

Your Child's Imagination Can Heal

A groundbreaking new way to help children cope with pain, stress, troubling emotions, and behavior issues.

Imagine your frustrated kindergartner calming anger with a special "Balloon Breath." What if your seven-year-old's conversation with her heart could teach her to be proud of herself? Picture your fourth grader visualizing an ice-blue pillow to cool his hot headache. Or your fretful 11-year-old getting homework help from a Personal Wizard.

These are some of the wonderful imagery tools developed by child educational psychologist **CHARLOTTE REZNICK, PHD**, who has been using them for more than 20 years in her private practice, and now shares them and her therapeutic program in a new book, *The Power of Your Child's Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety into Joy and Success* (Perigee, 2009, \$14.95).

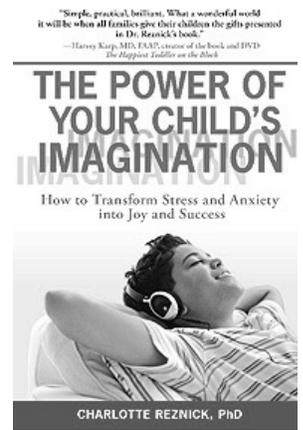
It has long been known that visualization techniques relieve stress, reduce illness, lessen pain, improve school and sports performance, and alleviate anxiety and sleep disorders. Luckily, says Dr. Reznick, children are particularly open to and good at harnessing their imagination as a way to cope with common problems, which sets the stage for a lifetime of self-sufficiency and self-growth.

She presents nine imagery techniques that become tools children can access whenever they need help, along with a mini-primer for each tool—a sample script, troubleshooting tips, and real-life examples of how it is used. The tools are adaptable to all ages (even adults can use them), and their benefits accumulate over time.

Readers learn how the techniques can be applied to help a child:

- Love, accept, and appreciate himself
- Reduce pain and heal other physical ailments
- Overcome fears, such as fear of the unknown, abandonment, doctors, disasters, and dying
- Deal with bedtime issues such as insomnia and bedwetting
- Cope with death, divorce, and other losses
- Handle anger, hurt, and frustration
- Achieve success at school and in sports
- Live peacefully with siblings and parents

Every parent can benefit from the original tools and tips in this book. Dr. Reznick also shows teachers, healthcare professionals, therapists, and others who work with children how to incorporate the principles of her program into their working world.



Your child has a big imagination. We're going to make it an ally, tapping his inner knowledge to help him heal himself and realize his dreams. Simply discovering that he has his own wisdom will be empowering. Developing the habit of listening to it and trusting it will profoundly shape how he meets life's challenges.

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About the Author

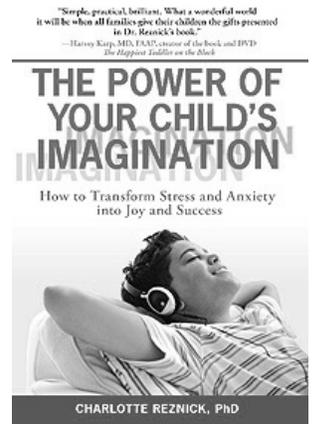
CHARLOTTE REZNICK, PHD, is an internationally recognized child educational psychologist, an associate clinical professor of psychology at UCLA, and a compelling speaker and media personality who has inspired parents, professionals, educators, and psychologists throughout the world with her original therapeutic approach to helping children and adolescents heal themselves. She is author of *The Power of Your Child's Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety into Joy and Success* (Perigee, 2009, \$14.95).

Upon earning her PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California, Dr. Reznick went on to become a Licensed Educational Psychologist, and for over 20 years has maintained a successful private practice in Los Angeles serving children and adolescents. She is best known for the positive coping skills program she developed, called Imagery for Kids™: Breakthrough for Learning, Creativity, and Empowerment, and therapeutic CDs for kids and teens. Imagery for Kids™ teaches children how to use the power of their imagination to understand and manage their feelings, creatively solve problems, and strengthen their self-esteem.

Dr. Reznick is a dynamic speaker who has shared her techniques with audiences throughout the world, including parents, psychologists and health practitioners, teacher groups, and other professionals. She is passionate about teaching adults how to use imagery to help kids tap into their own tremendous inner resources and develop emotional skills necessary for a happy, successful life.

Dr. Reznick has been a guest on NPR, NBC News, and Lifetime, and has been quoted and featured in a wide variety of print and online publications, including *USA Today*, *The Charlotte Observer*, *Nick Jr.*, MSNBC.com, DrKoop.com, iVillage, and Forbes.com, to name a few.

