



IMAGINE THIS.....

It's that time of year again folks, Christmas has gone and for most of us all that remains of the food is the extra couple of inches on the waist! The start of a New Year is often a reflective time for people when they look back on the year just gone and set in place some different goals for the year ahead. Maybe you have decided to give something up or start something new - whatever it is you want the question is do you have a clear

direction in mind for 2004?

Taking The Shortcut

I was in my local bookshop at the weekend and they had put up a huge display of self - help books all of which promised the easy way to achieve the success they promised. The books were flying out of the shop as people saw a shortcut to the things in their lives that they

would love to change. Here's the stinger though, research has shown that only 10% of these customers will actually read past the first chapter! Oops.

So the question is - is there a shortcut that works when you are heading towards your goal? I believe there is and even better it's free to use. The answer to turbo charging your

goals lies simply in your imagination.

A sports study was carried out on 3 basketball teams. The first team spent one month physically practising basketball on the court, the second team took no physical or mental practice at all and the third team took no physical practice and instead used the time to get together and imagine a successful game. The results were so surprising that sports coaching generally took a whole different direction.

The first team improved considerably as you would expect with all that physical training.

The second team reduced their performance - showing that taking no action at all is useless

The third team improved their performance by the same amount as the first team despite doing no physical training.

Following this study sports coaches realised that combining both physical and mental rehearsal in training sessions gave dramatic improvements in performance results.

Lets look at how this could work for you and your goal. You have probably set your goal and given yourself a series of actions that need to happen in order to be successful. Well done - that is like the physical training needed by the basketball teams. Now how can you add in the mental rehearsal side to increase your chances of success?

The Power of Imagination

We use our imagination all the time but not necessarily in the most thought out way.

What did you have for lunch yesterday?

Who was your favourite teacher at school?

To answer those questions I would guess that you would have made a picture. Using your imagination like this is also known as visualisation, which I am sure you will have heard about. Visualisation is not a new technique; you already do it all the time. Some people say to me that they struggle to visualise but the truth is this is how your brain processes information and therefore just because you are unaware of visualisation happening doesn't mean it isn't.

Sabotage Through Visualisation

Your brain makes no judgement on the visualisations you choose to have, it simply carries out the orders given. For this reason it may surprise you to learn that visualisation can actually prevent us from achieving our goals! Supposing you would like to lose some weight. When you think about that what do

focus on in your mind? If you are thinking about how unhappy you are at your current weight and seeing a picture of the 'big you' then you are sabotaging your goal. Instead of imagining what it is you don't want - start to imagine what it is that you do want. Change the picture and the feelings that go around it into one of success. How do you look once the goal is achieved, how do you feel, what are people saying to you? Now you are bringing the power of visualisation on line and just like the basketball players your performance will be massively enhanced.

Watch Your Language

What you say to yourself about your goal can have a huge impact on how the brain then processes your words and the resulting visualisation.

Imagine saying this to yourself: "I really should use my time better at work" How do you feel when you said that - Motivated to take action, probably not. When you look at your life you are much more likely to be doing the things you want to do rather than the things you should do. "I should go to the gym tonight but I want to go to the pub with my friends!" Think we can guess the likely outcome here.

Which of these phrases changes the goal in your mind?

- I might go to the gym tonight
- I could go to the gym tonight
- I am going to the gym tonight
- I must go to the gym tonight
- I am looking forward to the gym tonight
- I may go to the gym tonight
- I hope to go to the gym tonight
- I want to go to the gym tonight

Isn't it strange how the odd word change can completely change the meaning of the phrase?

So, when you think about your goal now test each of the phrases and find the one for you that creates the most desire for action. Once you know the phrase - use it all the time; keep repeating it over and over again to allow the brain to process the new language.

The Picture of Success

So now you have an idea of how important it is to focus your mental resources into what it is you want. If we translate the sad figures of book reading into this article then only 10% of you will have got to this stage! The good news is - those of you within that 10% are much more likely to practise the exercises as well

and therefore gain the benefits in your life.

Turbo Charge Your Goal Today

Every day this week I want you go through this process and notice over time how it changes the motivation to complete the goal.

- 1 Think about what it is you want in as much detail as you can
- 2 Imagine yourself having achieved the goal
- 3 When, where and with whom have you achieved this goal?
- 4 What has changed in your life as a result of achieving this goal?
- 5 What was the final thing that happened to allow you to know you had achieved the goal?
- 6 What has achieving the goal got you?
- 7 How do you feel having achieved the goal?
- 8 What do you see and hear now you have changed?
- 9 How do you look and what are you saying to others?

New Year, New You

Of course using your imagination can be really powerful when you have one particular goal you are working towards but why stop there. Changing the focus of your thoughts on a minute-by-minute basis is the true shortcut to success. I leave you with a true story which I challenge you to test and I promise you will work.

When you arrive at particularly busy car parks, do you bemoan the fact that you probably will not get a space anywhere near where you want and of course you are usually right? A good friend of mine gave me this technique which I must admit when I first heard it I had some doubts. As you get near to the car park start to imagine the ideal spot. See the empty space in your mind and even decide the colour of the car parked next to you. Keep the image in mind all the way and drive confidently to the place you have chosen. Give it a go; I think you will be amazed at just how often it works!

Until next time.

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