



Improving performance through- VISUALIZATION



Excerpts from an article
by Lynn McTaggart

Much has been written about the role of mental rehearsal in improving athletic skills. Here's the latest on the Power of Intention...

The most successful mental imagery imagines the game from the athlete's perspective— not as if you are watching yourself on a mental video or simply thinking positive thoughts— but as though you are actually competing. It amounts to a mental trial run. The most successful athletes break down the performance into tiny component parts and work on improving specific aspects. They concentrate on the most difficult moments and work out good coping strategies— about how to stay in control in the face of adversity, like a bad call or pulled muscle.

They engage all their senses in their mental rehearsal. They hear, feel, smell, and taste it— the ambience, the sweat, the fatigue, the applause.

The most important intention of all is to rehearse the victory, which appears to help secure it. They imagine their emotional response and others' reactions. They imagine that the crowd is cheering for their performance alone.

But how can simply thinking about a future performance actually affect the day of the event? Recent brain research with an electroencephalogram (EEG) has shown that electrical activity produced by the brain is identical, *whether we're thinking about doing something or actually doing it*. Therefore mental rehearsal lays down a track just as well as physical practice does.

However a few important differences remain between mental and physical practice. With physical practice, you can become fatigued, which causes electrical interference and blockage along the tracks. No roadblocks ever appear with mental intention, no matter how much you practice in your head.

The other difference concerns the size of the effect: the neuromuscular pattern laid down with mental practice may be slightly smaller than that of physical practice.

Although both types of practice create the same muscle patterns, the imagined performances make changes

on a smaller magnitude.

To derive any benefit, mental rehearsal must replicate the real thing— *at normal speed*. Rehearsal in slow motion, with particular attention to specific moves, does *not* improve performance. You must engage in the activity at an ordinary pace.

Mental intention can also actually produce physiological changes. Results of experiments showed that participants who worked out showed a 30% increase in strength after a few weeks, while those who just imagined themselves doing the training achieved an amazing 13-16% increase.

The same mental rehearsals used by athletes are also effective in treating illness. Mentally visualizing pictures of their bodies fighting illness have boosted treatment of an array of chronic and acute conditions in patients. The placebo, in effect, is a form of intention. It has shown that beliefs are powerful, even those that are unfounded. Our bodies do not distinguish between a chemical process and the *thought* of a chemical process.

To be most effective, an intention should have a highly specific aim or goal, which you should visualize in your mind's eye, while you are in a state of concentrated hyper-awareness. When you imagine this future event, hold a mental picture of it as if it were occurring to you at that moment. Engage all five senses to visualize it in detail. The centerpiece of this mental picture should be the moment you achieve the goal.

We might also improve our daily lives just by carrying out detailed mental rehearsal. We have extraordinary power to affect the living world around us. Just picture it!

Excerpted from an article in Jan/Feb 2007 issue of **Ode Magazine**, pp. 42-49, which was excerpted from Lynne Taggart's Book, *The Intention Experiment: Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life and the World* Simon and Schuster (Free Press), 2007.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 8-13:

Winter Training (Kangeiko), 6am daily,
JKA Santa Monica

January 20-21:

Winter Training Weekend for Juniors
JKA Santa Monica

March 4:

Master Yaguchi visits Venice, 1PM

March 17:

Kyu Exam, Santa Monica Dojo, 1PM

Musashi Says

PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS



Among the training precepts recorded by the samurai-scholars of the fifteenth and

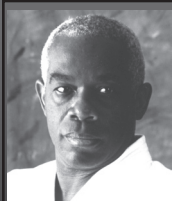
sixteenth centuries, the importance of paying attention to details was high on the list. One of the more popular axioms of the samurai reminded them to treat great things casually and small things seriously—as if their life depended on these details, as it often did. In his treatise on his way of fighting, Musashi emphasized that paying attention to small details was one of the most critical aspects of winning any battle, or succeeding in any enterprise.

Musashi made the point that people who fail in large enterprises often do so because they ignore the little things, or leave them to people who are not absolutely dependable. He pointed out that in battles to the death, warriors who did not personally maintain their weapons, who had not studied their own strengths and weaknesses and developed plans to either use them or compensate for them, or who failed to study their opponents carefully, were not likely to live long.

Throughout his lifetime, Musashi practiced his philosophy through constant study and training, never assuming he had learned everything he needed to know, or that the little details would take care of themselves.

Present-day business people who fail may not be in danger of losing their lives, but if they do not understand the details of the business they are in, especially what really makes it work, they are not likely to succeed. Taking Musashi's advice to heart can give you a major advantage.

From SAMURAI STRATEGIES, 42 Martial Secrets from Musashi's Book of Five Rings by Boyé Lafayette de Mente, Tuttle Publishing, North Clarendon, VT, 2005, pp. 54-55.



Sensei Field Adds

When practicing technique and kata, pay attention to the tiniest details of form, like the twist in the drawback hand with the little finger and thumb tight and the wrist twisted into the body. In sparring, watch for the smallest movements before and after an attack, as that is when the opponent makes himself vulnerable/open to a counterattack. Details count!

TRANSITIONS

SHODAN

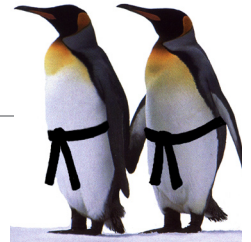
At Venice Dojo December 10, 2006:
Cody Hastings, Thousand Oaks Dojo
Elmira Tadayon, Thousand Oaks Dojo
Branda Yoshinaga, Newbury Park Dojo

BORN

To Monika and **Bob Ehling**, *Yondan*, JKA Santa Monica, a son, Finn, 6lbs 4oz, 12/1/06.

WOO HOO! IT'S HERE!
 MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR

JUST POINT ME TO SANTA MONICA!



“KANGEIKO:” WINTER TRAINING

Woo-hoo! It's time again for the annual traditional “spirit training” carried out the first full week of the new year. Its purpose: to cleanse the spirit, test the body and prepare the mind for the year to come. Santa Monica has been carrying out this tradition (started in Japan and carried out around the world) for over 30 years.

Call it global warming, but we won't run chanting through the streets in the snow wearing only a gi and shoes, as they do in Japan. Okay, call it California, but it still gets a little nippy at dawn.

All classes start at 6AM and end at 7AM except the final Saturday class which ends at 8AM, followed by a sake toast. (Hint: drink some water first!) Tuition is \$15.00 per class or \$40 for the whole week. Winter training is supplemental. Regular classes continue as usual. All registered students are expected to attend *at least* one class, and preferably all. **BE THERE!** 🌐

Bit o' wit: Fall down seven times, get up eight.

Sensei Field's absence: You may have notice that Sensei Field has been absent quite a bit of late. He has, after 35 years of nearly constant teaching, finally run into some health problems. His words to you:

“Thank you for your patience and good thoughts. Please help give me a mental and physical boost by being there when I return.”