out slowly, you'll become more grounded in your body. Your thoughts will also calm, moving away from upsetting thoughts into a state of present moment awareness.

You will find audio recordings of this and the next breathing game the *Balloon Breath for Calm* on our website. Make sure to receive your special gift with more opportunities at InnerPowerMindset.com/IPNgift.

The *Balloon Breath* is used in several of the guided imagery scripts in subsequent chapters. If your child is hearing-impaired, you can give her instructions so she can practice on her own with eyes closed. After a few minutes, you can tap her on the shoulder to let her know that she can return from the breathing game or guided imagery session. Then let her share what she saw or experienced. The next few breathing exercises are especially geared for children.



The Balloon Breath for Calm (Ages 5 and up.)

Let's imagine that you are blowing up a balloon. What color is it? Then see letting the air out very slowly through the tip of the balloon. Now pretend that your upper body is the balloon. So, as you fill up the balloon, the breath goes deep into your belly, and you then breathe out slowly. So, place your hands on your tummy. That's good. As you breathe in deeply, feel it coming in and out...in and out...as your belly rises and falls. If you place your hands on the side around your ribs area, you will feel that expand as well, as you breathe and expand like a balloon. For children, you can have them lie down and place a stuffed animal on his or her belly and watch it go up and down. That's a fun game, and it puts you in touch with the belly breath.

Let's practice again even slower. We're going to take a deep belly breath in on a count of 3. Breathe in 1, 2, 3. (Pause briefly) Then, slowly breathe out 1, 2, 3. (If this is too much for

you or your child, you may change the number and count to 2 each time.) Feel the breath coming in your nose and out slowly from the mouth. Try this again for a few more times and this time close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. If it's too hard to breathe in through your nose, you may also breathe in and out through your mouth.

Breathe in 1, 2, 3. Hold it. Then, slowly breath out 1, 2, 3. That's great. Now go ahead and try it on your own for a little bit and I will be quiet for a few moments. (Pause 30 seconds) Beautiful! Now let's come back into the room. Take 2 deep breaths. Wriggle your hands and toes, if possible. Now slowly open your eyes.



A few rounds of this deep breathing can bring a little peace. Counselors and therapists often teach deep breathing technique to their patients who suffer from anxiety and stress. Slow deep breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for relaxing and slowing down the body and its internal functions. If you're having a stressful day, or gripped by fear or worry, breathing deeply with or without eyes closed can be stress relieving. You will feel more grounded and centered in just a minute or two.

Blowing Out Birthday Candles is another breathing game that can be a soothing and quick way for children to settle down. It's a beautiful way to blow away your troubles. Practice these techniques with your child before he or she is upset. Then, you suggest he practice these mindful games when he's frustrated or scared or just needs to calm down. By breathing in deeply and slowly, we are signaling the body and mind for peace.



Blowing out Birthday Candles (Ages 5 and up.)

Blowing out Birthday Candles can help children relax especially when they're having a hard day. And, who doesn't like birthdays? It's a fun game, so be playful.

Now imagine that your fingers are the top of a birthday cake. You will be blowing out each candle....one at a time... very slowly. Each time you blow one candle out, you are blowing away all stress, pain, discomfort, or anger. Whatever is bothering you, blow it all out! As you breathe in again, envision that you are filling yourself with peace.

Take one hand and hold it up, facing you. Spread your fingers wide apart. Good. Let's start with your thumb as a birthday candle. Take a breath in, now imagine you're blowing out the candle on your thumb, letting all of your air out. With that, you're blowing out all discomfort and stress. Then, you're filling back up with peace. (Pause briefly) That's great! Next, go to your pointer or index finger. Imagine that finger lit up with a birthday candle. Take a deep breath and quietly blow out the next candle...blowing out all fear and anger or sadness. (Pause briefly) That's right...so beautiful. On to the third finger, your middle finger, take a big breath and blow out that candle. Let it all go. (Pause briefly) Make sure to fill back up with peace and calm. That's great. Let's move to another candle to blow out what's called the ring finger. See it all lit up? Take one more deep breath. Now blow out that candle. Goodbye stress and pain. And now we move to your pinky finger... number 5. Take a big breath and blow out that candle. You did great!

Now you can breathe normally again...in and out. If needed, you can continue doing the same thing with your other hand, blowing out one candle at a time on each finger. When you're finished, sit quietly, breathing in and out normally. Feel yourself surrounded by more peace and love. When you are ready, shake out your hands and notice how much calmer and softer you feel.



These mindfulness techniques are not new. As mentioned, many psychologists and counselors have been teaching these tools for years. What's new is the acknowledgment that we may all benefit from mindful breathing. These techniques are useful not only for clinical anxiety or panic but are just as effective for everyday experiences. Try them and notice what happens. There are additional mindful techniques and mind-body tools for parents to practice and then share with your children and teens in Chapter 11.

Take a few breaks throughout your day to check in and breathe slowly. This gives your mind a rest and brings your awareness back to your body to just *be* in the present moment. Ahhh...just to breathe and go inside! That is where your true power lies.

End of Sneak Preview

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