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Cancer

Welcome to this Healthy Living To Go podcast from Kaiser Permanente, designed to fit the way you live and the way you learn. Listen, live well, and thrive.

[Music]

I'm Belleruth Naparstek and this is guided imagery that I've designed for people who want to assist their body's natural tendency to repair and heal. It's not a substitute for medical treatment, but a compliment to it. More and more people find that using their minds in this way helps them relax, feel stronger, and get well faster. And it seems that when you take a more active role in your health, you generally feel better and do better. In fact, recent research has shown that using imagery can produce some remarkable changes in the body. It can alleviate pain, reduce high blood pressure, and boost the immune system, to name just a few. The program weaves several mind-body healing principles into the story it tells. It begins by helping you to relax and clear the mind. Then it calls upon your senses and memory to engage your imagination. And finally, it encourages you to experience a story that contains many healing images. All you need to do is settle in, relax, and let yourself listen. Some of the images will be more meaningful to you than others. Let your mind change or edit them as it sees fit. And because imagery is more effective when it is felt in the body, there are many feeling images for you here. You may find that as you use this over time, it has a stronger and stronger effect. Sometimes the images just naturally shift and change of their own accord. Don't get concerned about whether or not you're listening attentively enough. Relaxed concentration is best. But over time, the words and images that are good for you will seep in anyway. If you notice your mind wondering, you can gently guide it back. And because the imagery encourages a dreamy kind of awareness, please don't play it while driving. Every now and then, this will bring forth unexpected emotion. If this is the case with you, see if you can allow the feelings to just come up and move through you. Seeing it is a necessary kind of rinsing that's taking place. It won't hurt you to do this, and it may, in fact, be very good for you. This second segment has about 20 minutes of affirmations. These are positive statements that can be very useful in the healing process, a sort of reprogramming of your unconscious mind to combat negative thinking. For some people, affirmations are more effective than guided imagery. With any of this, take what is useful and leave the rest. If there is an image or phrase that is especially meaningful to you, try to play it over in your mind several times a day, when you brush your teeth, stop for a red light, or even better, just as you enter that twilight zone just before falling asleep, an especially powerful time to do this. Listen to this as often as you like. Most people do well listening twice a day, morning and evening. After several weeks, you may want to put it aside for a while, try some others, and then come back to it. Every now and then, you may want to review these instructions as a way of keeping yourself on track. So see if you can take this next while to commit yourself to this process of engaging the power of your imagination to help yourself heal by gently immersing yourself in this safe and easy process.

[Background Music] To begin with, see if you can position yourself as comfortably as you can, shifting your weight so you're allowing your body to be fully supported by the chair or the bed that you're in and taking a couple of deep, full, cleansing breaths, inhaling as fully as you comfortably can, sending the warm energy of your breath to any part of your body that's sore, or tense, or tight, and releasing the discomfort with the exhale so that you can feel your breath going to all the tight, tense places. And loosening and softening, and then gathering up all the tension, and then breathing it out so that more and more you're feeling safe and comfortable, relaxed and easy, watching the cleansing action of the breath with friendly but detached awareness. And any unwelcome facts that come to mind, those, too, can be sent out with the breath, released with the exhale so that for just a moment the mind is empty. For just a split second it is free and clear space and you are blessed with stillness. And any emotions that are rocking around in there, those, too, are noted, and acknowledged, and sent out with the breath so that your emotional self is still and quiet, like a lake with no ripples. And now, imagining a place, preferably outdoors, where you feel safe, and peaceful, and easy, a place either real or imaginary, a place that you used to go to or somewhere you've always wanted to be. It doesn't matter, just so that it's a place that feels good, and safe, and peaceful to you. And allowing the place to become more real to you in all of its dimensions, looking around you, taking the place in with your eyes, enjoying the colors, the scenery, looking over to your right and over to your left, and feeling whatever you're sitting against or lying upon, whether it's sand, or grass, a pine-needle-y forest floor, or a nice warm rock in the sun. And listening to the sounds of the place, birds singing, or leaves rustling, a gurgling stream, crashing waves. Letting your ears become attuned to the wonderful sounds of this place that is so safe and peaceful to you. You might feel a breeze blowing, crisp and dry, or balmy and wet. So just letting your skin enjoy the wonderful presence of this place. And smelling its rich scents, fragrant flowers, or [inaudible] air, sweet meadow grass.

[Music]

And as you become more and more attuned to the safety and beauty of this place, feeling thankful and happy to be there, you begin to feel a kind of a tingling, a pleasant, energizing something in the air all around you, something that contains expectancy and excitement, a sense that something wonderful is just about to happen. And you may even smile to yourself, because perhaps you haven't had that feeling in a while. But now you do know with some certainty that there is magic in this place and that something wonderful is just about to happen.

