

Yes I Can!

Using Visualization to Achieve your Goals



Robin Nixon

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CAPSTONE

This edition first published 2012

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Registered office

Capstone Publishing Ltd. (A Wiley Company), John Wiley and Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data is available

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-0-857-08310-4 (paperback) ISBN 978-0-857-08324-1 (ebk)

ISBN 978-0-857-08325-8 (ebk) ISBN 978-0-857-08326-5 (ebk)

For Julie

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank all the people who have helped to bring this book to publication, including Jonathan Shipley, Iain Campbell, Jenny Ng, Vicky Kinsman, Grace O'Byrne, Megan Saker and Emily Bryczkowski, and everyone else who has been involved. It's been a distinct pleasure to work with the Capstone team, and I'm grateful to you all for making my vision for *Yes I Can!* become a reality, and for helping it to turn out better than I ever expected.

I'd also like to thank each and every one of the well over 150,000 people who downloaded the first four chapters of this book from the iTunes App Store and Android Market. Your incredible support and hundreds of kind comments let me know that what I had written made a difference, and spurred me on to complete the book you are now reading - it wouldn't have happened without you!

Introduction

This Book Will Change Your Life

You can do it!

- Robin Nixon

'I wish I could be like that person.' I bet this is a phrase that you have said to yourself. Deep down you know that you have the potential to be 'that person', but achieving it seems impossible in practice. Well, I can tell you that it's not impossible:

- You have the power to change your life in many ways that you may not even realize.
- You can become more confident and motivated, and find greater focus and direction in your life.
- You can become a better leader or manager and fill yourself with positive energy.
- All this and more can be achieved with the simple five-minute exercises in this book.

Once you get used to these techniques and have seen the real results you can achieve, you'll understand how you can adapt the techniques directly to your own specific life and circumstances to achieve much more specific goals.

The power of creative visualization has been known for centuries, but it's something you rarely come across. But think about it. Before building a house you need a plan, an architect's drawing or blueprint. Without it, builders would run around in circles not knowing where they were going or what to do next.

But with a plan the builders can progress in an orderly fashion, from one task to the next, ensuring, for example,

that they don't try to put the roof on before the walls have been built.

So it is with life. Think of these exercises as life blueprints. To create them you simply set aside a few minutes each day to visualize the part of your life you wish to change or improve, and as you do so you see where the problems are, and the solutions just pop into your mind. And there are plenty of ready-made exercises in this book you can practise.

If you visualize on a topic for several days you will see your visualizations grow. They will expand and become more detailed, and you'll start saying 'Aha' as not only do you begin to understand how you can make the change you want, but you'll notice that you've actually already started out on the change.

I promise there's no mumbo jumbo in this book. Every technique is simply explained along with the reasons for why it will work. In these chapters you'll find practical, real-world changes you can achieve in your life using tried and tested techniques.

These exercises have worked for me many times over - and they will work for you. Prepare to be astonished.

1

Learning to Visualize

I visualized myself being a famous actor and earning big money. I could feel and taste success – I just knew it would all happen.

- Arnold Schwarzenegger

In this chapter you will:

- **learn the history of creative visualization**
- **understand how visualization works**
- **be ready to start using creative visualization to change your life**

Creative visualization has been known about and understood for hundreds (if not thousands) of years. For example, ancient cave dwellers visualized the animals they would hunt and how they would do it, and drew this on their cave walls.

Throughout history shamans have used visualization for healing, and we know that the ancient Greeks implemented guided imagery as part of their culture – the imagination was considered an organ, just like the liver or heart. The concept even appears in the *Bible* in numerous places, such as in Matthew 7:7, which says ‘Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you.’

Nowadays there’s hardly a professional who isn’t aware of some aspect of visualization such as using it to help speed up the healing process and for diminishing pain, and sport coaches use visualization every day as part of the training process. But it is only in the last hundred years or so that creative visualization has gained its modern name and that

several books have been written on the subject, leading to a far more widespread understanding.

The first major book on creative visualization in recent times was *The Science of Getting Rich* by Wallace Wattles. Published in 1910, the book outlines the process of maintaining 'a state of positivity and self-affirmation' if you wish to be financially successful. Soon after, in 1916, Charles F. Haanel, an American entrepreneur, author and millionaire, wrote *The Master Key System*, which is claimed by some as the inspiration behind the success of Bill Gates, who is said to have discovered the book while studying at Harvard and afterward decided to drop out and form the Microsoft company.

A few less well-known books followed and then the blockbuster *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill was published in 1937. It was based on an earlier book of his, *The Law of Success*, which had been commissioned by wealthy industrialist Andrew Carnegie. It was based on interviews of 500 American millionaires over a 20-year period and distilled everything Hill had learned into 13 'steps towards riches'.

More recently the book *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain, published in 1978, reignited interest in the subject. It was written after a trip to India in which Gawain became deeply impressed with its culture and religious beliefs and lost all interest in material things. She says of the trip, 'I gave away all my possessions and kept only what I could fit into a small canvas bag.'

The next big hit was the best-selling book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne, which stormed the charts in 2006. Crediting both *The Science of Getting Rich* and *The Master Key System*, the book drew interest from celebrities such as Ellen DeGeneres, Larry King, and Oprah Winfrey. The book is based on what Byrne calls the 'law of attraction', which in

my view is simply another way of looking at positive thinking and creative visualization.

HOW VISUALIZATION WORKS

There are several theories about how creative visualization works. Some ascribe its efficacy to God or another divine being; others are more practical and think its results are brought about purely as a result of positive thinking. Others take the universal mystical approach that like attracts like. Scientifically there is no evidence for universal attraction so psychologists and biologists will be more likely to look for a mental or physical process to achieve the results that have been attained over and over again in many scientifically controlled studies. This is also the view that I take.

