

A Community Garden Visualisation

By Lynda McCarty.

This can be read out to people participating in your visioning process.

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Take three deep breaths, releasing any stress or tension you feel in your body. Let go of any thoughts. Just be. Relax. Be aware of any tension in your face. Feel it drain away. Hunch your shoulders. Now relax. Stretch out your hands and arms, tighten and release.

In front of you is a long hallway. Walk through this hallway, until you come to a set of steps. Walk down these steps. You are on a landing. You open a door and step into a garden. As you look around, you realize it is your community garden. It is so familiar, and yet what do you know about this place? Spend some time exploring your garden using your senses.

Look at the kinds of trees and plants you have here. How do they interact? Do they attract a lot of bird life? Do they produce food? What is their purpose? Do you have fruit trees and chooks? Where are they placed within your garden? Observe some of the other features in your garden. Let your garden speak to you. How do the individual plants, trees, flowers, water features, animals, contribute to the whole garden? Take in the essence of what you feel, see and hear around you. Become one with the plants, the animals, the birds, the insects, the soil, the elements. They all have a place within the bigger picture, which is always changing from day to day, season to season, from birth to living to dying to decaying and recycling to start the process all over again.

You see your garden as it is and then as it could be. Sense a new possibility of creating, expanding beyond the boundaries of what you already know. Use this possibility to imagine what your garden is like in two or five years. You see a gathering of people interacting, laughing and having fun. They are sharing ideas, experiences, and practical applications. These people are working together and yet they are doing their own thing. The people have common interests, common goals.

As you walk around observing, you become aware of what a group of individuals can create together. Do you see yourself having a role within the garden? What opportunities would open up for you here? How would you contribute? Have you come here as a visitor or are you part of this community? You have a choice. Walk through this garden as you see it now, creating possibilities for the future.

It is now time to go. Take one last look around, remembering any specific thoughts and ideas you want to bring back with you, from either your own garden or the community garden.

In the distance you can see the door. Walk over to it. Open the door and walk to the steps. You climb up the steps. You are at the top, looking down the long hallway. Begin your walk towards the end of your journey, being aware of your body on the chair.

Stretch your arms, legs and body, bringing your awareness back into the room. Listen to the sounds around you. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes. Invite people to share what they 'saw' – perhaps in small groups or by writing on pieces of paper and putting them up for everyone to read.

From: **claire nettle** (2009) Growing Community: Starting and nurturing community gardens, Adelaide: Health SA, Government of South Australia and Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association Inc.

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