



## CLASS 4 | DE-STRESS YOURSELF WORKSHEET

### Breathing Into Your Heart

**DIRECTIONS:** *This is a simple yet powerful visualization strategy for stress reduction. Practice this exercise in class or on your own. Try it a few times so that you are ready to use it when a stressful occasion arises.*

1. Sit comfortably, with your arms supported and your legs resting evenly on the floor.
2. Close your eyes. Become aware of your breath.
3. Imagine yourself breathing into your heart, as if you are filling your heart up with air each time you breath in, as you would a balloon.
4. As you breathe, continue to imagine yourself breathing into your heart.
5. Next, in your mind's eye, picture something that makes you feel wonderful. This image can be anything from your life: past or present, other people, objects, or achievements etc. Come to this image, this powerfully pleasant image, and hold it in your mind's eye. Experience it as clearly and vividly as you can.
6. Continue to breathe into your heart for several minutes as you hold in your mind's eye this wonderful, important image.
7. After several minutes of "breathing into your heart," open your eyes and slowly return to an awareness of the room around you.
8. From this sense of relaxation and calm, return to thinking about the situation which caused you to feel stressed. Consider from your renewed perspective what other ways you have of responding to this situation that may be more adaptive and cause you less stress.