

## Small Steps to Health and Wealth Visualizing Success

I suppose I was an eighth grader when I first heard coaches talk about visualization as a key to success. We had a new basketball coach who spoke often of the power of a positive attitude. That same year, I recall a fascinating speaker, named Charlie Plumb, at Montana 4-H Congress talking about the importance of positive thinking and visualization. I figured they must be onto something with this “positive mental rehearsal” stuff they were telling me about and I started to use some of what they taught to reach my goals.

I firmly believe that power of positive thinking should not be underestimated. I also realize that it can be used to your advantage as a strategy for meeting your health and wealth goals. The Small Steps to Health and Wealth workbook suggests, “If you have a weight loss goal, picture yourself 20 pounds slimmer and fitting into clothing you haven’t worn for years. See yourself as active and walking 30 minutes each day. If you are reducing debt, imagine yourself receiving a credit card statement that shows a zero balance.”

“Putting your mind to it” is strategy number three out of 25 strategies offered in the Small Steps to Health and Wealth workbook. As you put your *mind* to it, visualizing the results you want, put your *mouth* to it as well. So often we let our language lead us in our lives. Instead of saying, “I hope to save \$50 a month,” use firm language to say, “I am saving \$50 a month.” Train yourself to use bold words such as “I am,” “I can,” and “I will.” Forget the wimpy words like “maybe someday,” and “I’ll try to . . .”

Describe the behavior in present tense. If you say you are doing something (when you really aren’t) eventually you will become accountable. It is too uncomfortable for most people to say one thing, “I exercise 30 minutes each day,” and then just sit on the couch all month while telling everyone (self included) that

you exercise routinely. Speak of the goal you want in the present-tense, as though you are already doing it. Visualize yourself doing it and eventually, you will do it. Sometimes we have to train our mind to an idea first, before our body, and habits can follow. Speaking of habits, at least bad ones, use the past-tense to describe a behavior you are diminishing. For example, “I used to carry a balance on my credit cards.” Train your mind to believe that a change is occurring. I keep a quote on my bulletin board that says, “The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”

Another way you can ‘put your mind to it’ is to think about other times you have been successful and use that success in one area to catapult you to success in other areas. My oldest daughter, who turned 8 recently, had been showing interest in learning to play the guitar, so we gave her one for her birthday. She enjoyed strumming along at first, but got frustrated saying it was “too hard.” Later, as she was completing a writing assignment for school I took the opportunity to say, “Wow, look at you writing complete stories now. Just a year and a half ago, all you knew was the alphabet. Now you read all the time and you are in double-digit math and you can write your own stories. I bet the guitar will be the same way. You’ll just learn a few things at a time and pretty soon, they’ll come together as a song – the same way the letters are now making stories and the numbers are now math problems.” I wanted to plant the seed in her mind that each skill has steps and she has obviously shown that she can master the steps to learning when she puts her mind to it. Sometimes, we all need reminders.

This week remind yourself to visualize and talk about the success you *are* having with your health and wealth goals.