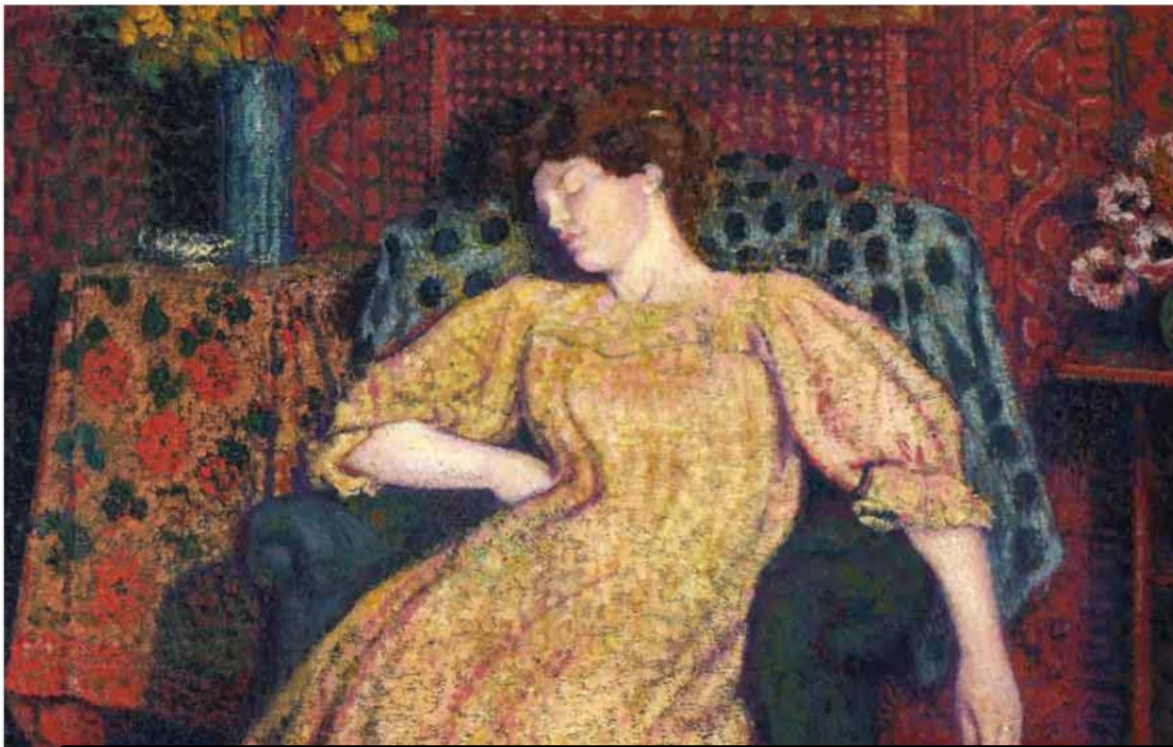


CREATE YOUR OWN IMAGERY

IMAGE ONE:

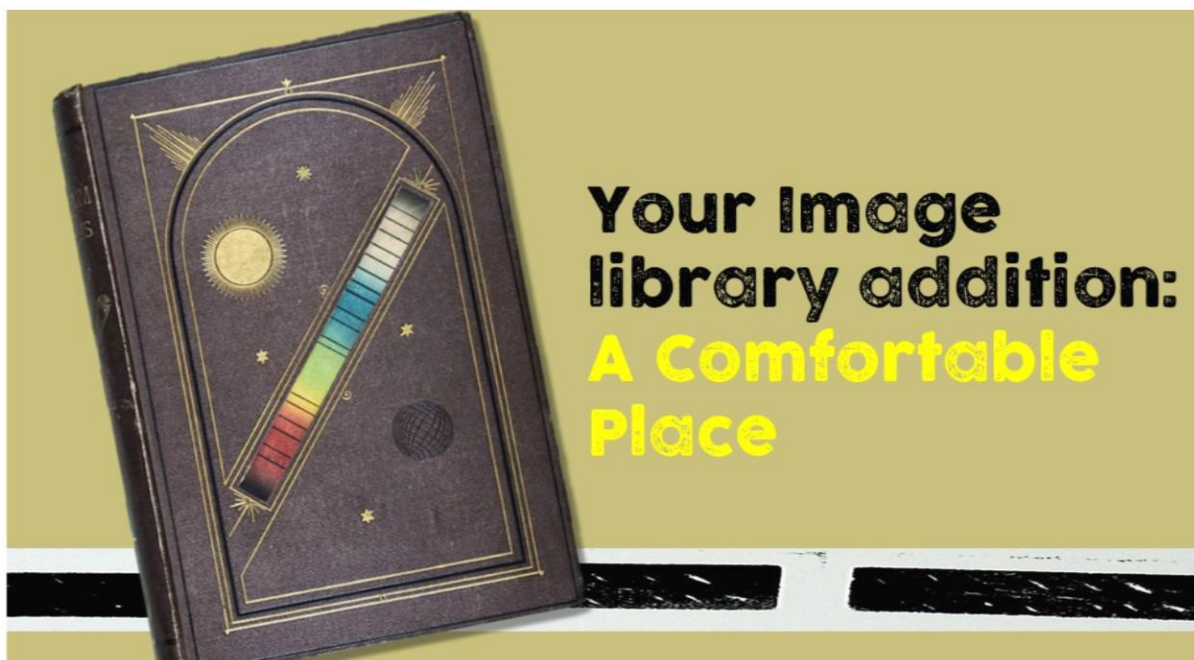
A Comfortable Place*



* Absolutely great for taking a much needed break from the world, getting your positivity back, opening your creativity, clearing your head, and recovering your best you.



>Imagination training made easy *from the Armchair Dreamer*<



Your Image library addition: **A Comfortable Place**

Credit - Main artwork - Book: *Spectrum Analysis - Six Lectures*; Author: Henry. E. Roscoe.
Published: London: MacMillan and Co, 1869. No cover design attribution listed in the book.

See the video version, too./

What you are about to read is the written version of an *Armchair Dreamer* video. Included here is everything discussed in that video. But not everything here is included in the video. Necessary changes were made in this guide to improve the clarity of concepts, and I've added additional graphics and lists.

The advantage of the video is that it moves along faster than reading text, and perhaps you will find my talking more personal than my writing. I offer you both. If you want to watch the video, go to armchairdreamer.com and see the video library tab. Whatever your choice, thanks for being here.



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Welcome.

Hi, this Gary Goodwin, founder of the *Armchair Dreamer* and welcome. The *Armchair Dreamer* is the place to visit for adding skills necessary to visualize, to imagine, and to do dream work.



Why work with imagery?

Imagery is an open bridge from our inner background world (also known as the unconscious) out to our conscious mind where we live. The unconscious contains more than anyone knows. We do know that we find these things there:

Memories – Insights – moods – ability to learn – attention – answers – energy – habits – floating ideas and feelings – Poetic views of life – thousands of inputs from each of our senses from every moment – calculations and estimates – altered states of mind, dreams, body sensations.

That's the shortlist. You have a choice. You can let all of that roll around in the shadows, effecting you this way or that, or you can, participate in and benefit from being closer to your unconscious. If you want to communicate with, learn from, and influence the unconscious, you need to use imagery.

The unconscious produces a high volume of imagery every day. Think of dreams or how naturally we translate a person's verbal story into a mental pictorial one. If we slow down and look inward, we will find imagery floating around, some of it related to what we are doing at the moment but a lot that seems mainly nonsense. But is it? I wouldn't count on it. The unconscious seems to be quite efficient and not wasteful in its use of our energy. There is probably a lot of sense in that assumed nonsense.

In addition to producing imagery, it responds to imagery. We pick up paper with printing, and soon after we start reading it, we are into fantasy. Movies make us feel like the subject of drama or comedy. Other images from art and religion grab us and challenge us to look deeper.

