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Posted on Mon, Dec. 02, 2002

Cinema therapy viewing tips

Knight Ridder Newspapers

(KRT) - Therapist Birgit Wolz has these suggestions for using cinema therapy at home.

_ Prepare your viewing area. Clear things away and make sure you're comfortable.

_ To help you focus on the present, observe your body and your breathing. Without forcing it, notice any areas of tension and try to release them through your breath.

_ Try to turn off your inner critic. Warning: This may a tough one for some. If you're struggling, don't fight it; just observe the voice.

_ Once you feel calm and centered, start watching the film. Notice how the movie's images, ideas, conversations and characters affect your breathing. Remember, try to do this without the inner critic.

_ Once the film is finished, reflect on it and ask yourself some questions. Did your breathing change at certain scenes? What part of the movie moved you? Did you identify with any of the characters? Was there any part of the film that was particularly hard to watch? Write down your answers.

_ For further pointers, Wolz found these books helpful: "Reel Power: Spiritual Growth Through Film," by Marsha Sinetar, and "Rent Two Films and Let's Talk in the Morning," by John W. Hesley and Jan G. Hesley. For a more playful read, try Nancy Peske and Beverly West's "Advanced Cinematherapy: The Girl's Guide to Finding Happiness One Movie at a Time."

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