

(These are exercises that will take a long time to master but every investment will improve your life. They are also fundamental to the other skills you are trying to develop. JAS)

How you can develop the powers of Concentration and Visualization

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A secret to mastering intense shamanic trance states and experiencing ecstatic flight of the soul into other realms of existence is a mind trained to concentrate. Concentration is the ability to focus your thoughts and attention on a chosen subject. With most of us this ability is weak. When we attempt to concentrate on a subject we are soon distracted by stray or unrelated thoughts.

The purpose of this paper is to give you the necessary mental training tools to develop the ability to produce vivid three-dimensional imagery by conscious deliberate activation of your subconscious mind in which you are in full control. This basic tool is the ability to concentrate the mind deeply and intensively. Concentration, will power, and visualization are closely related. When you increase your ability in one of those areas your abilities in the others are simultaneously developed.

The goal of mind training can be divided into several sub-goals which will not necessarily be mastered in the order listed below. In fact when you regularly practice the exercises given later in this paper you may find that several of them are attained simultaneously. Development of one ability often leads to the attainment of other abilities as well.

These sub-goals are:

1. To develop the ability to rapidly and intensely concentrate on any desired subject or object as long as necessary and to instantly change your attention to another subject or object at will.
2. To develop a keen sense of observation and to think deeply using your inherent intellectual potential to the fullest extent possible.
3. To concentrate so intensely that your physical environment, distracting stimuli, or anything unrelated disappears from your awareness.
4. To concentrate on an imagined sensory stimulation so intensely

that, with your eyes closed, you experience it similar to a hallucination. For example you concentrate on a lemon and are able to see it clearly in your minds eye, smell it, and taste it.

5. To produce the same effect with your eyes open. For example, you visualize a candle with your eyes closed and see it in your minds eye, vividly, in complete detail. Then you open your eyes while continuing to concentrate on the image of the candle to such an extent that you are not aware of the objects in your physical environment.

6. To take a vividly visualized image, such as a flower, and to project it into two dimensional space, such as on a piece of paper, vividly enough that it appears to you to be like a picture or photograph that you can trace with a pencil.

7. To project an image into three dimensional space so that you see it in the same way you would if looking at the real thing with your eyes open.

8. To be able to mentally change your perception of physical objects at will. For example you look at a piece of white paper and imagine it turning blue until you see it as blue. When you can do this you will be able to produce physical phenomena on your body such as sensations of pain or pleasure, and the elimination of actual pain.

9. To create any feeling or emotional state such as happiness, anger, sadness, peace, contentment, and so forth instantly and at will. When you can do this you will be able to change your spontaneous emotional reactions when they are aroused. For example you will be able to turn feelings of anger, anxiety, fear, sadness, or depression into joy, confidence, happiness, contentment and so forth.

10. To combine more than one intense sensory experience. For example, you visualize a dog in front of you, hear him bark, feel his fur when you pet him, and smell him. Or visualize a rose so clearly you see it on the table, can smell it, and feel it's thorns when you touch it.

11. To rapidly produce all of the phenomena mentioned above. For example, at first it will take an extended period of time to produce the image of a rose. With sufficient practice you will be able to produce a three dimensional image of a rose simply deciding to do so and saying to yourself something like, "I want to see a rose in front of me now." Or by saying "I feel happy" you instantly feel a wave of happiness filling your entire being.

12. To produce all of the above phenomena not only rapidly, but also under adverse conditions, such as distractions from people, noises, physical or psychological discomfort. Concentration can be defined as directing thoughts and attention to some topic or object and keeping the attention firmly on it. Therefore in concentration exercises you need to:

1. Select an object of concentration.
2. Direct your thoughts and attention to it.
3. Keep your attention on it and intensively think about it.
4. Prevent any unrelated and distracting thoughts from entering your mind. That is, as soon as unrelated or distracting thoughts enter your mind you need to send it away and again concentrate and think about your object. With practice fewer and fewer unrelated thoughts will occur and your periods of undisturbed concentration will lengthen.

MENTAL PROCESSES USED IN CONCENTRATION

1. **INTELLECT:** You think about the object of concentration; that is, you think about its form, color, shape, material of which it was made, its use, and so forth. You analyze it, remember everything you know about it, and eventually think about how it could be improved. At this point you think in terms of words. You speak mentally (not aloud) and tell yourself in your mind whatever comes to you pertaining to the object. It's important at this stage to develop in your mind an uninterrupted flow of thoughts and speaking related to the object. Your thinking should be similar to the uninterrupted flow of oil poured from a bottle. As long as this uninterrupted thought flow is maintained your concentration will not be broken.
2. **WILLING:** You make decisions to keep concentrating and think about your object of concentration until a determined period of time is spent. You keep returning your attention to the object of concentration as soon as your thoughts slip away, and keep sending away unrelated thoughts.
3. **IMAGINATION:** You need to visualize and clearly imagine the object of your concentration with closed eyes. When you begin exercising you may have very little ability to visualize however with time you will develop "eidetic imagery." This is the ability to see the object in your mind as clearly as you can when you are looking at it with open eyes and to keep the image in your mind as long as you want.

