

“We *ARE* What We See: Visualization as a Healing Tool”

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If you’ve ever watched a professional athlete prepare for his or her sport, you may have watched them in “the zone”, that place of utter mental preparation, focus, and concentration. You may have observed athletes going over their routines in their heads—eyes closed, or even eyes open, “seeing” what they are about to do, performing with controlled precision and refinement. Essentially, they “practice” in their heads what they are going to do.

When we are faced with a path of healing, be it physical or emotional, we can use these same concepts of visualization as a tool for change. Like an athlete, when we wish to gain optimal well-being, we are training our bodies and minds to be able to perform as we would like. Healing is the event, our treatment choices and daily wellness routines are how we train, and our wins are when we get closer to the point where we feel completely freed of the dis-ease. Through this process, we can use visualization to further emphasize, to further communicate with our brain that it’s time to start healing.

If, for instance, you are dealing with a physical dis-ease such as chronic back pain, you might start by noting when it began and whether or not there was anything significant occurring in your life at that time which may have triggered it. You would then likely seek some sort of treatment, whether it’s a completely western approach, a natural and holistic approach, or a combination of the two. Once you have chosen or experimented with what works for you, you can further heighten the element of healing through seeing your body as healed, and/or going through the healing process. Visualize the tension in your muscles easing and releasing pain. Visualize any misalignments slowly becoming more aligned. Visualize blood supplies being more readily available and flowing throughout your muscles. Visualize yourself effortlessly moving and engaging in activities. Visualize proper posture and what it means to be supported in your life, just as your back is meant to provide structure and support for your body’s physical frame. Visualize feeling happy and carefree. By visualizing all these things while receiving treatment and in your everyday self-care routine, you emphasize and communicate to your body your desire for being well and not being plagued with pain. Healing visualization can be thought of as a catalyst in your healing process.

There are many ways and reasons to integrate visualization for healing purposes. It goes hand-in-hand with meditation, which can trigger relaxation, decrease stress levels, and increase acute awareness. It can accompany the use of affirmations by creating in your mind a picture of what you are affirming in, or about, yourself. It is also the essence of hypnosis, of reaching that place of complete brain integration to pinpoint how you would like to see yourself. Visualization is mind over matter and thought-centered. It targets the right side of the brain, the creative and intuitive side versus the logical and rational side, the side that allows you to accomplish a task without second-guessing the motive. So if it’s healing that you seek, then visualizing it in a positive way (just like the examples above) will help yield positive results. If you were to see yourself as “a hopeless case”, someone who will never break free of the pain pattern, who will never be able to again do the things you enjoy, you then allow your brain to accomplish the task of staying in chronic pain. What you think—or visualize—and how you feel impact how your

body will or will not heal. The body “believes” what it is you think and see, whether it’s real or not and consequently reacts and follows through accordingly.

Some people say they have difficulty with visualization, and therefore don’t engage in it. However, if you were asked to visualize your favorite childhood toy, to focus on what it looked like, how it felt in your hands, to recall any sounds it made, and how it felt to play with this toy... then congratulations! You’ve just tapped into visualization mode. It is a tool that requires practice using, that you can develop and refine over time, that has its best potential when used often, and that can be used for virtually any circumstance and at any time. If you are willing and able to heal, using visualization as part of your process will aid in reaching that ultimate sense of well-being.

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