

## Episode 2: More About Relaxation

**John:** We want to welcome you to our second episode of MindSolvers. In our last episode, we shared with you some of the very basics of reaching the relaxed state of mind in order to destress and manage anxiety, which are only a few of the numerous negative symptoms of stress.

**Verl:** Yeah, and relieving that anxiety can help us get through a lot of the problems we face in life.

**John:** In this episode, we're going to share yet another relaxation technique, especially for those who didn't quite reach the level of relaxation desired, in the hot tub, and in the process explain why some people do better with one type of technique while others tend to do better with another.

**Verl:** Let's take a look at that.

**John:** The technique that we're going to introduce you to today is known as "Blending with Nature," and was taught to me by a very dear friend of mine who could see that I was a very difficult nut to crack!

**Verl:** You?! What do you mean by that?

**John:** Well, to answer this, let me return to the topic of Sensory Perception that we introduced in our last episode. As mentioned before, every one of us, without exception, is bombarded with external stimuli every second throughout the entire day, and whether we understand it, believe it, or not, throughout the entire night, as well.

**Verl:** What?! Even at night?

**John:** Yes! Even while we sleep at night, external stimuli doesn't stop just because we close our eyes and try to sleep, and it continues to be recorded in our minds (we'll have to dig deeper into this in a moment).

**Verl:** Good. I'd like some explanation.

**John:** To understand what stimuli I'm talking about just consider our five senses, all the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings that are constantly a part of our lives, most of which we completely ignore. Some, however, catch our attention, for good or for bad, and we process these as they happen.

**Verl:** I know I've asked you before, but give me an example.

**John:** Well, like an attractive person we cross paths with (other people are totally ignored), maybe someone honking at you (we're mostly likely oblivious to all the other traffic noises), something burning on the stove (we sometimes miss the most subtle fragrances), food that we're eating (at that very moment, but at other times we rarely notice the tastes in our mouth), and of course, the sensations of hot or cold on our skin, the pressure on our legs or back from sitting in a chair too long, or the tightness of the shoes we're wearing. If we consciously noticed each and every one of these and so many other sensations each and every second of the day, we would literally go stark raving mad!

**Verl:** Now I understand what you mean by external stimuli. We couldn't exist for more than a few moments if we noticed and tried to keep track of all those things!

**John:** Yes, in fact, I have tinnitus, the constant ringing in my ears.

**Verl:** Really? I had no idea.

**John:** If you don't have it, you could never possibly conceive of what it's like. At any rate, because this noise is always there, 24X7, and never goes away, if my brain didn't filter it out for most of my waking day, it would drive me completely insane. The brain is so amazing in this way.

**Verl:** You hear it all the time?

**John:** No, in fact, it's always there, but I don't hear it unless I stop and think about it, like right now.

**Verl:** That's crazy.

**John:** Right?! And the brain does a phenomenal job of filtering out so many other sensations, as well. But studies have shown that it's all being recorded and can be retrieved, if needed, as far back as when we were just infants, or even younger. We'll probably have to get back to this, as it's a fascinating subject. 5:30

**Verl:** I Can't wait!

**John:** The way we perceive life's experiences indicates in a limited and simplistic way how our minds are organized. Much of the world's population seems to be visually oriented and are capable of seeing very vivid images in their mind's eye. Others, however, see only that which their eyes capture at that instant in time and literally go blind as their eyelids close. Those who are visually oriented just can't relate to people like this as they have never experienced thought without imagery. Those whose minds are not visually oriented cannot even grasp what it's like to conjure up vivid images in their mind's eye.

**Verl:** Yeah, I know I'm very visually oriented.

**John:** And I'm not! Even though I can visualize, to a limited degree, when I close my eyes, it just goes dark; there are no images! People like me are generally categorized into two groups, auditory and kinesthetic.

