

25th
Anniversary
Edition

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

USE THE POWER OF YOUR
IMAGINATION TO CREATE WHAT
YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE



SHAKTI GAWAIN

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

By the Author

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Creative Visualization
Creative Visualization Workbook
Living in the Light (with Laurel King)
Living in the Light Workbook
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Creating True Prosperity
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Creating True Prosperity
Developing Intuition

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Living in the Light
The Path of Transformation

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SHAKTI GAWAIN



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This book is dedicated to you



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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

I met Shakti Gawain in Berkeley, California, in 1974, when we were both in our twenties. Shakti had just spent two years working her way around the world, traveling overland across Europe and Asia. She had spent several months in India, and her experiences there had particularly impacted her. We quickly discovered we had a lot in common, including a deep dedication to personal development, a fascination with integrating the spiritual and psychological wisdom of East and West, and a strong desire to make a positive difference in the world.

In 1977, we co-wrote and published a little book called *Reunion: Tools for Transformation*. We had no capital and very little business experience, but after each small step we took, the next step became obvious. Looking back, it feels as if we were led by spirit every step of the way.

In 1978, Shakti wrote her first book, *Creative Visualization*. We initially printed 2,000 copies of the book. We had to borrow money to pay the printing bill. I don't recall that we spent anything at all on promotion; I don't think we sent out even one review copy. But the print run sold out, quickly, purely by word of mouth. Booksellers kept telling us that people would come in, buy a copy, and return a few days later and want five or ten copies to give to their friends. The book initially sold itself — I'm sure it was because of Shakti's clear, beautiful writing as well as the solid content of the book. It was the kind of book people wanted to read and reread, the kind of book people kept in a special place and cherished for everything it had given them. It was the rare kind of book that helps people make wonderful changes in their lives.

We started to get deeply touching letters from readers very soon after publication. Each one had a story. Story after story began to pour in. One of my favorites summed up the feelings of many readers:

“Other self-help books I've read have made me feel as if someone was pointing a finger at me and telling me, 'This is how it is!' But Shakti took me by the hand, led me into a beautiful garden, and handed me a bouquet of flowers, one at a time. Quietly, gently, and with great caring. Thank you for a beautiful book.”

Creative Visualization has now sold more than six million copies — more than three million in North America, and at least another three million throughout the world in thirty-five foreign editions. It has proven to be a seminal work with global influence. The book launched Shakti's career as an internationally known and loved speaker and seminar leader, and it launched my career as a publisher as well. The book has shown us both how to visualize and create success, and I am eternally grateful that Shakti had the vision and courage to write it.

It is my hope and prayer that reading *Creative Visualization* will help you create exactly the kind of life you want, so that you're truly fulfilled, prosperous, healthy, and filled with creative

energy. You hold a book in your hands that has helped a great many people improve the quality of their lives.

Marc Alle
June 200

INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION

It's hard for me to believe that it has been so many years since *Creative Visualization* was first published.

At the time I was thirty years old, and just in the process of discovering my life's work. For a number of years I had been an active seeker, dedicating myself to exploring Eastern philosophy and Western psychology in an attempt to discover the deeper meaning and purpose of my life. Certain ideas and techniques I had learned were, in fact, having a profound effect on my awareness and my way of living.

I'm the kind of person who, once I discover something meaningful, simply can't help telling everyone who's willing to listen. So I found myself beginning to counsel people and lead small groups and workshops, teaching the concepts and exercises that were helping me solve my personal problems and expand my awareness.

It occurred to me that it might be a good idea to write these things down in a little book that I could make available to my students. As I was writing the book, I experienced alternating waves of creative enthusiasm and self-doubt, thinking, "Who am I to write a book telling people how to find greater happiness and fulfillment in life? I'm certainly no expert. My life isn't perfect."

My friend Marc Allen helped me get through the rough spots, encouraging me to stop worrying about it and just focus on my creative process. We decided to publish the book ourselves, even though we had very little knowledge of publishing and even less money. Somehow we managed to get the book out there in a few bookstores.

