



POSITIVE PATTERNS FOR LIFE

Visualize Success

DEFINITION: Visualization is conscious, organized daydream in which you deliberately take charge of your mental images and decide what you want to see.

HOW DO VISUALIZATIONS WORK?

A large portion of the cerebral cortex is devoted to vision. The cerebral cortex's main function is to process information that comes from the retinas of the eyes. When we close our eye, this function turns inward. It is at this point that one of the most important channels for the mind/body connection become available.

The subconscious mind seems to make distinction between real visual information and the vivid sensory images conjured up during a visualization exercise. Your mind and body reacts much the same to imaginary experiences as they do to real experiences. Visualization works because your subconscious mind experiences reality indirectly by watching these vivid sensory images. It's like you write and produce your own life story, and broadcast it on this little TV screen in your head. Your subconscious mind watches the broadcast but interprets this information as real.

Research has shown that you can move information into your subconscious if you can hold a vivid image in your mind for 35 seconds. Using visual images is the most effective way to access our subconscious mind. The best times to practice visualizations are just before falling asleep at night and upon waking in the morning. During these periods of altered consciousness, you are particularly relaxed and you mind is open to suggestion.

The more senses you involve, the more successful you visualization will absorb into your subconscious and therefore influence your behavior. Visual images with a strong emotional response are most effective. Intensity of senses, emotion, lighting, volume all influence the effectiveness of your visualization.

CREATE YOUR OWN VISUALIZATION

1. Find a quiet, comfortable place. Best after you have climbed in bed, before you go to sleep.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Clear your mind of all thoughts. Train your mind to be quiet.

4. Pay attention to your breathing.
5. Take a deep slow breath through your nose. Inhale as much air as you can and hold it for 2 second. Become aware of the tension in your lungs and sense the tension in your muscles.
6. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Feel your body deflating like a balloon as you release the air from your lungs. Think the word “relax” every time you exhale.
7. Continue slowly inhaling and exhaling in this fashion until your body feels limp and heavy.
8. Now that your body is relaxed, allow your breathing to become slow and rhythmic.
9. It is now time to create your mental movie. Think of a scene that is familiar and pleasant. Somewhere you can feel safe and relax.
10. Envision this place in detail, including trees, clouds, water, animals, breezes, light. See what you see brightly and intensely. Try to envision as many details as you can.
11. Visualize a scene involving emotion. It’s important to experience emotion which is uplifting, cheery, self-affirming, and celebrates life.
12. Hear what you hear pleasant sounds clearly.
13. Feel warmth of the sun or the freshness of a gentle breeze.
14. Smell the freshness of the air, the fragrance of flowers or pine trees.
15. Now put yourself in the picture.
16. See yourself practicing your new self-care patterns. Feel joy that comes from this self-care action.
17. Visualize yourself as a picture of wellness. You are full of energy, strong, confident, happy, and doing the things you like to do. Believe you own these qualities of wellness. You feel wonderful as a result of practicing your new self-care patterns.
18. Experience this visualization with lots of positive emotion and vividly use all the senses with as much intensity as possible: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. Try to hold this vivid image with this intensity for a minute.
19. Now let your pleasant images fade into sleep.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT VISUALIZATIONS

Visualization is a powerful habit change tool that uses your imagination to reprogram your subconscious thought and create a more positive reality in your brain of what you are capable of accomplishing. Your body will respond positively to this new reality in your brain and will start changing in order to match your brain’s new positive reality.

Here’s how it works. Each thought you have produces a physical electrochemical message. Your cells have special receptor sites to receive these electrochemical messages. It is like the cells of your body have ears to hear messages from your brain. This physiology allows your brain to be the boss of your body. Your body will respond to what the brain believes.

You need to believe your goals before you can achieve your goals. Mental imagery and positive thinking help you believe your health goals.