By visualizing a desired outcome thoroughly you draw a complex image (or sequence of images) in your brain, often accompanied by sensory imagery too. And by doing so you stimulate neurons, which then form new connections with each other, subtly altering the way you think. Over time this effect magnifies and, for example, when a shy person visualizes about having greater self-confidence, new more positive pathways replace the older negative ones, and that person actually takes on the character trait they have visualized.

At the same time, however, there is little doubt in my mind that having a belief in God or an all-powerful being enhances the results, which tend to come quicker and be even better than you hope for. If you are religious you'll say 'Well, of course!' And if not then you can put this extra effectiveness down to having a greater belief in the technique.

EXPECTING A POSITIVE OUTCOME

In numerous studies, the key to creative visualization has been found time and again to be having a positive expectation of a good outcome. When you visualize a goal and truly expect that you will achieve it the chances of doing so are several times greater than if you merely fantasize over it. In fact, people who simply daydream or fantasize of things they would like to happen tend to be lower achievers than those who don't visualize at all - an important consideration to remember!

Therefore, as you read this book be aware that only by believing that you will be successful will that be the case. So please don't just read the exercises and think that it will be good enough. You must actively feel the power and intent behind each one, and feel secure in the knowledge that you can and will achieve the change you desire.

Because belief is so important I cover it in the next chapter, in which I introduce the most powerful creative visualization technique of all: written affirmations, more commonly referred to as goal setting. Therefore I recommend you read this chapter first, before jumping into later parts of the book that seem most interesting to you right now. That way you'll have a great technique already under your belt, with which you can build your belief in yourself, and your positive expectations of a great outcome.

HOLDING ONTO YOUR BELIEF

In 2010 a study was published in which it was claimed that the popular health supplement glucosamine (which is used to treat joint pain and arthritis) appeared to have no statistically positive benefit after all. As a result, sales of the product plummeted with tens of thousands of people who had previously been absolutely certain that it was helping them now believing the opposite.

When we heard of this in our household we thought we would try an experiment. Both my wife and I have trouble with our joints, so we decided to stop taking the supplement to see if we would notice any change. If the study was correct we shouldn't have noticed any difference. But we both felt our symptoms deteriorate and quite quickly too. So we resumed taking the supplements and after a few days we both felt much better. So does this supplement work or not? Well, the answer to that question doesn't matter to us - because (perhaps due to adopting the right frame of mind) we both find it helps, and that's good enough.

By maintaining our belief in something, not just by faith but by conducting simple tests where necessary (so that our belief has a footing in fact), we maintain its efficacy. Positivity always wins out over negativity, which is why it always pays big-time to try to avoid being negative in the way we think - whether about things, other people or ourselves.

SELECTING GOALS YOU CAN ACHIEVE

One final thought before you get on with changing your life. Always select goals you are confident you can achieve. Instead of aiming for the stars, shoot first for the moon. That way your belief will be strengthened and the goals you seek

will come quicker and easier. You can always choose the stars for another goal when you are ready!

IF NOTHING ELSE, REMEMBER ...

With creative visualization you can change or achieve almost anything to which you put your mind.

2

Belief Is Half the Battle

Man is what he believes.

- Anton Chekhov

In this chapter you will:

- **examine and strengthen your beliefs**
- **look forward to and relish change**
- **quickly recover from failure and try again**

Belief is a very powerful thing. Everything you know and do is built on beliefs. It's true. Nothing is really based on facts because, as any scientist will tell you, no fact is ever proven to be a hundred per cent true – only the statistical chance of a thing being true can be considered.

Yes, it might be that every time you let go of an apple it falls to the ground. But that's only up until now. What about in the future? You might tell me not to be so ridiculous but, for the sake of argument, assume you're a character in the *Matrix* movies. Or, as we used to say pre-*Matrix*, imagine that you're a brain in a bottle.

There's actually no way for you to prove that you aren't in the *Matrix*, or a brain in a bottle. No matter what you think of, it could still be an experience fed to your brain by a computer or other outside set of input sources. Touch, taste, feeling, hearing and smell – every one of the five senses could be simply illusions fed to a blob of grey matter floating in a bottle of nutrients, and there's no way you can actually prove that's not the case. Go ahead, try arguing it with yourself.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU

Speaking of which, let's talk about you. Are you a religious person? If so that means you have faith. All religions are based on a system of faith, or belief. There's no proof that a scientist would accept that Jesus performed the miracles mentioned in the *Bible*. In fact they are contrary to what we understand of science, and that's why they are called miracles. But, even so, many millions of people have an unshakeable belief in their being true.

A few hundred years ago most people believed that the Earth was flat. A few still do today. They also believed that the universe truly was created in seven days – and millions of people still believe that. You see, belief is different for everyone. What you choose to believe (or maybe you don't choose, but feel you have to believe), well, that could be (and very likely is) very different for many other people.

LOOKING AT HOW YOU VIEW YOURSELF

Let me ask you something. How do you view yourself – I mean relative to other people? Do you feel you are more successful? Less? About average? Are you happier? Do you think you are smarter? More hard-working? Whatever answers come to mind when I ask you that, they are your beliefs. And they are strong; as strong to you as if they were immutable facts. You have probably derived these beliefs over many years of saying things like 'Oh, I could never learn to program a computer' or 'Cooking? I could never do that', and so on. And after a while it becomes true – at least, in your mind it does.