You don't have to write a book or produce a movie to get the effect of using an image to stimulate our unconscious. Instead, you can collect your memories and observations and practice bringing them up on demand. Soon your unconscious will catch on and join the process by reacting to your imagery through changing your energy level, or mood, or attention, or body sensations, or ideas, or insights...or all of the above.

You can use imagery for creativity, wellness, problem-solving, habit reduction, habit creation, calming, strength building, break-throughs, endurance, inner work of all sorts, and much, much more.

Imagery can connect us to previous experiences in very profound ways. What we recall can pull along with its sensations, feelings, and thoughts that we experienced at the time of the experience. Our brain tends to take much of what it is processing at any given moment and put it in its deep memory as a pattern. Bring up one element of that pattern, and you can unleash a reexperience of everything in the pattern.

The pattern can some times fire up with a sketchy, vague mental replay of our previous experience but it usually requires more. The more we need to give is to slow down, go inward, relax, let go, and stay in our imagination until details emerge. We need to immerse our attention, energy, and feelings into the emerging imagery. At some point, after we have allowed sufficient replay of the event to happen and we have given enough of ourselves to the task, the pattern, in part will appear and start to drive what we see and feel.

Begin your journey on the bridge to the unconscious right here and right now with a little time and a few steps.

Why build A Comfortable Place?

Essential to any imagery library are image sets around getting us prepared for the day's challenges and helping us get through the ups and downs of life. We need skills that help us: focus, create, calm, use wisdom, have insights, get us to peak performance, hold back troubling moods, and boost our positive sides. That's a sample of what is possible, and having a few in your "back pocket" ready to be used, will serve you well.

Comfortable Place imagery fits right into this. It gives a mental location to be positive, to be ourselves, to rest, and to discover our own pace. There we can prepare ourselves for

what's coming up, or we can catch our breath from what has been.

We need to begin building our comfortable place imagery by first considering what I mean by a place. I ask you to come up with memories of a real place where you have experienced comfort. Through your work here, you will turn from the physical location to a built one in your mind. It won't be an exact copy of what you have seen and experienced but a combination of the real mixed with what you associate to that place and that type of comfort. Associations include related places you have heard about or read about and what you think should be in a place of comfort. So you are doing more artwork and poetry than scientific detective work.

The types of comfort.

You also need to know what I mean by comfort. Not all places of comfort are the same. I'm not speaking of routine differences such as one person likes gardening and another, hiking. I'm talking about how what *we expect* from various places of comfort. One type can refresh us, and another type can give us a place to hide out; you get what I'm saying.

All types have a place in your imagery library, but you have to start somewhere. I have picked a specific type of comfort because I think it can give you immediate and wide-ranging benefits. But first, we will go through four other types of comfort.

Quiet Introspective Comfort



Credit - Main artwork - Charles Edward Perugini - *IN THE ORANGERY*



Quiet time is the most sought after place of comfort. We take control of our environment so our senses can relax. We are not socially engaged, so we can turn off that inner system.

Where and how we use our attention is well in our grasp. We can turn it inward or immerse in a book, a movie, creating, and other recreation.

We become far less critical of life and ourselves during this time, and our acceptance of the moment increases. Our thinking and feeling are allowed to wander.

We can be active, we don't have to sit in a chair to be in Quiet Comfort, but our activity can't be too challenging. Challenges require us to pick up our pace, expend higher rates of

energy, and puts us face-to-face with obstacles. Obstacles open us to frustration, and off we go. We are no longer in Quiet Comfort.

If we can make Quiet Comfort, it will help us a great deal to rest our bodies and to refresh our minds.

Sensory Comfort



Credit - Main artwork - Adolphe William Bouguereau - REST AT HARVEST



When I mention comfort, a lot of people bring up: hot baths, snoozing under the covers, saunas, massages, and a warm drink.

