



Welcome to Coach Traub's Newsletter Mental Skills Tips #13!!!!

Mental Skills Training = Performance Enhancement and Personal Growth

My mission is to over-deliver value on goods and services designed to help you "win" the mental game.

This issue's theme: Imagery

The moment of enlightenment is when a person's dreams of possibilities become images of probabilities. -Vic Braden, tennis instructor

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The Power of Imagery

Today's Mental Skills Tip – It is the athlete's challenge to get his (or her) body to act the way he wants it to act. Communicating mind to muscles is just flat-out hard. You must care, but trying too much is debilitating. You must be aggressive, but it is easy to lose balance and control. You must be strategic, but also keep it simple so you can focus effectively. You must be mechanically sound without thinking about mechanics while performing, even after a mistake. So is there a magic wand? Is there a way to commit the mind to a plan, then consistently get the body/muscles to act or react appropriately? I think there is. From Hank Aaron and Greg Maddux to Tiger Woods and Annika Sorenstam to Michael Phelps and Michael Johnson, imagery is the elite athlete's magic wand for producing outstanding results.

Imagery is creating or re-creating an experience in the mind using as many senses as possible. It starts with visualizing and adds in how it will feel, smell, taste, and sound as much as possible. Imagery can take on a first-person perspective, seeing things as they will actually look to you, or third-person perspective, like watching the scene on a movie screen in front of you. The image can be huge and colorful, or small and black and white. There is no wrong way to do imagery -- a daydream is imagery. With practice, vividness, control, staying power, and the ability to FEEL the experience happening (not just think about it) will improve. Experiment with the style, timing, and specifics of your imagery use, paying attention to what tends to work and what doesn't. And don't be surprised when the results are fantastic!

COACHING POINT - Incorporate imagery into practice as often as possible. It's a powerful skill, and like all skills, it improves with practice. For example, athletes should image the game situation being practiced in drills. Also, they can image the controllable result to produce (e.g. what you want this pitch to do). Image something (e.g. a day at the beach) that helps get the mind and body right for performing the task at hand. Mental rehearsal helps increase confidence, self-control, and solidifies the execution of the performance routine. Athletes should also use imagery to fix a flawed mechanic. Instead of expressing disgust at a mistake (e.g. front side opening too quickly), remember that mistakes lead to growth, and that this is a great opportunity to see if they can fix the mistake without focusing on the mechanics of it during the next performance. Imaging the correct form or controllable result shortly before the performance often creates amazing results!

"Overheard" from the Minds of some Great Athletes:

Poor Self-Talk can be transformed into
Fantastic Self-Talk

Counter: I don't want to image it, I just want to do it. to
I do want to practice imagery if it'll help me win.

Reframe: Imagery seems like hocus pocus. to
I don't understand how a light bulb works either, but I'm happy to use it when it's dark.

Counter: Imagery may work, but I'm not good at it. to
I'm okay and I know I'll get better with practice.

Counter: I don't need imagery because most of my peers don't practice it. to
I need to practice imagery because I want to be better than them.

Counter: I don't have time. to
I don't make time.



You can bring Coach Traub straight to your team.

EXTRAordinary Quotes (from Chapter 14: Imagery) [Book Details and Ordering Info HERE](#)

Annika Sorenstam, "I close my eyes and see the shot. I look at the ball and see the type of shot I have in my mind. I see it fly and I see it land. It's a way of seeing the result before you do it. I visualize the end result."

Nolan Ryan, "I lie down, close my eyes, relax my body, and prepare myself for the game. I go through the entire lineup of the other team, one batter at a time. I visualize exactly how I am going to pitch to each hitter and I see and feel myself throwing exactly the pitches that I want to throw."

Reggie Jackson, "I visualize a line drive up the middle."

Are You Hungry for More?

How does the mind/body connection work? I don't pretend to know the details, but I am convinced that positive imagery can help you:

- Facilitate and accelerate recovery from injury
- Facilitate and accelerate recovery from illness
- Guide your muscles to produce a specific result
- Facilitate an adjustment (fix a flaw in your mechanics)
- Practice/Rehearse a skill or strategy
- Control anxiety and all details of your internal state
- Increase recall (imaging what happened out there)
- Increase feelings of control
- Increase ability to stay positive through adversity

I could write many pages about anecdotal "miracle" recoveries from disease using positive thinking and imagery, and just about every elite athlete I talk to has a story about how imagery has helped him or her perform, but I will stop for now. I will ask...

Would you gamble money if you might triple your money, but also knew that you couldn't lose a penny? You have nothing to lose by trying imagery more often.

Do you want to read more? Here are a few links for you:

I like this [snopes article](http://www.snopes.com/sports/golf/innergolf.asp) about the golfing POW. <http://www.snopes.com/sports/golf/innergolf.asp>
Injured? Check this out: <http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/sportspsychology/a/Imagery.htm>
There's lots of academic research, as indicated by [this article](#). It's because imagery is available, free, and so useful. <http://www.athleticinsight.com/Vol8Iss3/ImageryResearch.htm#Introduction>

Do you want to buy my guided imagery CD?

Check out the baseball and softball CDs
in [my online store](http://coachtraub.com/cart): <http://coachtraub.com/cart>

Coach Wooden Quote-of-the-Month: "I never stressed winning. I don't believe my players would tell you that they ever heard me mention winning. I wanted the score to be a byproduct of the preparation." **Note:** Wooden's UCLA teams won 88 straight basketball games at one point and *seven (yes, 7!) straight national championships from '67-'73.*

Coaches Reminder: "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Baseball/Softball Rules Tip-of-the-Day: Out of the batter's box. It is an illegally batted ball if the batter swings or bunts the ball with either foot on the ground *entirely* outside of the batter's box. Penalty: the batter is out. Note: a batter's box exists, even if you can't see it. The easiest out call for the umpire is if the batter steps on, in front, or behind the plate, usually on an attempted bunt.

Training Point- Feet placement on a bunt is critical for plate coverage without stepping out of the box. Pay attention to details.

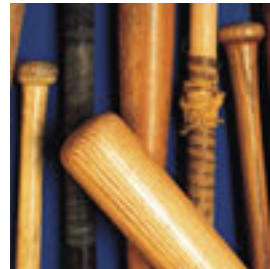
For getting this far, I have warm wishes for you...

*May your hunt for excellence be fruitful and never-ending.
May you not only hold on to the dreams you've had,
but also dream greater dreams than before.
May you not only enjoy this land and its wealth,
but also enjoy the wind at your back as you
make it a better place to live
by giving and loving generously.
God bless.*

Coach Traub

www.CoachTraub.com

Enjoy your job. Know your job. Do your job!



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