The rest is history. People seemed to love the book, and it sold by word of mouth. Gradually over the next few years it became a best-seller, and continues to be very popular to this day, all over the world. I think one reason for its popularity is that it is short, simple, practical, and has techniques that readers can begin using immediately and effectively.

It has been extremely satisfying to receive thousands of letters telling me how much this book has helped people with specific and sometimes serious problems. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to contribute in this way.

My work has blossomed right along with the book. For many years I have been leading workshops all over the world, and I have written and published several other books. *Creative Visualization* helped me find my path in life, just as it has helped others.

The time has come for a new revised edition. I have made relatively few changes, simply trying to clarify certain points, deepen certain concepts, and generally update it.

If you are already familiar with the first edition, I hope you enjoy the changes. If this is your first experience with *Creative Visualization*, may it help you create all that your heart and soul desire.

Shakti Gawa

A LETTER TOMY READERS

Dear Friends,

I decided to write this book because it seemed like the best way I could think of to share with others the many wonderful things I have learned which have so deepened and expanded my experience and enjoyment of life.

I do not consider myself by any means an expert on the art of creative visualization. I am a student of the subject, and the more I study and use creative visualization myself, the more I discover how vast and deep its potential is . . . truly it is as infinitely creative as your own imagination.

This book is meant as an introduction and workbook for learning and using creative visualization. Very little of the material is original to me; it is a synthesis of the most practical and useful ideas and techniques that I've learned in my personal study.

My sources are many. I've included at the end a list of recommended resources that I think you will find interesting and helpful.

This book contains many different techniques. You will probably find that it works best not to try to absorb them all at once, but more gradually. I suggest that you read the book slowly, trying some of the exercises as you go along, and giving yourself the chance to absorb them deeply. Or you might want to read it once through, then reread it more slowly.

This book is my gift to you in love . . . may it be a blessing to you . . . may it help you bring more and more joy, satisfaction, and beauty into your life . . . may it nurture the light that is shining within you. . . .

Enjoy!

Love
Shal

PART ONE

BASICS OF CREATIVE VISUALIZATION




Every moment of your life is infinitely creative

and the universe is endlessly bountiful.

*Just put forth a clear enough request,
and everything your heart truly desires must come to you.*

WHAT IS CREATIVE VISUALIZATION?



Creative visualization is the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life. There is nothing at all new, strange, or unusual about creative visualization. You are already using it every day, every minute in fact. It is your natural power of imagination, the basic creative energy of the universe, which you use constantly, whether or not you are aware of it.

In the past, many of us have used our power of creative visualization in a relatively unconscious way. Because of our own deep-seated negative concepts about life, we have automatically and unconsciously expected and imagined lack, limitation, difficulties, and problems to be our lot in life. To one degree or another that is what we have created for ourselves.

This book is about learning to use your natural creative imagination in a more and more conscious way, as a technique to create what you *truly* want — love, fulfillment, enjoyment, satisfying relationships, rewarding work, self-expression, health, beauty, prosperity, inner peace, and harmony. . . whatever your heart desires. The use of creative visualization gives us a key to tap into the natural goodness and bounty of life.



Imagination is the ability to create an idea, a mental picture, or a feeling sense of something. In creative visualization you use your imagination to create a clear image, idea, or feeling of something you wish to manifest. Then you continue to focus on the idea, feeling, or picture regularly, giving it positive energy until it becomes objective reality. . . in other words, until you actually achieve what you have been imagining.

Your goal may be on any level — physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. You might imagine yourself with a new home, or with a new job, or having a satisfying relationship, or feeling calm and serene, or perhaps with an improved memory and learning ability. Or you might picture yourself handling a difficult situation effortlessly, or simply see yourself as a radiant being, filled with life energy. You can work on any level, and all will have results . . . through experience you will find the particular images and techniques that work best for you.

Let us say, for example, that you are feeling unsatisfied in your current job situation. If you feel that the job is basically right for you but there are factors that need improvement, you could begin by imagining the improvements that you desire. If that doesn't work, or if you feel that you would prefer a new job, then focus on imagining yourself in the employment situation that you desire.

