



OUR  
STORIES

OUR  
WORTH

OUR  
PURPOSE

## Relaxation Exercise

This could be a daily ritual – at the end of the day the family gathers, maybe at first talk about the day.

I always ask my students at the beginning of the session: what good and bad things happened during the week? In this case it would be during the day. Sometimes only 'good' is mentioned (or 'bad') and that's okay as well. Sharing feelings is good, brings us closer together and helps to express and unload those negative feelings from being trapped within.

Then you alone (or with family) sit straight comfortably or lie down.

Close your eyes and for a moment just listen to the sounds in the room and outside. Note how many sounds you were not aware of before.

Keep eyes closed for the whole duration of this short exercise. Blocking the visual aspect helps you to focus and relax.

You can repeat the following steps a few times:

**BREATHE IN** and (quietly, inside) count to 4  
**HOLD YOUR BREATH** to the count of 4  
**BREATHE OUT** counting to 8

With closed eyes, imagine you are somewhere that you find relaxing – a beach, the garden, walking in the woods, a favourite room/place, etc)

**STAY THERE FOR** approximately 2 minutes and then open your eyes.

After that, the family can share their experiences and their favourite places to relax, etc.

This exercise can be extended. We focus on a particular part of our body where tension/stress accumulates the most, like: neck, shoulders, stomach, chest...

We do the breathing in and out as instructed above, releasing tension from that part. We may include the legs and arms.

You may record the instructions in your own soothing, calm voice (or your child can if older), and follow it on your own or with the family.

Some people find it difficult to relax, especially if they have accumulated a lot of stress over a period of time. They need to teach the body how to relax all over again through repetition of the exercise, although it might seem it doesn't work at first. Relaxation is a natural state but stress isn't, like a foreign body.

In these difficult times, it will hopefully help us to deal better with everyday stresses and create one more ritual that will give, especially to our children, a deeper sense of security.