

Quality #2 Goals and Expectations

Mental Rehearsal

Mental rehearsal is the first of five constructive mental creation processes. Using mental rehearsal we can create a clear vision that will ignite passion and drive discipline, focus, effort, and action. When we mentally rehearse, we “play out” or “experience” on the stage of our mind a difficult or challenging assignment, task, or event in an effort to improve skills, prepare, or mitigate fear. This is not about scripting, it is about spontaneously experiencing the event in this sacred space of our mind – a mind free from the dark and destructive processes of fantasy, imagined catastrophe, and counterfeit pleasure.

Mental Rehearsal is much like fantasy - vivid visualization – but with a different intent. We are not escaping and avoiding the rigors of life, we are intentionally coming to this sacred space in our mind to receive instruction.

I vividly remember the day. It was a major breakthrough. While on a teleconference with a direct selling company helping to promote an upcoming event where I would be speaking, I spontaneously said, “I will be modeling the seven principles of intrinsic validation during my speech. To do so, I will call one of your prospects live from stage.” I remember thinking, “What did I just say?” The speech was in three weeks. I had never made a live prospecting call from the stage. Conversely, I never experience fear when speaking. However, the idea of calling someone not knowing the outcome and compounded by the importance of the event sent a shiver down my spine.

In my heart I knew that it was important to demonstrate these powerful principles to this particular audience and the best way was to demonstrate it live. I could role-play but reality would be much more effective. It was risky to make this commitment, but I already had. Fortunately I had been through this process of overcoming fear before. It was time to invite the ultimate director – my partner - the power that governs abundance – to the stage of my mind and engage in mental rehearsal.

For the director to actively participate in this sacred process it was essential that fear and fantasy be banned from this sacred theater. It was also essential that my intentions be pure and my desire focused on the needs of the people. I could not be distracted by sabotaging thoughts such as “How will I look?” or “What will they think if it goes badly?” or the need to impress the audience with my skill.

For the next three weeks my partner and I spent time vividly mentally rehearsing almost every imaginable scenario, hundreds of them. What a feast. Ideas, impressions and solutions flowed. I’m a busy guy. You might ask, “Where did you find the time to do this?” When I made the conscious decision to let go of destructive fantasy and catastrophe there were literally hours available every day for constructive thought. I call it my Ferrari time.

Sometimes during the day and often late at night, I would engage. I knew that when in vivid visualization the systemic mind does not know the difference between the vivid mental rehearsals and tangible reality. The same brain circuitry and chemistry was occurring during each rehearsal that would have occurred if I were actually on the stage making the calls. Neuronal connections were being strengthened and

new connections being made. The rehearsals fostered confidence, increased excitement, and ultimately ignited passion to fearlessly execute in tangible reality.

With great anticipation the day finally came – the moment of truth. As expected, I felt calm and at peace. I gave the speech and made the call – it was like the 500th call. It was second nature. Instead of having fear about or attachment to an outcome or the need to impress the audience, I could be in the moment, present for the prospect. The audience was able to experience what it was like to have a natural and comfortable conversation with a prospect and the prospect was able to drop his wall of resistance.

On another occasion, about ten days prior to a speaking engagement, I was sitting at my desk preparing to mentally rehearse my speech. I wanted to experience the audience and make any changes to the PowerPoint. I was reflecting on several questions, “What do they need to know? What can I share that would impact their lives positively? What are their greatest challenges? What are their hopes and dreams?”

I consciously engaged in a mental rehearsal in search of answers to these questions. While in vivid rehearsal, I walked up on the stage. I was there. I could feel and see the audience. I looked in their eyes and opened my mouth and began to speak. A few slides into the PowerPoint, I got a very strong impression that there was someone in the audience who was in serious trouble. I somehow knew that they had spent their last dime getting to the conference and desperately needed answers. I paused, apologized to the audience, and asked if this person was present in the room. Remember, I am mentally rehearsing.