Either way, the technique is basically the same. After relaxing into a deep, quiet, meditative state of mind, imagine that you are working in your ideal job situation. Imagine yourself in the

physical setting or environment that you would like, doing work that you enjoy and find satisfying, interacting with people in a harmonious way, receiving appreciation and appropriate financial compensation. Add any other details that are important for you, such as the hours you work, the amount of autonomy and/or responsibility you have, and so on. Try to get a feeling in yourself that this is possible; experience it as if it were already happening. In short, imagine it exactly the way you'd like it to be, as if it were already so!

Repeat this short, simple exercise often, perhaps twice a day, or whenever you think about it. If your desire and intention to make a change are clear, chances are good that you may find some type of shift taking place in your work, fairly soon.

It should be noted here that this technique *cannot* be used to “control” the behavior of others or cause them to do something against their will. Its effect is to dissolve our internal barriers to natural harmony and self-realization, allowing everyone to manifest in his or her most positive aspect.



To use creative visualization it is not necessary to believe in any metaphysical or spiritual ideas, though you must be willing to entertain certain concepts as being possible. It is not necessary to “have faith” in any power outside yourself.

The only thing necessary is that you have the desire to enrich your knowledge and experience, and an open enough mind to try something new in a positive spirit.

Study the principles, try the techniques with an open mind and heart, and then judge for yourself whether they are useful to you.

If so, continue using and developing them, and soon the changes in yourself and your life will probably exceed anything you could have originally dreamed of. . . .

Creative visualization is magic in the truest and highest meaning of the word. It involves understanding and aligning yourself with the natural principles that govern the workings of our universe, and learning to use these principles in the most conscious and creative way.

If you had never seen a gorgeous flower or a spectacular sunset before, and someone described one to you, you might consider it to be a miraculous thing (which it truly is!). Once you saw a few yourself, and began to learn something about the natural laws involved, you would begin to understand how they are formed and it would seem natural to you and not particularly mysterious.

The same is true of the process of creative visualization. What at first might seem amazing or impossible to the very limited type of education our rational minds have received, becomes perfectly understandable once we learn and practice with the underlying concepts involved.

Once you do so, it may seem that you are working miracles in your life . . . and you truly will be!

HOW CREATIVE VISUALIZATION WORKS



In order to understand how creative visualization works, it's useful to look at several interrelated principles:

The Physical Universe Is Energy

The scientific world is beginning to discover what metaphysical and spiritual teachers have known for centuries. Our physical universe is not really composed of any “matter” at all; its basic component is a kind of force or essence that we call *energy*.

Things appear to be solid and separate from one another on the level at which our physical senses normally perceive them. On finer levels, however, atomic and subatomic levels, seemingly solid matter is seen as smaller and smaller particles within particles, which eventually turn out to be just pure energy.

Physically, we are all energy, and everything within and around us is made up of energy. We are all part of one great energy field. Things that we perceive to be solid and separate are in reality just various forms of our essential energy which is common to all. We are all one, even in a literal, physical sense.

The energy is vibrating at different rates of speed, and thus has different qualities, from finer to denser. Thought is a relatively fine, light form of energy and therefore very quick and easy to change. Matter is relatively dense, compact energy, and therefore slower to move and change. Within matter there is great variation as well. Living flesh is relatively fine, changes quickly, and is easily affected by many things. A rock is a much denser form, slower to change, and more difficult to affect. Yet even rock is eventually changed and affected by the fine, light energy of water, for example. All forms of energy are interrelated and can affect one another.

Energy Is Magnetic

One law of energy is this: Energy of a certain quality or vibration tends to attract energy of a similar quality and vibration.

Thoughts and feelings have their own magnetic energy that attracts energy of a similar nature. We can see this principle at work, for instance, when we “accidentally” run into someone we've just been thinking of, or “happen” to pick up a book that contains exactly the perfect information we need at that moment.

Form Follows Idea

Thought is a quick, light, mobile form of energy. It manifests instantaneously, unlike the denser forms such as matter.

When we create something, we always create it first in thought form. A thought or idea always precedes manifestation. “I think I’ll make dinner” is the idea that precedes creation of meal. “I want a new dress” precedes going and buying one; “I need a job” precedes finding one, and so on.

