

TITLE: 18 HOLES IN HIS MIND

BOOK: A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul

PAGE: 235

TIME TO READ: 4 minutes

TOPICS: **Overcoming obstacles**
Visual imagery
History—Vietnam
Sport—golf

AGE LEVEL: Grades 5 and up

SYNOPSIS: A prisoner of war in Vietnam uses visualization to stay sane and alive. Upon returning home, he finds that while physically very limited for seven years, he greatly improved his golf game by simply practicing in his mind.

NOTES TO TEACHER:

While visual imagery is a powerful tool used by many successful people, and virtually all Olympic athletes, it *is* viewed as anti-religious by some parents in some communities. Simply reading the story should not be objectionable, but you should **know** your community and your students before actively teaching visualization as a skill.

Many students have already been exposed to the concept of visualization, as most coaches now regularly teach some aspects of this skill.

The “Inner Smile Visualization” that follows is a safe “*starter imagery*” using this concept.

For a related history story about the fall of Saigon, read “The Bread of Life,” page 288 in ***Chicken Soup for the Volunteer’s Soul***.

A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul
18 Holes in His Mind

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

PRE-QUESTIONS:

Do you have a “dream” of *improving* something in your life?

- If so, what do you wish to make better? (*grades, sleep, free-throw shot, etc.*).

Read Story

POST-QUESTIONS:

Have you ever used “visualization” to improve yourself? Many coaches now teach this skill.

- Have you had a coach teach this or stress this for your team success?
- Have you had any *teachers* show you how to use this skill for any classroom improvement?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Re-write the story as seen through the eyes of Major Nesmeth while he was imprisoned.

Carefully following teacher directions, try this powerful concept with your classmates.

- Discuss the feelings of gaining or losing your power with your thoughts.

Choose one area in your life that you wish to improve (*test anxiety, time in running the mile, poor sleep, test scores in reading, etc.*) *Consistently practice* seeing it as *you want it*, and as if you were *already there*.

- Practice this for a minimum of 30 days.
- Add *affirmations* (book appendix pages 332-334). Report results in 2 months, 4 months, and at the end of the school year.

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

Visually show the *power of thought* with the:

- ***Good Boy/Bad Boy Kinesiology Demonstration.*** (appendix page 325)
- Follow with ***Fingers Come Together*** (book appendix page 330)

Inner Smile Visualization

Before doing this exercise, you may want to review a diagram of the major internal body organs with your students.

Give the students the following instructions:

1. "Sit up straight in your chairs. Your legs should be a hip's width apart, and your feet should be flat on the floor. Put your hands comfortably on your lap. Close your eyes and breathe normally.
2. "Begin to relax all the muscles in your face. Imagine being a very relaxing place-perhaps the place where you have felt the most relaxed in your whole life.
3. "Now imagine seeing your own smiling face out in front of you. Feel that smiling energy, like sunshine, being drawn into your eyes. Feel it relaxing all the skin on your face. . . . Feel it going deep inside your facial muscles and relaxing and warming your whole face.
4. "Let the smile flow into your mouth, gently lifting its outer corners. And as you continue to smile, bring that swirling energy into your jaw, and feel the jaw release any tension that is held there.
5. "Smile down into your neck and throat and feel the energy melting any tension that is there.
6. "Let the smiling energy flow down into your heart in the left side of your chest. Smile to your heart and thank it for its constant and essential work in pumping blood throughout your whole body. Feel your heart relax as it works more easily. Let the energy of your smile fill your heart with love and joy.
7. "Now smile into your lungs, thanking them for their wonderful work in supplying oxygen to the body. As you breathe into your lungs, feel them fill with goodness and courage.
8. "Smile now into your liver and kidneys, thanking them for helping you digest your food and keeping your blood clean. You can feel yourself letting go of any anger or fear that may have been present.
9. "Send your smiling energy to your stomach now, and thank it for the work it does digesting the food you eat. Then smile into your intestines and thank them for absorbing the nutrients from your food into your body.
10. "Continue to send your smiling energy down into your hips and upper legs. Feel the warm energy of your smile relaxing all the muscles there.
11. "And, finally, feel your inner smile extending down into your lower legs and feet.
12. "Feel your whole body now feeling loved and appreciated.
13. "Very good. Whenever you are ready, just slowly open your eyes and give me your attention up here . . . (pause) . . . Great! You may want to stretch your arms and legs for a moment before we continue."

After teaching this exercise to your students, you may wish to encourage them to practice it at home when they first wake up in the morning and any other time they just want to relax or increase their sense of self-appreciation.