

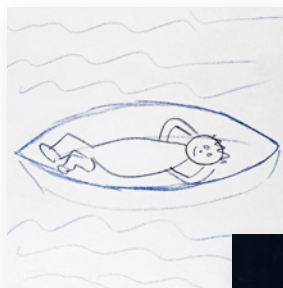
Course book Imagery Toolbox 3.0

Mobilize your inner resources.

Jan Taal

With contributions by:

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With this coursebook are the following items:

- 2 CDs with Imagery exercises
- 54 symbol cards
- Watercolour pencils & brush
- Sketchbook
- Notebook
- Modelling clay
- DVD with films:
‘Singing for your Life’ and
‘Touched by an Angel’
- Voucher for coaching

Painting on the cover:

‘New Life after Breastcancer’ (Esther van Abswoude)

Course Book Imagery Toolbox 3.0

Mobilize your inner resources

When facing cancer, chronic illness or crisis.

Inhoud

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1. Introduction

The imagination is a wonderful thing. It is a realm in which we find our inner wellsprings, (re)sources we can draw upon to fortify ourselves. The Imagery Toolbox contains some excellent 'tools' to help us to do just this. These take the form of simple exercises, suggestions and material which can provide you with the means to use your imaginative resources to increase your power and resilience in difficult times of illness and recovery.

By getting to work on the imagery exercises and mobilizing your own creativity you will start to harness the power of your own mind and to use your own inner strength to complement the medical care you may be receiving. In this way you can do a great deal to enhance your own emotional equilibrium, your sense of wellbeing and your ability to rest and to take pleasure in life. What is so special about the imagination is the space it creates for what is happening within you and also for what you need or long for.

In the last decades neuroscience has discovered that there are special brain cells - mirror neurons - which actively respond to what you imagine. These mirror neurons cause whatever you imagine to be actively stimulated and affirmed. When you use these exercises, you provide your brain with new input which develops and builds each time you relax and repeat them. In this way your imagination can help you to increase your resilience and assist in your recovery.

But we are of course so much more than our brain¹. Imagination and creativity tap into deeper and broader layers in ourselves, layers which are part of what we might call our 'greater self'. Human beings have been making use of the imagination for healing and to find purpose and meaning in life for at least the last 100,000 years and possibly a great deal longer than that². Our imaginative abilities are innate, they are a natural part of what we are, and images in thought and feeling are constantly affecting our behavior and our vitality, often without our even being aware of them³.

The exercises in the Imagery Toolbox, which are simple and direct in their use and application, can offer you a way to use the extraordinary power of your imagination to good effect. They can help you to mobilize your inner resources and to (re)discover your sense of mastery over your own circumstances.

The various exercises and creative material in this course book are accompanied by step by step instructions and are clearly illustrated with examples.

If you would like to read more about the theoretical background and practical application of working with the imagination and creativity in the context of

illness, go to Chapter 11 'The origin and practice of therapeutic imagery in the treatment of illness' on page 48.

The Imagery Toolbox is a DIY kit which can be applied at any stage during or following illness or crisis. The exercises in this book are simple to follow and are described and explained in full. Accredited coaches are also available to offer assistance in the use of the Toolkit; with a cut-price voucher you can book two coaching sessions at a greatly reduced rate. In Chapter 10 you will find more information about Imagery Toolbox coaching and the cut-price voucher.

The 'tools' in the Imagery Toolbox fall under 7 headings:

- A. This course book.
- B. Symbol cards which can help you to focus on what feels good for you and can contribute to your recovery.
- C. 2 CDs with imagery exercises covering 8 different themes.
- D. Drawing and writing materials
- E. Clay
- F. DVD of the film 'Singing for your life', with each other for each other
- G. DVD of the film 'Touched by an Angel' by Beatrijs Hulskes

2. Symbol cards

The symbol cards provide a 'way in' to your imagination. Whatever the photo on the card symbolizes for you or whatever attracts you to the photo is entirely personal to you and what your work with the symbol brings you is also unique to your own individual process. Allow yourself to be surprised.

At the end of this chapter you will find a number of examples of ways in which the cards were used.

► Choose a symbol card

Look at the pile of cards and choose the one which appeals to you most: the one image which in some way or other holds a positive attraction for you. It can be the image itself, the colour(s) or the form(s). But it may be that you are not quite sure what it is that attracts you and that's fine too. You can start by choosing a symbol card which relates to your present situation, to how you are feeling now. Then choose one which symbolizes something that might help you, or which stands for something you need or long for.

You can, if you like, write down in a few words the associations and feelings which go with each of the cards.

► The next step: focus your attention on your chosen symbol card

When you have chosen the card which represents what could help you or what you need or long for, put it in front of you so that you can have a good look at it. Make yourself comfortable, relax and look at the symbol card; see and feel what it is that so attracted you to the image on this card- the colour, the atmosphere, the form, the symbol itself... really take it in. It's as if you allow the image to come right inside you, a little bit further with every breath, as it were. Take it as it comes... you may even find that the image starts to change; after all, in the imagination everything is possible.

► Making the image your own

After you have taken a minute or so to look at your card, you could close your eyes... the image and the feeling that goes with it will stay with you. You could even see if you can become one with the image, in other words it becomes yours so that you can feel more of the atmosphere and the quality of the image within you. Allow it in - and, if you would like to - really let the feel of the image into your body. Really experience the benefit of its positive effect on you. This is a form of meditation whereby you mobilize in yourself whatever the symbol represents for you, you make it truly your own. Do this every day; by repeating the exercise you will make the image

and the quality which it symbolizes for you increasingly your own and it will gradually become ever easier for you to evoke this quality.

► Have a dialogue with the image

One particularly special way of experiencing the power of an image is to 'listen' to it. What is meant by this is a sort of 'intuitive listening' whereby you open your 'inner ears'.

Maybe you hear or feel something, something the image says or emanates, after all, in the imagination everything is possible... It is also even possible to answer the image or to ask it a question, to enter into a dialogue with it. Take the time to wait and see if a reaction comes in one form or another. Allow yourself be surprised, this dialogue technique goes further than ordinary thoughts, much further than rational thinking. It really is worth trying it some time, it might just bring you something of value.

► Make your own symbol card

In the course of the exercise the image usually turns into something slightly different from what is on the symbol card itself. This often happens. The symbol card was the starting point and now it has become something which is all yours. When you have finished the exercise you could find your own way of describing and drawing the image, then it really will be entirely yours. You will find writing and drawing materials in the Imagery Toolbox.

The only rule for drawing is that you don't have to be 'good' at it. So you could draw the image itself but you might also choose to draw the feeling associated with the image. A simple sketch is enough. Please don't try to make a work of art because that is really not what it's for. The purpose of the exercise is to give expression to the feelings and the positive energy of the image. By putting it on to paper, it becomes even more fully part of you and can be more deeply imprinted in your system.

► Look for your own symbol card

What also works well is to look through magazines and books and on the Internet for an image or symbol which you can use in the exercise, or to look for a (post)card which represents what you need and to use this as a focus of concentration, or perhaps, an even better idea, take your own photo.

A few examples

The lighthouse

(Illustration 1, 2) Reka is having a difficult time; she is undergoing chemotherapy treatment and is also facing an operation and hormone therapy. Without wanting to she is thinking about this all the time, and what she is dreading most is losing her hair.

Reka chooses the symbol card with the lighthouse on it. The power and solidity of it attract her and she needs these qualities now. But focusing on the lighthouse is not enough for her. She wants to be free also and to let herself be carried by the wind. She chooses a second image for this: a kite which flaps freely in the wind and is connected by a single slender string to the lighthouse. Reka draws the combination of the two elements. In the weeks which follow she looks at her drawing often and it helps her a great deal.

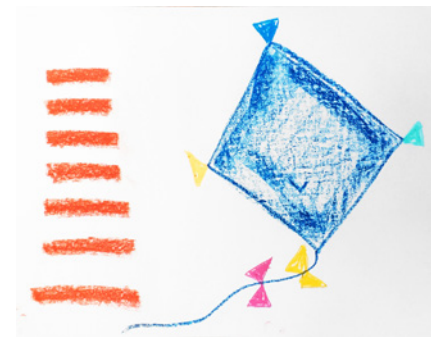
The Rose

(Illustration 3, 4; from the Imagery Toolbox 2.0) Carla chooses the 'frozen rose'. She makes a drawing of it, but in her own way: it's warmer, because it is warmth she needs.

The flower

(Illustration 5, 6) Maria chooses 'what she needs': a symbol card with a flower. When she focuses on it and then closes her eyes, the image develops into a tree. 'It's my tree, and it can grow. I am sitting under the tree and I want to climb up. It's the little round things that are climbing up. If I stay under the ground out of fear, I might feel safe but then absolutely nothing can happen.'

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3. Audio imagery exercises on 2 CDs

For the exercises in this chapter use the two CDs provided, or you can download all the exercises from www.verbeeldingstoolkit.nl with the code: VT123

When you use the audio imagery exercises you are harnessing your imaginative powers in a meditative way. There are eight exercises, each with its own specific theme.

Each exercise begins with relaxation before leading you into the theme. You will hear some suggestions about how you can approach the images in the exercise and then you will be invited to make contact with your imagination in your own way; the images and the experience are yours alone and the guiding voice will leave you all the freedom you need. In fact it may even be that not everybody's images are visual ones because the imagination works with all the inner senses: seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, tasting, smelling, thinking and intuition. Sometimes images are visual, sometimes there's a sound or you feel something intuitively, in the realm of the imagination all this is possible. Everyone has an entirely unique and personal experience, because the world of the imagination runs on fundamentally different principles from those of time and place which apply in our 'ordinary' world; everything is in effect possible and 'ordinary logic' holds little sway. The imagination exercises bring you into contact with a deeper layer in yourself where unknown powers and possibilities lie, in a place where inspiration and strength is available. Chose one of the exercises and listen to it, starting preferably with the very first exercise 'The Imagery of the good place'. This is a basic exercise which can help you to find a place of rest in yourself, a place where you can anchor and recharge yourself.

Do the exercises in as relaxed a way as you can and make sure that you won't be disturbed during it.

Be aware that in the imagination everything is possible. The imagination is the domain of creativity and a new freedom of possibilities. Follow the guiding voice but more importantly, follow your own way in the world of images. If you find that you are experiencing a lot of emotion, you can always take a break from the exercise and take the time to write down what you are feeling. At the end of each exercise there is some silence so that you can take your time to finish the exercise. A gentle sound of a gong indicates when the next exercise is about to begin. You can then turn the CD off.

After the exercise it is a good idea to write some notes about what you have experienced, or to make a sketch or drawing. Sharing with someone close to you who is good at listening, or with a coach or therapist, can also be helpful. Try not to analyse too much. Sketching or drawing your images of your experience is usually much better than thinking about it too much, because by drawing it you are making the image your own and already building upon it in your own way.

At the end of this chapter you will find examples of how to work with the audio exercises.

CD 1

1. Imagery of the good place 11.57 min.

In this exercise you will imagine a good, safe place, a place in your inner world where you can find rest and recharge yourself, a safe haven which is entirely yours and where you can anchor yourself and to which you can return regularly.

2. Healing imagery 11.20 min.

In this exercise you address your own capacity for healing and you learn how to use it.

3. The source 18.09 min.

A meeting with the clear source of the water of life.

4. Inner Light 16.22 min.

CD 2

1. Imagery as a support when receiving treatment 12.44 min.

The imagination can help you to support your treatment in its healing work.

2. Loving care for the damaged body 12.16 min.

Gentle, loving care for the damage which the body has suffered during the illness and treatment.

3. Pain relief 19.00 min.

The imagination can help to relieve or lessen pain. In this exercise you will approach this in a variety of ways.

4. Exploration of the domain of death 19.16 min.

A journey of discovery into the domain of death.

EXAMPLES 'Imagery of the good place' exercise

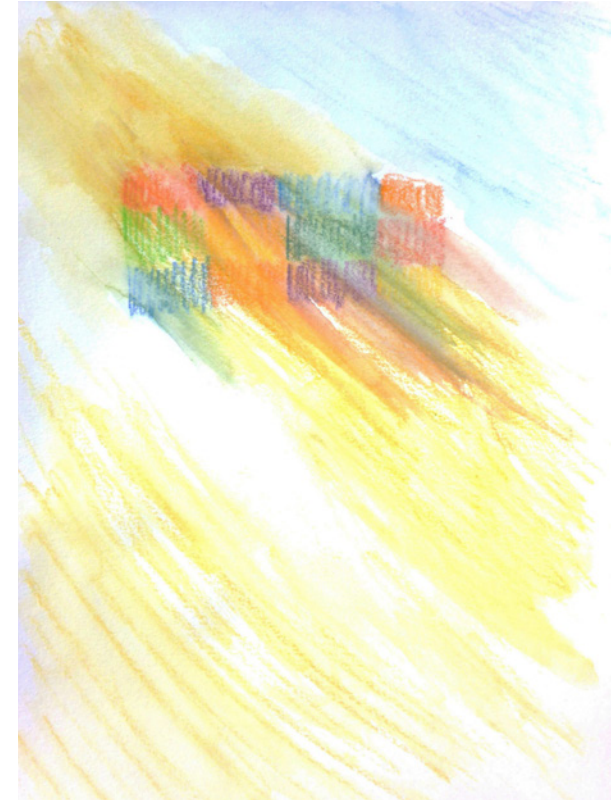
(Illustration 06) *I imagined a place where I have felt the most safe. I went back to my childhood when I was staying with Grandma and Grandpa. It's a very fine moment because nothing bad can happen to me. I've tried to show that in my drawing. That yellow in the stained glass window with the lovely warm sun on my face. And of course the sound of the birds in the garden. And still, often, when I hear the birds singing outside I'm back in that bed again and I can hear the birds in Grandma and Grandpa's garden. — Tine*

Finally I arrived at my very first memory, as a child sitting on the edge of a stream with my hands resting on my thighs. I'm sitting in the sun and I see a marsh marigold for the first time, that's one of those great big buttercups. And they shine so intensely. And as a child, I'll have been nearly three I should think, I really thought that they were made of gold, with that magic thinking you have then. But now I've really gone back and felt that again, how my small hands are lying on my legs and how the sun feels. — Lea

I'm on a ferry and the seagulls are riding the wind. I can feel that wind. Yes, everything is so very, very real, the energy right there round me. I hear and see the water splashing up. I can see dolphins swimming with us. I can feel my father behind me. I can hear him, I can smell his cigarette. I feel very safe and happy. — Marianne⁴

(Illustration 07) *Healing place full of light in the intimacy of the flower. — Pieterella*

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(Illustration 08, 10, 11, 12, 13) *David has just finished his treatment for bowel cancer. The treatment went well but David is full of worries and stress. He is afraid that he won't live to see old age and that he won't be able to take care of his family. David is full of shame and feels that he has failed. He wants to be back at work as quickly as possible so that he can follow his planned career path and can provide for his wife and children. But now he feels weak and a failure.*

David feels a heavy pressure in his chest. The image that comes up for him of this pressure is a cog, a cog which is standing still (Illustration 08).

As he makes contact with the cog he heaves a deep sigh. There's an 'still-standing cog' in his chest but at first he doesn't understand what it has to tell him. It gives him a feeling of 'nothingness', something he experiences as extremely negative. But as David keeps his attention on the cog - on the feeling of it in his chest - he starts to discover that this 'standing still' also brings him rest. He begins to realize that the 'still-standing cog' gives him time to himself, or in other words the cog is asking him to 'stand still'; to let go of his worries and just to breathe a bit more often - in short, to take time for himself and his family and to let his career take care of itself. It is time for reflection and 'taking stock', for restoring rest and balance after this disturbing period of illness and treatment.

When David does the audio exercise "Imagery of the good place", he learns to relax. To his astonishment this comes very easily to him. During the exercise a spontaneous image comes up of himself lying in a boat on a gently flowing river. The way the river carries the boat slowly onward is a wonderful feeling (illustration 09). At the end of the exercise he tells that in 'ordinary reality' he has never been on a river in a boat before. David finds this most extraordinary and also very good.

Following this David carries on practicing and receives a number of images which are very helpful to him: floating on water, playing in a ball pool (illustration 10), stretched out on his back on an island (illustration 11), enjoying lying on a bed of leaves which turns into 'sitting on a rubber cloud' (illustration 12) and floating free as a bird (illustration 13).

From all these images David chooses 'sitting on a cloud' as his core image. He frames this sketch and hangs it in a prominent place in his house. He also uses the image 'lying in the boat on the river' regularly. He lets it go through his chest, he says and it brings him rest.

Six months later David reports that he is doing well. He is working at full capacity again, but he allows himself regular rest periods and no longer works overtime. The exercises have worked so well for him that he is now coaching colleagues in them.

EXAMPLE The 'The source' exercise

(Illustration 14) *In my imagination I went through the lovely landscape to the source of the river. It is in the mountains where the sun is shining, the colour of the flowers breaks up the green of the meadows and the sound of the flowing water in the stream is like eternal music to my ears. This beautiful landscape breathes out peace and strength, both at the same time. I start to climb upstream toward the source, it is a stiff climb but well worth the effort. I arrive at the glacier where the river rises. The water is clear and cold. So refreshing after that sweaty climb. The glacier has all the colours of the rainbow where the sun shines on it. The water is purifying, it cleanses me on the outside and the inside. — Tine*

EXAMPLE The 'Inner Light' exercise

(Illustration 15) *In this exercise I went to my inner light. Through the landscape, through the doorway to the light. The light is all-embracing, warm, soft and calming. It's my inner light. And it comes from my guardian angel. He watches over me and is there for me when I need him. It's my deceased husband who is looking out for me. It is the love which is eternal. — Tine*

EXAMPLE 1 'Imagery as a support when receiving treatment'

(Illustration 16) *I'm sitting comfortably on my bed whilst my 'friend Chemo' does his work. I've asked him to do as little harm as possible to my good cells. — Hester*

EXAMPLE 2 'Imagery as a support when receiving treatment'

I made my own version of the exercise 'support when receiving treatment', with a big Bear as totem animal who lay under me and protected me during the radiotherapy. I could let myself completely 'sink' into his large body and this helped me relax. There was also a circle of Sisters around me, each holding a candle in her hand, supporting me. I invited the radiation as healing light. — Rosa

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4. Drawing and writing

After the exercises on the CDs or the exercises with the symbol cards, it is recommended that you write and draw. In the Imagery Toolkit there is a notebook, a sketchbook, watercolour pencils and a brush for this purpose.

Why write? Why draw?

Creative expression can help you enormously. Active expression of your feelings and thoughts makes you stronger; it expands the emotional ground upon which you stand. In addition to writing and drawing, this can also be photography, modeling, sculpting, cutting and pasting, collage making, poetry, singing, dancing, playing, drama and gardening.

Expression helps you to feel more powerful and more balanced, to give your emotions a place, without having to explain anything, and so be able to cope with them better.

Moreover, it helps you gain energy and inspiration and to generate new ideas. In short, expression helps to allow your energy and vitality to flow. Do it!

Drawing materials

The Imagery Toolbox includes watercolour pencils, a brush, a sketchbook, a notebook and a pencil sharpener. Simple drawings can be made with these drawing materials. Drawings increase your contact with your inner images and strengthen the healing effect.

The purpose of this is to make sketches or drawings of your images, and preferably to do so as freely as possible. Don't try to make nice drawings or 'real art'. This is definitely not the intention.

Drawing, and any creative expression, gives you a non-verbal voice. It provides a medium for what perhaps cannot be put into words and is (still) incomprehensible, a medium for the irrational, thereby doing justice to what lives within you. Poetic and associative language can also work in this way. Later you can look at your drawing again and possibly continue working on it. Of course, you can also purchase drawing or painting materials yourself. And working on a much larger piece of paper is also highly recommended. Have fun!

Writing in the notebook

Writing down what you experienced during the exercises helps: it gives you space and strengthens you. When you write something after each exercise, it helps you step by step to see the road you are following. Reading back what you have written occasionally will give you insight and an overview and it helps you to make choices which are right for you.

On a journey of discovery

The combination of imagination and words forms a rich source of inspiration and insight from which you can draw again and again. When you write in your notebook, it's not a matter of writing 'beautifully', but about finding the words for what you are experiencing. The inner world is so big and special that you can never accurately set it down on paper. Everything you draw and write is an impression of what you are experiencing. It is by definition not complete or perfect, but a snapshot. When you take this approach to writing, it gives you room really to explore your inner world of images.

Writing exercises

The writing exercises which you are offered here have a clear structure and composition. You can follow them easily, step by step. The structure of the exercise ensures that you give room to your feelings and thoughts in a playful way. It offers you a beginning and a conclusion. In a few minutes time you can explore a piece of your story without running the risk of being swamped by feelings or thoughts.

Some tips

1. See the writing as a means of increasing your awareness of your inner images and not as an end in itself.
2. Write short texts; a few lines or a few minutes of writing will be quite sufficient.
3. Spelling and grammar are not important, it is your notebook and anything can be written in it.
4. Note the date, even if you only write a few words.
5. For now, keep all your texts, because they allow you to see the way along which you have come.
6. Make sure you have plenty of privacy, so that you feel free to write what you want without others reading what you have written uninvited.
7. Write without thinking about it first, instead discover what you wanted to say as you write.
8. Do not make corrections whilst writing, as this interrupts the flow of inspiration.

Writing and reading

When you experience a lot and take in different impressions, you also have to get a lot out in order to regain and maintain your inner balance. Balance and space are required to process and integrate new information, so that in the future you can make choices which suit you and which support your resilience and development.

By reading your text aloud, just as it is written on paper, without reading additions or corrections, you put it outside yourself, as it were. By hearing

and getting the taste of the words, you can make contact, also on a feeling level, with what you have just written so quickly and spontaneously, without thinking about it beforehand. Only by doing it yourself can you discover its value.

Write assignments in response to an inner image

The following are self-contained exercises. They can be repeated often or be done in succession.

Writing exercise 1

1. Look at the drawing and give it a spontaneous title.
2. Make a note of the title on the drawing and make a note of the date.
3. Write the letters of the title under each other on the left side of the page so all the letters are on a new line.
4. For each letter give a short and succinct answer to the question: What have I experienced (seen, heard, felt) during the imagination exercise? The first letter of each answer is already recorded. Write quickly without thinking.
5. Read the text aloud to yourself ...
6. What stands out the most for you now?
7. Write no more than 2 lines about this.

EXAMPLE Title = TRUST

Truthfulness is what comes to mind

Reaching further down

Unveiling darker sides

Sources of strength

Teaching myself to see it

Writing exercise 2

1. Look at the drawing and create a list of keywords for everything you see.
2. Read the list out loud and select one item from it.
3. Now write something very detailed about this one item, taking 5 or 10 minutes.
4. Read this text aloud and underline a short fragment or phrase that speaks to you in a special way ...
5. What do you really want to say with this?
6. Give a spontaneous answer to this question in 3 lines.

Writing exercise 3

Choose one of the phrases below and write it in your notebook. Without really thinking about it finish the sentence with the first thing that comes to mind. Determine before you begin how many lines of text you're writing, for example 3, 5 or 10 lines of text.