An artist first has an idea or inspiration, then creates a painting. A builder first has a design then builds a house.

The idea is like a blueprint; it creates an image of the form, which then magnetizes and guides the physical energy to flow into that form, and eventually manifests it on the physical plane.

The same principle holds true even if we do not take direct physical action to manifest our ideas. Simply having an idea or thought, holding it in your mind, is an energy that will tend to attract and create that form on the material plane. If you constantly think of illness, you may eventually become ill; if you believe yourself to be beautiful, you become so. Unconscious ideas and feelings held inside of us operate in the same way.

The Law of Radiation and Attraction

This is the principle that whatever you put out into the universe will be reflected back to you. “As you sow, so shall you reap.”

What this means from a practical standpoint is that we always attract into our lives whatever we think about the most, believe in most strongly, expect on the deepest levels, and/or imagine most vividly.

When we are negative and fearful, insecure or anxious, we often attract the very experiences, situations, or people that we are seeking to avoid. If we are basically positive in attitude, expecting and envisioning pleasure, satisfaction, and happiness, we tend to attract and create people, situations, and events that conform to our positive expectations. So, consciously imagining what we want can help us to manifest it in our lives.

Using Creative Visualization

The process of change does not occur on superficial levels, through mere “positive thinking.” It involves exploring, discovering, and changing our deepest, most basic *attitudes toward life*. That is why learning to use creative visualization can become an experience of deep and meaningful growth. In the process we often discover ways in which we have been holding ourselves back, blocking ourselves from achieving satisfaction and fulfillment in our lives through our fears and unconscious beliefs. Once seen clearly, these limiting attitudes can

often be dissolved through the creative visualization process, leaving space for us to find and live a natural state of greater happiness, fulfillment, and love. . . .

At first you may practice creative visualization at specific times and for specific goals. As you get more in the habit of using it, and begin to trust the results it can bring you, you will find that it becomes an integral part of your thinking process. It becomes a continuous awareness, a state of consciousness in which you know that you are the constant creator of your life.

That is the ultimate point of creative visualization — to make every moment of our lives a moment of wondrous creation, in which we are just naturally choosing the best, the most beautiful, the most fulfilling lives we can imagine. . . .

A SIMPLE EXERCISE IN CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

Here is an exercise in the basic technique of creative visualization:

First, think of something you would like. For this exercise choose something simple, that you can easily imagine attaining. It might be an object you would like to have, an event you would like to have happen, a situation in which you'd like to find yourself, or some circumstance in your life you'd like to improve.

Get in a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Relax your body completely. Starting from your toes and moving up to your scalp, think of relaxing each muscle in your body in turn, letting all tension flow out of your body. Breathe deeply and slowly, from your belly. Count down slowly from ten to one, feeling yourself getting more deeply relaxed with each count.

When you feel deeply relaxed, start to imagine the thing you want exactly as you would like it. If it is an object, imagine yourself with the object, using it, admiring it, enjoying it, showing it to friends. If it is a situation or event, imagine yourself there and everything happening just as you want it to. You may imagine what people are saying, or any details that make it more real to you.

You may take a relatively short time or quite a few minutes to imagine this — whatever feels best to you. Have fun with it. It should be a thoroughly enjoyable experience, like a child daydreaming about what he wants for his birthday.

Now, keeping the idea or image still in your mind, mentally make some very positive, affirmative statements to yourself (aloud or silently, as you prefer) about it, such as:

Here I am spending a wonderful weekend in the mountains. What a beautiful vacation.

or

*I love the view from my spacious, new apartment.
or I'm learning to love and accept myself as I am.*

These positive statements, called affirmations, are a very important part of creative visualization, which I discuss in more detail later.

If you like, you can end your visualization with the firm statement to yourself:

*This, or something better,
now manifests for me*

*in totally satisfying and harmonious ways,
for the highest good of all concerned.*

This statement leaves room for something different and even better than you had originally envisioned happening, and serves as a reminder to you that this process only functions for the mutual benefit of all.

If doubts or contradictory thoughts arise, don't resist them or try to prevent them. This will tend to give them a power they don't otherwise have. Just let them flow through your consciousness, acknowledge them, and return to your positive statements and images.

