

Wee steps can make a big difference

Tips for visualisation



What is creative visualisation?

We can think of creative visualisation as a way of using your imagination, to help create what you want to happen in your life. We do it all the time and probably aren't even aware of it. We may decide we want toasted cheese. We imagine the lovely warm toasted bread with the melting cheese. We may have none of these ingredients so need to go to the shops and get them. To do this we need money so need to look for our card or cash. In our mind we imagined toasted cheese, and before we know it, our feet are taking us along a line of decisions which result in us enjoying eating this lovely feast! It started with an idea, the more our imagination focused on a reality where this was something we were doing, the more motivated we were to make it happen and it did!

Why does it matter what we imagine?

Its amazing how much our thinking goes into creating what happens next. Using our imagination towards goals which matter to us will help us move towards having or achieving what we visualise. However, our faith in our ability to achieve that matters, when we visualise something, we also need to believe this is something we can do. There are many pieces on www.cope-scotland.org you may find helpful for increasing confidence. It is also really important we take time to think, what is it I want, what do I want to make manifest in my life.

How does this work?

Our thinking is pretty complex, in addition to the thinking we are aware of, our consciousness, there is also our preconscious mind, it's kind of there if we need it but we don't think about it all the time. Then there is our unconscious mind. Like an iceberg, we only see what is above and just below the water, the bulk of the iceberg is hidden from view. This is also true of our unconscious. However, this is where our fears live, the self-doubts, attitudes and experiences which can hold us back from reaching our potential. Creative visualisation is a way to help us override any self-limiting beliefs we may have, by helping us develop new attitudes about ourselves and what we are capable of.



How do I start?

The aim of creative visualisation is to bring something into your life which wasn't there before or imagine a new life where something which isn't helpful for you is no longer an issue. The key things to remember are, it needs to be something which really matters to you and view it in the positive. If you are in a job you hate, don't visualise leaving that job, instead visualise yourself in a new job which makes you feel fulfilled. What does that new job look like? Be clear on what your goals are maybe include bullet points to achieve those goals. Knowing what your goals are and why they matter is really important for visualisation so please take time on this. Tune into your gut reaction, does this feel right? The clearer your vision the more it matters to you, the more motivated you will be to make it manifest. When you visualise you maybe imaging something you don't yet know how to do, don't worry about that as in setting your goals this is something you can work towards. The stronger the memory you are making of visualising yourself having already succeeded, the stronger will be your motivation to get there.



Give it time and be relaxed

Thinking about what we really want in our lives and why, is sometimes easier said than done. Give it time, don't rush it. When you are planning to think about this, spend some time first getting relaxed and do this at a time when you won't be disturbed, so try and switch off your mobile! You may want to have a relaxing bath first or listen to some music which inspires you. The aim here is to help tap into your creative self. This wee piece may also be of interest www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/ideas-for-how-creativity-can-improve-our-mental-health These wee tips may be helpful www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/relaxation-and-what-we-can-learn-from-frogs You may find journaling is helpful for capturing your thoughts. This wee piece may be useful on journaling. www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/the-pen-is-mightier-than-the-sword

What resources do I need?

Creative visualisation happens in your mind. The resources you need is your attention. Being mindful can help focus our attention, you may find this useful www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/tips-for-living-mindfully . A pen and paper to journal, and perhaps to make a vision board. You can also use images and words from magazines to create your vision board, whatever works for you. The aim is to take what is in your mind and put it in front of you in words or pictures to help what you want to make manifest even clearer in your mind. If you are looking for tips on clearer thinking you may find this helpful www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/latest-blog/tips-for-thinking-more-clearly Time can be sometimes hard to find, to begin with, even if you can make 20 minutes a day, every day, this can make a difference. It is better to perhaps use less time more frequently than a lot of time now and then.



What could creative visualisation offer me?

These tips are for self-management. If there has been something in your life which has had an impact on you and what you believe yourself capable of, this may require professional intervention. Ask your GP or other health care provider about supports near you. If you perhaps want to achieve something, new house, relationship, job, improved sense of wellbeing, pass a test and more, then creative visualisation is a tool that may help you achieve that desired goal.

Using all your senses

You may find watching this wee video helpful for realising just how many senses we have www.cope-scotland.org/index.php/videos/video/using-the-senses-to-relax . This is using your senses to relax; however, you can use them to visualise. Imagine your goal has already happened, you have succeeded, what do you see, hear? smell? Taste? What can touch, is there wind on your skin? Are you moving, how does that movement feel e.g., you may want to learn to drive a car, can you feel the car moving? The clearer the vision is in your mind, the more often you visualise this, the more likely you will feel motivated to achieve that goal as already you can imagine you have achieved it. You may want to add people, times of year. The more your imagination works in a positive way the more focused you are on achieving this goal. This is where a journal and or a vision board can help as you can capture all of this to reflect on and remind you what you are working towards on days when maybe this is harder than others.

Untangling notes with boxing gloves on!

Sometimes we have so much going on in our lives, its like being given a ball of very knotted wool, putting on a set of boxing gloves and a blind fold and told to untie the knots! Hmmm how many seconds and the ball of wool goes flying. The same holds when our lives feel very overwhelming and stressful, we don't know where to start. Relaxation doesn't take away the knotted ball of wool, but it takes off the blindfold and boxing gloves and makes it easier for us to be calmer and focus on the knots which we need to put our energy into unknotting. Make a note in your journal about the knots that are holding you back from your dreams.

Perspective

There are a couple of ways you can visualise; one is that you are in the vision and experiencing all the positive things you are aiming to achieve. The other is seeing it through someone else's eyes e.g., you may imagine watching yourself on a screen. Perhaps a film you have written the script for and directed? Try it both ways, see what works for you. A reminder, if you are working through any issues, or have any feelings of depersonalisation or dissociation, speak to a health professional before trying these exercises, they are for self help and do not replace professional advice.

Stay kind and positive

Creative visualisation is around bringing something kind or positive into your life and the lives of others and is a tool for bringing more positive energy into the world. If at this time you find it hard to be positive do speak to someone as our mental health matters and sometimes self-help alone is not enough. What is also helpful, if you think this is hard of someone you admire who succeeded, sometimes against the odds, that you would see as a role model. Yes, goals need to be realistic, however, we are often capable of more than we give ourselves credit for, so if you are going to dream, dream big and see where those aspirations take you and remember, if you need help ask, we all need help sometimes.