1. When I look at this drawing ...
2. I am surprised to ...
3. The image has especially ...
4. I'd like to know more about ...
5. Listening to the object/person in my image/drawing ...

This chapter has been realized in collaboration with Christine de Vries.

More information about creative diary writing can be found at www.shodo.nl and in the book "Dagboek als spiegel – een handbook vol inspiratie" (Diary as Mirror - A Manual Full of Inspiration) by Christine de Vries.



Relaxing in the Sun

5. Sculpting

Your story, your inspiration, your resilience, make it with your hands.

In the Imagery Toolkit you will find a package of plastiline clay. This is sculpting material that always remains pliable. Through kneading it in your warm hands the plastiline becomes softer. While kneading you can get used to the material and the way it feels in your hands.

Maybe you can just knead it and that gives you a good feeling. You may spontaneously come up with ideas about what to do with the clay. If you concentrate on your theme while kneading the plastiline, your hands may already make shapes. Let this happen and be surprised by what emerges. Do you already have an image or a feeling that you want to shape? Use that as a starting point and let yourself be surprised by what is emerging as you work with the clay.

Below are some exercises that can inspire you and help you improve your sense of well-being.

You can complete the assignments with one of the writing exercises in the manual.

You can also use what you have made to create a story-in-images or create a "good place" (or "altar").

Basic Exercise

Take a piece of clay that is not too big and not too small for your hands. Knead the clay awhile so you can get used to the material. It will slowly feel warmer.

Warming up

- Make a ball with the clay
- Hit or press the ball into a pancake
- Roll the flattened piece up
- Roll a thin snake with the clay by rubbing it between your hands
- Make a ball again.

Exercise 1 | The good place

This is a place where you feel at ease and that is good for you, a place that is all yours and where you do not need to consider anyone else. You can go there to recover and relax. A place to find inner peace and to recharge yourself.

You can begin immediately working with the clay and just let inspiration come from your hands. You can also begin working from an idea or image you've already had.

As a preparation for working with the clay, you can do the first audio exercise on CD 1 (Imagery of the good place) and let that inspire you to work with the clay.

Start by kneading the clay and then make a ball.

Let your hands work with the clay and make the place. It does not have to be beautiful. You can add other materials if you want to, such as toothpicks, pebbles, wire, fabric etc.

If the place is ready, take yourself there as it were, and identify with it. Feel if it is good for you. Make some changes if you feel like it. Take the time to be completely in your experience. Let it inspire you. You are the creator of it and with it you have given yourself a great gift. And you can benefit from it more and more by regularly giving it your attention.

Give the piece a suitable place in your home. You can always return to this place in your imagination and experience the feeling and quality of it.

Exercise 2 | Power animal or helpful being

Begin by kneading the clay and creating a ball with it.

Create a non-existent animal or being with the clay: an animal or being that can support you or that you want to create. In the imagination anything is possible!

Once you have created it, give it a good place in your home or wherever you are. Then you can do the following writing exercise.

1. Does the animal or being have a name or would you like to give it one?
2. How can the animal or being help you?
3. In which situations would you like it to help or support you?

You can make many helpful animals or beings and let them support you.

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The golden ball stands for everything which is dear to me. — Jerry

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Two more examples of supportive figures.



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Exercise 3 | Place for good things (also known as 'the altar')

Begin, for example, with a box, a cloth, and a place in your home as a basis. You can use anything that feels appropriate.

If you are going to work with clay you can start by kneading. In the meantime, let your thoughts go to the place for good things (altar) and the object you want to make.

You can build something from the clay that you can put objects on or in. Create items or symbols that are important to you in this phase of your life. Objects that give you strength and are good for you. Pay attention to the place you give each object.

If you like, fill it up regularly with new things. This will keep you in touch with it.

EXAMPLES The good place

(Afb. 22, 23, 24, 25)



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Exercise 4 | Supportive family, friends, ancestors or important persons

Which person or persons can assist you in difficult times, support and further help or inspire you? It can be especially helpful to represent and give form to this person or these people. This is a way of giving their quality and energy a tangible place and thereby gaining inspiration.

Model one (or more) person(s), for example a family member, friend, ancestor (real or symbolic), or an inspiring historical figure or famous person, who can assist and support you in difficult times.

Look for photos or other reminders of that person (those people).

Give them a place, for example in 'the place for good things' ('the altar').



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Together getting the job done.



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Exercise 5 | How you are feeling about your life now

Create three images. One that represents how you felt about your life a year ago or earlier. Then one that symbolizes how it is for you now. In the third image, you express your expectations for the future and your desires. This exercise helps you understand how you are currently doing in your life. Your expectations about your future determine to a large extent how you are feeling about your life now. What do you need at this moment? It can be very helpful to share your image series with a trusted person.

VOORBEELDEN

(Illustration 27) *My disease and I*

(Illustration 28) *I and my disease*

(Illustration 29) *Support*



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Exercise 6 | Caring for your affected body

This exercise is for when you have received treatment and are still affected by it.

Do the warm-up with the plastiline. Then create an image that gives you and your body comfort and care.

During the sculpting, you will be looking naturally for what you need for yourself.

In this way you take care of yourself and give your body, which has been damaged or affected, what it needs. (Illustration 30)



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This section was created in cooperation with art therapist Marian Kramers.

6. Singing and music

Music is possibly the most direct path to the inner world. Good music touches us, offers comfort and healing. It moves and heals us from within. Advice: Listen frequently to music that touches you and makes you feel good. This is what it was made for.

Do you have an instrument? Play it!

The voice is the instrument that may touch us most deeply and can move us the most. When you sing you become a walking resonance chamber, your feelings, desires and energy are mobilized. Singing together can enhance this effect enormously.

The foundation Kanker in Beeld (Cancer in Images) organizes the 'Singing for your Life' choirs. This is a large network of choirs that has spread throughout the Netherlands. Anyone can take part; singing for pleasure is the only priority.

Besides the fact that singing and music have a curative effect, the choirs offer extraordinary solidarity, support and comfort. In 2010, a similar choir project was launched in Wales, with similar success. Researchers from the School of Healthcare Studies at Cardiff University⁵ have been studying the effects of singing on the quality of life of the participants in the choirs. In the pilot study there were notable improvements found in vitality, social functioning, state of mind and pain reduction. Indications of reduction in anxiety and depression were also found. A second, larger research study in Wales demonstrated that, in addition to having positive effects on emotional well-being, singing also has positive effects on components of the immune system.⁶

In the Imagery Toolbox there is a DVD of the film *Singing for your life*, which was specially made for the Imagery Toolbox with the cooperation of five choirs from the network of Singing for your Life. Singing with each other, for each other! Let yourself be inspired by listening, watching, and perhaps even by singing yourself. At www.kankerinbeeld.nl you can find the list of addresses of the choirs.

The choir members say the following: "For all of us, cancer plays a major role. Sometimes we talk about it, often we don't. But it is very tangible when we sing. This gives all the songs a greater emotional charge."

"Anyone can take part, even if you have no singing experience. Each voice and input is fine and good enough. We are a friendly choir who support each other through thick and thin."

"Cancer does not necessarily mean the end of the song; it can also be the start of a song or even a whole repertoire."

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Foto's Billie-Jo Krul

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7. Photography, film and more

Modern media offer an incredible variety of interesting possibilities for working with images. For example, photography with digital cameras and smartphones has become accessible to everyone. Video, vlogging and film are very popular among young people. Making a photo series, creating a vlog or making a movie is a great form for anchoring inner images and feelings and making them more concrete.

Take pictures of what appeals to you and in one way or another shows you something that you can use. Print such a photo and hang it prominently on view in your house.

Another tip: place the photo on the home screen of your smartphone or tablet.

EXAMPLE Tree of new life.

(Illustration 34) *I saw this tree countless times on my bike rides to the hospital. Before the operation the branch in front of the right breast was a diseased part that couldn't come with me. I had to let it go, leave it behind. In the spring, five months after the operation, there were leaves coming out of the branch, leaves of new life. — Barbara Verhoef⁷*

All kinds of materials invite you to develop your story: for example, a collage or a photo-story about the difficulties that you experience and the possibilities you see or want. Anna made a diorama.

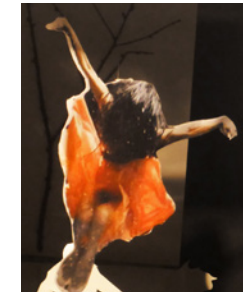
EXAMPLE Diorama of Anna

- (IIIu. 35) *I made the diorama when I had undergone a chemotherapy treatment and I was about to undergo the very intensive follow-up treatment – Anne*
- (IIIu. 36) *The hospital: you are sick, we help you. Come inside.*
- (IIIu. 37) *This is where you need to be for your next appointment.*
- (IIIu. 38) *I have to take the plunge (chemotherapy, operation, radiation etc.). A leap in the dark.*
- (IIIu. 39) *We run together through the corridors of the hospital. We want to leave, leave, leave*
- (IIIu. 40) *To the light, outside. To the tree that will be allowed to flourish again.*
- (IIIu. 41) *This is the tree six months later. Some colour and green. The outside looks normal, on the inside there's a wound. But the tree is firmly rooted.*
- (IIIu. 42) *A year later. The tree is smaller. There are some dead branches sticking out. The tree is more cautious with the energy that it has. There is more liveliness and colour.*

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8. Working with images as a family

Imagination and creativity with children is like playing a home-match. Using their imagination comes naturally to children. Most children still have open contact with the world of imagination and are not yet hampered by the stress and responsibilities of adult life and the limitations education, school, society and culture impose in the course of a life-time.

Giving space to the imagination is a wonderful way of helping families who are confronting cancer to cope and bear emotionally all the drastic changes they face. The creative expression of the images in particular enables the children (and the parents) to allow their emotions and provides a physical place that strengthens resilience, solidarity and bonds. They are actively involved, with and for each other. And what cannot always be said or put into words well, can find it's place in the images. This does so much more than words. Each image, each expression opens the inner world of feeling and, if it is framed with care, it can provide a lot of strength and a sense of fulfilment.

Painting: free play of the imagination

The parents of Stijn and his sister Iris, respectively six and eleven years old, wanted the children to be burdened as little as possible by the vicissitudes of the disease. But as the prospects of a cure for mother Melanie are all but disappearing, they want to involve the children more.

It appears that the children had already been busy with it for quite a while. Stijn had already drawn many happiness bombs and happiness cannons without talking about it, but the happiness cannons are firing at full power whenever there is bad news from the hospital. And Iris did it in her own way; she made little notes and happiness tickets with drawings and photographs of beautiful moments that we have experienced together. (Illustration 43)

Together with the children, mother Melanie and father Joris began painting. Just like that, without a plan. It led to unprecedented creativity and pleasure. In a short time there is a large painting bursting with symbolism. (Illustration 44)

At the top Stijn flies in his plane shooting happiness bombs at the angry cloud. To the right of this is a happy-colours bomb. At the bottom right is the happiness tree and in the middle Iris paints floating, magical filters which will rid mother of the cancer cells. On the left is the happiness sun and below this is the happiness fountain.

The painting has given them an incredible amount of pleasure. It is hung in the middle of the house, and the children are happy and proud.

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Weeks later, when their mother has died, the painting is put on the front of the funeral card. At the farewell service at the church, the painting is placed in the centre of the dais.