Do this process only as long as you find it enjoyable and interesting. It could be five minutes or half an hour. Repeat every day, or as often as you can.

As you see, the basic process is relatively simple. Using it really effectively, however, usually requires some understanding and refinement.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO RELAX

It's important to relax deeply when you are first learning to use creative visualization. When your body and mind are deeply relaxed, your brain wave pattern actually changes and becomes slower. This deeper, slower level is commonly called the alpha level (while your usual busy waking consciousness is called the beta level), and much research is being done on its effects.

The alpha level has been found to be a very healthful state of consciousness, because of its relaxing effect on mind and body. And, interestingly enough, it has been found to be far more effective than the more active beta level in creating real changes in the so-called objective world, through the use of visualization. What this means for our practical purposes is that if you learn to relax deeply and do creative visualization, you may be able to make far more effective changes in your life than you would by thinking, worrying, planning, and trying to manipulate things and people.

If you have any particular way that you are accustomed to relaxing deeply or entering a quiet, meditative state, by all means use that method. Otherwise you may wish to continue using the method I describe in the previous chapter — breathing slowly and deeply, relaxing each muscle in your body in turn, and counting down from ten to one slowly. If you have any trouble physically relaxing, you might want to seek instruction in yoga, meditation, or stress reduction, which will be helpful in this regard. Of course, a side benefit of all of this is that you will find deep relaxation healthful and beneficial mentally, emotionally, and physically.

It is especially good to do creative visualization at night just before sleeping, or in the morning just after awakening, because at those times the mind and body are already deeply relaxed and receptive. You might like to do it while lying in bed, but if you tend to fall asleep, it's best to sit up on the edge of the bed or in a chair in a comfortable position, with your spine straight and balanced. Having your spine straight helps the energy flow and makes it easier to get a deep alpha wave pattern.

If it's possible for you, a short period of meditation and creative visualization done at midday will relax and renew you, and cause your day to flow more smoothly.

HOW TO VISUALIZE

Many people wonder exactly what is meant by the term “visualize.” Some worry because they don’t actually “see” a mental picture or image when they close their eyes and try to visualize. When some people first try to visualize, they feel that “nothing is happening.” Usually, they are simply blocking themselves by trying too hard. They may be feeling that there’s a “right way” to do this, and that their own experience is incorrect or inadequate. If this is how you feel, you need to stop worrying, relax, and accept what happens naturally for you.

Don’t get stuck on the term “visualize.” *It is not at all necessary to mentally see an image.* Some people say they see very clear, sharp images when they close their eyes and imagine something. Others don’t really “see” anything; they sense or feel it, or they just sort of “think about” it. That’s perfectly fine. Some people are more visually oriented, some are auditory, others are more kinesthetic. We all use our imaginations constantly — it’s impossible not to, so whatever process you find yourself doing when you imagine is fine.

If you still don’t feel sure what it means to visualize, read through each of these exercises, then close your eyes and see what comes naturally to you:

Close your eyes and relax deeply. Think of some familiar room such as your bedroom or living room. Remember some familiar details of it, such as the color of the carpet, the way the furniture is arranged, how bright or dark it is. Imagine yourself walking into the room and sitting or lying down on a comfortable chair, couch, or bed.

Now recall some pleasant experience you have had in the last few days, especially one involving good physical sensations such as eating a delicious meal, receiving a massage, swimming in cool water, or making love. Remember the experience as vividly as possible, and enjoy the pleasurable sensations once again.

Now imagine that you are in some idyllic country setting, perhaps relaxing on soft green grass beside a cool river, or wandering through a beautiful, lush forest. It can be a place that you have been, or an ideal place where you would like to go. Think of the details, and create it any way you would like it to be.

Whatever process you used to bring these scenes to your mind is your way of “visualizing.”

There are actually two different modes involved in creative visualization. One is receptive, the other is active. In the receptive mode we simply relax and allow images or impressions to come to us without choosing the details of them; we take what comes. In the active mode we consciously choose and create what we wish to see or imagine. Both these processes are an important part of creative visualization, and both your receptive and active abilities will be strengthened through practice.

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