

SEVEN STEPS IN PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

LESSON SIX

Though subconsciousness responds better to suggestion than to direct command, it is, nevertheless, necessary to transfer to it a specific image of the result you desire.

This image is not a command. The form of words in which you stated it at the beginning of your practice formulates your will and desire, but does not attempt to dictate to subconsciousness the means or methods whereby your desire shall be transformed into an actual, external reality.

The specific image is necessary because its details call up subconscious associations of ideas. Through these associations, not by an endeavor to force subconsciousness into particular kinds of activity, your hidden powers are brought into play.

The important thing to remember about the work of subconsciousness is that it is always below the level of conscious thought. No more than you can see the transformations underground which change a seed into a plant can you see the hidden workings of subconsciousness. It is unprofitable to pry into them. What you need is knowledge of some practical methods for planting your mental seed. The seed is the specific image of what you want.

When you have formulated your mental picture, using pencil and paper to get into it as many details concerning weight, size, color, action, etc., as you can think of, the process of transferring this image to subconsciousness may be begun. This lesson has to do with the exact procedure involved in this transfer.

Let us, first of all, repeat the caution given in Lesson 1. Maintain strict silence about your aim. This principle of absolute reserve is one of the most important in the whole field of practical occult psychology. Conserve the energy other people waste in talking about what they intend to accomplish.

The Bible is full of psychology and it says truly that the tongue is an unruly member. To talk about your plans is to dissipate energy sufficient to carry them to successful conclusion. It is written: "The world belongs to the silent ones." To maintain silence develops power, both physical and psychological. Observe this rule most carefully.

Set aside a few minutes every day. Go to a room where you will be free from interruption. Sit in a comfortable, straight-backed chair. Do not cross your legs. Let your hands rest easily in your lap. Sit erect, your head, neck and back in a straight line.

Do not relax. Neither be tense. The right posture is one in which every voluntary muscle is free from strain, yet fully alive.

Repeat your statement of purpose once, firmly and vigorously. Unless you are likely to be overheard, say it aloud.

Then close your eyes and mentally go over the details of the picture of the result you want to materialize. Watch yourself closely and whenever your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your mental picture.

As explained in Lesson 5, see this picture as a present reality. Give your whole attention to making the details come into your mental field of vision with every detail sharp and clear. If you are not "eye-minded," you may find yourself reciting a description of the details of your image instead of visualizing them. Try, however, to call up pictures corresponding to the words. The more you try, the more definite will the images become. Whatever problems you have in making clear mental images will gradually be corrected in your Tarot work which you will be starting two weeks from now.

Begin always with the larger features of the mental image. After you have sketched these main outlines, go on with the details. In the early stages of your practice, the five-minute concentration period may pass before you have completed the picture. Be sure to stop at the end of five minutes.

Next day begin with a swift review of what you did the preceding day. Then go on from the point where you left off and develop the picture as much as you can in five minutes. So continue, day by day, until you have completed your mental pattern of the desired result.

By beginning always with a swift review of the main outlines and details of your work, you will find you have time for many additional details before the end of the five-minute period.

The time spent in review is not to be counted as part of the five-minutes. Yet it need not take long. The five-minute period is to be devoted exclusively to your endeavor to add something to what you have worked at before.

Like everything else we learn, the first steps of this practice are slowest. By keeping at it regularly, early in the morning, if possible, before taking up the routine of the day, you will soon gain proficiency. Before long, you will be able to summon the entire image, from its main features to its least details, in much less than five minutes. As you repeat this practice over and over again during the coming years, you will find yourself able to form new images with perfect ease and with great speed. To be able to do this is one of the most valuable skills you can acquire.

During your morning practice keep out of your consciousness all thought of the future. You are making a mental pattern which actually exists now. No matter what your external circumstances may be, your mental image is also part of those circumstances. For, if you watch closely what occurs while you make mental pictures, you will discover that you who make the images and observe them are at the center of your mental field just as truly as you are at the center of the physical field which surrounds your body. Thus your mental images are as truly part of your environment as are the physical objects outside your body.

Furthermore, your field of mental imagery is the controlling part of your circumstances. For though you may be unable to trace the connections between the mental

images you have held in the past and conditions you are now experiencing, the condition of today is always the result of the images of your yesterdays.

You have built your present circumstances by subconscious response to mental imagery. Your future will be the materialization of what you image now.

By changing your mental imagery from negative to positive, you set in motion forces that will make your world what you want it to be. Select one objective, image it clearly, and follow these directions for transferring it to subconsciousness. The result will be that your actual experiences will correspond to your mental patterns. Remember the law:

Thought always takes form in action unless cancelled by opposite thought, and mental images tend always to materialize themselves.

The morning practice should be repeated during the day whenever you have a few minutes to spare. You will find it far better to use your mind creatively than to let it merely drift as do most persons. Whenever negative states of mind assert themselves and you find yourself dreading the future, doubting yourself, or beset by worry, the fact that you have your mental patterns ready to use as counteractives to these destructive mental states will be of great advantage.

Long ago it was discovered that the way to overcome undesirable, doubting, pessimistic states of mind is to call their opposites into the field of consciousness. You don't have to shovel out darkness. Simply turn on the light. Trying to get rid of dark thought by main force, or by suppressing it, is waste of time and effort. Expend all your energy in building up positive states. They will automatically overcome the negatives. When you have built a mental pattern which is the expression of heartfelt desire, you have the best protection against negative mental activities.

By your morning practice you make it easier, every day, to call up positive imagery. You will soon reach a stage of development where it will be easy to think positive, constructive thoughts.

All this practice aims at perfecting one clear image. This is most important because single images are the only ones having sufficient power to penetrate deep into subconsciousness and set going the hidden process which leads to materialization.

An additional practice is to be undertaken at night after you have gone to bed, turned out the light, and made yourself thoroughly comfortable. This practice will enable you to transfer the image to subconsciousness.

The first requirement for success in this practice is utter physical relaxation. To secure this, begin at your toes. Tense them a little. This will focus your consciousness in the motor cells of your brain which control your feet. As soon as you have done this, relax all the muscles of your feet.

Next fix attention on the muscles of your legs, between the knees and ankles. Tense them a little and then relax. Follow this by tensing and relaxing the muscles between your knees and hips.

Now take a deep breath and move your abdominal muscles while holding the breath. Then expel the breath and relax the abdominal muscles. Take another breath and this time tense and relax the muscles across the chest. Relax as you exhale.

Now tense the muscles across the small of the back and then relax them. Follow the same procedure with the muscles across your shoulders.

Next, by the same procedure, relax the muscles of your hands, forearms and upper arms. After this, relax the muscles of your neck. Then tense the facial muscles vigorously and relax them completely.

We give these directions in detail to make sure you will get the idea that tension must always precede relaxation. Tension arouses the activity of the cells in the motor centers which control the muscles.

Relaxation, remember, is control. Not control of the muscles themselves so much as control of the nerve force which energizes them and control of the brain centers which distribute this nerve force.

By all-over relaxation you can make contact with the physical centers of subconsciousness which are links between the conscious mind and the deeper subconscious centers. For the action of the brain cells which control your muscles is just as certainly subconscious action as is any other power of that hidden mental field.

When, by relaxation, you can draw the nerve force at will away from any part of the voluntary muscular system, you have become adept in the first of a series of exercises which lead to extraordinary command of mind and body.

At the end of the relaxation exercise you will be ready to transfer the one image to subconsciousness. Summon the image before your mind's eye, definitely and clearly. You may seem to see it in the darkness a foot or so in front of your eyes. Or you may be one of those persons who see their mental images between the eyes and the closed eyelids. Others, with eyes closed, see the picture in a mental space which they feel to be inside the head behind the forehead. However it may present itself to you, imagine that you are printing this picture on the cells of your brain at the back of your head. This is easier than it may seem. After a few trials, you will get the knack of carrying the picture mentally to the back of your brain and fixing it there.

This fixing of the image at the back of the brain is a real thing and actually occurs. It is not a trick to deceive subconsciousness which you have been told never to do. The sight center is located at the back of the head and the cells of that center are those whose activity provide you with all your visual images. When light hits the retina, chemical stimulations occur which carry the image back to the cells of the sight center which then go

into action and enable you to see, i.e., a psychic correlate of the image now enters your consciousness.

Similarly when you create a clear mental image as discussed in the preceding text and consciously carry this image back to the sight center, you have performed an operation analogous in all respects to the act of seeing and this mental image now becomes impressed on the cells of the sight center. These cells, acting upon consciousness with this mental image, are now able to assist you in initiating a train of suggestions which will be accepted by subconsciousness. Once accepted, subconsciousness goes to work in its mysterious and indeed, sublime fashion to materialize the image. Eventually you will see this image concretized as a living reality.

As soon as you have completed this exercise, compose yourself for sleep. If the mental work has made you wakeful, go once more through your tension-relaxation procedure. Then dismiss all further thought about your aim. If you find that ideas connected with it have a tendency to recur even after relaxation, turn attention to the memory of some pleasurable incident in your past and dwell on that. The main consideration is to stop all conscious thought about your aim before you fall asleep.

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What has just been explained is basic in most of the elementary metaphysical schools of thought. You may have been attempting to practice similar techniques for many years with mixed degrees of success. You may have wondered why it is that sometimes the principle seems to work with miraculous speed, while at other times you find it difficult, if not impossible, to hold consistently to the more positive states of mind. Just as knowledge of simple arithmetic is essential as a preliminary to algebra, geometry, and the more advanced mathematics, knowledge of the powers of consciousness and the specific practices as outlined in the first seven lessons is essential as a preparation for the Tarot and Qabalistic techniques of B.O.T.A.

These techniques will be explained to you in the more advanced courses you are about to begin. The causes for former failures will gradually become apparent and will be eliminated.