Painting the coffin

(Illustrations 45, 46) *The coffin was painted together with the children. Through all the grief the painting provided a kind of positive work feeling. As if you were fixing up the room. At times there were moments of great emotion, but that is just allowed to be there. The lines of dots were also placed on the coffin which we later drew in paintings. They depict the contact between us and the place where Melanie is now. I have drawn Melanie in a small boat on the way to the other side. The sun is shining; she waves and is happy because she has left her broken body behind. — Joris (vader)*

The second painting: The white balloons

(Illustrations 47, 48, 49) *At the funeral white balloons were released, for contact with heaven, for contact with Mum. The white balloons are also on the top left of the painting with the three family members a few weeks after the funeral. The little dots are happy dust, the connection with mother and with each other. They connect but also surround. The earth is shown beside that surrounded by happiness. These little dots are also on the coffin. The stairs take us upwards, to mother. At the bottom in the middle is the happiness shop. It is a kind of fairground booth where you can get jars of happiness. (Illustration. 50).*

In the dramatic period after Melanie's death, the children turned out to be very good at expressing what was going on. The paintings that we made contained all kinds of magical elements to heal Melanie and later to reach Melanie at the new place where she had arrived. Countless images of happiness fountains, happiness cannons, happiness elves and roads leading to heaven were also depicted. At one point, I was allowed into the happiness shop to buy happiness dust. Just in a jar. Sprinkle it over your pillow and that's it. It needs to be kept a bit practical. The children used old jam jars for it. — Joris

De derde schildering

(Illustration 52) *On the lower right the four of us are on a terrace in a small village in Italy by the sea. We have really been there, first as a couple and later the four of us and, after this was painted, the three of us. It is a place of happiness and of great meaning for me. When I came back there with the children after Melanie's death, I thought I had to say goodbye to it. Under each cobblestone there was a memory, and everything made the tears flow. But on that vacation the children had so much fun snorkelling and*

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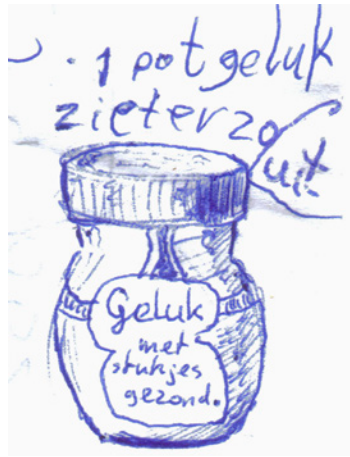


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felt so free in the sea, it made me realize that even there, or especially there, life does not stop, life goes on. The dotted lines are always a symbol of the connection we still feel with Melanie, represented here as the green heart.
— Joris

At school

Shortly after the death of mother Melanie, Stijn's class teacher wanted to talk in class about his mother's death. She asked Stijn to bring in a photo of his mother. The other children in the class were also invited to bring in a photo of loved ones they had lost. That could be a relative but also a pet. The one showed a photo of grandma, the other of the precious rabbit that had died suddenly. As each one told his or her story the rest listened with rapt attention. It was a very beautiful, heartwarming morning in the classroom.

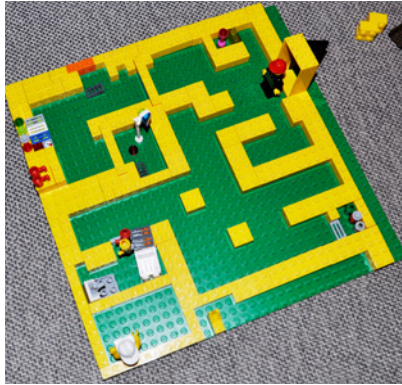
Het lego ritueel

(Illustrations. 52, 53, 54, 55) Six months after the death of Melanie, we often play the Lego ritual, tells father Joris. The children make a maze and Joris stands by the door.

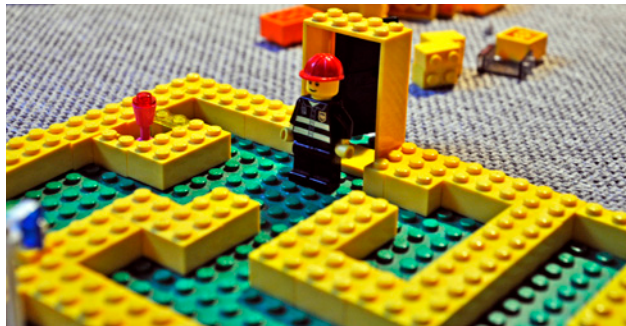
We've made a kind of 3D Pacman game, in which I have to go through a maze. I'm the fireman, I've been told, who must save the firewoman. That's Mum! I already suspected as much. There are no rules to the game, the only thing that I know is that Mum is somewhere in the maze. I let the children lead me through this special world. I have to open all kinds of gates, sometimes even with a grenade, and there are also stairs, alarm bells and air conditioners. As help. Meanwhile, in the 'normal world', I'm cooking; the housework must go on after all. I have to go to the maze to save mum from her plight. I call, after quickly stirring the pans: "Help children, what should I do?" I then get a walkie-talkie that gives me instructions from the children. "Take a hand grenade from your backpack and blow the door up," Stijn calls. Eventually I have rescued mum and the four of us have fish. The Lego figures are going to have fish! It's a ritual that the children often want to play. — Joris

Imagination with children knows no boundaries

An essential characteristic of the imagination is that in principle anything is possible; it knows no borders. Here are some examples of this. One morning Iris has a phone call with Melanie in heaven with my hand as a phone; tells Joris. It was a very natural conversation. 'Will you watch when we go to Ameland during the autumn holiday?' Iris says that sort of thing. When Stijn woke up, he also made a short call. Also very natural. 'Cool, man!' he said into the phone. This appeared to refer to a new happiness beam. It seemed that Melanie was able to operate this beam.



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How do you get to heaven and back?

(Illustration 56) Sometimes, late in the evening, Stijn sees the red button. He's lying in bed and suddenly it's there. The button brings you to a very special place...

After you've pressed it, the wall gradually becomes transparent and the escalator appears. That brings you to the rocket. This rocket brings you to the planet with the little house on it. Then you go into the little house and look behind the kitchen for the cellar. Open the door.

Can you see the stairs? This is not just a flight of steps to the cellar; there is a very deep hole. Don't be afraid, just jump in. You fall and fall, but don't be afraid. You land softly in 'the river where you don't get wet'. You're now in heaven. Good thing you remembered to bring the key. If you have it with you, you can always come back- if you can find the post by the river with the keyhole.

The tears factory

Stijn came up with many devices. One of these is the tears factory. Tears are the raw material of the factory and enter on the left-hand side. Through a variety of tubes, pressure tanks and pipes, they are processed. On the right-hand side a transmitter radiates the end product out of the factory: happiness.

Stijn says that the happiness planet begins at the tip of the Milky Way. It has been previously established that the happiness antenna reaches up to the corner of the universe. It's good that Melanie has been there once because that was the start of all happiness... did you know that, Dad?

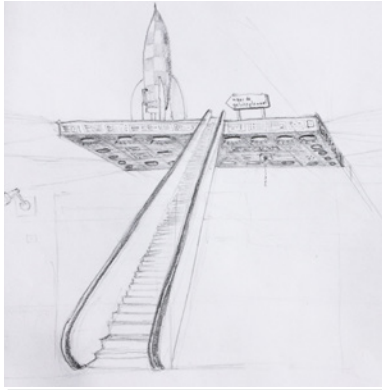
Iris made a little magazine using software that helps you fold one A4-sheet into a mini-booklet. It contains memories, photos and interviews with friends of Melanie's. (Afb. 57).

Memorial meeting with the children

(Illustration 58) Six months after Melanie's death, Joris, Iris and Stijn organize a commemorative meeting with Melanie's friends. The paintings are hanging on the wall and Iris and Stijn give explanations and commentary. The atmosphere of the get together is very lovely and gentle. But we could also laugh out loud at Melanie's quirks and the beautiful things that we've experienced together.

The apple tree

(Illustration 59) *In 2011 we planted an apple tree in the garden at some good friends of Melanie's. Mele means apple in Italian. Afterwards we hung happiness wishes written on little notes and read aloud from the book Onder de appelboom (Under the Apple Tree) by Rutger Kopland. We've made an annual ritual of this. We prefer to do it in the twilight, so the children can put lanterns around and while reading that one poem*



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every time again it is very still. With a little luck you can actually hear the geese flying over. In the meantime, the tree is generous with her apples in autumn.

Inspired by the children

‘Coming to terms’ means to give feelings a place, to establish a new relationship with life and to build a new relationship with the deceased person. Everyone can do that in his or her own way. In the examples in this chapter the children did that by means of their imagination. This brought them a lot more than made-up fantasies. These are true psycho-energetic creations with a great emotional value, which help to build a new relationship with the deceased and to help find his or her place in the inner world. It helps to maintain and restore emotional balance. Children can be an important source of inspiration, because they usually have a much better and more open contact with the imaginative domain.

Ik heb van de kinderen geleerd de verbeelding serieus te nemen. Het heeft me heel veel opgeleverd. Ik zou alle ouders willen aanraden de verbeelding en het spel van de kinderen serieus te nemen, niet alleen om de kinderen te helpen, maar ook om jezelf te helpen. Al die verbeeldingen en spel momenten zijn louterend voor me geweest. Geef je over, kinderen weten de weg. Maar ik heb ook gezien dat ieder het op zijn eigen manier doet. Zo heeft één van mijn vrienden alle emoties en herinneringen aan dierbare overledenen in een doosje en op slot gedaan en weggezet. Dat helpt haar om het te dragen, weten dat het doosje er is. Zo kan het ook.

— Joris

Reflection after seven years

Now, in the summer of 2017, it is almost seven years since Melanie died. It's had an enormous impact on my life and still does. The children are doing miraculously well. They are doing excellently at school and are high spirited. The contact between us three is still good and deeply grounded. Now and then memories of Melanie and the time when it was the four of us come up. It affects me the hardest. The children have less difficulty with it. They are going through the stormy developments that all school students go through, but are not losing their balance. Melanie is always with us. — Joris

This chapter was created in cooperation with Joris Baas.

9. Three-week course

There is no certain recipe for how to deal with illness or crisis. Finding your way and taking steps to increase your resilience is, after all, an entirely unique process. This 'three-week course' provides a guideline for the steps that you need to follow, which you can adjust to fit your own needs. In general, the exercises that attract you or feel good to you are the right thing to do. Above all, do it in your own way.

Successfully coping using the exercises in the Imagery Toolbox requires repetition and elaboration. The exercise also produces something new every time, because your process will continue and deepen. New elements will appear. The inner world is dynamic and the images will reveal this to you. You should always do the exercises in a relaxed state. For this reason, all the audio exercises begin with a relaxation section. If you notice that it feels forced or that there is an increase in tension, take a break to first relax again. As you exercise more, you will notice that you will become increasingly comfortable interacting with the world of the imagination.

Make the important images your own by giving them a place in your daily life during these three weeks. For example, put your sketches in a prominent place at home and also on your smartphone.

It can be very helpful if you share what you experience in the exercises with a good friend or partner who can listen well without making judgements.

It's best to do the exercises in the morning.
In summary, there are two separate steps:

First step

Finding a new place of rest and support, where you can anchor yourself and refuel with energy drawn from your inner resources. In particular, the 'good place' exercise is suitable for this. But the 'Healing Imagery', 'The source' and 'Inner light' are also good.

Second step

Promoting what you need or what can help with the aid of the specific exercises.

Week 1

1. 'Imagery of the good place' audio exercise
Do this once every day.
Write down what you experience in the notebook. Make a sketch of your images in the sketchbook. It may also be that you have had certain feelings, which you can also depict (in abstract, with colour).
2. Do the exercise with the symbol cards on days 3, 5 and 7.
First choose a symbol card for 'how are you doing now'.
Then choose a symbol card for 'what you need or what you long for'.
Sometimes you may want to select several symbol cards, and that is fine.
Write down your thoughts, feelings and associations for each card.
Then concentrate on the symbol card for 'what you need or what you long for'. And wait to see how the image develops when you close your eyes.
Write down what you experience, the images, feelings, thoughts and associations. Create a sketch of this in the sketchbook.
This exercise is explained in chapter 2.
3. Do writing exercise 1 from chapter 4.
4. Read chapters 1 to 5.