After your exercise session is completed it's important to refuse to think about your object of concentration until your next session. This will prevent obsessive thinking about it.

GENERAL RULES

OBJECT OF CONCENTRATION: The object of your concentration exercise can be anything: a coin, a stamp, a candle, a flower, or a quartz crystal are all good. Each of those have enough detail to help keep your mind focused, but are not so complex as to lead you away from the purpose of the exercises. Using a flower bud or a crystal as the object of your concentration will have a tendency to develop your clairvoyant abilities. After you develop proficiency in concentrating on simple physical objects you can begin using intellectual topics, abstract ideas, and more complex objects.

PLACE FOR EXERCISES: In the beginning its best to find a quiet place where you can be undisturbed. This could be your own room, a church, or any other private place. You might find it useful to use ear plugs such as those made of wax and cotton which are available in most drug stores. As you gain proficiency noises and the environment will not distract you and you will be able to exercise anywhere.

REGULARITY AND PERSISTENCE: Regularity and persistence in exercising is extremely important. Do not miss even one day. Ideally the exercises should be practiced twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening, and if possible at the same time every day.

DURATION OF EXERCISES: Don't demand too much of yourself at the beginning. Start with exercises lasting one minute or less, but do them regularly and correctly. The exercises may be difficult and boring in the beginning, but they will become fun when they become habit and you realize the positive effects they have on you in terms of better mental functioning.

INCREASE DURATION OF EXERCISES: When you gain some proficiency with a one minute exercise gradually increase the duration of the exercise by an additional one minute per day. When you are able to think intensively about any selected object or topic without interruption for 15 minutes you will have made tremendous progress. If you are interested in occult, magical, or shamanic abilities you should gradually extend your practice to an hour or more.

The 15 minute time period should be maintained when it is reached. An effort should then be made to improve the quality of your concentration and to keep improving it until no disruptive thoughts appear during this period. It's best to get an inexpensive digital kitchen timer to measure the

length of your exercises. These can be set in one minute increments and make no distracting noise from the time they are activated to the time they ring.

BODY POSITION: During the exercises your body should be erect, with your spine, neck and head forming one straight line. You may find it helpful to do these exercises sitting in a straight backed chair, your feet flat on the floor, and your hands resting on your knees.

BODY RELAXATION: Your body relaxation must be complete, except for the muscles which hold your body in the appropriate position. Make an effort to relax every muscle before starting the exercises. If, during the exercise, you notice that any muscle is getting tense, immediately relax it then return to the exercise. Although you need to be completely physically relaxed, you should not fall asleep and your mind should be alert. The rule is that your body should be relaxed, and your mind intensively active.

QUIETING THE MIND: This is done before the exercises begin. You do this by (1) excursion of thoughts and (2) rhythmic breathing.

(1) Excursion of Thoughts: Before starting an exercise relax your mind and let your thoughts come and go as they please. It's important to keep a distance from your thoughts and just observe them as you would observe the flow of a river from a bridge. Don't get involved and carried away by passing thoughts, just observe them indifferently and they will slow down after a couple of minutes.

(2) Rhythmic Breathing: It's very good to breathe rhythmically before the actual exercises in concentration are started. Your heart beat should be used as a measure. The rule is that your inhalation should equal your exhalation in duration, and the pauses between inhalation and exhalation, as well as those between exhalation and inhalation, should last half as long as the inhalation. For example inhale for 6 heart beats, hold your breath for 3 heart beats, then exhale for 6 heart beats, hold your breath for three heart beats, and repeat. This should be whatever length of time is comfortable to you since the actual length of time is not important, but the regularity and pattern is. It's important that your breathing be done effortless and without any strain.

During inhalation think and imagine how air is entering and filling your lungs, during retention imagine how it is absorbed by your lungs, and during exhalation visualize how it smoothly leaves your lungs. These exercises should calm your mind and let you create a temporary distance from distracting everyday events.

The number of rhythmic breaths taken can vary from 6 to 20

depending on your mood and the available time.

DECISION: As you begin your exercise session think to yourself, "I shall concentrate on this (name of object) for (amount of time). I shall permit no other thoughts to enter my mind. If any unrelated thought enters my mine I will immediately send it away and concentrate on this (name of object). Every day I am concentrating better and better. I shall concentrate on this (name of object) for (amount of time) and nothing will distract me."

SPECIFIC EXERCISES:

1. CONCENTRATION ON A SIMPLE OBJECT. Select your object, for example a 25-cent coin.

Assume an appropriate body position, relax, perform the excursion of thoughts and rhythmic breathing, and make the decision that you will concentrate for your selected period of time on that quarter.

Now start thinking about the quarter. Think about its shape, color, material from which it is made, how it is made, what can be bought for it, and so forth. Keep an uninterrupted flow of thoughts directed at the quarter and send away any unrelated thought that may appear. Simply keep returning your mind to the quarter as soon as it wanders away. You will see some inscriptions

on one side of the quarter; "Liberty", "In God We Trust", and the date.