She maintains a lively website (www.imageryforkids.com) featuring a monthly blog, articles she has written, and resources for parents and professionals who work with children and teens.



Benefits of Imagery Techniques

- Relieves stress
- Reduces illness
- Lessens pain
- Improves performance
- Relieves anxiety
- Alleviates sleep disorders
- Minimizes behavioral problems
- Reduces the need for headache medications
- Decreases tics
- Helps with focus

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Nine Imagination Tools to Help Children Cope

Below are nine tools you can teach a child to help her navigate the challenges of growing up, such as fear of doctors, pain of loss, low self-esteem, anger and frustration, stress-induced ailments, trouble sleeping, and many other common stumbling blocks of childhood.

Teach her to Balloon Breathe. With her hands around her navel, have her breathe slowly and deeply into her lower belly so it presses into her hands like an inflating balloon. The Balloon Breath has calming effects and facilitates a waking state of focused concentration and receptivity to positive suggestions.

Visit his Special Place. This is a safe private place within your child's inner world where he can work out problems or take mini-vacations from the stresses of life.

Consult a wise Animal Friend. Have her seek advice and comfort from an imaginary, loving protector who has her best interests at heart, and helps her access inner wisdom.

Encounter a Personal Wizard. Kids may want real magic. His Personal Wizard is a mentor and magical teacher in human form who brings a different level of wisdom: human but extraordinary.

Receive Gifts from inner guides. Once your child is allied with an Animal Friend or Personal Wizard, she can ask for and receive Gifts from them. Gifts can be thoughts, objects, or ideas that symbolically provide children with power and specific ways to solve their problems.

Check in with Heart and Belly. Even adults ask, "What does your heart say?" or "What's your gut reaction?" The Heart and Belly have their own intelligence—and often come up with new answers and solutions to troubling questions.

Talk to toes and other Body Parts. Just as Heart and Belly have their wisdom, so does the body at large. Kids stash feelings and symptoms in almost every part of it; the body is a repository for hidden information. Your child's Body Parts will reveal emotions and physical symptoms and offer healing advice.

Use Color for healing. When a child imagines breathing in favorite protective Colors, a remarkable tool for transforming pain, shifting emotions, and accessing healing energy becomes available.

Tap into Energy. When words are insufficient, a loving touch from a parent or loved one can do wonders to restore calm and well-being. Direct loving energy to your child with your hands, eyes, and thoughts. Teach her to do the same for herself.

"Simple, practical, brilliant. What a wonderful world it will be when all families give their children the gifts presented in Dr. Reznick's book."
—Harvey Karp, MD, FAAP, creator of the Book and DVD *The Wiggly Unfitler on the Block*

THE POWER OF YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION

How to Transform Stress and Anxiety into Joy and Success



Digging for Treasure

When your child gets stuck and doesn't know what the root of his problem is, suggest to him that there's a treasure box buried in his Special Place that holds the answer, and a shovel waiting to be used. Have him dig for the treasure box, perhaps with the aid of an Animal Friend or Wizard. You can open it together to see what's inside.

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Seven Ways to Use Art Therapy with Kids

Draw a self-portrait. On a large sheet of paper, trace your young child's body. Have her imagine what her feelings look like and where they are, and then let her color them in. Older children can design and complete their own. Drawing increases your child's awareness of her inner world, and it's easier to talk about a drawing than to express difficult feelings.

Picture the future. Artwork is also an effective starting point when you're working with clear end-goals, like getting a good night's sleep or reducing a fear. Have your child draw two drawings—how things are now and how he'd like them to be. Kids often hang these pictures in their bedrooms to remind them of their desired direction.

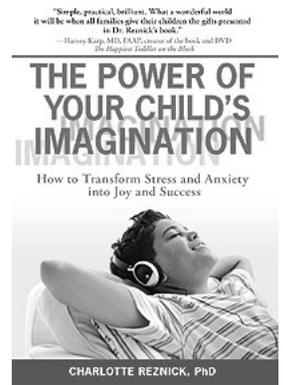
Show and tell. After an imaginary journey, such as a mini-vacation to his Special Place, have your child draw his experience. The picture gives you both something to look at and discuss. If the drawing illustrates a problem—say, a dangerous goblin or a fire at home—ask him what might solve the situation (perhaps an Animal Friend or Personal Wizard can be summoned).

Accept every drawing. Some kids have a tough time committing their mental pictures to paper; they fear they won't measure up. Reassure your child that anything he creates is fine. Sometimes all that comes are strokes of bold color evolving out of a wonderful or terrible feeling that is finally set free on paper. Praise each one. They are the artifacts of your child's inner world.