About a third of the way back on my right side, a woman stood. I asked her to come up to the stage. It was an emotional experience for both of us as I gave her my group coaching program and told her, “This is the answer you have been looking for. Show up and I will show up to serve you.” She sat down. I completed the speech.

Back in tangible reality, very real tears were dripping off my cheeks. What an experience. I pondered this moving impression – if nothing else I had a much better understanding of the audience I would be addressing. Made a few changes to the PowerPoint and dove into my very real and tangible coaching practice.

The day for the speech finally came. I remember that it was a festive event. I was kicking off the morning. I was introduced and raced up on the stage, took a big breath, scanned the audience, and began to deliver the message. Suddenly the same impression came that I had experienced ten days earlier. I was hesitant at first. Several thoughts; was the impression a fantasy about being loved, admired, recognized, or needed? No, my intention was to bless this audience. So trusting this revelatory experience that occurred while in mental rehearsal, I paused and boldly shared what had happened ten days earlier while sitting at my desk. Then I asked if that person was present in the audience, a third of the way back on my right side, a lady stood.

Through our mutual tears I asked her to come to the stage where I gave her the coaching program. There was an immediate and deep connection established with the audience because I trusted this revelatory experience. How could I have known? I didn't. But the power that governs abundance did. We were all, speaker and audience, actively

participating in the sacred process of abundance and we all became more abundant that day.

We would never want to trade very real experiences like these for a norepinephrine driven escape and avoid fantasy or counterfeit pleasure. Let us keep this sacred space of our mind clean so that the power that governs abundance can reveal such things to all of us and on a regular basis. Your partner knows who needs what. If you are actively participating in abundance and listening, you can know, too. To do so, we will want to convert destructive fantasy into constructive mental rehearsal.

For years sports psychologists have used mental rehearsal to improve the performance of athletes. In their minds, basketball players practice free throws, skiers make perfect runs, gymnasts execute perfect programs, and pitchers throw perfect games. In addition, while practicing in tangible reality, young athletes mentally transport themselves to the ultimate event and it ignites their passion to practice. Little leaguers become major league hitters in the World Series. It's the ninth inning, down by three runs, bases loaded, two outs, full count and the pitcher hurls a fastball. What is the outcome of this mental rehearsal? Yes, a game winning home run.

Recently I participated in an intimate retreat at Deer Valley where several friends gathered to explore ways to support Kevin Hall in preparation for the release of his book, *Aspire – discovering your path through the power of words*. We each took a turn sharing ideas. One of the highlights occurred the second day when it was Peter Vidmar's turn. In 1984, Peter won the Gold Medal in the pommel horse with a perfect 10, and with his team, won Gold in the men's all around.

After putting us all to shame by doing a perfect handstand on a folding chair, he shared in great detail how he and fellow Olympian, Tim Daggett, practiced and prepared for the Olympics. In short, when practicing they vividly imagined that they were in the Olympic venue – the stoic judges, an imaginary green light, the raised hand of the judge and the confirming raised hand from the athlete, and of course the noisy crowd. They vividly imagined that it was the last exercise of the men’s all around, the parallel bars. If Tim and Peter both performed their best they would finally beat the Republic of China and take home the coveted Gold Medal and for the first time since 1904.

In 1984 this vivid visualization literally became tangible reality. It was the last exercise of the men’s all around. Tim and Peter were the last to perform. The Gold Medal was in clearly in sight. Tim did his routine. Peter waited at the edge of the mat for the judges to post the score. When they did the crowd erupted, a perfect 10.

Just before stepping on the mat, Peter’s coach walked over to him and said, “Perform it just like you have thousands of times in practice and we’ll go home.” Just as vividly as he created an Olympic venue during practice, Peter vividly created the quiet practice gym. He mounted the parallel bars and did a nearly flawless routine followed by a perfect dismount. The judges awarded him a score of 9.95. The Gold Medal was a reality, intentionally created one millimeter at a time. Imagine the result had Tim and Peter sat on the sidelines spending valuable practice time fantasizing about the Gold Medal ceremony – the flag being raised, the anthem being played, the medals, the limousines, the private jets, the Wheaties box versus mental rehearsal during a very

real five to six hours a day workouts, six days a weeks, for twelve years. Passion-driven action supported by a clear vision equals a Gold Medal.

