

Utopic Imagining and Creative Restoration

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1. Animator: [Have participants close their eyes and relax, taking some deep breaths.] Imagine being in a favorite place at your home or in your community, a place where you feel relaxed and refreshed.

Bring all of your senses to bear as you enjoy this place. Notice the smells and fragrances in the air.

Notice any sounds.

How does the air feel on your skin?

What are the colors like?

What time of day does it seem like?

Just rest for a few moments in the fullness of this place.

[This portion is to help awaken imaginal senses so that the subsequent images will be as vivid as possible. It also places participants in a peaceful place, from which they can move into utopic images.]

2. Animator: Close your eyes in this spot. When I ask you to open them up, it will be thirty years from now. Do not let your own mortality deter you. There have been many positive changes in your community, in your nation, and in the larger, global world; transformations that reflect people's deepest desires for their lives. As you begin to travel around your community--visiting schools, places of healing, of government, of spiritual life--notice in as much detail as you can how these desires have manifested. Now open up your imaginal eyes and begin to explore for about 8 minutes.

3. Animator: Now for another 8 or so minutes widen your utopic imaginings to explore how things may have changed positively on the national and global levels. You might open a newspaper in thirty years from now, or listen to a newscast, and notice how the stories have changed. Or you may find yourself walking in a very different part of the world. If your attention begins to wander, gently bring it back to see how people's deeper desires for their world have been manifested in changes that have taken place.

4. Animator: With our eyes closed I would like each of you who would like to share one image of what you imagine your community, nation or world to be like in your deepest utopic imagining. Describe it in detail, so the rest of us can imagine it clearly. The person on your right will touch your hand when he or she has finished so you will know when to begin.
5. Animator: [When each person has had a chance to share, continue with the following instructions]. Chose one of the changes that you feel most deeply about, that you would be willing to honor through your actions, and hold it in your heart. Ask yourself, "What would need to happen in the next 15 years for this image to have a chance of becoming reality in 30 years?" Give yourself 5 minutes to reflect on this, allowing yourself to begin to fill in many of the necessary details as is possible.
6. Animator: Now imagine in as much detail as you can in five minutes, what would need to happen in the next five years for this utopic reality to have the chance of beginning to take root in our world?
7. Animator: What would need to begin to happen in the next year for this utopic image to be set into motion? What part of this can you imagine engaging in? [4 minutes]

What changes in your current life would such engagement require?
[4 minutes]

8. Animator: Holding your utopic image in your heart space, ask yourself who within you would most desire your engagement in making this image a reality? If this part of you were a character in a novel, what would this one be like? Where would he or she live? What would he or she be engaged in? Try to get to know this character or figure through a brief active imagination encounter.
9. Animator: Now notice where in your body you feel any resistance to working toward the utopic change you have imagined. If this feeling were a character, what would he or she be like? Again try to engage with this character through active imagination, getting to know him or her as much as you can in a few minutes.
10. Animator: See if these two characters would like time to speak with each other. Allow a dialogue to unfold, if it would like to.

11. Animator: Bring your imagining to a close, and when you are ready please open your eyes.

We have time to go around the circle once for you to share the image of the desired change you were working with and anything you noticed about desire and resistance within yourself toward engaging in actions to give this image life in the world.

12. Animator: In closing, I would like you to each briefly ask for anything you might personally or spiritually need to be better able to help manifest into the world around us what you deeply desire.