Talk to the image. Once your child has spilled his feelings on paper, he can converse with them. He might use his picture of Fear to ask what it needs to calm down, or to tell it to leave. It's much easier to speak to feelings when they're outside than when they're gnawing away at his tummy.

Take artistic action. It's a great release when a child can draw her angry, hurt, or upset feelings, but pictures don't have to be static. She can erase part of it, or draw over it in "healing" colors with a changeable marker—an immediate transformation that feels magical. She can even rip up or throw away the paper. These actions can offer a hurting child a sense of control and satisfaction.

Capture the memory. The Special Places your child visits on her journey are personal healing sanctuaries. Hanging pictures of them somewhere private but visible will remind her that she can return whenever the need arises. Drawings of trusted Animal Friends and Wizards can help her remember support is always near.



Right and Left Brain Dialogue

When a child encounters a problem his imagery can't solve, try this. Let him choose one colored marker for his left hand, and a different color for his right. Have his nondominant hand write down a question, and his dominant hand answer it. Let the dialogue continue. You will be surprised what you and your child learn.

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Nonmedical Ways to Treat a Kid's Headache

Headaches are the most common pain kids have. They may be caused by specific events, but can also be the result of underdeveloped coping skills. The good news is that headaches can be helped—often without medication. Here are seven tools to try.

An ounce of prevention. If your child is prone to migraines, talk to him about common triggers: chocolate, caffeine, cheese, and sugar; too little/too much sleep; bright lights/loud noises; stress; anger or frustration; too much/too little exercise; and barometric pressure changes. Knowing the triggers can help with prevention.

The power behind the pill. Ask your child to describe how she imagines the headache pain-reliever works. One child described his Tylenol as a SWAT team that parachuted into his brain to rescue him. Have your child ask her image to help her often—with or without the pain medication.

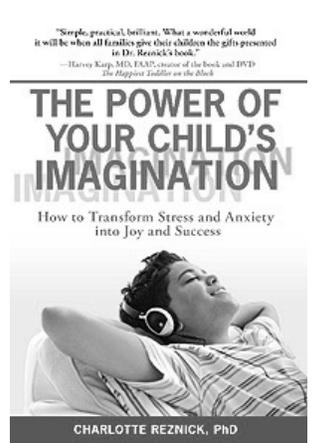
Create a headache journal. Have your child note the date, time, and level of his headache when he feels pain, along with what he was feeling before the headache started. When kids start to make the connection between frustration, say, and the onset of their headaches, it spurs them to learn new coping techniques.

Ask three questions. When a child is suffering, these three questions can help eliminate the pain. Have her do deep Balloon Breathing (diaphragmatic breathing), then ask: (1) What color is it? (2) What shape is it? (3) How heavy is it? After more breaths, ask her again. Continue to breathe and question in rounds. Her pain will likely change or disappear.

Ask the source. Have your child talk directly to the headache. Ask the headache what it wants him to know, do, or understand to release any more bits of pain.

Melt away the rest. Have your child imagine the headache pain melting through her temple and out of her head. Hold your hand about three inches from her forehead to give her a direction in which to send her pain—out and away. Tell her you'll help pull the melting pain out of her head.

Use cooling colors. If your child describes his head as hot or burning, tell him to imagine a color, such as ice blue or deep forest green, cooling down his boiling head.



Childhood Headache Facts

- 90% of all school-aged children experience headaches.
- Childhood headaches are often associated with high levels of pressure and anxiety.
- Migraines affect 10% of all children.
- If you have migraines, there's a 50% chance your child will get them too.

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Advance Praise for *The Power of Your Child's Imagination*

“Simple, practical, brilliant. What a wonderful world it will be when all families give their children the gifts presented in Dr. Reznick’s book. Joy, success . . . and health and happiness are just around the corner!”

— Harvey Karp, MD, FAAP, author of *The Happiest Toddler on the Block*

“Dr. Reznick offers a revolutionary approach for parents to help their children handle fears, worries, and self-doubt. Her simple, accessible advice allows kids to develop their self-esteem while creatively tackling problems. This book is a must-read for any parent who hopes to arm their child with the tools to handle life’s daily struggles.”

— Jack Canfield, coauthor of *The Success Principles™* and the *Chicken Soup for the Soul®* series

“This is a wonderful guide for anyone raising children in a stressful world. I’m looking forward to practicing Dr. Reznick’s strategies with my own daughters as they grow and become more aware of life’s everyday pressures.”