[Music]

And as that certainty settles around you, you notice a slender ray of light, pure white light shining down, illuminating a small circle, maybe five or six feet in front of you. A beautiful ray of light almost humming with its own intensity, spotlighting everything it shines on with exquisite brightness, [inaudible] definition, vibrating color, giving everything in its circle a fresh, new beauty. And as your eyes become accustomed to the powerful, vibrant light you watch, not terribly surprised, as the circle begins to widen, opening to include more and more of the environment, highlighting more and more of your special retreat. And as the circle enlarges, more and more of the place seems to be intensifying, vibrating in its own energy, alive with color, glowing, dancing, singing with sparkling life. And you watch with a wonderful, deep peacefulness as the expanding circle of light approaches you with its generous energy and gently surrounds you. You become aware of a warm presence surrounding you. And looking around in this remarkable light you can see that you are encircled by gentle, loving beings, immediately

recognizable as allies, loving friends with special gifts and powerful abilities, a whole circle of smiling well-wishers in the bright, humming light. Some perhaps looking familiar, or perhaps not, but all gathered around you, warming you with their protective presence, nodding and smiling. You can feel the light moving through your body, pleasantly vibrating, energizing you, filling you, penetrating into the layers of tissue, deeper and deeper into each and every organ, all the way to the bones, all the way to the cells, nourishing, and charging, and revitalizing you. And feeling the light as it moves with a kind of deliberate intelligence into the places of the body that maybe feel denser, heavier, darker, places where maybe unhealthy tissue can be found. And feeling the light shining into those places with its powerful energy, cleansing and clearing, dissolving the heaviness, leaving them light and spacious so that more and more you can feel your own energy moving freely throughout your body, no road blocks, no dead ends, just the free flow of healthy energy moving easily in free and open space. And sensing the light, mobilizing the remarkable, versatile power of the immune system. Like a flare, it's highlighting the peculiar surfaces of any stray cancer cells that may be about, and perhaps there are none, but most of us have some. And if there are any, seeing the powerful light illuminating them so that they can be instantly recognized and removed by the faithful army of fighter cells, the loyal soldier cells that were born in the bone marrow, sent to the thymus, the gland under the breast bone, for training, and then shipped out to every part of the body to ensure its well-being, combing the tissue in their search for deviant, chaotic cancer cells. Ingenious, persistent fighter cells gathering around any clusters of cancer cells that might be starting to form, latching onto them, penetrating them, and releasing their poison into them. Miraculous, powerful little cells, able to stop cancer cells several times their size. Tiny but deadly, like clever little David with big, unfortunate Goliath.

[Music]

And watching the cancer cells shrivel and die, their dry, threadlike traces swept away by the tidy cleanup crew of feeding cells that swallow and ingest what's left, leaving the remaining tissue fresh and clean, just open, healthy space. Watching and feeling gratitude for such an ingenious mechanism built right into the body, at your service at all times, watchful and protective. Your own private army, mobilized to even greater strength by the vibrant energy of the light.

[Music]

And knowing that the light is not just reaching into the dark places of the body. It is not just the unhealthy tissue that is dissolving, but that the pockets of painful feelings stored in the body are dissolving, too. Old hurts and resentments melting away, ancient griefs and fears loosening and fading, crusty pockets of guilt and self-hatred turning into a neutral kind of dust and floating loose along with fading judgments about who you ought to be, who others ought to be. Releasing all that old pain, beginning to forgive yourself and others for disappointments of the past, letting it all go, leaving the mind more spacious and open, the body stronger and healthier, leaving you more resilient than you have ever been, with more room for joy, and gratitude, and peacefulness. More room for the generosity of your true nature.

[Music]

Feeling all through your body the penetrating warmth and power of this loving, healing light and sensing the shift on the inside as the cells realign, [inaudible] to your health and strength, humming with the vibrant energy of the light. Certain you are healing, that you will continue to heal, able to see yourself

engaged in favorite activities, remember with all of your senses what it feels like to move with all of your vitality, grace, and ease. Doing what you love to do without a thought, just the body at full strength, enjoying its aliveness, understanding that the body remembers how to feel this way, how to be this way, that this is the blueprint to return to. And seeing the pleased nods and murmurs of your magical friends, understanding that they have seen it too, that you are healing, that you will continue to heal.