When we first practice mental rehearsal with coaching clients they often ask, “Do I just make stuff up?” The answer is, “No, just experience it.” We often go on to say, “Do you need to make stuff up when you are sailing on your new boat or driving your new car while in fantasy?” The only difference is intent. In fantasy we desire to have something so badly we spend productive time vividly escaping into the future in an attempt to prematurely and artificially have it. In mental rehearsal we go to this sacred space, gain clarity regarding what we want to create which ignites our passion, and spend our productive time in passion-driven action actually creating it.

At first this exercise may seem foreign. When it is mastered, you will discover just how real some of your mental creations actually are and moreover, why you will want to reserve this gift of vivid visualization for constructive purposes only.

If you can imagine owning and driving an exotic sports car, living in your dream home, or can feel what it would be like to be rich or out of debt, you can do this, too, and at a very high level. It just takes a conscious decision to let go of fantasy and engage in life and engage your gift in constructive behavior. With a little discipline and practice, you will be a master of mental rehearsal.

During a coaching session with a corporate executive, a client shared that on the following day she was required to attend a very difficult meeting. She felt like several parties to a disagreement were all pointing fingers at her and she would have to defend her decisions and actions. During the days preceding the coaching call, she had engaged

incessantly in catastrophizing and was growing increasingly angry and defensive. She was even having trouble sleeping.

We got clear about the events leading up to this meeting, encouraged her to be totally accountable for anything she had done to create the situation and then practiced listening and stepping into the world of each person who would be in attendance. As she genuinely focused on the needs of each person, her anxiety began to dissipate.

Then we engaged in mental rehearsal. I had her close her eyes and approach the building. “What is your mindset,” I asked. “Peaceful resolution,” she responded. I said, “I see you entering the building. You have a brown paper sack in your hand. What’s in the sack?” In the sack I had seen three light switches. I could see her handing one to each participant. When asked what it was for, she could respond, “I am clearly on the hot seat, if at any time you want to fry me, just flip the switch.” That was my vision. Her vision was even better. She saw three tomatoes in the sack. She saw herself handing them out with the following instructions, “If you don’t like what I have to say, just throw the tomatoes.” We laughed. Laughter is great medicine.

The time came for the meeting. She stopped and got the three tomatoes. Interestingly and true to form for most events in which we have engaged in catastrophe, it did not happen at all the way she had feared. Mental rehearsal had created positive energy and a desire to serve. After consciously listening for doors and stepping in the world of each individual, tensions vanished, compromise was reached and the tomatoes stayed in the bag. Mental rehearsal and a little humor had softened her anger and created a safe place for everyone. She

masterfully “melted all hearts liken to the sun whose rays soften the coldest clay.”

While reporting the favorable outcome at our next session, we did consider for a moment what might have happened if she had continued catastrophizing and then brought blame, defensiveness and anger into the room, something that had occurred on a few previous occasions. That outcome was no longer acceptable. It helped that this one was so sweet. She discovered that she was really good at mental rehearsal and when she made the conscious decision to engage; her extraordinary gifts of empathy and practical judgment were also unleashed. What a super star!

This principle can be applied to business building - cold calls, warm market calls, interviews, presentations, projects, speeches, sales, unpleasant and difficult tasks. It can be applied to relationship building – dating, courting, commitment, children, in-laws. It can be applied to almost every life circumstance or challenge we face. Will everything always turn out perfectly? No. But the difference between the destructive and constructive uses of this gift is so profound it is almost scary to consider the ramifications.

Identify an important event that is in the near future. What do you want to create during this event? How can you create it? How will it serve others? Practice putting yourself at the event; don't come with a script; instead come to be instructed. Just be in the experience. Have a desire to lift and build and bring abundance to the people or person involved. If your mind wanders, follow it. See what you can discover. It sure is better than spending this time stoking the fire of frustration and anger.