

Using Visualization for a Better Performance

by Laura Orsini

THERE WAS A SOFTBALL COACH who used to tell her players, “If you can touch it, you can catch it.” Her thinking was that if you could get your glove close enough to the ball that you could touch it, by extending your reach just a bit, you could catch the ball. A powerful form of mental encouragement, this approach bolstered her players to stretch their abilities — and, as a result, their successes.

We all have a similarly powerful mental tool at our disposal — the knowledge that if we can imagine it, we can create it.

Our thoughts are limitless, as is their ability to create. Studies have shown that the best athletes and surgeons not only practice their crafts, but they continually utilize visualization exercises. If a basketball player visualizes the perfect jump shot, he or she will invariably perform better than an equally skilled player who does not practice visualization.



Many people are familiar with the “law of attraction” which says that we get whatever we focus our attention on — or like attracts like.

This is true of small things and big ones, positive things and negative ones. Have you ever been present for a raffle drawing and heard someone say, “I know I’m going to win,” and watched them walk away with the grand prize? Likewise, have you ever been on a picnic when you saw a bee and thought, “I know that bee is heading straight for me,” and watched the bee blaze a trail to your plate? Our thoughts are powerful!

But what does this have to do with seeing and creating?

Seeing or visualizing something means getting a clear mental picture of it. Focusing on that mental picture requires us to focus our attention and energy on it. By focusing our attention and energy on it, we are focusing our thoughts on it. And by focusing our thoughts on it, we are attracting it.

Sound easy enough? Actually, it is.

The first step is to figure out what we want to manifest in our life. It can be anything from a job to a vacation to a boat to a slimmer figure to an uncluttered closet. It can be a non-tangible thing as well, because even non-tangible things (happiness, health, a healed relationship) have visible results.

The next step is to get in your mind a picture, or a series of pictures, of your intended creation. See what it looks like, feels like, smells like, sounds like, and even tastes like, if that applies. Next, picture how you look while you are using/doing/experiencing it. If your goal is a job, picture your workspace with you in it. What are your daily tasks and routines? Picture yourself doing them. If you want to purchase a boat, picture yourself steering it. Envision the place where you would dock or house your boat. Experience what it would feel like to tie down the sails or rev the engine.

As you begin to visualize your creation, eliminate any doubts about your ability to have/create/experience this thing. Stem the negative self-talk and silence the censor in your head that tells you all the reasons it's just not possible. Replace those thoughts with the image of your creation and counter them with positive affirmations. Remember, you manifest what you concentrate on.

One last step toward manifesting your vision is to create a vivid visual — that is, craft a concrete picture of your creation. This can be an actual snapshot or photograph of the thing, if it's something tangible, like a trip to Ireland. It can be a collage of words and pictures related to your creation; it can be a treasure map or a timeline; it can be a cartoon panel.

It doesn't matter what the vivid visual is, as long as it is a pictorial representation of your goal. Once you've created the vivid visual, put it in a place where you can easily see it so it can be a constant reminder of your creative goal.

Know that once you begin this visualization process of manifesting your goal, nothing can stop you from achieving it.

Originally printed in AzNetNews — Aug/Sep 2003

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