**Go on a vacation in your mind to your favorite places –**

**the beach, mountains, grandma’s house, any place real or imagined**

**Focus on your 5 senses** – Below are some examples

* **See:** What would you be seeing (get into the “juicy details”) – obvious and not so

obvious

* + **Beach** – ocean, boat off in a distance, birds flying above, the trail of some sea life in the sand, the sea grass blowing in the wind, the red sunburn of someone’s skin
  + **Mountains** - a leaf floating down from a tree eventually falling into the stream and drifting down the stream, water over rocks, decayed wood with tiny little mushrooms of interesting shapes and colors, trees and leaves of different shapes, sizes, colors and shades, rainbow colored trout camouflaged by rocks, circles on surface of the water
  + **Grandma’s home or other safe place** - walk through all of the rooms of a favorite home remembering what was in each room, where the furniture was placed, what was in the cabinets, the colors, light fixtures, the large picture window, rocking chairs on the front porch
* **Hear:** What are the obvious sounds and the not so obvious sounds you might hear?
  + **Beach:** The sounds of the waves crashing onto the beach, seagulls in the background, children’s muffled laughter from down the beach, lifeguards whistle blowing, kite blowing in the wind, buzz of a bug.
  + **Mountains:** The wind in the trees, waterfall before you see it, bugs chirping, the sound of an animal in the bushes, water in a stream, fish jumping, crackling of a fire, silence
  + **Grandma’s house:** remembering voices of family members, ceiling fan, Hee Haw / Lawrence Welk in the back ground, cards being shuffled, birds singing, sound of rain
* **Smell:** What are the obvious smells and the not so obvious smells?
  + **Beach:** Salt air, charcoal, sun tan lotion
  + **Mountains:** fresh air, plants in bloom, pine, white oak, skunk, wild flowers, smell of rain in the air
  + **Grandma’s House:** cookies baking, air freshener, fire place , moth balls
* **Touch:** What sensations do you feel?
  + **Beach:** sun on your face, cool breeze, sand beneath your toes, the way the sand is pulled away from your feet when the ocean pulls back, lotion being applied
  + **Mountains:** the crunch of leaves beneath your feet, the coolness of a rock your laying on, breeze, the unevenness of the ground, coolness of the water, moisture in the air, damp moss
  + **Grandma’s House:** breeze of the ceiling fan, comfort of a quilt, warmth of the fireplace, feel of the rocking chair rocking
* **Taste:** What tastes do you associate with this place
  + **Beach:** salt air, cool drink, ice cream, snow cone, fish fry
  + **Mountains:** water, honey suckle, fresh fished cooked over an open fire
  + **Grandma’s House:** cookies, treats, popcorn cooked on an open fire,

**Who Loved you into Being Exercise**

This is a wonderful place to take your mind at those times when you either cannot fall asleep or wake up and can’t fall back to sleep – spending that time savoring those people who have made a difference in your life.

In 1997, when Fred Rogers from PBS’s ***Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*** accepted an Emmy for lifetime achievement, he gave a unique speech, in which he asked a room full of movie stars to close their eyes for 10 seconds and think about who loved them into being. The beautifully dressed and made up stars began to smile and have tears stream down their faces in that brief 10 seconds. You can watch the clip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Upm9LnuCBUM>

His brief speech went like this, “So many people have helped me to come to this night, some of you are here, some are far away, some are even in heaven. All of us have special ones who have loved us into being. Would you just take, along with me, 10 seconds to think of the people who have helped you become who you are, those who have cared about you and wanted what was best for you in life.” There was 10 seconds of silence and then he ended with, “ Whomever you have been thinking about, how pleased they must be to know the difference you feel they have made.”

Mr. Roger’s touch people in 10 seconds –so whether you are awake for 10 seconds or a couple of hours what a wonderful place to take your mind – savoring those people who have made a difference in your life. Some may have had a huge impact and others just touched your life for a brief period, but also had an impact, or maybe it was just a simple statement they made that impacted you deeply in terms of how you felt about yourself, possibly giving you a different perspective. Maybe someone’s simple act of kindness left you feeling touched, seen and cared about.

* **Think of the people who have helped you become who you are, those who have cared about you and wanted what was best for you in life**. Allow yourself to take pleasure in remembering these people, their impact, and allowing yourself to feel the connection and feel the gratitude you have towards them. Rest in feeling loved and cared about, knowing that you matter and that you have worth. Maybe sending loving kindness wishes to them (May you be safe, may you be happy, may you feel love, etc.). What a delight way to spend a sleepless minute or hour – appreciating those who have meant so much..

* In the daylight hours you might spend some time **jotting down those people’s names**. I keep a list of people in the notes section of my phone so I can easily add to the list as different people come to mind or new experiences give me reason to add to my list. Feeling grateful for the kindness of others can become addictive.
* If you want to take the savoring a bit further, **write a short synopsis of how each person impacted you**.
* And if you really want to take it further **send a short note to each person** – sharing with them how they have impacted you and sharing your gratitude. As Fred Rogers noted, this person (wherever they are) would be pleased to know the difference they made. My sister in law once received such a note from a yoga student of her’s who was doing a 30 days of gratitude exercise that involved sending a note a day to someone she was grateful for. There have been [many studies](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition#why_practice) over the past decade have found that people who consciously count their blessings tend to be happier and less depressed.  What I can tell you was my sister in law was very touched by that note and her happiness quotient went up many points that day and for some time after as she shared her experience and delight with others!

Now some people might say – there is no one or not many people who have loved me into being – but give it a little time and think of even those small incidences in which someone showed a kindness toward you – maybe the clerk at the pharmacy who remembers you and asks in a genuine way how you are doing and makes sure you are up to date on your flu shot. I once had a client who had not had the greatest mother, but had a pretty amazing Aunt that cared about her greatly. After her Aunt’s funeral, she said to her Uncle, “I wonder how I would have turned out if I’d had her for a mother?” To which her Uncle responded, “I think you turned out pretty good.” That simple statement, left quite an impression on her and actually brings tears to her eyes whenever she replays that moment in her mind. So think of a teacher, mentor, supervisor, co-worker, family member, stranger, etc. Don’t let your mind shut it down – be open, curious, think of big and small impacts. Don’t worry about trying to find perfect relationships – those are very rare.