

# CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

How to think your way to success.

BY JENNIFER CHAPIS / PHOTO BY JASON BOYER

**Y**ou gave an amazing cold reading. The once stone-faced casting director raved perfection, and you left the audition confident the role was yours. But after two weeks and no callback, feelings of disappointment, melancholy and even anger start creeping in. Thoughts resembling "I'm not good enough" are taking hold.

Wait a minute! What happened to change your mindset from self-assured to insecure? Aren't you the same talented actor who delivered that great on-the-spot performance? When it comes to success, the most common obstacles that steer talented people off course are self-doubt and fear of failure. The fact is everyone has fears, but you can learn how to take charge of yours.

## CONSISTENT CONFIDENCE

The road to success is rarely a six-lane highway clipping along at 70 mph. It's usually more like a slow-winding mountain trail you have to clear as you go. Traversing this trail requires consistent self-confidence to keep moving forward when bumps appear in your path, especially with your destination nowhere in sight. So where does self-confidence come from? Where does it run off to? And can confidence ever be consistent? The answer is yes, but not if you look to other people and outside circumstances to determine how you feel about yourself. It may seem as if success and recognition add up to self-confidence, but the opposite is equally true: Self-confidence adds up to success and recognition.

## CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

As an amateur, gain the confidence you need to become a pro. Visualization is one effective technique that helps you stay focused despite rough spots along the way. This powerful daily practice helps you build the strong, clear mindset necessary to stand firm long enough to see your greatest dreams realized. Visualization is



fun, and almost anyone can do it. Furthermore, experts report that deliberately and clearly visualizing the things you want in life can help you to create them.

Shakti Gawain, a pioneer in the field and author of "Creative Visualization," a book that has sold six million copies worldwide, describes this as "the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life." She reminds us that everything, whether it's a new job or a new love, starts first with a thought. The artist creates the painting from the picture he has envisioned in his mind, she explains. You are the artist, and the painting is your biggest aspiration. If you want to create the life of your dreams, you must first start dreaming. This is creative visualization: imagining yourself exactly where you want to be.

"In creative visualization you use your imagination to create a clear image, idea, or feeling of something you wish to manifest," Gawain says. Then you continue focusing on it with positive emotion. Acting is all about emotion, and so is visualization. Visualization works partly because it helps you get excited about your dreams as if they're already happening to you right now. Just as a professional actor must first imagine himself as the esteemed physician before he can convincingly portray that dramatic role, you too must first see yourself as the cover model or daytime drama star you want to be before you can convince your subconscious that you are that person. The sooner you start visualizing your own success, whatever it may be, the sooner you will naturally start to take the action steps necessary to creating it.

### MINDING YOUR MIND

"Learning to use creative visualization

can become an experience of deep and meaningful growth," Gawain explains.

"In the process we often discover ways in which we have been holding ourselves back." When we are in a state of fear or insecurity, we tend to attract the very same things we are afraid of, namely failure. That's because your body will always listen to what your mind tells it. The trick is to get your mind working for you and not against you. It's time to start taking careful inventory of the thoughts that pass through your head. How can you expect to convince your subconscious that you're a superstar if your tendency is to complain about not getting what you want, spotlight past failures, or obsessively worry about what's to come? Focusing on goals and solutions, rather than actual or potential problems, is one key way a person of clarity and vision pre-paves a personal pathway to success. When used properly, visualization can be a valuable mental and emotional tool to help you believe in yourself for as long as it takes for reality to catch up.

### PLACE YOURSELF THERE

If you want to win an Academy Award, go to the award ceremony tonight—in your mind that is. Really feel what it's like to toast your success. If you want to be on the cover of *Vogue*, hold the magazine in your hands and see yourself. What are you wearing? What's the expression on your face? What do your friends say when they call to congratulate you?

The fact is, you don't have to wait for recognition in order to feel confident, and you don't have to wait for success to feel the joy associated with it. As experts such as Gawain and others in her field contend, feeling the success you want today will help you create it in your life tomorrow. Once you can

These visualization tools can also come in handy right before an audition or go-see.

Visualize it going exactly as you want it to go to help make your dreams a reality!

clearly visualize your desired destination, you can see the path to get there. By visualizing your future success for just a few minutes daily, you become like a self-confidence machine racing toward the vision on your horizon: your greatest dreams.

Here are a few simple steps to follow to help you visualize your goals:

- Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.
- Take several deep breaths.
- Settle into a relaxed seated or reclining position. Continue breathing deeply.
- Focus on relaxing one body part at a time—your feet, ankles, and so on—ending finally with your scalp. Just breathe and let the muscles go.
- When your whole body feels peaceful, imagine a situation, feeling or object you desire. Start with something simple (i.e., your next callback).
- Use your imagination to see yourself clearly in that situation. Visualize all the details, with everything going perfectly.
- Don't worry if you cannot conjure a clear mental picture. Different people visualize differently. Just go with whatever happens for you.
- Imagine it all the way to the end (i.e., landing the job!).
- Evoke the emotion you will feel when you have that success. Allow yourself to feel it.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring it back. Continue focusing and feeling.
- Affirm your vision by speaking what you see and feel aloud (i.e., "I am thrilled to receive the great news that the job is mine").
- Repeat this exercise daily.
- Hold onto your confidence and excitement, knowing that every action you take brings you one step closer to your dreams! **AFM**

**Author bio:** Jennifer Chapis has modeled brands such as Jessica McClintock, Champion, Body Glove, Patagonia, Billabong and others. Recently relocated from NYC, Jennifer is a model with San Diego Model Management.