Think for a while about the meaning of the words, but don't permit yourself to be carried away too far from the quarter. When you think about "Liberty" deliberately turn your attention on that concept and think about what it means for a moment, then deliberately turn your attention to the second inscription, and so forth. Then spend some time thinking about the image of George Washington, then again turn your attention to the coin.

The second task is to direct your attention to the form of the coin in order to be able to visualize it later with closed eyes. Look at it without strain, calmly and attentively. Try to memorize its form.

Then close your eyes and try to imagine it. At first you probably won't succeed in visualizing it clearly. Therefore, open your eyes again and look at the quarter to get a better impression of the parts that you were not able to visualize. Repeat this process until the time for the exercise is expired. You may find it useful to concentrate on only a part of the coin in order to get a good picture of it, and then to go to the next part. For example you can try to imagine clearly Washington's forehead, then his nose, mouth, and so forth, and finally combine all those parts together in a clear image of his face.

If you find that you run out of thoughts about the object before the

time has expired, you can elaborate on the thoughts which you already covered by going over them in greater detail. You may also just keep thinking the same thoughts over again. The purpose of the exercise is to keep your mind on the object, not to produce some extraordinary thoughts. Use the same object in all of your future exercises until you are able to create a clear and B image of it and keep that image vividly in your mind. You may spend a considerable amount of time on this, but you will find that the same can be accomplished on other objects in a very short time because you will have trained your mind to concentrate.

2. CONCENTRATION ON READING: This may be done anytime, in addition to the above exercise. Take a small passage or a sentence. Decide that you will concentrate on it for, say, 10 minutes. Read it slowly and get the exact meaning of each word and each sentence. Imagine what the writer wanted to say and understand it. If some scene is described, imagine it clearly. Then think about it. Analyze what the writer stated. Is he correct. Do you agree with him? What do you think about it? What are your experiences regarding the same topic. Be critical. What were the writer's motives? Why do you disagree with him? The important thing is that you again keep an uninterrupted flow of thoughts directed at the passage for a determined period of time. The passage should be short. The idea of the exercise is to develop the habit of sharp thinking and not to acquire knowledge by reading a lot in a fast manner.

3. COUNTING EXERCISES: This exercise can be executed anyplace. You can simply close your eyes and imagine that you are in front of a chalkboard. Imagine that you have a piece of chalk in one hand and a sponge in the other. Now imagine that you are writing the number 1 on the board. Visualize it written on the board as clearly as you can. Then erase it with the sponge. Again imagine the empty chalkboard and then write the number 2. Again erase it after you have formed a clear picture of the number. Repeat this process with the numbers 3, 4 and so forth. You will find that every day you will be able to visualize more numbers without distracting thoughts. Continue with this exercise daily until you reach at least 100 without distracting thoughts. What is important here is clear visualization of the numbers and an uninterrupted flow of that imagery and thinking.

4. DELIBERATE DISTRACTION OF THOUGHTS: The idea behind this practice is to train your mind to learn voluntary distraction of thoughts. You can train yourself at any time with this practice, as much as you want during the day. It is good to do it at least several times per day. The exercise is quite simple. You consciously distract your

attention from something that attracts it. For example, some pleasant or unpleasant sight attracts you or stimulates your imagination. Say to yourself, "I don't want to think about it." and then focus your attention on something else. The same can be done with any other stimuli, such as: refusing to listen to some pleasant music, distracting yourself from some memory, or some fantasy activity. There is nothing wrong with enjoying pleasant sights or listening to music. This exercise should be considered as simply another tool for training the mind. The psychological term for this process is called "suppression." It is a source of strength for the person who is able to do it. The conscious process of suppression has nothing to do with "repression" which is an unconscious process by which traumatic or unpleasant experiences are kept from emerging to the surface of consciousness.

5. DO EVERYTHING WITH FULL ATTENTION: This is very important. You must strive to be concentrated on everything you do. The effect of exercises will be lost if you do one thing and think about something else. There must be harmony between doing and thinking. That is, if you do something you should give it full attention: you should not think about other things, or of something that you will do in the future, or something that happened to you. For example: if you shave, think only of shaving; if you read something, think only of what you are reading; if you eat, give full attention to eating, and so forth. It may take a long time to develop this habit, but it is a very necessary one.

You will find that after you practice an exercise of concentration in the morning you will be more attentive and concentrate on everything you do during the day. Your mind will develop what psychologists call a "set" of concentration, or a concentrated attitude, which will persist a long time after the exercise.

FINAL COMMENTS

The above instructions should be read, reread, studied and committed to memory. They may look complicated, but they are actually simple to perform in practice. Although they are simple, proper performance will require great persistence until the habit is developed. Regular practice is a lesson in self-discipline which will strengthen your ego and aid in the rapid development of your ability to concentrate and visualize. You will find that regular practice of each one of these exercises will increase your abilities to practice the other ones.