Each of those engages our senses, and we feel heightened pleasure. Pleasure is a primal signal to body and mind that all is well, and we can relax. That relax signal conveys we can

let go of worries, guilts, social concerns, tune down inner chatter, and release unnecessary readiness of mind or body. That is restorative as long as we choose healthy pleasures.

We need to stay close to the source of pleasure, both in a physical way but also with our attention. Our attention must frequently check in with the sense(s) and take in the pleasure signals. Therefore, our activity level is usually lower here than in Quiet Comfort. Our mind also tends to shut down in terms of pursuing complex thoughts. We have shifted to the now and its immediate experiences.

Hiding Out Comfort



Credit - Main artwork - Jules Joseph Lefebvre - GRAZIELLA



At first look, this form of comfort is all good. We get rest. We get to control the place. We manage the pace, the stimuli, and more. As in Quiet Comfort, we can find peace, rest, and refreshment here.

But something else is going on at the heart of this experience. We are hiding out from something or someone in the external world. We sheltering from harm, hurt, frustration, and probably, our own emotions, such as anger. We are partly seeking shelter here from the world, and partly seeking refuge from parts of ourselves.

The artwork above shows us this. The woman is alone. She is at a distance from the world. She relies upon the rooted

stability of the rock to give her groundedness. The rock reminds her of a reality that can be simple, such as the tea ceremony of Japan. Rocks are solid, and that gives her stability and something sure to hang onto.

Looking closer, we see that she is chained to that rock. The chain is a link and a restraint. How far can she go out from the rock? Is she free, or is this a prison? Is it both? She holds the chain loosely in both hands. That indicates she understands the price she pays to depend on the rock.

Hiding Out comfort does provide rest, peace, stability, but we need to find other ways to achieve the same things.

Zoned Out Comfort



Credit 4 - Main artwork - François Boucher - SLEEPING SHEPHERD



We can see Zoned Out Comfort in the painting above represented by a shepherd collapsed on the ground with an intoxicant in hand, best friend comfortably curled up nearby.

Zoned Out comfort frequently is the result of not turning to rest and rechargings. Our unconscious pulls the plug on us, and we run out of energy. Gone, for a while, is our striving, pushing, interaction with, and worrying about the world. We overdid it, and something says no more and takes things out of our control.

Like Hiding Out Comfort, Zoned Out Comfort is in response to the world. We need to go through one more type before I show you what is not a replacement for any of them but is freer and more flexible than Hiding Out, Zoning Out, and even quiet time.

Alert, Calm & Positive Comfort



Credit - Main artwork one - Charles Edward Perugini - DOLCE FAR NIENTE; main artwork two: Charles Edward Perugini - AT PLAY



We don't hear about this type of comfort much. But I think it is what we often seek. If we can find it, then we tell others that "we feel great!" The great we feel is not some rush or jacked up high. It is a feeling tone that:

- > we have plenty of energy to tackle anything we want at the moment;**

›we hold no worrying, regretting, or negative ruminations;

›we have control of our bodies, emotions, thinking, and other self resources;

›we feel positive;

›if there are challenges, we have what is necessary to overcome those challenges. We get calmness. “Hey, I’ve got this.” We relax.

›we have alertness;

