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Author and Editor



SWL Media and Learning Center

Eliminate Fear and Achieve

Visualization Process and Exercise

Note: Substitute topic for the storyline if you are writing nonfiction

Are you interested in developing your writing skills? Visualization can help you write a clear picture of where your story is headed and what steps are needed to get it there. Creating a new habit requires that you learn a process that will become lodged in your subconscious. You replace the current subconscious thoughts with new ones. When this habit becomes intuitive, you are on your way to using the new practice.

Visualization is the art of thinking subconsciously about your desired outcome and the process needed to get there. Visualization is a self-directed thought process. You use your mind's eye to see the results you want to achieve. Two visualization techniques apply to the writing process creative visualization and directive visualization. Think of creative visualization as looking at a series of still pictures. Before you can create an image, you must see it in your mind's eye. For example, a character standing in a slightly lit alley wearing a topcoat and gray Stetson slanted to the right with an object in hand.

Here is how to begin moving your story toward reality. This is an essential first step to control your storyline. Until you can precisely see your storyline unfolding, you are placing yourself in the hands of destiny. Once you have a documented multiple pitches of your storyline, such as the end of each chapter, it is time to apply directed visualization to your picture. Directed visualization is like a video. Actors and athletes use this technique to rehearse their performances. You begin to focus your attention on the various details that need to come together to make your story happen. For example, the lanky man hid the object under his coat. As he looks around, he hears the clicking of heels and sees a shadowy female figure step into the musty alley from his left.

How do you use creative and directed visualization? When using creative visualization, your goal is to get a clear still picture of your end product. You use directed visualization to see a video of your product.

Let's start with creative visualization. You want to activate the right side of your brain - your creative and artistic side. Ready to give it a try? If not, come back at another time when you are. Initially, this may take a while until you have practiced it.

Get Ready: Have a pen/pencil and paper handy or set up a recorder for audio. A glass of water, juice, or soda may be desirable. Find a quiet place, preferably in the dark. It's best to sit in a comfortable chair or lie down. You can listen to relaxing music if you wish.

- Relax. Some individuals do a few deep breathing exercises to prepare their mind and body for the next step.
- Close your eyes and focus on seeing pictures of scenes with characters.
- Clear your mind of all distractions. Pay attention to your emotions, as well as, your thoughts. It may take a while until you have practiced it over and over again. (I did tell you this would be work.)
- Focus on that desired outcome. What do you see at the end of your journey?



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- See multiple still pictures of your storyline.
- If you have a clear vision of what you want to accomplish, document it with words, pictures, or a combination of both.

Except to revisit and fine-tune this initial visualization phase that completes the creative portion of visualization. When you make this technique an integral part of your thought process, you'll be able to visualize whenever and wherever you happen to be.

Now, let's focus on the directed phase of visualization. It is time to reenergize the left side of your brain - the logic and procedural side. Let's briefly go through the steps you would normally take to get a clear and concise picture of your desired outcome. During the directed phase you will add features to your still pictures and create a video of your desired outcome. Revisit the storyline you documented during the Creative Visualization. Review each picture. Do you need to get rid of some? Do you need to add some? Do they need to be sequenced?

Okay, are you ready and relaxed? Good, let's proceed.

- Look at your first picture and begin to see what events must occur for you to reach your desired outcome. When will you achieve it? Who is involved, and what are they doing? What colors do you see? What sounds do you hear? What aromas do you smell?
- Continue with the rest of your pictures.
- Get a video picture of where your storyline is going and how you are going to get there? What are the surrounding sights and sounds? How do your characters feel? How are they interacting with one another? What narrative and dialogue will you need?
- Do you see any potential barriers? Try to identify them.
- Once you have a clear vision of the progression, you will take to get from where you are to where you are going, add the details to your previous documentation. Document the sights, sounds, and smells you experienced. Write down any potential barriers you saw.

Now comes the challenging part. Look at your notes and write a concise summary of your visualization process. Be as specific as you can. Be sure to include a target date for completion.

Is this something you truly want to happen? What will the benefits be to you, your family, and your friends? Your motivation to achieve your desired outcome will depend on what benefits you envision. Do you have your desired outcome written down? Are you ready to commit yourself to *Make it Happen? Then Go for It!*