

Tree Meditation

(an RDI Grounding Technique)

Purpose: This guided visualization can help clients experience a resourced state of feeling grounded, calm, strong, resilient or peaceful.

Note that this exercise has in a few cases caused a sense of claustrophobia for some clients as they step inside the tree. If that happens switch to a different resourcing technique or allow the client to remain on the outside of the tree perhaps leaning against the tree or simply observing the tree.

Preparation:

Take a moment to ground your client in the present through breathing, or a quick body scan or other method of your choosing. (ex: *With your eyes open or closed, let's take a few minutes to just breath. Notice your breath rise and fall. Become aware of your body seated in the chair.*)

Guided Imagery: Read this slow so your client can connect with this imagery.

I'd like for you to picture in your mind's eye a tree. It can be any tree at all. Bring it to your awareness and let me know when you've got it.

Take in your tree. Notice its size and shape. Notice its bark and smell. Notice if it has any leaves or pine needles, or flowers. Notice its colors. Notice if there is any life in your tree such as birds or insects. What do you notice?

Reach out and touch your tree and become aware of its texture. Notice the sensation of the bark.

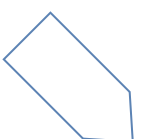
Now imagine that the tree offers to you to step inside, and if you are comfortable you may enter your tree. Notice what the inside of your tree is like. Notice smells, sounds, textures, and imagery. What do you notice?

Now imagine that you start to become the tree. Your toes and feet root deep into the earth. Your legs and torso become the trunk of the tree. Your arms become the branches and out of your fingers shoot leaves or pine needles.

Take a moment to breath here as the tree. Inhaling up from your roots, up the trunk to the crown of your head, and exhaling from the crown of your head, through your trunk to your roots. (allow a couple of rounds of breathing in this way)

Notice what it's like to be this tree. Notice how that feels in your body.

What do you notice?



Add BLS, short and slow sets (4-8 passes) to enhance positive experiences your client is having. Stop to check in with *“what do you notice?”*. You may continue adding sets of BLS as long as the experience is strengthening.

Notice any qualities you may associate with this tree. Perhaps that’s a sense of strength, or being grounded, or flexible. Are there any words or phrases that come to mind?

Add BLS, short and slow sets (4-8 passes) to connect with these words or phrases. Stop and check in with *“what do you notice?”*. You may continue adding sets of BLS as long as the experience is enhancing.

Increasing Tolerance for Life Experiences Option:

You may creatively pull on metaphors from the tree to support your client in life experiences. For example, you may say *“what happens to the tree when the wind blows?”* to help your client notice that the tree stays strong and rooted and can sway with the wind. Or you may perhaps pull upon how a tree weathers a storm. As your client connects with these metaphors or insights, you may say *“notice that”* and add short and slow sets of BLS to link with those qualities.

Creative Options:

Be creative with other tree guided imagery that enhances attributes the client finds useful (for instance being “okay” with birds and squirrels in the tree branches).

Closing the tree exercise:

Be sure to take a moment to bring your client back from this exercise. An example of how to do this is:

Now allow yourself to slowly, at your own pace, come back into your human form. As you’re ready, step out of the tree. Take a moment to offer thanks and appreciation for your tree however you see fit. Maybe that’s words of appreciation, or even hugging your tree. And before you leave, remember that this tree is always here for you anytime you may need to return.

Slowly make your way back to the room.

Take a moment to debrief with your client about their experience.

