

MUSIC FOR IMAGING AND HEALING

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Cultures through out time have long recognized the power of music for healing, evoking emotional experiences and spiritual guidance and connection. The ancient Greeks, King David of the Old Testament, healers in India, and Shamans of many cultures all knew this. In the United States, hospitals during World Wars I and II began using live music to speed recovery of injured veterans. From these profound effects, the profession of Music Therapy officially began in 1950. The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) began in the 1970's first in a research laboratory, and then into therapy offices. GIM has assisted persons in the areas of personal growth, life issues and transitions, spiritual connection and exploration, and creativity by listening and freely imaging to classical music in a relaxed state with a trained guide.

Can I use music for myself at home?

Yes. Many people can experience some of the benefits of GIM in the comfort of their own home. Try these simple steps and discover a new way to listen to music and change yourself. Choose quality music recordings and begin to explore a whole new world.

Which music should I use?

That depends on your goal. GIM is not a music appreciation experience, so your general music preferences are not necessarily the most powerful choices for a GIM experience. Remember, your goal in GIM is different. Perhaps in your personal life you use music to relax, to energize you, to experience pleasure, or to provide a backdrop. In GIM, music is used to stimulate or evoke imagery from your deep mind or self. It is there to stimulate new ways of thinking and shed old habits.

If you want to explore aspects of yourself, music by Debussy, Ravel, and Vaughn Williams will be helpful. If you want to stimulate energy and creativity, fast movements from composers like Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart can help.

Try a music experiment.

Try listening to these easy to find classical music pieces. As you listen to each one, ask yourself: What images or impressions come to mind? Of what does this remind me? How does it make me feel? How does it make my body feel?

Debussy's Claire de Lune

Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Pachelbel's Canon in D.

How do I begin the music and imaging process?

Begin with a quiet environment. You can sit in a comfortable chair or lie down. Close your eyes and focus on your breath to carry yourself to a relaxed state. Bring all of your attention to your breath, your expanding and contracting chest, the sound of the air, the feel of your breath. Let worries and distractions pass by you. Begin the music and open your mind and heart.

Let the music stimulate your imagination and generate imagery. Imagery can be symbols, pictures, emotions, understanding/insights, or sensations in your body. Let the images flow freely and speak to you. Allow the music to guide and suggest healing. After listening, reflect on how those images may relate to your present situation and feelings. You may wish to write about your experience.

With practice and observation of how the music affects you, you can become more experienced in choosing your music. See "Music Suggestions for Imaging" for specific music selections you may wish to try. If you find you need more support to go deeper in your journey safely, please seek a professional GIM therapist (FAMI) to assist you on your journey.

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