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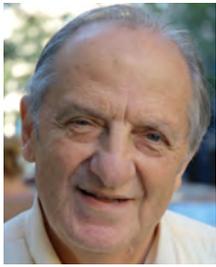
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Resolution

How Does Mental Imagery Work?



*By
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M.D.*

(Adapted from a recent interview)

Origins

The practice of mental Imagery as a significant healing method dates back to antiquity. A major reason for its early genesis into therapeutics relates to the ancient model of healthcare, which is the basis for my Imagery practice in contemporary times. That model states clearly that mental-physical, or what is currently called mindbody, is one integrated unity of interaction. That is, what happens mentally is directly reflected (not causing) physically and vice versa. This goes to say then that mental activity via the most powerful mental action – called mental Imagery – has direct effects that can be physiologically measured. Mental Imagery was understood to be a divine language bringing together in consciousness the invisible world with the visible. As such it was termed symbol - sym meaning together and bol meaning to throw. Imagery was/is recognized as the natural and true language of inner life. In this capacity as an inner hieroglyph of the mind, akin to the ancient Pharaohan sacred language of hieroglyphs, this sacred language gives direct messages and instructions to our physical body (biologically and physiologically) as to how to heal. The body in turn acts on these instructions and moves toward a normal, built-in mechanism within us to come into order and balance, which is what healing is.

Imagery: The Intelligence of the Heart

The spiritual scientific (as in contrast to material, natural scientific) model operates thus: Invisible reality sends its information along an invisible channel called “mind.” This information is conveyed as Image. Mind is part of a vast field of force/power called love, the universal healing energy. Consciousness is filtered in us through the heart, the physical analogy of love and repository of this symbolic language. In the spiritual system of the West, Imagery is called the “intelligence of the heart.” The eternal beating of the heart, then supported by the eternal life force of breath

through the lungs, aids in organizing brain function. Impulses are sent from heart to brain where they are relayed from this central receiving station (brain) to the rest of our organism. What is actually happening here has its origins in embryological development in the womb. At about three to four weeks into embryological formation the primitive central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) is beginning to develop. It is called the neural crest. Here an explosion of brain cells occurs where they migrate to all the other forming organs so that every organ of the body has a brain. Eventually the brain of the skull sends its messages to the brains of the other organs, which in turn send instructions to their supporting cells and tissues as to what to do. What the heart sends to the brain is relayed to the organ(s) intended to be helped. Brains recognize this inner conversation and behave accordingly. This is a natural conversation utilizing our will to do so. Will and intention are intuitively connected. Will is the spark of life. When given a direction it is called intention. This is a process happening on/in the inner forum of consciousness as an experience of non-linear time. Why? Because in gaining a healing possibility for ourselves we do not concern ourselves with results, outcomes, consequences, end points. These are all elements of dimensional space. Time without dimensional space is no-time, no past or future. Linear time: past, future requires and births dimensional space to contain and hold it. The inner process of Imagery has no dimensional referents. Leaving end points and goals out of it, the question of how it all ends up is in the hands of the Divine/Invisible Reality. He/She is the cosmic doctor in charge of wellness. Divinity is the Father/Mother in charge of no-time/present instant and what will be. Therefore, the function of Imagery is a sacred act connecting us to our Source. This is the point of view of spiritual science.

Sacred Magic vs. Personal Magic

The sacredness of Imaginal experience leads me to discuss visualization and obtaining something for yourself. There are two factors to consider: One is what is called personal

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magic, the second is the use of the term visualization. The two are linked together. When I speak of Imaginal practice, as I have above, we are talking about *sacred magic* where something physical appears to change when something not physical acts on it. We do this magical act in the name of and as servants of God. (The term "God" is a short hand for divinity, almighty, cosmic consciousness, the One mind, etc.) We know who decides the result. In contrast, *personal magic* is when the individual identifies him/herself as the agent of results, goals, materializing, obtaining. This individual has not done so as the servant, but as the master in charge of and having power over material life (you may note that Moses and Jesus did not lay claim to being the kings of personal magic, always do so in God's name).

Visualization is the term that has come into common usage to represent having the power to conjure a result, outcome, to obtain

something. To conjure is to summon spirits and/or influence or effect the outcome of something. In contrast, *to Image* is an act of discovery, a revelatory event. Many sports figures, for example, see themselves playing tennis, playing golf, baseball, basketball and many other sports in advance of the physical act. Their effort is to effect something, to manifest by conjuration in the material world: prosperity, dates, jobs, for instance. They are always **goals to achieve** rather than **intend toward** as we do in Imagery. Mainly then, we manifest by visualizing for material manifestation. You now become a personal magician. The difference may appear subtle, but it bespeaks two entirely different world views. As a side note, conjuring spirits is more in line with a third form of magic called *sorcery* where the magician becomes an agent of forces of nature manifesting through him/her such as can be seen in some shamanistic practices.

Research in mental Imagery & current projects:

Over the past 30-40 years there has been a wealth of research studies done on the effects and efficacy of Imagery, particularly showing physical and physiological changes taking place. In *Healing Visualizations: Creating Health Through Imagery*, I describe the

power of Imagery not only in the physical sphere, but also in emotional life (and through a whole range of human experiences, which you will find on my website <http://www.drjerryepstein.org>). I have accomplished two successful research studies: one in treating asthma with Imagery where nearly 50% of the patients got off medication or substantially reduced medication with one session; the second on achieving greater heart rate coherence and variability with a positive change in mood state. (Heart rate coherence and variability organize the strength and function of the heart).

¹ A complete definition of heart coherence can be found at: <http://www.heartmath.org/research/science-of-the-heart.html>

In addition to training and supervising clinicians through his school, The American Institute for Mental Imagery (AIMI), Dr. Epstein has an adult education center for the general public and maintains a private practice as well. His latest book project is on longevity and immortality through the Imagery process that he has developed along with other techniques and methods of Western spiritual therapeutics. On his website you'll find a list of all his publications, many of them downloadable, as well as many, many Imagery exercises. To date, he has published over 500 Imagery exercises available to the general public.



OBITUARY

In Loving Memory of Catherine (Cathy) Kelber, June 27, 1950 ~ June 21, 2010.

We wanted our community to know that Cathy died on the Summer Solstice, after four years of challenges from two different kinds of cancer. She died peacefully and with grace.

Cathy was part of Imagery International, Beyond Ordinary Nursing

(certified in 2002), the American Holistic Nurses Association and Healing Touch. She was a gifted educator/faculty member of the UCSF School of Nursing and a practitioner who believed in the power of Imagery in her work, healing sessions, self-care and treatment. A huge group of family and friends celebrated her birthday on June 27 at Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA. She was a fourth generation San Franciscan.