

Hello, and welcome to the lesson on MCIIIP Visualization. I'm sure you've heard of outcome visualization before, where you're advised to close your eyes and imagine yourself having attained your heart's desire, whether that's being rich, successful, famous, whatever.

It works, which is why that advice has been repeated so often, so many times. But it's not like science has been asleep for the past 20 years – it's been working on more effective forms of visualization. What they've come up with is MCIIIP Visualization. It'll help you in the following 2 circumstances:

- 1) You know you can do it, but lack emotional conviction and confidence that comes from the heart.
- 2) You feel excited about the project as a whole, but start losing steam thinking about the individual tasks involved.

One precaution, if you've low self-confidence and expectations of success, MCIIIP Visualization has been shown to sometimes be more harmful than it's helpful, in which case you should skip ahead to lessons 2 and 3 of this module. Assuming that's not you, let's move on to the details.

Outcome visualization increases expectations of success, but sometimes by too much. This is what your primitive brain thinks, "If I can visualize it so easily then it must be less difficult to accomplish than I thought."

I know what you're probably thinking, "That's stupid. I can imagine anything, even dancing unicorns. What I imagine has little bearing on what I can and cannot do in reality." Except that's true only now, in the modern age, with our imagination fed daily by television and fiction novels. In the past, imagination wasn't used as a means of fantasizing, but of planning.

And that's exactly the problem. Outcome visualization often works too well – studies have shown that after using outcome visualization, the primitive brain often thinks a goal easier to accomplish than it actually is. You'd assume that would be a good thing, but it can be a problem. The primitive brain is hyper-efficient. If it thinks something will be easy, it'll reduce vigor and motivation, anticipating that the energy won't be needed. That's why outcome visualization is now sometimes called fantasy indulgence.

And that's why MCIIIP visualization was created – to inspire, but within reason. As a best-practices combination of 3 other visualization techniques - mental contrasting, implementation intentions, and process visualization, the research literature is vast – it works.

Imagine you've successfully launched your product – you've got as many sales as you have hoped for. Now visualize the biggest benefits you associate with success: paying off your debts, vacationing on the beach, thank you emails from your customers - whatever you care most about. If you've completed the Start With Why exercise in module 3, use that list to help guide your attention.

Now visualize two to four aspects of your present reality that stand in the way of making that change come true, like being distracted by your day job, dreading and skipping past certain tasks you know are important but would like to avoid, or getting bored and distracted.

That's mental contrasting – and it's been proven more effective than outcome visualization. It's simple, but it works. There are two reasons for that:

- 1) It keeps inspiration high, but within reason – look, I can imagine success, but also, I can imagine obstacles.
- 2) It allows motivation to flow backwards.

A common problem with our subconscious is that it doesn't understand how seemingly useless and boring intermediate steps tie together with the end benefits - how sitting in front of your computer bashing away can have anything to do with sunny vacations at the beach. Visualize the obstacles after the benefits, and you'll tie them together.

Overcoming those 'boring obstacles' will start to get associated with the benefits of your desired future. In which case the motivation will flow backwards – from the pina coladas at the beach to the work that has to get done in front of your computer.

That was the first half of MCIIIP Visualization, mental contrasting. The second half starts with (II), Implementation Intentions.

First, write down or verbalize an implementation intention for each of the obstacles you identified in the previous technique, in the form of 'when [trigger], I will [action] '. For example:

1. 'When I feel distracted, I will move to a quiet space.'
2. 'When I get home from work too tired to work on my product, I'll go for an energizing jog.'
3. 'When I start to lose motivation, I'll review the list of benefits I created.'

What you're doing here is twofold – first you're creating a counter-strategy for each of the biggest motivation obstacles you anticipated. Second and more importantly, you're creating a psychological intention to actually execute that strategy. Studies have shown that forming a concrete psychological intention increases the likelihood of two things happening - 1) realizing an obstacle has presented itself (e.g. get home from work tired and you might automatically sit down on the couch and start watching TV, without even realizing you're tired and that that's a problem) and 2) taking action to do something about it to overcome that problem.

Process visualization increases the effectiveness of implementation intentions, which in turn increases the effectiveness of mental contrasting. Three separate simple techniques which work great together. So visualize yourself encountering each of the obstacles you identified in the previous step.

Let's just take an example: "when I get home from work too tired to work on my product I will go for an energizing jog." So imagine yourself coming home from work tired, but then you want to imagine enthusiastically overcoming that obstacle. So in this case not just going for an energizing jog, but going for an energizing job with a smile on your face with enthusiasm. You'll understand

why that particular bit is important in a moment. Now this might not seem particularly effective, especially compared to outcome visualization, but it is and that's because it's a form of practice.

Over 100 studies have replicated its effectiveness. The reason so is because mental practice, which is exactly what process visualization is, can be almost as effective as physical practice. For example, in one study, participants who mentally practiced a 5-finger sequence on an imaginary piano for two hours a day had the same neurological changes (and reduction in mistakes) as the participants who physically practiced the same passage on an actual piano. In many cases, mental practice activates the same brain regions as physical practice.

What that means, for you, is that when you process visualize – you're actually forming a habit. Every time you encounter an obstacle but fail to overcome it, you're forming a habit of failure. Because you're visualizing yourself overcoming the obstacle, you're forming a habit of success. And because process visualization relies on your imagination and because you can control your imagination, you can be sure that its success that you're visualizing and not failure. Alright let's get to some other details.

These techniques are best used once a day - it should take just 5 to 10 minutes. But once a week is okay - I use MCIIPV once a week, because even at that frequency, it retains much of its effectiveness - for just 10 minutes a week I'm saving myself hours of grief.

The more sensory detail, the better - the more effective the visualization and the practice become. And you can visualize the same things every day but only if the obstacles remain the same. You want your visualization to be as reflective of reality as possible.

The best part about all of this is that these techniques are a skill and a habit - now, months after deliberately using these techniques, whenever I anticipate an obstacle, I find myself automatically creating implementation intentions, which I then actually follow. So remember – you can do it, you know it, so from time to time, just take a moment to remind your subconscious.