

## “The River” New Year’s Visualization Meditation

January is a time of self-reflection and turning inward. Following a season of giving and outward focus, the start of a new year provides an opportunity to shift our awareness to ourselves. This Visualization guides you in reflection of where you came from, where you have been, and looks ahead to where you are going.

Here we are using Visualization to create a mental image which aids us in reflecting on our past and envisioning the future.

When visualizing, it is important to experience as many sensations of seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting as possible. Give color to your mental image with details of beautiful natural scenery with trees, water, animals, sunshine, wind, pleasant weather, etc.

Visualization Meditation Exercise-

1. Sit down, close your eyes, and direct your attention to your breathing.
2. Be aware of every breathing in and breathing out.
3. Let your breathing be something automatic and do not try to steer it.
4. Observe how the air slowly goes in through your nose, fills up your lungs, and goes out again.
5. Slowly withdraw all of your attention from all sounds in the room.
6. Visualize yourself in a forest, smelling the earth and the leaves. Hearing the wind in the branches and animal sounds in the background.
7. Visualize yourself in a forest, walking up a hill on this mountain. Notice increased humidity in the air as you come across a bubbling spring. The spring appears from the mystery of mother earth, see this spring emerging from the earth much like you emerged from your own Mother’s womb.
8. Take a moment to see yourself kneeling down looking into this spring, seeing the clarity of the water. Look at the pure transparent clear water, this represents your true nature, and think about your purity as you opened your eyes to the world. Notice as the water appears from the earth it begins to form a small stream flowing down the hill.
9. This stream represents your earliest childhood memories, so go back as early as you can and Recall your earliest memories. Slowly begin to walk following the stream created by the spring. Remember being an infant, then a toddler. Observe the beautiful child that you once were. As you continue walking down the stream you see things added to the water, leaves and twigs beginning to condition the water. This is you in your earliest state. Maybe you remember your first home, family and friends.
10. As you continue to walk the stream gets a little wider. Notice as you walk downstream, how other streams merge into this one. This is when you entered the social world, going to school, interacting with a bigger social group. Keep walking down the stream, noticing what memories were there. Possibly some challenging memories, pleasant memories. Notice what emerges for you.
11. Keep walking down the stream and notice the convergence of many streams creating a river. You come to the bank of a larger river. This is your adolescence. With all of the challenges of gifts of that time in your life.
12. You climb into a waiting canoe and begin to row down the river. This river is your adult life. Recall experiences from your adulthood, all of the way up to the present. Notice memories that come into your awareness of joyful fun experiences, and also observe the successes and challenges in life. Notice when you first encountered meditation. Observe how your practice of

### Relaxation by Visualization

<b>Kind of Meditation</b>	Visualization
<b>Degree of difficulty</b>	Beginners
<b>Advised duration</b>	15 to 30 minutes
<b>Posture</b>	Sitting
<b>Advantages</b>	quick relaxation clear, calm mind removes stress people can use a visualized environment as an "anchor" for stressful situations
<b>Remarks</b>	A Visualization exercise that helps you to reflect on the past and envision your future.

Handout Developed by CAPT Candace Y. Hander 2020

*The River* meditation derived from <https://www.yogajournal.com/practice/viniyoga-sequence-manage-addictive-behavior>

- meditation has helped you in your life. Continue flowing down that stream looking at the choices that you made, the accomplishments that you are happy or proud about. What were your challenges, maybe even some regrets. Notice how fast that time has passed, flowing down the river of life to this very moment.
13. Now wherever you are at in the river, begin looking forward. Look down the river of your life into the future and see how it flows into the ocean. Recognize the fact that this river is flowing toward the ocean. You will continue to flow down the river until merge with the source. While you can't change the destination, you can change the quality of the journey.
  14. Reflect on your values and goals. What is yours to do in your life? So from wherever you are now think about what is important for you. How do you want to live the remainder of this life?
  15. How can this practice support you in your journey down the river, until you enter the infinite ocean? What changes might you make?
  16. Bring your attention to the tip of your nose, then notice the inhale, then flex the arms, first one than the other. Open your eyes.

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