**Verl:** How's that?

**John:** So, if you were to ask me to describe my mother face, for instance, I could generally tell you her characteristics, but not from seeing her face in my mind's eye. Interestingly, however, if I were to bring up in my mind the last time I spoke to her, on the telephone, for instance, a mental image of her face would pop into my mind, but not without that auditory stimulus.

**Verl:** No kidding!

**John:** Yeah, so sounds, voices, and especially music helps to generate lots of imagery for me. The other general category is Kinesthetic, or feelings and emotions.

**Verl:** Give me an example.

**John:** Well, maybe the best way to answer this question is to help our listeners determine their own Sensory Perception category.

**Verl:** How do we determine that?

**John:** Ok, simply describe verbally (out loud) to someone, whoever's around you, where you live. Have them listen carefully to the words you use.

**Verl:** How does that help?

**John:** First, I want you to pause the podcast. Find someone, anyone, and just do this. Then come back and I'll explain.

**Verl:** Ok?

**John:** You see, if I explained it first, it would skew your answers.

**Verl:** So, use the record feature on your phone or laptop and describe the place where you live. Then, go back and note the types of words you use to describe it. Now, later John is going to tell you what those different types of things mean. If there's someone with you, and it's a good exercise for both of you to do together anyway, describe the place you live to each other. You might be surprised how different each of you describe it. So, either way, do not go on until you have done this exercise.

**John:** So, a visually oriented person might reply something like this: “I live in a two-story home with white siding, red brick, and a gray-shingled roof. It’s a beautiful home that was decorated with earth-tone, sculptured carpet throughout.” You see, this is painting a vivid picture of what they’re seeing in their mind’s eye throughout their home, their yard, and even their neighborhood. A similar visual description could come from someone who doesn’t like their living circumstances, but still describe everything in very visual terms.

**Verl:** Oh, interesting!

**John:** Someone with auditory orientation might say: “I must live in the noisiest of all neighborhoods imaginable; dogs are barking day and night, kids are everywhere and raise Cain from sunup to sundown. My neighbors are no better as they play loud music all hours of the day and night.” You see, most everything expressed is descriptive of sounds. Now someone else with Auditory SP living in the same neighborhood may describe a very different experience, but it will be described using auditory terms.

**Verl:** And what about the kinesthetic?

**John:** Well, they might say, “I love my neighbors; everyone gets along so well. What a great neighborhood. We couldn’t have found a better bunch of people to call friends. We feel so comfortable living here that we don’t even lock our doors at night.” Now, someone else with kinesthetic tendencies, who hates their neighbors, may express the opposite impressions; however, they’re describing their experience with emotions.

**Verl:** Wow, that is different. But not everyone is that one-sided, are they?

**John:** No, not everyone leans toward one category as dramatically as is described them here. Many will be able to insert aspects of several or all types into their description, but you’ll find that one category will stand out very distinctly. You can even hear what category they fit into by listening to how they speak as they use descriptive phrases like: “Do you see what I mean?” or “Let me draw a picture for you,” or “Listen to me,” or “Read my lips,” or even, “You just don’t understand me.”

**Verl:** Yeah, now that you mention it, I do hear these used a lot. In fact, John, when you describe yourself as a “tough nut to crack,” it sounds pretty kinesthetic, as well. So, how does knowing this about ourselves help to relax?

**John:** Ah! Thanks for getting us back on track. You see, I’m visually handicapped! And I also have what’s called Analysis Paralysis.

**Verl:** Say that again.

**John:** Analysis Paralysis...you’ll find this type of person in jobs that require analytical thought, like practically anyone who works in the computer industry—programmers, engineers, analysts, testers. Doctors and nurses, judges, attorneys, legal aids almost all fit into this same category (we have a million questions and are never quite satisfied with the answers given).

**Verl:** Yeah, that’s you alright. I remember when we first started working together and I tried to help you with relaxation by visualizing things. It was really frustrating for both of us when you were mostly unable to do that. I didn’t understand why you couldn’t when I could see things so clearly. Now I understand the combination of analysis paralysis and kinesthetic that caused that.

