

into and out of you, in whatever way feels comfortable to you. . . .

And now imagine your family and friends lower you gently onto the grass and leave you there to sleep and rest. After a short while you awaken, and looking down on the beautiful blanket, you see a very special symbol that represents the loving care and support you receive from those who are part of your life. . . . And now allow a symbol to form of the love and friendship you give to others. . . . And if you do not experience these symbols right now, it may be that after this exercise is over you will discover the symbols for love you receive from those who are part of your life and symbols for love you give. You are likely to discover that all of those symbols fit you perfectly.

As you prepare to end this exercise, remember that you can use these symbols of love, and you can recall how it feels to be rocked and embraced by friends and family, whenever you need it. Perhaps you would like to use this image as you go to sleep at night. Or you may want some healing energy when you are not feeling well. By remembering the love of friends and family, you can increase your energy and sense of well-being.

And now, gently stretch your arms and legs and bring your awareness back to the room, carrying with you the symbols of love that you received and gently opening your eyes when you are ready.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Sometimes I think we don't solve anything, we just rearrange the mystery."

— Officer Leaphorn in *Skinwalker*, by Tony Hillerman

I hope this card helps you create a little peace, joy and love in your life

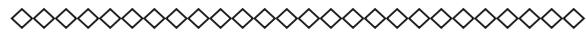
This card—**Family and Friends Surround You With Love**—is Number 19 in a series of "Diversions for You and Your Friends" created by Arlene Harder, MA, MFT, Support4Change Blog.



For this special imagery exercise today, I've chosen the picture above, which was taken of lilac bushes next to my daughter's house near Washington, DC.

They are one of my favorite flowers not only because of their fragrance, but because their gentle beauty announces their presence each spring. Of course, because they are seasonal, we don't find them in the florist as often as other flowers, but when you enter a room, you know they, and their beauty, are there. Similarly, the support of friends surrounds you even when you cannot see them.

The imagery exercise inside this card is based on one I created for The Wellness Community—Foothills (now Cancer Support Community). Participants in the program found that it helped them to remember all the love in our lives. The gentle caring of others was a balm to their spirits and a conduit for serenity and hope. They realized that the end of life, whether soon or later, became more luminous and approachable when they were in the presence of beauty — and of love, which this exercise so clearly demonstrates.



Experiencing the Love of Others

As you prepare to experience the power of love in your life, let yourself rest fully and comfortably on your chair, sofa or bed, and gently close your eyes. . . . Begin to relax by noticing where in your body you may be holding some tension or stress . . . and then relaxing even more by allowing that tension to flow down your spine, down your legs and then into the furniture and on into the ground . . . continuing to relax more and more . . . letting your mind become quiet and still . . . moving into a space within where you can let your mind wander back over the years and notice the many people whom you have liked and loved . . . and especially remember those who have liked and loved you. . . .

As you think of all of these people, remember now the special person who is, or was, the one whose love has supported you the most. . . . See the love in the eyes of this person and experience what it felt like when the person shared that love with you. . . . And now imagine this person has come today to give you a very special symbol of love and friendship. . . . Accept this gift into your heart . . . allowing the love and caring support of this wonderful friend or member of your family to fill you with warmth and pleasure and joy. . . .

And now, let the image of another friend, or perhaps someone in your family, come into your mind . . . See the love in these eyes and experience what it felt like when that person shared that love with you . . . and notice that this person also wants to give you a gift that represents love and friendship. Again, accept this gift into your heart, allowing the love and caring support of this person to fill you with warmth and pleasure and joy. . . .

Imagine that yet another friend or family member wants to give you a symbolic gift of love and friendship. Accept into your heart this gift as well, allowing the love and caring of this person to fill you with warmth and pleasure and joy. . . .

And now become aware of all the people who have given you

love and friendship and support, the people who have kept you in their thoughts and who wish for you the very best. . . . And as you allow their faces to appear before you and as you remember the wonderful times you have had with them, allow the love and friendship of each one of them to fill you with warmth and pleasure and joy. . . .

And now, as these beloved faces continue to appear to you, imagine that all of them invite you to a beautiful and peaceful meadow. When you arrive, you notice that they have placed on the ground a brilliant, magnificent blanket woven out of their love and care. You take a moment to look at this blanket they have all helped make. What do you imagine it would look like? . . . When you are done admiring this beautiful blanket and they invite you to lie down upon it. And after you have placed your body on this blanket of love, they all take hold of the edges. Then they gently lift you off the ground and rock you back and forth as they cradle you in their embrace. . . . slowly and gently, rocking back and forth . . . And if you are concerned that they may not be able to lift you, just realize that this is a magic blanket woven from love and it is the strength of this love that easily lifts you. So let yourself now experience what it would be like to be rocked very gently by the people you love and let the feeling of warmth and pleasure and joy flow over you and through you. . . .

As now as the feeling of love seeps into every cell in your body, you realize, perhaps for the first time, that all these people accept you just as you are. Oh, there may be a few who sometimes get annoyed with you. After all, you are only human and you make mistakes like all of us do. And there may be some whose personal characteristics are such that you can't always feel their love. But as you are rocked gently in this blanket, you realize it is woven from a great deal of love that many friends and family members are able and willing to give. And as you continue to be embraced in their genuine love and affection for you, you become aware, on a very deep level, that you have the right to be loved and appreciated just as you are. You realize that you don't need to be a "perfect" person and to always make the "right" decisions. You don't need to "do" anything to deserve love. Simply because you live—and you are you—you deserve love. And furthermore, you realize that everyone has the right to be loved. And now, reflect on that thought as you continue to be cradled by the love and friendship of so many people. . . .

And as you realize that everyone has the need and the right to receive love, you notice that the energy of love which flows into you, easily flows out and back to the people who surround you. Take a moment now and allow yourself to experience love flowing