

CONTROLLABLE IMAGERY EXERCISE: REVISING A PAST EVENT

NAME:

Now that you've successfully imaged a past event, we're going to work on revising those memories to create different outcomes. Your ability to change the content and direction of your imagery will make it more controllable. The more controllable your imagery, the more neural pathways you'll be able to target and enhance in your imagery sessions. You might notice that many of the fields below are identical to your previous exercise. This is because the process of imaging an event, whether we're remembering an actual event or creating a new one, is largely the same. We enter the imagery through our senses and create a vivid sensory environment. From here, however, we can add a few "controllables," like our focus and our behaviors, to steer our imagery in a direction of our choosing, and kinesthesia, which is the feeling of our bodies in motion, to incorporate the appropriate movements and mechanics to perform at our best

SIGHTS *What do you see? Scenery? People? Objects? Any details stand out?*

SOUNDS *What do you hear? Which noises are foregrounded? Which are backgrounded? Are they loud, soft, shrill?*

SMELLS *The fresh cut grass of the field? The chlorine in the pool? The worn leather of your mitt?*

TOUCH *The grip of the ball, the coarseness of the diving platform beneath your feet? The tape on your ankles??*

TASTE *The salt of your sweat? Mint of your gum? The dull sweetness of your mouth guard?*

EMOTIONS *What emotions are you experiencing? Do these emotions change throughout the imagery? Be sure to note any physiological responses to your emotions.*

Now let's move to your controllables.

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KINESTHETIC SENSE *(How did the movement of your body feel? Did your movements feel synchronous? Were you moving with ease and purpose? Did your body feel graceful? Powerful? In control?)*

FOCUS *(Where were you directing your attention? What focus points helped your performance or allowed you to guide your imagery? Highlight these things and bring them into future imagery)*

BEHAVIORS *(How were you acting in your imagery? What were the outcomes of your behaviors? Which behaviors worked for you? Which behaviors didn't?)*

As with the first exercise, you may find it useful to run through this kind of imagery immediately following a performance, particularly if there were moments that you wished you would have handled differently. Imagining those moments, while replacing bad decisions with better ones, can go a long way in making your desired responses more automatic in future performances.

Both of the vivid and controllable imagery exercises are useful primers for your imagery practice, as our most formative memories tend to be inherently vivid and easy to manipulate or control. They should also give you an idea of how ideal imagery should look and feel. You can return to these exercises as often as you'd like, with as many different memories as you can summon, to get imagery practice and to fine tune old skills. In most situations, however, the imagery you will be using will be forward-facing, and either address your mental state in the present moment, or anticipate a future performance. Our next section will take you through how that process works, and how you can use what you've learned to this point in the module to create the right kind of imagery to accomplish your goals