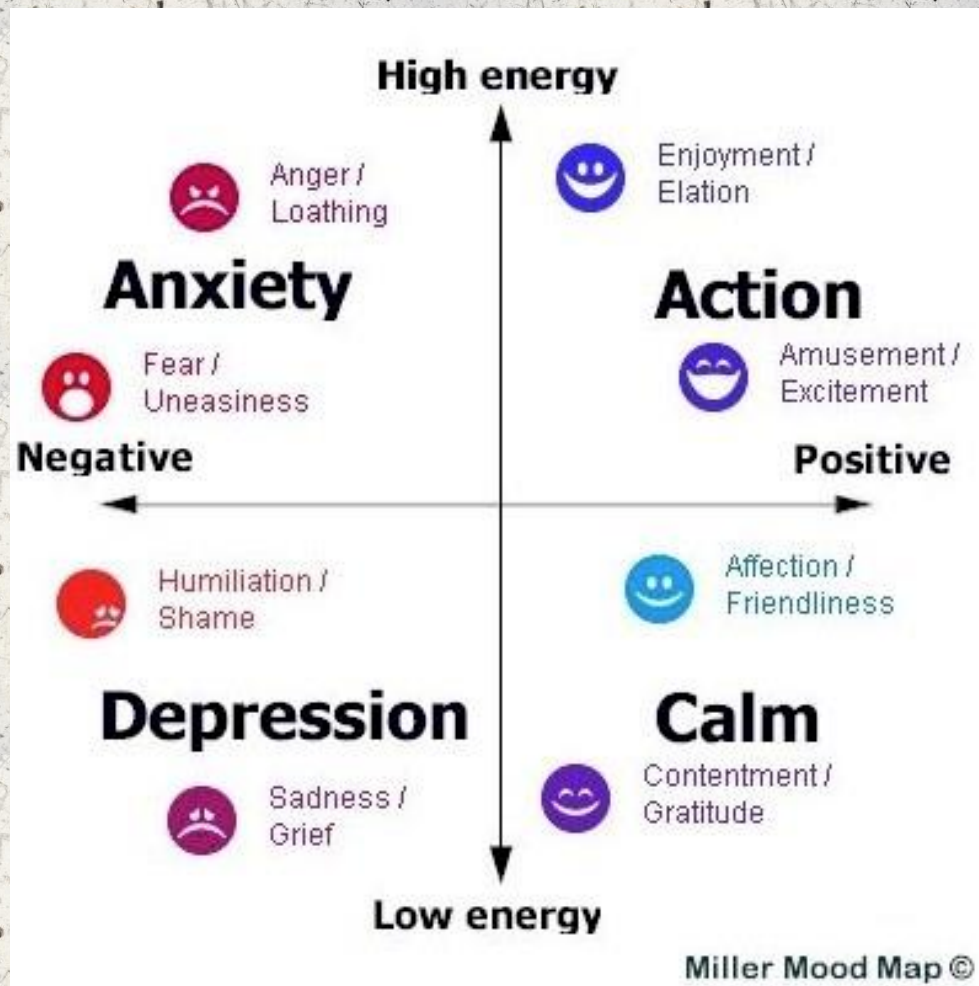
›we feel grounded and connected with what is going on

›we are active, seeking to do but not rushing ourselves or the world to get to where we are going.

I saw this type of comfort in the writings of the psychologist, Robert E. Thayer.* He mapped everyday moods in how they feel to us, some negative, and some positive. He also tracked energy levels. Did the mood feel energetic, neutral, or lacking in energy?

• **See:** *The Origin of Everyday Moods: Managing Energy, Tension, and Stress* and his book, *Calm Energy*.

