**The River of Life Self-Hypnosis Method**
from *Bodymind Healing Psychotherapy* (Mayer, 2007, 2009)

(Begin by giving yourself a Subjective Units of Distress Score (S.U.D.S score is 0 to 10, 10 being the most distressed)

- Notice the breath arising up your back on your inhalation. It goes up to the sky where you absorb your own "spiritual image," (of God, the light of the sun, etc.) As you exhale the breath, carrying that connection, comes down the front central channel of your body to below your navel. Your exhalation is longer than the inhalation; your pause after exhaling is longer than the inhalation.
- Imagine a river coming down the front of your body. This is "the River of your Life." Perhaps images will arise of some of the difficult times you had when trees fell into the river, waterfalls occurred where you barely survived the fall, or ice blocks formed. Yet your river has continued down to this time/place in your life where you are sitting by your calm inner pool, which you can imagine being kinesthetically by your belly. Populate your inner sanctuary with the color of flowers, and type of trees that you imagine there. How many breaths does it take to lower your SUDS score to a comfortable level? This "transcendent dimension" of the ROL is activated at the end of your exhalation where you dissolve into the surroundings of your inner sanctuary. After you've been in your Inner Sanctuary with repeated exhalations…
- Imagine that the River comes down to the Ocean after the end of your exhalation. Feel your feet in the Sands and a new Stance toward life develops from how you felt when you were upstream. Appreciate the journey of your life down the river.
- Use the practice without attachment to the outcome. If your SUDS level has not gone down sufficiently, first try to feel where the river is blocked in your bodymind. What issue arises in the stream that stops your energy from going downstream? Imagine it as an ice-block with words written on it. Imagine the compassionate light of the sun shining on the ice melting it into water, then water vapor rising up to the heavens on your inhalation. If this doesn't bring down your SUDS level sufficiently, then try the "transmuting dimension." * One part of Bodymind Healing Psychotherapy's transmuting of the issues is Cognitive Restructuring.

**2. Cognitive Restructuring** (from a *Bodymind Healing Psychotherapy* viewpoint):

- Identify your Negative Belief: As you *Focus* (Gendlin, 1978) on your bodily felt sense, what issue blocks your river. Find the negative belief behind this feeling. Write it down and give it a SUDS number in parenthesis.
- What would be a more truthful or constructive belief? A formula helps:
  Even though_____, this is an opportunity to_____.
  Fill in these blanks and then write the new SUDS level in parenthesis.
- Do a few rounds of cognitive restructuring, until the SUDS level goes down sufficiently.
- Sometimes if your SUDS level doesn't go down sufficiently, it's helpful to imagine pouring the new truthful constructive belief, as if it's healing medicine, into your inner river. Let it wash through the center of your body on your exhalation going down to your feet.

**3. Qigong and Energy Psychology methods:**

- Sometimes it's helpful to integrate Qigong and/or *Energy Psychology* methods to the above practices (See below*).

* Please note that these practices are more fully described in Dr. Mayer's Books, *Bodymind Healing Psychotherapy* (2007) and *Energy Psychology* (2009) and in the CEU training video Bodymind Healing in Psychotherapy. *The River of Life Audio* is available as a download from www.bodymindhealing.com. Complementary Qigong practices can be found in the Bodymind Healing Qigong set described in the book *Secrets to Living Younger Longer*:. *www.bodymindhealing.com*