**John:** Yeah, so frustrating, so the more you know about yourself, the better you can pinpoint just what method to use in order to relax. Everyone can do it, but with some, it just takes a little more finesse.

**Verl:** Ok, so how did the “Blending with Nature” technique help you relax? Before you answer that, John, why don’t we ask our listeners to see if they can follow along and experience some of what you experience? So, as we explained in the first episode, be sure you’re not driving or

moving around, that you're in a quiet place, sitting or lying down, where you can focus on John's voice and listen as he describes his blending with nature experience.

**John:** Oh, right. Well, because of my natural analytical tendencies and my lack of visual acuity, I was taken to a city park with a great big, old oak tree. I stood in front of it and was told to virtually memorize every aspect of this old tree. What I discovered was that by doing this, I could, in fact, close my eyes and have the image of this old tree still fresh in my mind; I didn't have to create anything visually, it was there because I was just staring at it for five minutes analyzing every unique and interesting feature.

Then, I was told to literally reach out and feel the bark and discover all its curious nuances, which I did.

**Verl:** So, not only did you get the image in your mind, but the tactile feel of it as well.

**John:** Oh, yes, and that's when I discovered my kinesthetic tendencies; they all came alive! I could close my eyes and imagine the look and feel in my mind. It felt real to me.

**Verl:** So the imagination has a lot to do with all this.

**John:** Oh, yes! It's all about the imagination. In fact, the more that you can "pretend" that you're actually there and doing what's being experienced through the imagination, the deeper into that mental state of relaxation you'll find yourself. And I discovered this when I was told to "now become the tree." And my imagination just went wild as I felt myself becoming that old oak tree. So, whether you're visually handicapped, like myself, or a visual virtuoso, like Verl, simply close your eyes and join me as I share this experience with you.

I could sense my toes stretching down and sinking deep, deep down into the earth becoming the roots. I could feel the liquid nutrients being drawn in and working its way through my core trunk and into my arms as they then reached up into the sky, higher and higher, and became the limbs and branches rising up into the warmth of the sun's rays. I had become the tree!

And then, to cap the experience, I could hear a scratching noise as I felt and saw a family of little, grayish-red squirrels chasing each other around my trunk and heard them as they plucked several of my acorns and shoved them into their ever-bulging cheeks. And then, I could see in the distance a flock of what looked like sparrows flying my way. As they all came to light in my very own branches, and I could feel their talons as they wrapped around and gripped tightly and the weight of their tiny little bodies causing those branches to droop just slightly. And I could hear the cacophony of chirps as they seemed to communicate with each other. And I could feel the warmth of the Sun rays baking the bark of my trunk causing my leaves to open wide to receive the nourishing rays of the sunlight and feel the cool breeze and hear the wind as it rushed through my branches and rustled my leaves.

**Verl:** And you were gone.

**John:** Like nothing I had ever felt before. So relaxed. If you have been following along with me, let me suggest that you remain in a very calm and relaxed state of mind.

It seems that time has gotten away from us for this episode, and we didn't touch upon the topic of the conscious and subconscious minds. But as a segway into our next episode, let me leave you with our gift, that mental bonus. While you find yourself in that very relaxed state of mind, to all who are aspiring writers, in whatever field or genre. Allow that part of your mind, which is always awake and alert and attentive to your needs, bring to the conscious awareness ideas, thoughts, expressions, feelings, sounds, imagery, of that very subject that you're contemplating, in clear and vivid detail, so that when we bring you back to reality, in just a moment, it will all be coherent, lucid, and completely accessible as you begin the process of elucidating your thoughts.

Now, let me suggest that you bring yourself back to reality, with your mind being cleansed and refreshed, as if you had a full eight hours of peaceful, restful sleep. And when you're ready, simply open your eyes.