

Creating the Safe Space

Internal safety is often something lacking in an individual personality system, so developing your own internal safe place is an important part of the programming with The Liberation Place. It is used throughout your journey into change, and in particular all of the work we do with the child parts that exist within your personality system. Having a sense of internal safety is something that is missing for many people who struggle with addictive and compulsive coping mechanisms, as they are usually associated with a general sense of fear that gets triggered by external circumstances, so creating this space internally supports a sense of peace in the internal world and aids us when we use the imagery work associated with Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills like “Planning Ahead” and “Building Mastery.”

Using the Safe space meditative process is also a key factor when you step into the healing work associated with unburdening the parts of your personality that may be carrying a particular story about your childhood experiences. In Schema Therapy this is referred to as, “limited reparenting,” and it is an incredibly powerful skill to learn, which when used as a replacement for your default coping mechanisms, can provide the necessary reduction in your overwhelming emotional experience to give the window of opportunity for the cognitive work that most people find impossible to do when they are in a state of distress.

It is important to point out that creating your safe place can be a difficult assignment to take on, as you may not have the memory of a safe place readily available. If this is the case for you, this is completely ok, and totally understandable for many people who are dealing with the symptoms of unmet childhood needs, and developmental trauma. When we are not able to remember a safe place, or come up with one from real life experiences, we need to get creative. This is why imagination is a really essential part of the mindful practice, as it can help you create a fictional place that you can call into your mind when feeling anxious, stressed out, or afraid of things that are happening in your environment.

Take some time to read through the meditation example below so you have a good understanding of what the process looks like to create your own unique safe place, and then listen to the guided meditation that’s provided with this assignment, which is a recorded version similar to the written meditation provided below. If you are using this workbook in conjunction with the online classes, the recording of this meditation is available with this lesson. If you are using the book on its own, you can find a version of the meditation on our YouTube channel at the address listed in the introduction. Use this recording to create your safe space, which may take a few attempts to do. Once you have created a safe place to use in your internal world, complete the exercise attached to the meditation to continue developing this space to support your unique emotional needs.

If you try this exercise multiple times and find it to be something that you simply cannot do, that is totally fine, and it does not mean you have to stop the work. Many people struggle with creating a safe place, mainly because they’ve never experienced one in the real world so how would they know what it looks like when it comes to creating a fictional one. If this is the case for you, don’t worry, try going to the next exercise called, “Creating Your Safety Bubble” to see if that will work for you instead.

Safe Place Meditation

First, let's find a quiet place to sit and settle into a comfortable position in your seat. Close your eyes if you can, and if not, just find a spot to focus your gaze that allows you to feel relaxed and undisturbed throughout this process.

At your own pace, take a couple of deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you continue to breathe, bring your attention to a place in your mind that represents a safe, calming, or peaceful place for you to be. Try not to have any expectation, or judgement about it; just be open to whatever image occurs.

It can be like a movie scene in your mind's eye, a memory from the past, or a recall of a picture you have seen at some point. It can be something from your life, a real place you have been to, or pure creation from your imagination, from a book or even a movie.

When you have your image spend some time there and take a look around, take note of what is happening around you, the sights and sounds of the place you are in. Pay attention to the feelings and thoughts you are having and spend some time sitting in the peaceful sensations.

When it feels right come back into the room in which you are sitting, look around and acknowledge that right now, in this exact moment, this to is a safe place for you to be.

You can bring anything that is safe, calming, peaceful or comforting into your image. Whatever works for you, make it your own. Do not worry if you have some difficulty getting a strong image at first, it will come with time and practice.

People have different ways of developing an image, some use a picture or a photograph as a prompt. If you have difficulty imagining a place that is safe, see if you can find a picture that represents it, or draw it for yourself.

Take some time to answer the following questions to build essential awareness around the creation of your safe place image. Be as specific, and descriptive as you can, as this will help you recall it in future exercises.

What did you see in your safe place image?

Did you see yourself in the image?

If you do, how old are you?

What else do you see in the image?

What sounds can you hear in the image?

What scents, or smells are there in your image?

Describe the emotional experience you had while being in your image?

Describe any physical sensations you were feeling while being in your image?

Was there anybody else with you in your image? Remember only safe people are allowed, anyone unsafe should be ejected from the image right away.

Self talk and establishing the right frame of mind is essential when setting yourself up to create your safe place image. Essentially, we are trying to include statements such as I am safe, I control this space, and no harm comes to me here. Remind yourself of your emotional experience in this space by stating things like, I feel calm, or, I feel peaceful. Whatever works for you is what is important to repeat to yourself here, so, when you are working on this alone, add your own words that make sense to you.

Next, we want to name your safe place so that you can bring it to mind quickly and easily when you need to, in times of stress, fear, or high anxiety. For example, it may be a house she felt safe in before, or a place you went to that already has a name. If you created a new place that doesn't exist, try to find a name for it that is easy to remember and bring your image to mind whenever you think of it.

The name of my safe place is:
