

Lesson One: Preparing an area

You won't be able to take your mind off your problems if the kids are running around you or the dog/cat decides to flop down in your lap. You will need an area that is free of noise and distraction. Turn the phone ringer off, turn off the TV or the radio, shut your windows if you can hear traffic or kids playing outside. I even like to pull the curtains. It's just another way of shutting myself off from everything else.

Pick a place that is comfortable and relaxing. I use my bed, just because it's a wide, soft, relaxing location with a door that can shut others out. If you prefer a pillow on the floor, knock yourself out. Just remember, if your legs fall asleep and distract you before you're done, you won't get far with the exercise.

Collect the following items:

- 1 white candle - I like to use a nice big thick one rather than a taper.
- incense in your favourite scent - sandalwood is the one usually recommended for meditation, I prefer vanilla & orange or better yet, strawberry.
- 1 piece of quartz crystal - if you happen to have one.

Now get comfortable... Wear sweats or shorts and a baggy shirt, or whatever you prefer just as long as it isn't restrictive or tight to your body. Place your candle and incense in a location where they won't fall or get knocked over then light them. Sit down facing the candle with the quartz in your hand... Again if you prefer to throw a little yoga into your meditation go right ahead, just remember again... if you're struggling to keep some position or if after 15 minutes you start to experience pain because of your chosen position, you'll just have to start all over again. I usually just cross my legs... Sometimes I stretch out on my back and don't sit at all. It's totally up to you.

Begin by breathing deeply. In through your nose out through your mouth. Long deep breaths until you feel yourself starting to relax. Inhale the incense... Let the scent calm your nerves. Use the candle as a focus point. Concentrate on the flame. Watch it flicker and glow. When you are relaxed, close your eyes. From this point your main goal is to not move. No scratching, no fidgeting, no moving. Feel the quartz in your hand and concentrate on it rather than anything else happening in your life. Everything should be still. When you can sit absolutely still for 20 to 30 minutes and think of nothing but the crystal, then you're ready to move to lesson two.

Lesson Two: Controlling Your Thoughts

Use the same instructions from lesson one to start lesson two. When you get into a relaxed state with your eyes closed, continue focusing on the stone. If you don't have a stone, imagine holding a quartz crystal.

When all the other distracting thoughts have been replaced by the stone, start to push that out of your mind as well. Try not to think of anything. This is probably the hardest thing any of us can do. The slightest noise could ruin all your attempts at first. Once you are

able to clear your mind, the objective will be to increase the length of time you can keep your mind clear.

This will always be difficult, but when you get to the point where you can turn off the random thoughts and control the things that enter your mind, it will be time to move to lesson three.

Lesson Three: Simple Visualizations

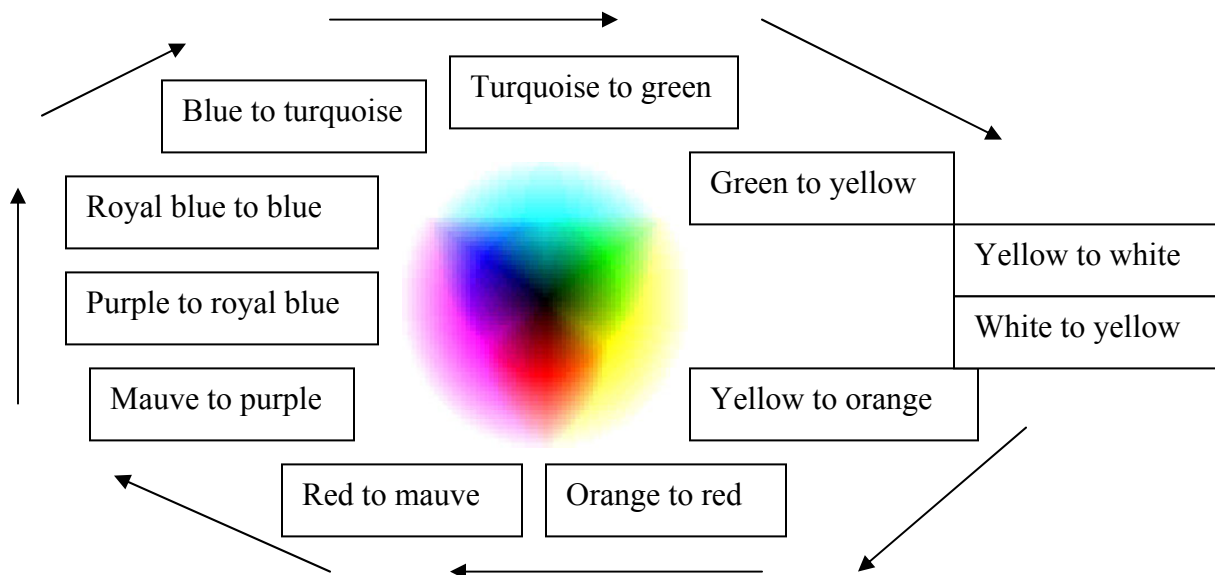
Lesson three builds on lessons one and two, so if you aren't able to sit motionless while controlling your thoughts you will have a difficult time carrying on.

While sitting motionless, your mind void of random thoughts, you can start creating your own specific thoughts. The next step entails a little experimentation on your part. The easiest thing for most people to imagine will be either a colour or a basic 2-dimensional shape. For me, the colours were easiest to see. For others a shape might be simpler to bring forth. Determine which you are. Either way you'll eventually be able to do both.

Colour Visualization:

I always start with white. It's the easiest colour for me to bring forth when I concentrate (and I'm not talking light shining through your eyelids "white" - there is a difference). When you can see a true colour in your mind then you know you've succeeded.

From white I change it to yellow then move it through the colour wheel until I get back to white:



White → Yellow → Orange → Red → Mauve → Purple → Royal Blue → Blue →
Turquoise → Green → Yellow → White

This isn't as easy as you may think. It takes a lot of control and concentration to move through the colours smoothly, but once you have this down you can move on to shapes.

Shape Visualization:

When I began working on the visualization of shapes, I found that the simplest form for me to bring forth was a white dot or filled white circle. The colour isn't important; your circle may not even be filled, but just an out line.

When you've successfully formed the circle, work towards a square by imagining the sides flattening out. Then elongate the square and make it a rectangle. From a rectangle turn it into an ellipse, then back into a circle.

You can make up different sets of shapes to move through. The pattern of shapes isn't the important part; it's the ability to form the shape.

Lesson Four: Further Visualizations

In lesson four we take what you've accomplished in lesson three a step further by combining colour and shape.

Colour into Shape Visualization:

Now that you are comfortable visualizing colours try to manipulate them further. Begin by visualizing two colours at once, like a split screen. If you begin your colour visualizations with white just push one side to the middle so it reveals a different colour (black for example) 'below' or 'behind' it.

Next, try creating this split from both sides then from the top and bottom and along the diagonals. When you have this down, make the split expand out from the centre. The shape of the last split isn't important, but most people find either a square or circle easiest.

Now that you have a shape visualized, change its colour by going through the colour wheel in that one space only, while leaving the surrounding colour unchanged. Once you can do that, changing the shape will be easier than you would imagine. Use the shapes exercise from lesson three to move through an easy sequence.

Shapes into Colour Visualization:

Usually people who can visualize shapes see them as white outlines on a black background, like a negative. Because of this, the first thing you have to do is look at the outline of your shape and visualize the outline getting thicker. Thicken it up until it turns the outlined shape into a solid.

Now look at the colour of the solid shape... It is a colour, whatever it is... You see, shapes people could always visualize colour, they just don't recognize it as a colour for some reason. Once you recognize the white as a colour, try and change it slightly to a pale

yellow, light blue or a pink. Stick to the pastel colours until changing them becomes more comfortable. When you are ready, deepen the colours until they are vibrant. Refer back to lesson three and the colour wheel exercise and give that a go.

When this becomes easy, change the colour of the background your shape has been sitting against. Again, slowly work through the different colours until you are comfortable.

Lesson Five: More Shapes and Colours

Now that you can change shapes and colours it's time to expand your visualizations to include more than one shape. Written it will sound simple enough, but as I'm sure y'all know by now, it's far from easy.