Optional:

If you are undergoing treatment or are about to do so, do the exercise on CD 2: 'Imagery as support when receiving treatment'.
If you have pain, do the audio exercise 'Pain relief' on CD2.

Week 2

1. Continue with the 'Imagery of the good place' exercise. Do this once every day.
If you have done the 'good place' exercise for a week, you have probably become familiar with the images. Often there are one or two images that return regularly. Then you can do the 'good place' exercise without the CD if you prefer. If you enjoy doing it with the CD, then continue that.
Write down what you experience. Make a sketch of it in the sketchbook. And do once the 'good place' or 'place for good things' with the modelling clay, as described in chapter 5.
2. 'Healing imagery' audio exercise on CD1.
Do this exercise a couple times this week.
Write down what you experience. Make a sketch of this in the sketchbook.
3. This week do 'The source' audio exercise on CD1 once or twice.
Write down what you experience. Create a sketch in the sketchbook.

4. Do writing exercise 2 from chapter 4.
5. Choose a certain time every day to look a little longer at your sketches.
6. Read chapters 6 and 7.

Optional:

If you are undergoing treatment or are about to do so, do the exercise on CD 2: 'Imagery as support when receiving treatment'.

If you have pain, do the audio exercise 'Pain relief' on CD2.

Week 3

1. Do 'Imagery of the good place' exercise with or without the audio exercise (CD) once every day.
Try during the day to be in the 'good place' briefly. A short interlude of a few minutes is sufficient. This will help you to anchor this place of rest in your life.
2. Repeat the 'Healing imagery' audio exercise on CD1.
3. Do the 'Inner light' audio exercise on CD1.
Write about it and make a sketch.
4. Do the 'Loving care for the affected body' audio exercise on CD 2.
Write about it and make a sketch.
5. Create a power animal or helpful being with the modelling clay.
This is exercise 2 from chapter 5.
6. Choose a certain time every day to look a little longer at your sketches.
7. Do writing exercise 3 from chapter 4.
8. Create a picture story from your sketches, photos that you have made or clippings from magazines.

Optional:

If you are undergoing treatment or are about to do so, do the exercise on CD 2: 'Imagery as supporting when receiving treatment'.

If you have pain, do the audio exercise 'Pain relief' on CD2.

Would you like to know more about the background of working with the imagination? If so, go to chapter 11 The origin and practice of therapeutic imagery in the treatment of illness on page 48.

Tip: Consider doing two sessions with a certified Imagery Toolbox coach. In the Imagery Toolbox 3.0 there is a discount voucher for this. In the following chapter there is more information about coaching.

10. Guidance by an Imagery Toolbox coach

The exercises can be done on your own and also in a group. Especially when you are beginning, guidance by an expert Imagery Toolbox coach is recommended.

The coach is trained in imagery work and knows how the imagination works. He or she can help guide you through the exercises and give further directions. The names and addresses of certified coaches are listed in the Register of Imagery Toolbox Coaches, available at www.verbeeldingstoolkit.nl and at www.imaginatie.nl.

In the Imagery Toolbox there is a discount voucher for two sessions with a certified Imagery Toolbox coach. This voucher is valid for one year after purchase of the Imagery Toolbox.

Please note: if an exercise unexpectedly releases intense emotions, continue writing and drawing and share your experiences with a person whom you trust or a coach. If the emotions are extremely intense or unbearable, please contact a coach in all cases.

11. The origin and practice of therapeutic imagery in the treatment of illness

People who are confronted with cancer come to the realization that they are not as safe and invulnerable as they believed themselves to be when in full health. Their experience of control over their own lives, their autonomy, their self-confidence, their sense of meaning, all the vital major components of happiness and wellbeing, are often seriously undermined. The disease confronts many people unexpectedly with the finiteness of life and with all the feelings this brings with it. Imagination and creative expression provide a 'non-verbal voice' to do justice to what lives inside of us.

The inner world of our imagination forms the central arena within which we become who we are and explore our possibilities. Imagining is a core-function of the psyche. Every action, each new step in our development is generated by our image of it. Imagination and creativity are powerful means to restore or further to develop emotional and psychological balance and to enhance resilience.

'Have you put something in my tea?' asks Sylvia in astonishment. Sylvia, who was in a treatment process with chemotherapy for her breast cancer, has done 'The imagery of the good place' exercise (the first audio exercise of CD1). She has just returned from an imaginative journey to a wonderful garden and she is feeling euphoric. I hadn't put anything in her tea of course, I had simply helped her to open herself to her own inner world and then to enter into concentrated contact with what she discovered there.

Days later Sylvia is still feeling the physical effects of her experience, a wonderfully feeling of peace. That's how strong imagery can be; it can bring us into contact with a whole other dimension where unprecedented forces have their being, a dimension which exists beyond the bounds of time and space. It is, however, a dimension which has its own pitfalls, particularly if we do not have the necessary strength to cope with the immeasurable forces which dwell there.

A distinguishing feature of imagery is that it can take us into a deeper state of consciousness. As we become more involved in our inner imagery, we can enter a kind of natural trance-like state, in very much the way that when we are gripped by a film, a book or a piece of music we can completely enter into it and we lose all sense of time. Carl Jung said that as we make full contact with an image, it's as if it becomes pregnant. The image unfolds and reveals the energy contained within it, much as a window opens on our computer screen when we click on it.

Powerful psychological medium

Just how important imagery is for us is evident in the fact that we constantly use images to describe our experience: 'I was really down in the dumps', 'I was walking on air', 'My heart sang', 'We ran like the wind', 'This business stinks', 'They all want a piece of the cake', 'That was a sour look!', 'She spoke in honeyed tones' etc.

To reiterate: Creating images and imagining is a core-function of the psyche. Every action, each new step in our development is generated by our image of it. The inner world of our imagination forms the central arena within which we become who we are and explore our possibilities.

People speak, think and feel in images and act according to those images. Who we really are is reflected in our conscious and unconscious inner images. Our imagination is probably the most powerful psychological resource we possess. It is in this domain that we can be influenced the most, psychologically, physically and behaviourally. It's small wonder that demagogues, politicians and advertising campaigns make extensive use of imagery.

Three of the most important authors in the field of modern imagination therapy, Sheikh, Assagioli and Jung, called the imagination one of the most influential spontaneous functions of the psyche because it gives access to the creative domain, where we have the greatest freedom. It is the central arena where the personal identity is formed and where access can be obtained to surprising solutions.⁸

Neurologist Ramachandran says: image forming is one of the most characteristic qualities that human beings possess. It colours and forms the experience of ourselves and of the world.⁹

In the case of cancer and other chronic disease, imagery and artistic forms of work – drawing, painting, sculpture, writing, singing, music, poetry, theatre, movement and dance – can make an important contribution to an increase in coping capacity and resilience as well as to an improvement in quality of life, well-being and a sense of meaningfulness and a reduction in fear, fatigue, stress, pain and depression.¹⁰

The fifth dimension: the greater self

Time and space represent the familiar four dimensions for "ordinary" consciousness. The imagination opens us up to a fifth dimension, where time and space prove to be relative; it is a dimension where in principle anything can happen, in the imagination everything is possible. Here's where human beings can be completely free. It is the arena of the greater self, where the way in which we live our lives is determined. It is within this greater self that sources can be found to help meet challenges, such as the development of coping-power and resilience during illness.

The characteristics of the fifth dimension, the greater self, are:

- intense awareness;
- a trance-like state; as if you are dreaming (daydreams); visions;
- experience of timelessness, and also in the spatial context there seems to be no boundaries;
- images loaded with symbolic, psychic energy;
- experience of an energy field or subtle body;
- contact with revitalizing, restorative powers arises, but the same applies to contact with psychological aspects which have not yet been dealt with?

For student Fabian (22), who was affected by testicular cancer, getting acquainted with the imagery exercises was a big surprise.

It was an incredibly horrible period for me. My life stood still and at the same time I was confronted with great fears and uncertainty and abruptly faced with my own mortality. Initially I was sceptical about imagery work, but the exercise with a 'good, safe place' gave me the rest I needed and the courage to look at my fears.

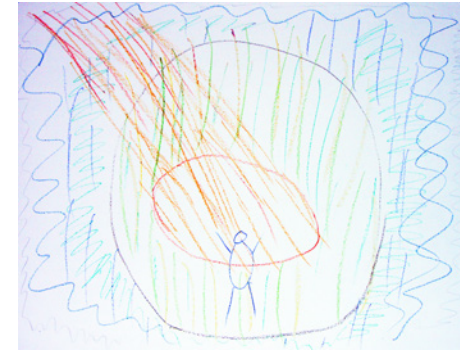
(Illustration 60) The good safe place. I am lying in the middle of a forest on the grass in a place without trees. The sun is shining and gives me warmth and energy from above. It recharges my body. For a moment, the worries disappear and I feel relaxed.

(Illustration 61) It's night and I'm trying to regain strength in a restful place. I'm lying on a lake in a forest and it's peaceful. I get a sign: I see an arrow pointing upwards. Then I float up and as soon as I'm floating above the forest and the lake I'm surrounded by fireflies. That gives me more peace and a feeling of safety. I feel good.

(Illustration 62) Once again, I imagine I'm floating in the sky at night and seeing and feeling the fireflies around me. Slowly, the fireflies become one with the surface of my body and suddenly I get a vision. My whole body-surface consists of bright golden light. I can see it very clearly. The light radiates a large amount of positive strength and life energy. I also feel a lot of strength and positive energy in my body, and this feeling lasts for some days after the end of this meditation.

(Illustration 63) I am looking for my fears and uncertainties and I see a cave. The cave is pitch-black and I observe only a small space at the entrance. I go inside and hear and see monsters and vile creatures all around. I know there's a path that goes into the cave, but I don't want to go in yet. Suddenly I get another vision: I see myself sitting in the cave in a Buddha-like position,

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meditating. This time not only is the surface of my body illuminated, but my entire body consists of bright golden light. Again, I feel the strength of the light and for a few days after my meditation I feel very strong and well, despite all my worries.

(Illustration 64) I'm able to go deeper into the cave where my fears and uncertainties are. I carry with me the light that represents my positive power and my life energy and it lights up the path in the cave. The path in the cave ends in a large space above a deep abyss. I am one with the light and it makes me strong.

(Illustration 65) I prepare myself to descend into the abyss. I'm still one with the light and carry the light with me. To be able to make the descent well I imagine I have wings and two bright golden wings appear on my back. I'm going down a huge, long tunnel that seems to go down endlessly. Finally, I'm in a gigantic space that seems never-endingly huge. Just below the end of the tunnel floats a platform that I go and sit on. Around me in the dark I once again hear all sorts of horrible sounds of creatures that frighten me. I'm on the platform, meditating and feeling the power of the light. Suddenly, I realize that the sounds around me are only in my own fantasy. I am in absolute nothingness and I am creating the fears around me. This awareness gives me a soothing feeling and gradually I get to know the place: the platform and the absolute nothingness around me. I also create the light and feel strong and safe.

The origin of imagination and creativity

As far as we can know, images, visions, daydreams, stories, myths and symbols have always played a vital social, political and therapeutic role, in every era and in all cultures. Reaching far back into prehistory and in every corner of the globe we find symbols in caves and graves, on bones and fragments of pottery, in sculpted objects and figures as well as in myths, stories and folktales. Symbolic arts and therapeutic rituals have existed for at least 100,000 years and most likely for much longer.¹¹

Fascinating forms of expression are to be found all over the world and in Europe some of the most extraordinary examples can be seen in the caves of Chauvet (35,000 years old) and Lascaux (17,000 years old).

