

Visualize Victory

By Chris Vasiliadis

Picture success and it's yours? It would sound like magic or hocus pocus if there weren't countless examples of all flavors of individuals using visualization to achieve their goals.

Your brain doesn't see letters, according to developmental molecular biologist John Medina, author of *Brain Rules*. It sees only pictures. Feeding your brain your goals in picture format (vs. text) helps your brain be more efficient in attaining those goals.

Bear in mind, this technique doesn't work all by itself: don't expect to simply picture something and poof, it appears! The following minimal tenets need to be in place.

1. Create a physical picture of your goals, or create a clear image in your head.

Physical pictures include pictures that you draw or paint, pictures that you take with a camera, photos cut from magazines, or downloaded from the web, or some combination of all the above. Put these into a notebook, or use my favorite approach, a Vision Board. Grab a piece of poster board, scissors, a glue stick and your pictures, and you're on your way. Remember the collages you created as a child? Same idea, but now with a wellness purpose.

Whether you create or cut out physical pictures or claim an image of your desired wellness in your head, the idea here is to put your mindset in a place that you've already achieved your goals. Choose pictures that excite and jazz you in achieving your goals. Use pictures to answer questions like these:

- You've done it: what does this look like in your life?
- What are you now able to do as a result of achieving your goals?
- How do you feel?
- Who is around you?
- How do your surroundings feel?
- How are you being?
- What does it look like to achieve and maintain the wellness goals you set for yourself?

2. Instill a ritual of reviewing your pictures at least twice a day.

For those who create the Vision Board, post it in a prominent place where you will easily review it at the start and end of your day. Notebook people: keep this easily accessible, open and in view. I especially favor reviewing your pictures right before bed to both end the day on a positive note and allow your brain to work on achieving your goals while you sleep.

Look at each image one at a time. If you prefer to use images in your head, try recalling these images during focused breathing or meditation. Retrieve the same images at each sitting to train your brain on what you want to achieve. For each image, spend a moment imagining you've achieved what that image represents. (We're feeding the right, creative side of your brain here.) See the experiences you're having, as if you're watching a movie about your achievement. Connect with the feeling and emotion you get when you imagine you've done it.

This process may take a bit of practice: hang with it, and it's OK if you feel like you're making this up -- you're rehearsing with your mind -- building a groove in your brain to prepare and condition it to have this experience for real.

3. Take the next step.

A side benefit of visualization: it's especially helpful when you're stuck on **how** to achieve your goals. Don't worry about having all the steps figured out in how to achieve your goals. As my

coaches would say, get clear first on what you want. Begin with pictures that excite you, reviewing them and connecting with the feelings/emotions daily. AND, you must take action. You just need to know the next step: take it (and if you don't know the next step, contact a resource who can help you.) Consistent step-by-step action combined with reviewing your images, will move you more quickly toward your goals, and simultaneously build confidence along the way.

I encourage you to consider the wellness you want to achieve or sustain during the holiday season. Give visualization a shot for the next 30 days and let me know how it works for you.

Chris is a Certified Wellness Coach who happens to be living well with Multiple Sclerosis. Through her coaching and training firm, Priority Wellness (<http://www.prioritywellness.com>), she helps individuals in a life or work transition navigate the process to achieve the best possible outcome, while maintaining their well-being. She also works with stressed out and depleted people who are ready to increase their energy and decrease their stress, so they can perform better and be more relaxed at work, life and the things they love. Chris can be heard twice a month on her internet radio show, Energizing You, on blogtalkradio.com. She is currently co-authoring a book on women business owners who have experienced a personal crisis while running their business. Chris can be contacted at chris@prioritywellness.com or 781-791-7642.