



Case name: I Just Can't Visualize

Contributor: Ned Herrmann
Herrmann International

Company: Western Electric Technical Manager

The Challenge: Unleash the ability of a technical manager to visualize in his mind's eye.

Purpose:

Finds ways to apply whole brain technology in order to demonstrate an individual's ability to visualize an event, a problem issue, or a potential solution in a visual form or even in a manner similar to experiencing a movie in your mind.

Existing conditions:

A technical manager feels that he could improve his performance on the job if he was able to visualize problem situations, tasks requirements, and potential solutions to important company problems. Other people appear to be capable of doing this and he can't and is, therefore, frustrated. The manager has learned that visualization is not a rare capability but rather one that is potentially available to everyone if ways can be found to unleash that capability.

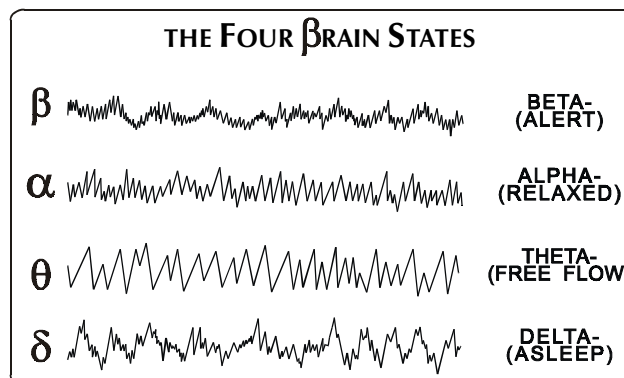
Desired Outcomes:

Short term: Demonstrate that visualization is possible by having the technical manager successfully experience a visualizable event under workshop conditions.

Long term: Build on the affirmation achieved in the workshop to develop an everyday, workplace capability of visualizing as situationally required.

Whole Brain Intervention Methods, Processes and Strategies:

The Applied Creative Thinking workshop (ACT I) provides a visualization module that uses a series of guided fantasies to demonstrate an individual's ability to visualize in their mind's eye. The module begins with an explanation of the four brain states that are available to humans on a daily basis. The four states are: (1) the alert, aroused, **beta state**; (2) the relaxed, non aroused, **alpha state**; (3) the free-flow visual **theta state**; and, (4) the deep, dreamless **delta state**. Participants learn that these states are present at all times and vary in degree situationally.



There are three specialized guided fantasies designed to demonstrate the ability to visualize. These are sequenced in such a way to encourage the likelihood of the largest number of participants

to actually achieve visualization during the course of at least one of the guided fantasies. Each guided fantasy starts out with a series of breathing exercises to lower the breathing rate and produce a relaxed state at the alpha and, hopefully, theta brain state levels. Before experiencing the guided fantasies, participants understand that visualization can include a variety of expressions such as: taste, smell, color, visual stills, and often realistic movies in the head. The first fantasy is called the "Garden Fantasy." It lasts less than three minutes. In the fantasy, individuals are guided down a garden path into their favorite garden. Beautiful, orchestral music with a beat frequency of approximately 60 cycles per second accompanies the unfolding fantasy. Participants are invited to stop and smell flowers along the way; to see these flowers near by and in the distance and to feel the wind on their cheeks. Then as they reach the center of the garden, the music swells with chimes and an organ crescendo. The fantasy closes by gently bringing participants back to the reality of the workshop. When queried about their reaction, workshop participants are invited to share their experiences. Typically, 75% of the participants have a very real experience in a favorite garden from, very often, their childhood. When asked, a high percentage expressed irritation at having been taken away from the garden before they were ready to leave. None of them had any idea that the fantasy was as short as it actually was.

Following a short break, participants are invited to experience the second fantasy which guides them into recalling the "haunted house" of their youth. In contrast to the first fantasy, this one very deliberately includes a lot of specific data about the haunted house, its location, its general description, and the various rooms. Again the fantasy starts with a series of breathing exercises, is supported by appropriate music and is terminated in about three minutes by gently bringing the individuals back to the workshop setting. Many participants experienced success with this fantasy including some who were unable to actually visualize the garden. In this case, they were able to go back to a specific house in their childhood hometown that, for them, was "haunted." If the details embedded in the fantasy didn't fit their personal experience, they would correct the "mistaken details" in their own visualization. Inviting participants to share their experience reveals that over 75% of the typical group would have a successful visualization of the haunted house of their youth.

By a show of hands, 90% of a typical participant group of approximately 20 people achieved a successful visualization in either one or both of the first two fantasies. The technical manager who is the focus of this case, said that, no, he did not get anything out of the first two fantasies. He saw nothing, smelled nothing, and felt nothing. They were total failures as far as he was concerned.

The third guided fantasy is designed to provide an opportunity for those who might have missed experiencing the first two, to have a personal success. The third fantasy is an "open ended" fantasy. After the breathing exercise beginning, it positions a person to experience whatever is in their mind. Baroque music is used as a support to the process. As in the first two fantasies, the individuals are encouraged to seat themselves comfortably or to lie down on the floor in a comfortable position. Following this open-ended three minute final fantasy, the participants were asked if they wished to share their experience. Several hands went up, but the technical manager waved his hand urgently. He blurted out that he simply had to share his wonderful experience.

He described himself walking along a country road north of Boston when a horse-drawn carriage approached from the rear. When he turned to see who it was, he recognized Benjamin Franklin's faced in the coach window. He waved frantically and shouted, "Mr. Franklin Mr. Franklin." The coach stopped and he approached the now open window and said, "Mr. Franklin, I have so admired you over the years that I have dreamed about engaging you in conversation, but that chance never occurred until now. Would it be possible for me to ride along with you so that I might take advantage of your experience and wisdom." Mr. Franklin said, "Fine, be my guest. I am always interested in sharing my experiences with the people who are interested in learning." The technical manager then described how the door was opened and how he climbed into the coach and seated himself across from

Mr. Franklin who proceeded to engage him in conversation for the entire trip from Boston to Philadelphia. The workshop participants were struck by the level of animation of the technical manager as he described in detail this extended conversation which took more than 10 minutes to narrate. His narration was almost five times longer than the actual guided fantasy. When he concluded his story, he said, "Wow! That was great! I've always wanted to talk with Benjamin Franklin. He is one of my great heroes." I asked him what he had learned from this guided fantasy experience. He said, "I didn't think I could do it, but it's very clear now that I can. I will never again be able to foreclose on my ability to visualize as I apply this to my work. This is a clear affirmation for me and I'm motivated to put it to use."

Summary of outcomes:





The technical manager, along with the typical workshop participant demonstrates an ability to experience visualization through an understanding how the brain works and the application of the guided fantasy technique. This serves as an affirmation of the individual's ability to achieve success. Once this occurs, it is very difficult for that individual to say, "No. I can't do this." Therefore, the purpose of the workshop demonstration is to achieve this powerful affirmation. Over the years, at least 75% of 1,000 ACT I workshop participants achieved this affirmation of their ability to experience visualization.

Optimizing the results:

Short term: Build on the workshop's success to apply this new capability back home in everyday work and life situations. Practice with the provided guided fantasy audio tape. But in all cases, approach the application of this skill with the confidence that it can be done because they have already done it.

Long term: Keep practicing, keep trying until visualization becomes a normal part of an individual's work and life activity. Feedback from many participants reveals that visualization is now a common experience for them.

Measurement criteria applied:

Metaphors		Success measurement points	
A 	D 	A 40	D 100
B 	C 	B 30	C 80

