

Using Your Creative Imagination

We're already months into this lockdown. The kids are restless and cranky. The backyard or nearby park just doesn't give you enough zest anymore.

I've got a way to switch it up and send you "out of this world." It's a six-minute journey to an exotic land that's always available to you in a split second. It's the world where you journey through the wonders of your creative imagination.

Your imagination can be a great ally and friend in life. It can keep your spirit alive. It can save you from dullness. But only if you actively use it.

Habits of Happiness #2 — The Happiness of Your Creative Imagination

Jacques Ibert, "Escales," movement 1 (Palermo)

Leopold Stokowski, conductor, L'Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, EMI Classics*



Exercise: Sit, eyes closed. This music will take you through an entire day in a 16th-century port town (Palermo) on a big market day.

Note: *the following directions are suggestions only!* Go with whatever pops into your imagination along the way. But these milestones are strongly attuned to the progression of the music, and if you're not sure how to jump into your imagination, these steps will help!

- The music starts in the predawn darkness. You're up on a hillside overlooking the bay of a port town. Darkness slowly gives way to dark blues, purples, hints of color and shapes. Suddenly, sunlight bursts over the ocean's distant horizon.
- After the dawn breaks, you'll head down a winding path from your hilltop toward the city. With each twist and turn, you'll notice the first rustlings of activity in the town and the harbor—houses opening their shuttered windows, small fishing boats bobbing alongside the quays, farmers' carts, merchants setting up their stalls.
- Make your way down one last stretch...and you're swept up in the bustling excitement of this important harbor town.
- Let your imagination see anything and everything! Three-masted schooners coming into port, galleons unloading precious cargo from far-off lands, townspeople and farmers haggling over prices, fishermen hawking the morning's catch.
- Wander through it all. Turn a corner and see something new: a spice bazaar, bronze lamps, silks, leather goods, jewelry.
- Later, you may see a cohort of soldiers march through in their parade-dress uniforms. Then a celebration and dancing.
- Sunset brings a mellow sweetness as you head back up to your hillside house.
- Or maybe you decide to board one of the ocean schooners, heading out on a new adventure!
- The sun's afterglow disappears, and in the darkness, the stars glisten in the sky.
- As the music ends, look up at the stars or out across the vast sparkling ocean and just say to yourself, "What a lovely day. I will treasure that forever."

"I'll treasure that forever."

Find something that makes you say that every single day of your life. **Every day.** Find something for which you express your gratitude, your reverence, your "thank you" to the life-gift you had that day.

What you're doing is feeding the inner core of you—your soul, your Being, your heart, your anima, your verve, whatever you want to call it. But you must feed that every day, because that's the key to creating and maintaining your presence. It will enthuse you through all your endeavors, and it will sustain you through all of life's difficult times. That is the power of exercising happiness.

**This particular album also includes superb performances of Debussy's Ibéria and Nocturnes, as well as Ravel's Rapsodie Espagnole. These are all excellent doorways to creativity.*