[Music]

You know that they have been supporting you all along. You just haven't seen it. Now you do. And now you can continue to see it, a constant ring of warm protection and support. A special one, one who maybe looks a little familiar to you, possibly reminding you of someone who loved you very much or guided you well in the past, or perhaps not, but clearly the leader of this magical group, with a wonderful, deep, gentle warmth in its eyes says, "Remember, we are always here. It is you who come and go. We are at your service to help you heal, to help you better love and appreciate yourself, understand who you really are, return to your own peacefulness. Call for us any time, and we will come." And gathering up a handful of the glowing, vibrating light, gives it to you for safekeeping. Your own special supply to use as needed. And so, feeling peaceful and easy, you watch as the light slowly begins to contract into itself, becoming a smaller and smaller circle, seeing it once again becoming the slender ray and disappearing into itself. Feeling peaceful and easy, knowing that the vibrant, healing light and the magical band of allies are yours to call forth whenever you wish to further the work that you have already done. And so once again, seeing yourself in your safe and peaceful outdoor surroundings, feeling relaxed and quiet, although perhaps the colors around you are brighter, maybe the sounds more vivid, the air more alive. You might feel that something powerful has happened, that a major shift has occurred and will continue to occur with or without your conscience working on it. So once again, feeling yourself sitting in your chair or lying down, breathing in and out, very rhythmically and easily. Gently and with soft eyes coming back into the room whenever you are ready, knowing in a deep place that you have done important, healing work, and you are better for this. And so you are.

[Music]

This segment contains affirmation. These are positive statements designed to counter negative thinking. See if you can listen to each statement, take it in, and maybe repeat it to yourself. For some, affirmations are more effective than guided imagery. So once again, taking a couple of deep, cleansing breaths, see if you can settle in comfortably and just let yourself absorb what you're about to hear. I know there are times when I become worried, fearful, despairing, sad, or angry, and I acknowledge and accept what I feel as my inner truth of the moment.

[Music]

I know that the more I can acknowledge and accept what I truly feel without criticism or blame, the more I assist my body's natural tendency to be well.

[Music]

More and more, I can soften and release unwanted emotions. Once they are acknowledged I can send them out with the breath in the interest of my own wellbeing.

[Music]

More and more I can consider that possibility that my body is containing something useful, that this cancer has been challenging me to learn, and change, and grow.

[Music]

I thank my body for teaching me to love myself, express myself, stick up for myself, and accept myself.

[Music]

More and more I can see that when I can soften toward myself, when I can accept who I am without criticism or blame, I allow my body to heal.

[Music]

More and more I can see that when I can soften and let go of harsh expectations, release rigid demands on myself and others, I allow my body to heal.

[Music]

I know that when I can forgive myself and others for errors of the past I allow my body to heal.

[Music]

I thank my body for teaching me to always remember the beauty of my own being.

[Music]

More and more I know that when I can love and appreciate myself, take time to care for myself, I am fortifying my immune system and giving my body a powerful message to be well.

[Music]

More and more I can understand that the time to be motivated by guilt and resentment is over. Now is the time to do things out of love, and celebration, and the joy of self-expression.

[Music]

I call upon my intention to heal myself and to stay well. I engage my powerful will to assist my body in doing this.

[Music]

The blueprint that I hold in my mind's eye that I instruct my body to follow is the picture of a strong, vital, healthy body. I can see it, and I can feel it as I hear these words. Strong, vital, healthy, free and clear of disease.

[Music]

I invite assistance from my friends and loved ones, past, present, and future, to lend me their support and strength. I see myself surrounded by their love and caring, and I can feel it all over my body like a warm wave.

[Music]

I look inside my body and see vigilant, loyal white blood cells, fierce and determined, scouting for cancer cells, surrounding them, penetrating them, and destroying them with their powerful toxins. I can see this happening, and I can feel this happening.

[Music]

I look inside my body and see the clean-up crew of feeding cells engulfing the thread-like skeletal remains of the dead cancer cells, leaving only open space and healthy tissue. I can see this happening, and I can feel this happening.

[Music]

I look inside my body, and I see the rebuilding of new cells, perfect, vital, healthy, aligned with the original blueprint. I can see this happening, and I can feel this happening.

[Music]

I can look inside my body and see a powerful blue-green wave of pure healing washing through it from head to toe, clearing out any unwanted debris and taking it out with the tide.

[Music]

I can see and feel radiant sunlight entering and warming my body, nourishing the healthy cells and shriveling up the unhealthy cells.

[Music]

When I eat I instruct my body to make use of what it needs and to reject whatever is unhealthy to me. I sense my body following these instructions.

[Music]

When I go to sleep I instruct my body to continue its healing at an even higher intensity than in my waking state, and I sense my body following these instructions.

[Music]

I thank the medicine and the procedures designed to help my body's natural tendency to heal itself, and I join my strength and purpose to theirs.

[Music]

I tell this cancer these things, thank you for teaching me to stop and listen. Thank you for reminding me of what is truly important. You can go now.

[Music]

I know that I have things to do, gifts to give, purposes to accomplish. I require a healthy, working body for this.

[Music]

More and more I can understand that I can heal myself and live, or I can heal myself and die. My physical condition is not an indication of my wholeness.

[Music]

More and more I know that I will get well not out of fear of dying. I will get well out of the joy of living.

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[Music]

More and more I know that I will get well not out of fear of dying. I will get well out of the joy of living.

[Music]

More and more, I know that I am perfectly, utterly safe. And so you are.

[Music]