How to Practice Negative Visualization

Negative visualization is the practice of imagining worst-case scenarios, popularized by the Stoics of ancient Rome. Negative visualization exercises can help you be grateful for what you have and appreciate the shortness of life.

Benefits

1. Gratitude
   By imagining you've lost everything, negative visualization creates a renewed sense of gratitude for what you have in your life.

2. Present-moment living
   In the end, we'll lose everything we have. Negative visualization reminds us of that, and helps us take advantage of the present, while we still have those things.

3. Resilience
   Most of us walk around as if the status quo were going to continue forever, and are blindsided by change. Negative visualization helps us mentally prepare for inevitable change.

How to Practice

Here are two exercises to create more gratitude, resilience, and appreciation for the present moment in your life.

The "Last Time" exercise
There's always a "last time" we'll do everything in our lives, whether walking our dog, picking up our kid, or going to your favorite restaurant. As you go through your day, try and imagine this will be the last time.

Negative visualization
To practice negative visualization, imagine everything you valued in your life was gone. Imagine what life would be like, and how you'd feel.

Then, come back to the present in renewed appreciation for what you have.