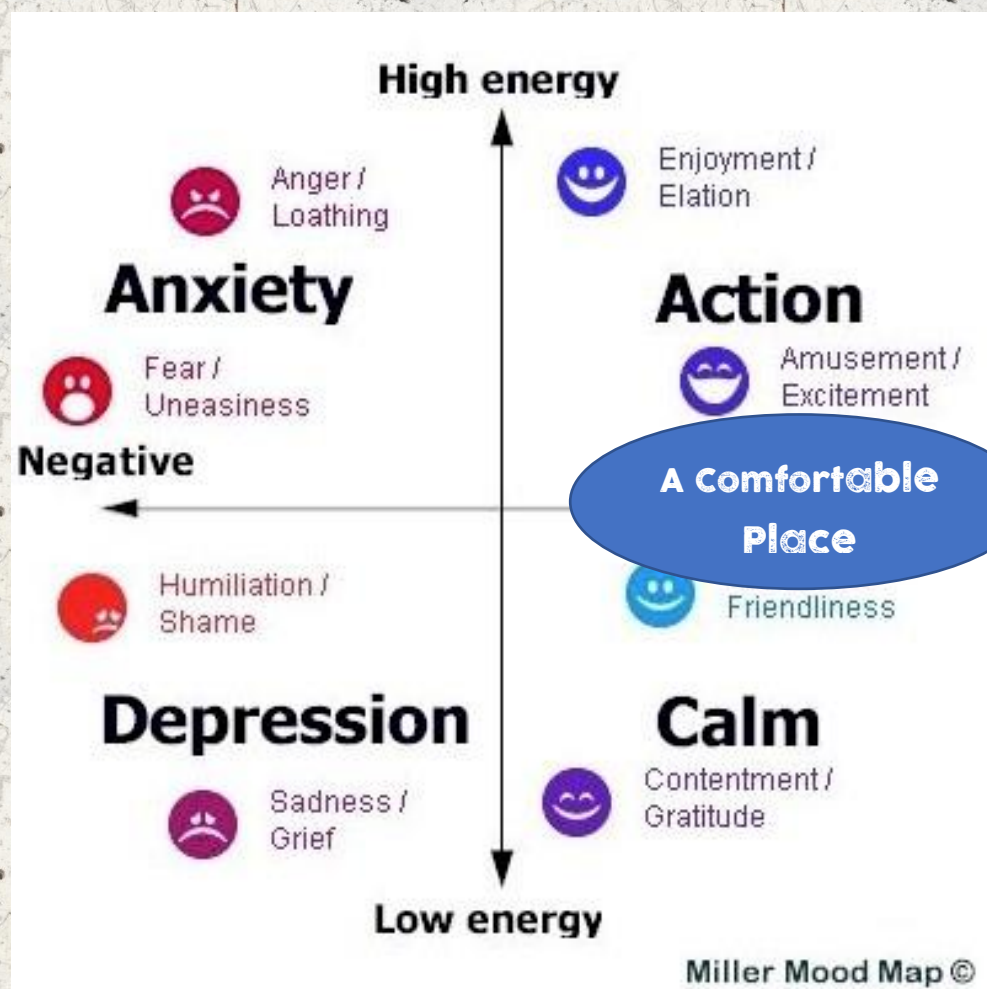
When these two forces are put together, we end up with the map below.



Source: Mood Mapping: Plot Your Way to Emotional Health and Happiness By Dr. Liz Miller

In recent years, Thayer's work has been expanded upon and put into phone apps that allow for accurate tracking of our experiences. Liz Miller has been very active and provides her basic map of moods.

On the Liz Miller map above, I put Calm, alert, and positive comfort right on the horizontal line showing the negative-positive and on the calm-action side.



Miller's and Thayer's work is meant to help people become aware of where they are on the map and help lead them towards moving to where they want-need to be.

You need and deserve to have more time with the experience of a comfortable place. Imagery will increase your odds of getting it.

Come, let's get down to work.

Create your own imagery

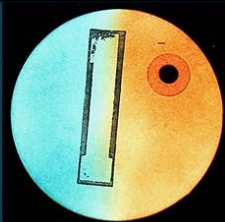
The steps to get *A Comfortable Place* imagery built are easy. It only takes a little bit of time, and you already have everything you need to start, do, and finish this job. Now turn around and look at yourself.

Start with your memories



One of the unique approaches of the *Armchair Dreamer* way of working with the imagination is the reliance upon a person's own experiences to guide things. You don't use my imagery; you use your own memories and ideas to frame up your imagery library.

Step 1 of 5.



create a rough list

WHERE AND WHEN HAVE I EXPERIENCED THIS BEFORE?



A

Your memory work starts with a question: Where and when have you experienced *Alert, Calm, and Positive Comfort*?

Let your mind head off to where/whenever it wants to go. You might have one or two examples right away. If not, don't rush and don't get frustrated that nothing is coming up. You will find something.

Finding something can be a full-on memory with all sorts of details, or it can be a tiny fragment, perhaps a faint location or a vague notion around comfort. Take what you get and hang in there.

Need prompts?