— Mallika Chopra, coauthor of *100 Questions from My Child* and author of *100 Promises to My Baby*

“Charlotte knows kids, and she also knows the power of our own minds to heal ourselves, create images of joy, and become the things we believe we are. . . . A very practical tool set for this age.”

— Lee Carroll, coauthor of the *Indigo Children* book series

“As a skilled psychologist, Dr. Reznick draws from her wealth of experience to offer children and parents a treasure trove of skills to relieve stress. She presents well-written, easy-to-follow tools to use in every situation. From visualization techniques to breathing exercises, Dr. Reznick taps the power of a child’s imagination to ensure kids achieve peace and success.”

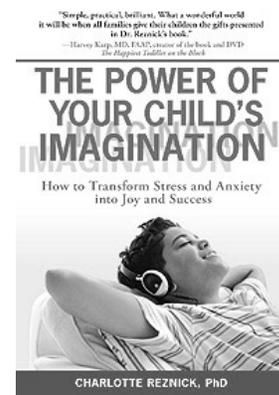
— Judith Orloff, MD, author of *Emotional Freedom*

“Charlotte Reznick’s book fills a gap that has existed far too long. Imagery is a powerful tool for healing at all ages, and children have the greatest ability to utilize it. Every helping professional and every parent needs to learn these skills.”

— Emmett Miller, MD, author of *Deep Healing: The Essence of Mind/Body Medicine* and *Our Culture on the Couch*

“This is one of the most important books ever written, because it teaches you how to teach your kids to deal with fear, anger, anxiety, illnesses, losses and relationships in positive and healthy ways. Imagination is what makes humans different from all other creatures, yet nobody ever teaches us how to use it. EVERY parent, educator and healthcare worker should read this book.”

— Martin L. Rossman, MD, author of *Guided Imagery for Self-Healing*



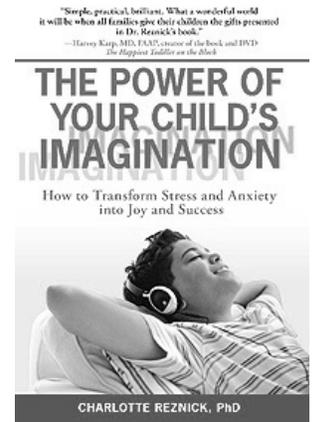
“The challenges of growing up in today’s rapidly changing society are enormous. Children need to be equipped with skills for survival and growth that were never before imagined. I focus on teaching children and adolescents self-healing and self-control techniques that will empower them to realize their potential throughout their lifetime.”

—Charlotte Reznick, PhD

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Suggested Interview Questions

1. What was your goal in writing this book?
2. What does research say about the power of a child's imagination?
3. You developed a program using nine imagery tools, which you've been using in your private practice as a child educational psychologist and teaching others for 20 years. What are the nine tools?
4. What ages best respond to these techniques?
5. Do these tools work with all children, or are certain children—say, especially artistic kids—better at using them than others?
6. Can these “tools” work for parents too? Should we all have imaginary friends?
7. How can parents use music, drawing, or writing to enhance these techniques?
8. Sleep issues are a major concern for kids today. How can parents use imagination to help their kids fall asleep quickly and easily?
9. What advice would you give to a parent whose child needs help building up his self-esteem?
10. How can my child become his/her own best friend?
11. How would you use the program to help a child who suffers from bullying and feels bad about himself?
12. What tools would be useful for a child caught in the middle of a nasty divorce and custody battle between parents?
13. How would you use imagery techniques with a kid, say, who is often complaining of chronic stomachaches or other stress-related physical ailments?
14. What can these techniques do for kids who are fearful?
15. Give an example of how a surviving parent might help a child who has lost her other parent in the war or from an illness.
16. What advice would you give to a parent or school counselor who wants to help an angry child who's acting out?
17. How do your tools help kids boost their performance in sports or schoolwork?
18. What tips do you have for parents of siblings that are constantly fighting?
19. You have some therapeutic relaxation CDs (Discovering Your Special Place, Creating a Magical Garden and Healing Pond, Climbing a Mountain of Success, and now the companion CDs with the guided journeys from this book). How do they help kids in emotional self-care, and what's the best way parents can make good use of them?
20. Where can parents or professionals who work with children learn more about your imagery techniques and tools?
21. Parenting today is hard. What is your best advice for parents to help their kids succeed in life?



Top 10 Things Kids Most Want and Need from Parents

- Patience
- Understanding
- Listening
- Soft voices
- Structure
- Consistency
- Love
- Freedom connected to responsibility
- Family and extended family
- Role models

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