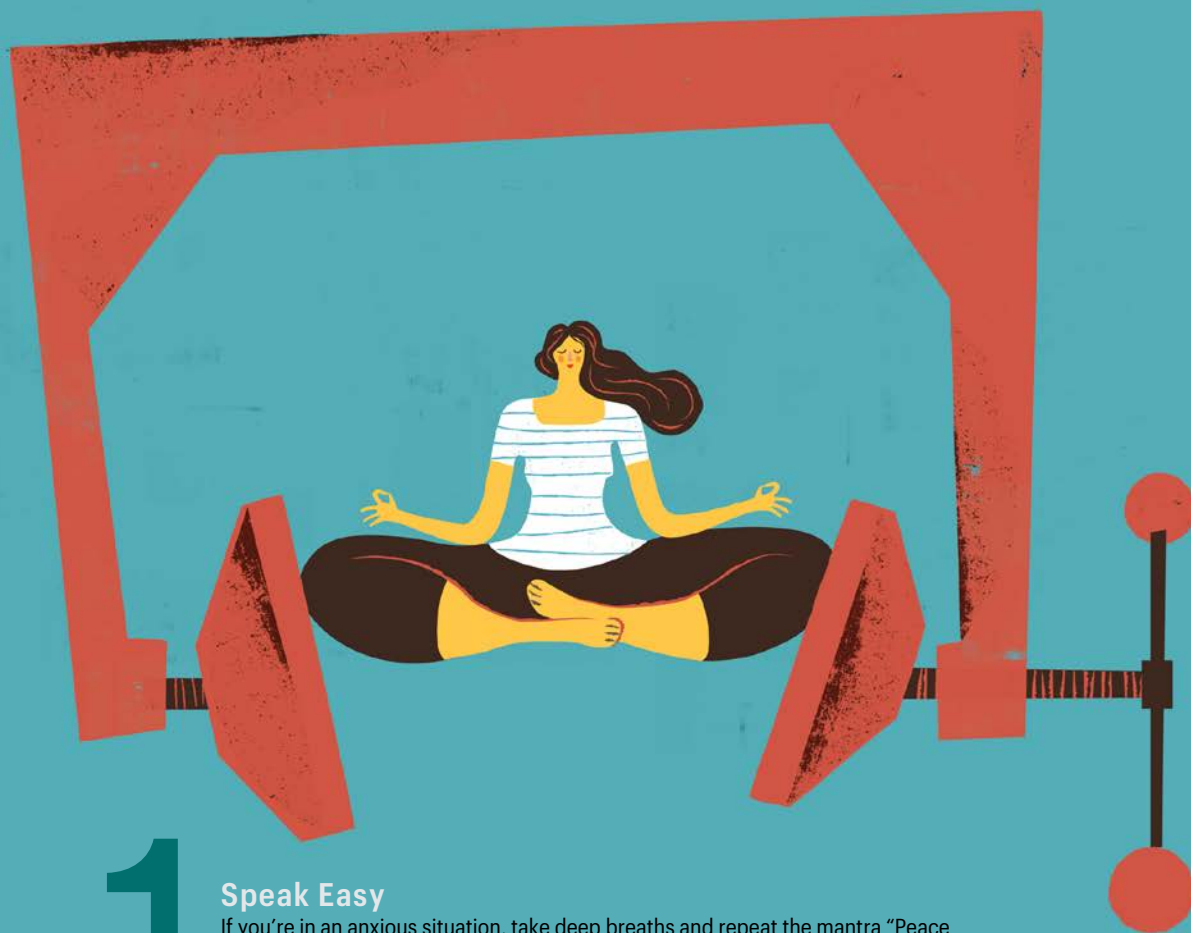


5 Simple Ways to Relax More

BY MALLORY CREVELING

Live in the moment by following this zen advice (for you and your kids) from Gabrielle Bernstein, author of The Universe Has Your Back.



1

Speak Easy

If you're in an anxious situation, take deep breaths and repeat the mantra "Peace begins with me." (Research shows it can trigger a relaxation response in your body.) As you say each word, tap your thumb on your index, middle, ring and pinky fingers, letting each word correspond to a different digit. Practice this regularly and use it as your go-to soothing tool.

Calm kids down When one of your kids is frustrated, sit on the floor and face each other. Say the mantra out loud as you both tap your fingers together.

2

Write Your Remedy

Jot down a few upbeat affirmations, such as “I am happy,” “I am loved,” “I am healthy” or anything else you’re thankful for. Stick them on the fridge, in your car or on the bathroom mirror as a daily reminder of all the good in your life.

Calm kids down Turn this into an art project by having your children draw or paint affirmations on paper. Or simply have them pick one out for the week.



3

Embrace the Wait

Getting stuck in traffic, sitting at the doctor’s office, standing in a super-long line at the store: They’re all time sucks annoying enough to provoke a silent scream—unless you take control of the situation. Turn it into a happier experience by listening to an audiobook or podcast, calling a friend you haven’t spoken to in a while or downloading a cool new app. Instead of letting your blood pressure rise, you’ll be relaxed and having fun.

Calm kids down Suggest they bring a book, draw or listen to their favorite music while you browse the grocery aisle.

4

Picture This

Cut or print out images that reflect what you want to happen in your life in the next six months to a year. Paste them on a piece of paper as a reminder of what you’re working toward. Every time you glance at it, you’ll focus on what you have to look forward to.

Calm kids down Turn this into a family project with everyone creating their own collage for display in a central area.

5

Switch Your Thoughts

When you have something you’re dreading—like an awkward conversation with your partner or a work presentation—picture a positive outcome. Take five minutes, close your eyes and stop yourself from dwelling on possible negatives by replacing them with uplifting images. Train yourself to do this whenever discouraging thoughts start to sneak in.

Calm kids down If your children get upset while working on a school project or become angry because they can’t do something, talk them through it. Point out the parts of the project they’ve already tackled or know how to do. Then have them visualize the happy outcome.

“Obstacles are detours in the right direction.”