›Think about what you do to relax.

- ›Think about your favorite places.
- ›Think about your favorite things you do.
- ›Think about who you see in these places.
- ›Imagine being relaxed and alert and see if some memories come up about a place/time of comfort.
- ›Imagine what you think *A Comfortable Place* should look like?

Need an example?

My list of memories of comfortable places include:

- ›used books shops
- ›city walks
- ›our backyard
- ›strolling through a museum.
- ›looking at the moon in open sky country locations.

Need help?

Take your time and deepen your relaxation. Relaxation naturally moves us towards an inward focus, more deep-seated memories, and heightens our in-built ability to visualize and imagine.

If you still can't relax enough, go to the *Armchair Dreamer* and look for the basics of getting relaxed enough to do imagery work (www.armchairdreamer.com).

Come up with a rough list of your first memories and move on to Step Two.

Step 2 of 5.



Make your short list

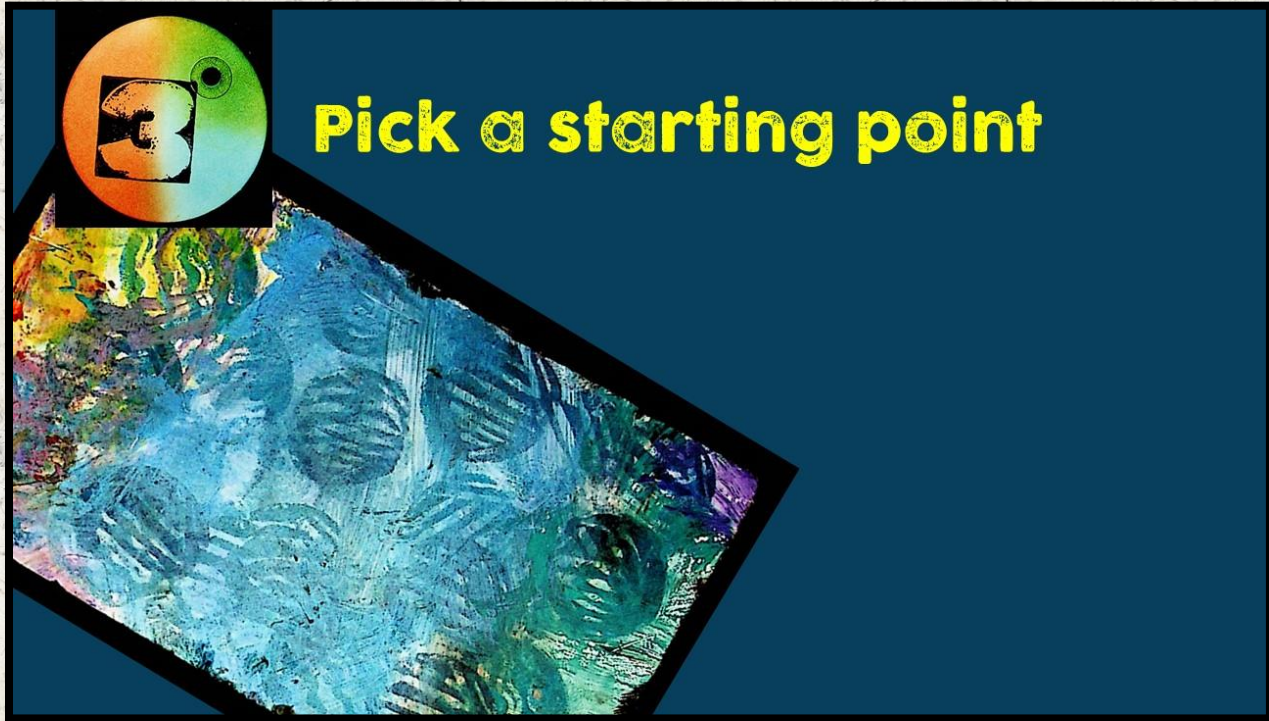
WHICH ONES CAPTURE ME THE MOST?