Visualize the shape and colour you feel most comfortable with then split it in two. I've always used the image of cells separating to help me see the shapes split. It may help you as well.

Once you have two of the same shape, try moving both shapes through a changing pattern. Then try changing the colours. Next try a different colour on each shape. Move on to two different colours on changing shapes; then finally work on changing shapes and colours.

Lesson Six: Complex Visualizations

Now that you can easily visualize a number of different shapes in different colours you're ready to move on to objects.

Before you begin your meditation, look around your room and select a simple object. It should be as basic a shape as possible, like a shoe or a book. Study it. Take in as many details as you can. Remember its colour, its texture, and its dimensions.

Begin your meditation and use the previous lessons as exercises to warm up your visualization skills. When you are ready, visualize your object. Concentrate on its details. When this is accomplished, try to visualize another object. The next object need not be something from the room around you. Try creating an object of your own.

Change objects as many times as you wish, but remember, the whole point of this lesson is to accurately visualize an object in all its detail. If you are just zipping through a list of objects, you've missed the point.

Lesson Seven: Interacting with Objects

During lesson six we began visualizing simple objects in full detail. Today we visualize ourselves touching an object.

When I say detail, I mean detail... My favourite simple object has always been a hard

cover book with a heavy textured material cover and leather binding. It measures about 10" x 12" and every one of the 1300 pages is edged in gold. The title of the book is also etched into the cover with gold leaf. Needless to say, it's heavy.

Start by visualizing your object in the same sort of detail. When you have it, imagine its weight; how the texture of it would feel in your hand. Finally visualize it in your hand. Hold it up. Turn the object in your hand and look at the opposite side.

Lesson Eight: Creating an Environment

Now that you have managed to interact with your visualization it's time to expand it out and create the rest of the surroundings... After all, objects just don't float around right? Well not unless your skilled in levitation... ;o}

As you enter the level of meditation where you would normally begin visualizing objects, start instead to instead build a scene. I like visualizing a clearing in the woods, so for me the easiest thing is to begin my visualization from a green background. If you want to try a night scene, a black background might be better to start from. Regardless, just decide on the scene and pick the predominant colour.

Out of my green background I start with a single blade of grass in all it's detail. It's a beautiful vibrant green because the Sun is shining down upon it. Then I start to add it neighbours. As I back away (make the grass seem further away) I can see more of the clearing and more grass. I add different grasses to the scene, some taller, some shorter... Some are browner and drier than the others. There are small wildflowers sprinkled throughout in a range of different colours. The Sun is warming them all. They sway in a light breeze. Slowly I continue add to the scene. Soon I've reached the edge of the woods, but before I can see the trunks of the trees I see the shadow the trees cast on the grass. The shadow moves with the breeze allowing the smattering of Sunlight poking around the edges of the moving leaves dance. Further past the edge of the shadow, it gets darker. Soon I can see the shadowy outline of the tree trunks. I keep expanding the scene adding more and more to it until I can see the entire tree; then the other trees beside it, all moving in the breeze. Above the trees, the blue skies finish the scene.

Now that you have a picture, look around; slowly as if it is you standing in the centre of the scene. Is there a path you followed in? Then add it. Are there birds? Hear them. Also start to hear the leaves rustling in the breeze. The breeze whispering through the grass. Don't forget to add smells - the wildflowers and grasses and trees. Does the breeze smell faintly of a distant ocean?

Lesson Nine: Visualizing As You Cast

The final lesson brings us to our goal; the ability to visualize the results of a spell as you cast it. Regardless of the spell you cast it can only become more powerful if you see the results in you mind.

Before you begin, think about the environment the results will happen in (if you can), or what the result would look like after the spell was successful. For example, your garden

needs rain so you decide to work a weather spell (**Note:** Never try to do this type of spell on a large scale. You are affecting the lives of others by altering the weather. Keep the affects as isolated as possible.). Visualize your garden in the middle of a rainfall. How green the leaves are; the drops bouncing off the leaves; the ground becoming wet; the smell of the rain and the wet Earth, etc.

Cast your spell with this image in mind.