For many years it was thought that these paintings were intended to depict scenes from daily life (hunting for example), but in recent times this theory has proved to be scientifically unviable as far as most prehistoric art is concerned. Most archaeologists are now convinced that the caves in Spain and France were 'sacred sites', where the art served spiritual and ritual purposes. But what were these? In the last twenty years the 'shamanic' theory has gained increasing support within the scientific community. According to this theory,



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in prehistoric times the paintings served as a medium for making contact with the 'other world', the inner world of the spirit. The animals represented there are not meant to show the 'ordinary' reality of space and time, but are intended as a representation of a fifth dimensional realm.

(Illustration 66) Painting in the cave of Chauvet

(Illustration 67) Mythical meeting of bird man and bison; Lascaux

Archaeologist David Lewis-Williams, specialist in the subjects of prehistoric art and the San, the oldest known group of people on Earth, holds that altered states of consciousness, such as the experiences of 'another world', visions, hallucinations and dreams, are universal to all cultures and the origin of all religions.¹² The ability to access other states of consciousness than the "ordinary" four-dimensional one is found in all parts of the world and in all known times; it belongs to and is part of the DNA of human beings. For the San, like all shamanic societies, trance consciousness is not a secondary activity; it is the essence of life itself.¹³

Modern humans also have access to that dimension, in what we can call "the greater self", the inner world which holds the potential for resilience in facing challenges. Joseph Beuys calls creativity a secret place that is available to all and can provide fulfilment of life when we actively and positively participate with the naturalness of a child. This fulfilment goes beyond the material with which we create.¹⁴

Mythology of indigenous peoples and modern physics

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss made some particularly interesting discoveries during his studies of indigenous peoples. He found such a striking similarity between their ancient myths and the language and concepts of modern physics, that he described the discoveries of quantum mechanics as our modern myth.

The reality of the material world is not 'fixed', as we in our ordinary consciousness perceive it, but is more like a field of possibilities which depends entirely on the way we measure (perceive) it. By means of ever-farther-reaching calculations, science has gained insights into micro and macro-realities which far exceed our 'normal' consciousness. The scientist can therefore only explain to the general public the unimaginable micro and macro-realities through mythical statements. Big bang theory, expanding and contracting universes, particles that can be at various positions simultaneously or communicate beyond time and space, these are all concepts of mythic proportions. Modern physics appears reluctantly but unmistakably to have entered into the domain of the mystical. String theory for instance already provides us with at least 11 dimensions of reality.

Lévi-Strauss speaks of the return of the mythic in modern physics. According to Lévi-Strauss, myths give us a valuable indication of the way in which the



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human psyche works and they represent transcendent knowledge about fundamental human issues such as life and death, social relationships, our sense of meaning and our place in the cosmos.¹⁵ Christian mythology in Western culture is also full of fifth dimensional imagery, starting with the miracle of the immaculate conception and ending with Christ's resurrection.

(Illustration 68) The veneration of Mary and child; the miracle of the immaculate conception. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, circa 1495, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

(Illustration 69) Resurrection of Jesus, fresco by Giovanni Canavesio, 1491, in the Notre-Dame des Fontaines Chapel, La Brigue. France

Imagination, medicine and neuropsychology

In the history of medicine, imagery is probably the oldest diagnostic and curative tool, forming the basis for the healing rites which have existed since time immemorial.¹⁶

Through their research, modern neuropsychologists have rediscovered the central role which the imagination plays in learning processes and behaviour. Since the discovery in 1996 of the phenomenon mirror neurons, a fast-growing number of findings serve to indicate just how significant a part imagination plays in the development of new behaviour and new skills.¹⁷ Mirror neurons are brain cells which are activated by what we perceive as well as by what we imagine. Imagining an action creates almost as much brain activity (90%) as the perceiving or performing of a similar action.¹⁸

When we imagine, new neural pathways (chemical connections and electrical impulses) are formed and the behaviour which corresponds with what we are imagining is stimulated.¹⁹

Each new development begins with the image. For example, muscles significantly retain their power through imagination exercises²⁰, even if they are encased in a cast, but as well as this badminton, playing the piano, golfing, compass reading, learning a language, understanding others and countless other activities are better learned and carried out by using the imagination. In rehabilitation for physical injury and in sport this is now widely applied by means of motor imagery.²¹

Placebo and the theatre of the medicine

Probably the biggest mystery in the whole of modern medicine is the fact that a pill which contains no active ingredient whatsoever (a placebo) can nevertheless produce a healing effect. The same applies to a 'pretend' injection or a 'pretend' operation.²² Semblance works wonders.²³

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A summary of the working of placebos:

- The beneficial effect of placebos is increased when the doctor (healer, shaman, etc.) is enthusiastic and convinced about the effect
- The more the doctor shows a sympathetic interest in the patient, the better it works
- The more promising and more optimistic he is, the greater the beneficial effect
- The more prestige the doctor has, the better the placebo works
- The placebo effect is greater when both physician and patient believe that treatment is effective
- The larger the fake pill is, the better it works
- If the fake pill has a well-known brand name, it works better
- The more expensive the placebo is, the better it works
- A red colour stimulates, cool colours are calming
- Common drugs become less effective once new drugs are available
- Two tablets will work better than one tablet
- Any treatment works better than no treatment
- Side effects of the administered placebo increase its effectiveness

With antidepressants, the side effect of the drugs appears to have a placebo effect. Kirsch (2002) examined all the research results from six known antidepressants, including Prozac, Paxil (Seroxat), Zoloft and Effexor. The medicaments were approved by the American Food and Drug Administration on the basis of these 47 controlled studies. Indeed, the drugs seemed to have a positive effect. Kirsch, however, found that 75% of this effect was also found in the placebo group. The difference between both groups was considered to be of little value in clinical terms. In addition, if a placebo agent was given that only had side effects, these placebos were as effective as the recognized antidepressants.²⁴

Side effects may also have a positive placebo effect in the case of chemotherapy and other cancer treatments. However, when investigating the effectiveness of chemotherapy the placebo effect is rarely taken into account. The main reason for this is that most chemotherapy has such serious side effects that double blind research, where the patient is unaware of whether he is receiving active chemotherapy or a placebo, is both practically and ethically difficult to execute.²⁵

The inner Doctor

The findings regarding placebos suggest that merely the suggestion of efficacy, the credible image of this efficacy, can trigger a psychic driving force that stimulates the realisation of the physical state associated with it. Apparently people have the ability to evoke in themselves a kind of 'inner doctor' or 'internal pharmacy': a healing potential that works on expectations

and imagination.

In the examination of the functioning of placebos, even the people who are told that they are taking a placebo had fewer complaints. They were told that the placebo tablets were extensively tested and that they can significantly increase their self-reinforcing capacity.²⁶

In the 'theatre of medicine' faith and belief are powerful sources of self-medication with real physical effects. In research into pain treatment by placebos, it has been shown that opioids are actually created in the body, the relief of pain is not only fantasy. When a healing effect of the placebo is expected, signals are sent to the part of the brain which creates opioids and then these opioids are spread via the spine.²⁷

As soon as we come to a doctor or a hospital our minds and our body respond to all kinds of signals of which we are scarcely aware. That effect appears to be subliminal, which is to say that we are not conscious of it.

The information that we receive from others also has a strong influence. Some researchers even believe that what we see and hear from others regarding a condition or a complaint is the most important factor in 'the theatre'. This influence, positive as well as negative, of those around us, through group pressure and prevailing views, is large. Prayer healings and faith in places of pilgrimage may therefore not be altogether nonsensical. But that belief must be unconditional. So then Karl Marx may still be right; religion is truly the opiate of the people.²⁸

The entire context of treatment, all the suggestions regarding the treatment, is important for curing or alleviating complaints. Of course, this calls for the creation of a 'healing environment' an environment that promotes well-being and healing. By a 'healing environment' hospitals usually mean surroundings which are pleasant architecturally and in which the elements of nature, daylight, fresh air and silence play a prominent role. But it is clear that the function of placebos shows that personal attention, sympathy and optimism may contribute at least as much, or even more, to recovery and healing and thus should be an integral and prominent component of medical practice.²⁹

Similarities and differences between placebos and imagery

Imagination and placebos operate in the same territory. Both utilize the power of the imagination. It is the wonderful ability to create new neural and behavioural patterns with the help of suggestion and imagery. The image is the beginning of each development. Do you want people to build boats? Make them long for the sea.

There is a sense then in which imagery therapy can also be called placebo therapy. There is however also a significant difference.

The placebo works *unconsciously*, because the person (usually) does not know that it is a placebo. By means of the placebo the healing power is activated in the person's psyche and therefore in his brain.

In imagery therapy we make *conscious* use of the imaging power. In this work, a single act of imagining something one wants to achieve is rarely enough. One must become deeply familiar with the image. The image must be given sufficient roots (including solid neural patterns) to enable it to become a natural part of the person. There are a wide variety of imagery techniques for achieving this goal.³⁰

It is important to address the pitfall of the superficial or forced use of imagery (visualization etc.): if you want to imagine something positive, but you do not really make this something of your own, it can have negative effects. You may briefly have a positive image which evokes positive emotions, but then you may be content with this short-lived emotional experience and neglect to take further action to make the new experience your own and to give it more tangible substance in your daily life.³¹

Particularly in the case of serious illness a dangerous pitfall is to pursue imposed, prescribed images, without sufficiently taking into account the state of the person's 'fertile ground'. Are the images 'owned' by the person or are they forced? If they are forced, the person can get the idea that he is not 'good enough' doing the imagery, because his own images may be different or because a feeling of tension arises. This may also express itself in anxiety or guilt. Qualitative attention for relaxation and for the acceptance of the spontaneous images is the remedy for this.

Spontaneous images are by definition the person's own, they are unique to him and have the 'roots' that prescribed images lack. Those roots can of course be developed but this must always be done in close association with the person, taking his or capacities into account.³²

The three stages of imagery

To enter consciously into the world of the fifth dimension - the greater self - competence and strength are necessary. The terminology for this is I-strength or I-skill. Am I capable of entering into the wonderful inner world and yet maintaining my autonomy, or will the forces in that immense terrain overpower me?

In the Imagery Toolbox there are two basic exercises that can specifically increase I-strength. In the audio exercise 'Imagery of the good place' you learn how to find or create a safe place in the inner world. This serves as an anchorage where you can recharge yourself and where you can find peace in difficult times.

The symbol cards are also an excellent medium for increasing I-strength. By choosing a symbol card or part of one for emotional balance and power and focussing on it, you are ready to begin familiarizing yourself with what is on the card. By repetition and by giving it form in your own way, in a sketch or with clay or other material, you enhance that process.

The process of gaining expertise with imagery work has three stages.

The first stage

The process of imagery begins with the discovery that inner images have great impact. Our unconscious self-images as well as our perception of the world constantly influence our feelings, thoughts and behaviour. Becoming aware of the images which influence us can be a big and often confronting revelation and this experience forms the first step in the process.