Take your longer list and feel your way through each one. Which one (or more) grips your attention and feel the most? In other words, which one stands out the most and seems to click within you when you compare your location to the concept: an alert, comfortable, positive place/time.

Make this your new list, a shortlist of comfortable places.

Step 3 of 5.



Now you have your short-list pick your best fit to the defined *A Comfortable Place*. Next, you need to play through in your mind, where you enter that place. Your entry point is what will come up first when you imagine this place.

For instance, a city walk in my current town works for me. I have a specific section of the downtown in mind. I narrow this down to a particular corner: that is where I will start my *A Comfortable Place* imagery each time I begin.

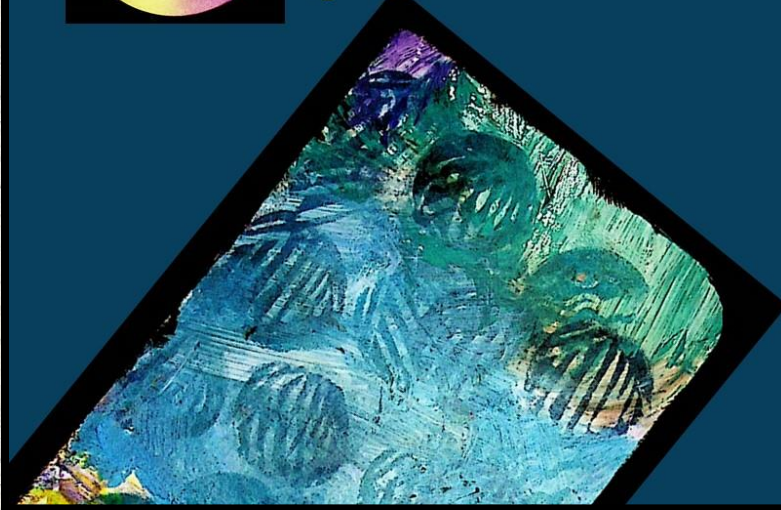
Having a set beginning point allows you to kick off your imagery sessions with a place you know well. You don't have to cast about looking for a place to start. Casting about makes what is meant to be a relaxed experience, frustration-

prone, especially when we are new at doing imagery work. Pick a place and make it your place.

Step 4 of 5.



Deepen your starting point



You make your starting point your place, by:

- ›seeing it in your mind's eye. Really see it. Describe the lighting. Early morning, afternoon, or evening? Describe verbally to yourself or out loud what are you seeing? What colors? What type of objects, buildings, people, etc.? Describe it like you are describing it to someone who you wish could visit that place but is unable to get there.**
- ›hear your starting point and, when you are ready, elsewhere in your comfortable place. What do you hear? How loud are these sounds? How frequent?**

›what could you touch?

›what do you smell?

Step 5 of 5.



In this step, you will need to go beyond merely describing your place. You need to let yourself go into the imagery to allow feelings of the space to come back to you. That is your comfortable place, so it should be able to produce feelings of relaxation, comfort, and alertness. If that has not started on its own, go more into your mind's eye senses and be more in the place. As you look for details, details will come to you, and there will be details you have never noticed before. That means you have stepped into your imagination, and you are not visualizing the scene as you did in the earlier steps, but you are living the place in your mind, heart, and body. It

doesn't have to be overwhelming, but we have to feel good about the place.

Some last tips.



Practice starting at the same place each time you do *A Comfortable Place* imagery session.

Take time to in each session to describe some of the sensory details, either from your memory of the place or as they come up for you on the day you practice. It doesn't take many sessions before the imagination provides us with what it wants us to notice in your place. Somehow, details are pre-selected and pop up to our awareness. Things we never would have thought about are there to be seen and experienced.

Take time to practice long enough so that you allow the feeling tone of the place to come up for you.

Enjoy moving or just resting in your unique, customized, *A Comfortable Place*. That's it for today, but this is only part of the journey into visualization, imagery, and dream work. More work is ahead. Please join us.

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