At first the images may be observed like scenes in a theatre and one can leave it at that, Carl Jung wrote. But if the observer understands that his own drama is being performed on this inner stage, he cannot remain indifferent, and he will notice that he is being addressed by the unconscious, that the images have a purposeful relationship to his conscious situation. By engaging with our images we get to know aspects of our nature which we would otherwise never have admitted into our conscious awareness.³³

The second stage

In the next stage we discover that we can exert influence upon our images and that within this inner world of images we can take action, make adjustments and even effect transformation. This is the area in which most therapy and coaching work is done, where we learn to navigate in the enormous arena of conscious and unconscious self-images, drives and potential talents and where true autonomy can be developed. Imagery work has many techniques to offer for this.^{34 35}

The third stage

It is a well-kept secret that we are quite possibly the creators of our own inner world and thereby of our own feelings, our own behaviour and our own lives. It is an ancient secret which in the present day is being embraced by some neuropsychologists. For instance, Ramachandran proposed that we are constantly hallucinating when we look at the world.³⁶

In the third stage we come to the realization that 'our inner world' of feelings, convictions, complexes and self-images, in fact determines our experience of the world 'out there'. In becoming conscious of this, we can become the capable owner of all aspects of our psyche and all the energies, emotions, tendencies and convictions which we find within us. We learn to cope with them and we discover the creative capacity by which life in all its many facets is caused to unfold.

In the case of illness or crisis you can become aware that there are opportunities within yourself for enhancing your resilience and for tapping into these inner resources to help you to cope and to increase your sense of wellbeing.³⁷

(Afb. 70) On the 'map of the psyche,' the smaller self' includes our thoughts and feelings, the experience of our body, the ideas about ourselves and about how the world is. The 'greater self' includes everything else that is present in us, such as unconscious complexes, trauma, desires, opportunities and talents.

(Afb. 71, 72) Whenever we make contact with an image or symbol or do that as part of a true ritual, we begin to make contact with the greater self. The more intense our contact is, the more 'pregnant' and animated the image will be. If we make contact with the image, the symbol or the ritual out of I-strength, then the intrinsic quality of it reveals itself to us. It will give us power and relief and help to strengthen us.

Fabian in the example on page 50-53 was able to do this to overcome his fears. It helped him to restore his psychological balance and live in a richer and more self-confident way.

Confrontation with Life

When confronted with life-threatening illness, bewilderment, panic, sadness, powerlessness, fear and anger are normal reactions. And as well as this, the body is affected; there are scars and often chronic fatigue or other permanent physical effects of the disease and its treatments. There are all kinds of consequences for family life, relationships, working life and expectations for the future.

Dinie Kanters-Schreuders made this statue, titled Despair-Grief-Cancer-II, which meant a very great deal to her. It gave her strength and a sense of fulfilment (Illustration. 73).³⁸

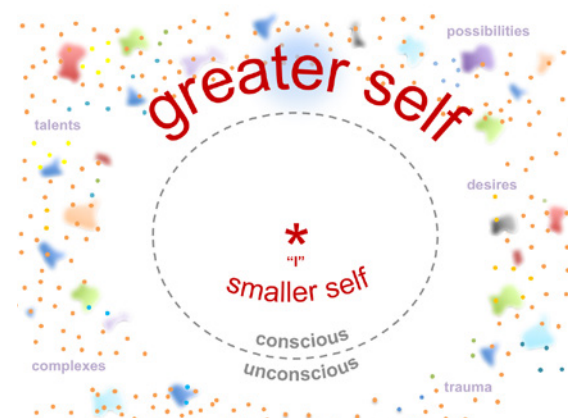
Looking into a deep well

Having a life-threatening illness is like balancing between hope and fear. According to Jonker-Pool (2001), it helps us to realize that we cannot keep everything under control. On the other hand, we must realize that negative experiences can also have positive aspects hidden within them. This is a tough process and things will never be the same again. A new awareness is needed about who you are and what your goals and values are in life. Or, as one patient put it: "For me, having cancer was like looking into a deep well, which ultimately led me to adopt new priorities."³⁹

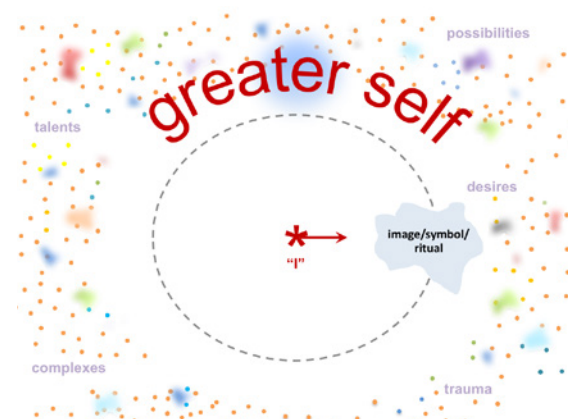
Clara Tameling makes a drawing of her resilience:

I have this extraordinary feeling: For the first time in my life I am going on a journey all by myself and I don't know where the path will lead me. This path has a fork in it, towards life or towards death. I am prepared to go along this path and I feel the support and confidence to do it. (Illustration 74).⁴⁰

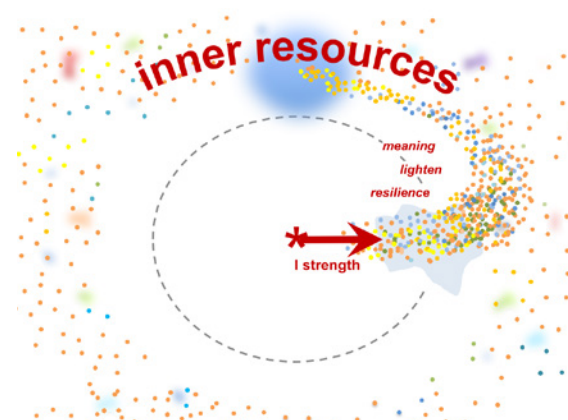
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Cis Bouten was torn with doubt:
should I fight the disease or should I accept it? In the contact with the image she discovered 'old wounds' as well as a renewed contact with something precious in herself. Constantly fighting against cancer, but it seems as if the cancer cells are insensitive to it, and they laugh (Illustration 75).

Now that I have let go of the fight, I fall like a baby - I feel so small - into a deep black hole, but the rays of the sun continue to penetrate. (Illustration 76).

By painting the embryo and this child's head, I have discovered the child inside me. In my dreams I have often been pregnant. On the one hand this is the crushed child I used to be and on the other hand it's the child I would love to have had. I feel that I need to give her attention, to cherish and pamper her.
 — Cis Bouten (Afb. 77) ⁴¹

Techniques and attitude of the coach

The exercises in the Imagery Toolbox are designed so that everyone who wants to can do the exercises alone. But guidance by a coach can be particularly useful in the beginning. In the register of certified Imagery Toolbox coaches are the names and addresses of qualified coaches in most regions of the Netherlands. More information can be found at www.verbeeldingstoolkit.nl.

Imagery has a broad spectrum of different types of technique. This spectrum ranges from 'observing from a certain distance or talking about an image' to 'the deep integrative contact with the psychic, energetic contents in the inner arena'.

Observing an image, dialogue, merging with it, artistic expression, insight, physical and concrete integration and application in daily life: these are all techniques used in imagery work. Which technique a coach, or therapist, chooses depends upon the client's process. What is happening, what does this client need, what would help him, what may strengthen coping capacity and resilience? The coach should make these considerations without bias. Serious illness, however, often brings up the coach's own process (counter transference), especially when it comes to questions of life, death and pain. This may result in an overemphasis on physical healing, but this author is convinced that this needs to be avoided, however welcome healing of course is. A unilateral focus on physical healing can make the coaching (or therapy) limited and cramped, whilst it is often the existential, spiritual essence of life which needs to be given attention, and with heart and soul. When Cis Bouten let go of her fight against cancer, she discovered the child in herself, and this she experienced as a great joy (Illustration. 77).

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11. THE ORIGIN AND PRACTICE OF THERAPEUTIC IMAGERY IN THE TREATMENT OF ILLNESS
COURSE BOOK | IMAGERY TOOLBOX 3.0

(Afb. 78) *My arms stretch forward in search of support, whilst at the same time they keep the world at bay. My hands reach for help yet push others away. A disfigured body trying to find the balance between staying and leaving, between asking for love and rejecting it. Life pushing through death and decay.*⁴²

Finally

Facilitating and encouraging self-reinforcement and resilience during illness are essential for coping and for recovery. They belong to the core functions of health care. In the business that healthcare has become, imagery and creativity deserve a central place in the light of their great merits. The Imagery Toolbox has been developed for this purpose: to help mobilize the great good that the imagination can bring and the immense possibilities it holds for people. In doing so, the greatest care has been taken to make the exercises and the creative material as simple and effective as possible.

12. Resilience and health

By Jan van der Greef⁴³

Modern medicine has been developed primarily to fight against symptoms and has been successful in doing so. The discovery of penicillin and its success contributed significantly to this approach. The idea that a disease (bacteria) enters our body calls for defence. Disease in this model is seen as something that should be destroyed or at least hindered. Thus most modern medicines have in their name the word 'anti', 'blocker' or 'inhibitor'. This strategy is successful in urgent and acute situations, but leaves a lot to be desired in the case of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and rheumatism and also in cancer, for which much of the treatment is based on combating the disease (chemo, irradiation, operation). It is time to make other kinds of approach more available.

What is health?

It is quite remarkable that we do not have a well-formulated definition of health at our disposal. How can you practice medicine if the concept of health is not clear in your mind? From a reductionist perspective, the idea until quite recently was that the genetic code offered all openings to finding not only the diagnosis but also the solution to all diseases. Nature has taught us otherwise. A caterpillar eats and eats and suddenly becomes a beautiful butterfly, yet in the DNA (the DNA sequence) nothing changes. It is the same creature but it has a totally different manifestation. There must therefore be something more than genes alone. The system is more than genes; the context is essential. So we see that identical twins seem to suffer from different diseases and have a different life-experience.

What is it then that turns genes on and off? This is the field of systems biology, but in genetics the term epigenetics is used. This is the quest to determine which environmental factors influence the regulation of genes. It appears that many factors may affect gene activation: diet, diseases, aging, chemicals, smoking, stress, medicines, drug, lifestyle, etc.

Health therefore depends on many factors. Since the turn of the century, there has been much discussion about changing the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of health, which has been in use since 1948. The old definition reads: 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or other physical defects'. Within the terms of this definition all of us are in fact sick. Systems biology looks at connections and dynamic patterns rather than at a single symptom. Resilience is central and it has been suggested that the definition of health should be changed to an 'ability to adapt' (editorial Lancet 2009). Recently,

an even more sophisticated definition has been proposed: 'Health as the ability to adapt and self-direct, in light of the physical, emotional and social challenges in life.'⁴⁴ We can of course also add a spiritual dimension. The difference between this new definition and that of the WHO is that the new concept highlights the potential to be or to become healthy, even when disease is present. As part of this, personal growth and development and the fulfilment of personal goals in life are of great importance.'⁴⁵

Research shows that out of the top ten most used drugs in the United States, for only 25% (and sometimes just 4%) of the treated persons is there effective relief. The other 75% (or more) of course experience the side effects, and so is the quality of life adversely affected but so also are the healthcare costs.⁴⁶ In the case of chronic disease it is for this reason alone, of great importance to stimulate the self-healing ability by supporting patients' own resilience and resistance.

Resilience and self-strengthening ability

It is vitally necessary for us to realize that our own system possesses incredibly powerful regulatory capabilities. Health is primarily about this resilience, the ability to respond adequately to external and inner challenges. This means that instead of fighting disease, attention should be focused on health promotion, on strengthening the resilience of the patient's own system. In this regard, the placebo effect is a prime example of what can facilitate patients' internal health-promoting capacities.

The new systems biology model

The new way of looking at health and disease entails a shift from looking at molecules, chemistry and symptoms, to looking at the power of the human being to respond adequately to the external and internal environment and the challenges and changes therein.

This new systems biology model involves the body, the physical environment, the cultural and social environment as well as the inner, psychological and spiritual particularities (components) of the person in its analysis, diagnosis and approach to prevention and treatment. It is a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model which takes account of connections and dynamic patterns instead of looking at a single symptom.

The findings in the placebo research conducted over the last few years are very relevant to this. Tremendous progress has been made towards a better understanding of this phenomenon. Whilst previously placebo effects were quickly brushed aside and considered irrelevant, nowadays we are realizing that these effects, for example in depression studies, can account for 75% or more of positive results. There are many impressive studies which identify various determining factors for placebo effects, ranging from the shapes and colour of pills, their cost, the place of treatment, etc., but also the authority

of the attending physician as well as the tone with which the treatment is offered. A particularly illustrative example is a study in which patients with irritable bowel syndrome were told expressly that they were being given a placebo ('placebo' was also written in large letters on the container) and this was compared with non-treatment. The effects can then only be attributed to the context, and this proved to be significant because the placebo group showed a clinical improvement compared with the untreated group, even though no pharmacologically active substance had been administered. This emphasizes once again that the healing process must be considered in a broader and a psychosocial context – the ritual of the treatment.⁴⁷

Bringing people into contact with their own self-healing powers is therefore a crucial part of recovery. The image that the context, the ritual of treatment, evokes, has a function and can promote resilience. It is a creative process which is led by images of possibilities. And images can also help you to encounter the obstacles which stand in the way of resilience and then to engage with these and maybe even bring about changes. The power of the imagination becomes a compass for well-being and recovery.

The author of this chapter is Professor Jan van de Greef, professor of Analytical BioSciences at the University of Leiden and former Principal Scientist TNO.

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School for Imagery

The School for Imagery (School voor Imaginatie) was established in Amsterdam in 1985 by health care psychologist Jan Taal to offer training in the skilled and respectful use of inner imagery.

Vision statement

Inner imagery is a determining, guiding factor in human functioning and in learning processes and its efficacy is being increasingly confirmed by the findings of contemporary neuropsychology. It is therefore of great importance, wherever human action takes place, to take into account the influence and the laws of inner images.

The skilful and purposeful use of inner images makes human (inter)actions effective. Respectful engagement with the inner world of images can also bring people in a natural way to their own meaningful spiritual sources.

Working with these principles, the School has grown over the years into the specialist centre in the Netherlands for the application of imagery work in diverse areas. These fields include psychological treatment, coaching, psychotherapy, supervision, career guidance, team building, organizational development and projects in health care and education. From the beginning the guidance of people in crisis with the help of imagery and creativity has held a particularly special place.

Information about courses, training, therapy and coaching can be found at www.imaginatie.nl and at www.verbeeldingstoolkit.nl

The **Coaching with the Imagery Toolbox Course** is intended for counsellors and coaches who wish to guide people with cancer, chronic illness or in crisis using the Imagery Toolbox 3.0.

The aim of this course is:

- to offer skilful guidance to people with cancer, chronic disease and crisis, in their coping processes and imagery work;
- to assist people with cancer, chronic disease and crisis in their independent work with the exercises in the Imagery Toolbox and to offer them coaching as part of this process.

Information:
www.imaginatie.nl



The Kanker in Beeld Foundation

The Kanker in Beeld (Cancer in Images) foundation supports and launches initiatives for creative expression such as singing, theatre, visual art and writing. The foundation brings (ex)cancer patients, friends and family into contact with these possibilities and supports professional practitioners in these fields in the creation and development of new initiatives.

Participation in singing, painting, writing and theatre is possible throughout the country. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming, and prior experience is not required.

The foundation promotes the number and quality of its therapists by organising meetings, stimulating the establishment of a 'quality mark', and is active in promoting creative and imaginative expression as part of standard oncology care.

The logo of Kanker in Beeld is a dahlia. Dahlias can withstand rough treatment but still need protection in the winter. Together they make a varied and dynamic colour palette that still forms a strongly unified whole. All these aspects represent what Kanker in Beeld stands for: power, creation and connection.

Emergence and development

In 1997 the School for Imagery saw the birth of Kanker in Beeld. Together with a group of volunteers, the first large national event was organised in 1998 in the magnificent Oude Kerk (Old Church) in Amsterdam.

In 2003 the second big event was organized, again under the leadership of the School for Imagery and this time financially supported by the Dutch Cancer Society (KWF/ Kankerbestrijding).

In 2009, the third large national event took place in the Grote Kerk (Great Church) in The Hague.

Over the course of years, the foundation has developed and facilitated many creative initiatives with coping with cancer at their centre, among which the Imagery Toolbox. For the big event in 2003 the project choir Singing for your Life was set up at the initiative of Patricia Deiters-Rahusen, This choir was a huge success and has led to the establishment of choirs across the entire country. In 2017 this unique Kanker in Beeld network now numbers 30 choirs. You can see the film about the choirs on the DVD in this Imagery Toolbox.

Activities

The activities of the foundation fall into four categories:

- Images for your Life
- Singing for your Life
- Playing for your Life
- Writing for your Life

For information about the activities and the locations:
www.kankerinbeeld.nl



Notes

- ¹ Whilst in the past few decades there has been spectacular development in our knowledge and understanding of how the brain works, 'we are not our brains' as has become a concept propagated by many scientists. It is the other way round- the brain is in us. Rather like a radio from which music comes, the brain could be compared with a transmitter. The brain is capable of a lot and has a huge influence upon our experience and behaviour, but the true sources lie much deeper in our energy system. When we hear music on the radio, we don't think that the orchestra is sitting in the radio itself, do we?
- ² The discovered evidence of symbolic art and therapeutic rituals are at least 100,000 years old and possibly even 500,000. A discovery has even been made which is 3,000,000 years old, but the question of whether this object (the Makapansgat Stone with its several faces) had symbolic value for the people of that time is disputed by archaeologists. (Giblin & Spring, 2016; Eliade, 1952: Campbell, 1983: Clottes & Lewis-Williams, 1996).
- ³ From the extensive research into the placebo effect, it has been incontrovertibly shown that even if we do not use our imagination consciously, it is constantly exerting an unconscious influence. (Brody, 1997; Enck et al, 2008; Nanninga, 2002; Mittendorf, 2009; Taal, 2014)
- ⁴ Alma & Taal, 204, p. 14.
- ⁵ Gale et al, 2012.
- ⁶ Fancourt et al, 2016.
- ⁷ From Vos, Flore-Deiters & Evelein, 2009, p. 61.
- ⁸ Sheikh, 2003; Assagioli, 1982; Jung, 1963; Taal, 2015a, 1994.
- ⁹ Ramachandran, 2000.

- ¹⁰ Achterberg, 1985; Sheikh 2003; Linz, 2014; Behr, 2014; Visser & Op 't Hoog, 2008; Taal, 1994, 2002, 2012; Taal & Krop, 2003; Alma & Taal, 2014, 2015; Nørgaard et al, 2013; Gale et al 2012; Fancourt et al, 2016.
- ¹¹ Eliade, 1952; Campbell, 1949, 1983; Jung, 1961; Walsh, 2007; Clottes & Lewis-Williams, 1996; Giblin & Spring, 2016.
- ¹² Lewis-Williams, 2002, p. 135.
- ¹³ Lewis-Williams, 2002, p.142.
- ¹⁴ The multi-disciplinary artist Julie Oakes experiences the natural, inborn creativity in her grandchildren. No longer having all the daily cares and concerns of parenthood, it's become crystal clear to her: those miraculous sources of movement and growth which children naturally have. Oakes awakens the fire of her own creative sources by walking every morning in a natural setting with all her senses open. 'Beginning the day undone ... I practice allowing what comes up to the surface to bubble, to effervesce ... What I tap into through the walking meditation or making art or writing is common to all of us. It is recognizable in the growth of a child and I see it in my grandchildren with a clarity that was clouded as a parent by the mess of utilitarian chores that raising children brings, The spark of creativity can be struck again and again through a clearing that is available to all. ... There is no exclusion from the realm of creativity other than the rules made for ourselves that blocks participation.' (from a personal letter to the author).
- ¹⁵ In *Wild Thinking* (1962) Lévi-Strauss wrote : 'The striving towards objective knowledge is one of the most ignored aspects of the thinking of people we call primitive. Scientific rationalism, which Western society is so attached to, is only one manifestation of our

- capacity for thought. Equally important and 'scientific' are myths, family systems and rituals, which in addition are as old as humanity itself and therefore have rather more to tell us over human nature' www.filosofie.nl
- ¹⁶ Achterberg, 1985.
 - ¹⁷ Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Gallese & Fogassi, 1996.
 - ¹⁸ Kosslyn & Moulthou, 2009.
 - ¹⁹ Jacoboni, 2008; Markman, Klein & Suhr, 2009.
 - ²⁰ Clark et al, 2014.
 - ²¹ De Vries & Mulder, 2007.
 - ²² Cobb, 1959; Diamond, 1960; Moseley, 2002.
 - ²³ Nanninga, 2002.
 - ²⁴ Nanninga, 2002.
 - ²⁵ Design Dilemma: The Debate over Using Placebos in Cancer Clinical Trials. Post 3 mei 2011. National Cancer Institute. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/research/placebo-clinical-trials>.
 - ²⁶ Kaptchuk, 2010.
 - ²⁷ Vance, 2016.
 - ²⁸ Vance, 2016
 - ²⁹ Roberts, 1993; Moerman & Jonas, 2002; Gaymans, 2012.
 - ³⁰ Taal, 1994, 2002.
 - ³¹ Oettingen & Mayer, 2002.
 - ³² Taal, 2003, 2012.
 - ³³ Jung, 1963, p. 495.
 - ³⁴ Taal, 1994, 2015c; Taal & Krop, 2003.
 - ³⁵ For a summary of imagery techniques see: www.imaginatie.nl/imaginatietechniques.
 - ³⁶ Ramachandran, 2010, p. 229.
 - ³⁷ Taal, 2015a.
 - ³⁸ Warners-Kleverlaan et al, 1998.
 - ³⁹ Taal, 2003.
 - ⁴⁰ In: Holzenspies & Taal, 2003, p. 62.
 - ⁴¹ In: Taal, 2003, p. 13 en 16.
 - ⁴² Irma van der Meer in: Holzenspies & Taal, 2003, p.97.
 - ⁴³ This chapter is based on the text of Jan van

- der Greef, Een systeemvisie van gezond en ziek, 2016. For the full text see: www.imaginatie.nl/achtergrondartikelen
- ⁴⁴ Huber, van Vliet, & Boers, 2016.
 - ⁴⁵ Huber, van Vliet, & Boers, 2016.
 - ⁴⁶ Schork, 2015.
 - ⁴⁷ Kaptchuk et al, 2010.

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The Imagery Toobox can be ordered via de webshop on
www.verbeeldingstoolkit.nl

The set of symbol cards and the CD's Strength of
Mind Plus 3.0 can be ordered as separate items

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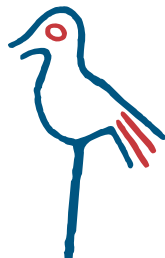
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The imagination is a wonderful thing. It is a realm in which we find our inner wellsprings, (re)sources we can draw upon to fortify ourselves.

The Imagery Toolbox contains some excellent 'tools' to help us to do just this. These take the form of simple exercises, suggestions and material which can provide you with the means to use your imaginative resources to increase your power and resilience in difficult times of illness and recovery.

By getting to work on the imagery exercises and mobilizing your own creativity you will start to harness the power of your own mind and to use your own inner strength to complement the medical care you may be receiving. In this way you can do a great deal to enhance your own emotional equilibrium, your sense of wellbeing and your ability to rest and to take pleasure in life. What is so special about the imagination is the space it creates for what is happening within you and also for what you need or long for.

