



Secrets of Communication and Self Development

The following publications highlight Dr. Dilip Abayasekara's remarkable work in the field of speech consultation. They are provided free as our way of saying, "Thank you for touring our site." Our hope is that they will help you achieve your goals for effective public speaking and self development.

Dilip Abayasekara, Ph.D., A.S. is a professional speaker, trainer, and speech coach. His focus, through his training company, Speaker Services Unlimited, is to help people discover their own genius and find their path of fulfillment.



How to Create Your Reality With the Power of Your Imagination

Can you be brilliantly eloquent? Can you be great at anything you choose to do? Can you speak with eloquence and power in front of a group of people? If you answered "no, no, no" or "get real" or any variation of those words, I have good news for you. Although your present reality may indicate that the answers are "no", you CAN do all of the above in your imagination! In your imagination, you can be anything you want to be, do anything you want to do, realize any deferred dream that you have labeled as unreachable in the glum reality of your analytical "real" world. Do you remember when you were a kid, how much fun you could have imagining yourself to be a super hero, acting in concert with your imagination? You could fly, you could stop a speeding bullet, and you could leap over tall buildings. And then...you grew up. You dreamed less and less. You forgot the power of your imagination, not knowing that imagination is one of the greatest powers resident in you to affect your reality.

Maxwell Matz, in his best selling book, *Psychocybernetics*, tells the story of how he discovered one of the most empowering principles for human change. Dr. Maltz was a plastic surgeon. He tells the story about a young woman who came to him to get an ugly scar removed from her cheek. After the very successful surgery, which restored her beautiful skin, the woman still could not erase her perception of herself as being "ugly". This episode and many others like it led Dr. Maltz to articulate the powerful connection between imagination and reality. Here it is: if you imagine something vividly enough for long enough, what you imagine will become your reality.

What is reality? Reality is what we perceive to be real. Yet we know from everyday experience that two individuals can look at the same scene or event and have widely different perceptions of the reality of that event. Your imagination can powerfully affect your perception. Your perception becomes your reality. So then the question is, how can you harness your imagination to create the reality that you want? The answer lies in understanding how to wield the tool of your imagination, choosing the correct approach, and using the proper techniques. Let's look at these more closely.

Wielding the tool of your imagination

Your imagination runs on six channels of perception. These are our five senses plus one more: seeing (visual), hearing (auditory), touching (kinesthetic), smelling (olfactory), tasting (gustatory), and the internal sense I can only describe as "feeling". The principle behind the most effective use of your imagination is this: the more vividly you use each channel and the more channels that you use in your imagination, the greater will be the impact of your imagination on your reality. You add vividness to your imagination by imagining in sharp detail, bright colors, distinct sounds, sensitive touch, distinctive odors, exact taste, and deep feeling. We know that people tend to favor the use of one or two channels as the preferred way of perceiving their environment. Regardless of what your preferred channel is, you can increase the impact of your imagination by using as many channels as possible when you imagine an outcome that you want.

Let's apply this knowledge to a specific situation - giving a speech. In your mind's eye, see yourself appropriately dressed, brimming with confidence, being introduced to the audience. You see the audience excited at the prospect of hearing you speak. You hear their applause as you are introduced. You see the encouraging smiles of specific audience members. You feel a positive excitement in yourself and feel absolutely confident that you have something of value to give the audience this day and that you are going to have a wonderful time with them. The words roll out of your mouth with ease and yet with excellent articulation and vocal variety. You can see the members of your audience hanging onto every word you say. You see their positive expressions. You make eye contact. You hear your words rolling out with eloquence and power. Your voice has never felt better. You have having fun!

The correct approaches to using your imagination

There are five steps to using your imagination to achieve any goal.

1. *Do not tolerate negativity.* If you have an "I can't" attitude about actually achieving what you want, you will sabotage the power of your imagination. If it's difficult to drop the negativity then "reframe" the situation, i.e., alter the meaning of the content of your imagination or find a positive context to wrap around the situation. If all else fails, just pretend to be positive.
2. *Create positivity.* Get excited. Imagine with enthusiasm!
3. *Use multi-channel imagery.* Imagine with at least three channels or more as I described in the previous paragraph.
4. *Imagine regularly, as many times a day as possible.* Some the best times to practice your imagination exercises are when you first wake up in the morning and before retiring at night.
5. *Do your homework.* Do everything possible to match the desired outcome that you will imagine. For example, if you have to give a speech, do your homework to get the speech researched, written, practiced and ready. Simply imagining success without putting in the required work is a fool's dream unless you already have a very high level of skill in the endeavor.

By this time you've probably realized that proper imagination takes work! Creative imagination is not daydreaming. Creative imagination is an organized approach to creating in our minds the reality we want. It takes energy. But it is fun and most important. It works! Apply the proper techniques. If you have a fair degree of confidence with yourself, you can apply what I call the "First Person" technique. here, you are the star of the show in the theater of your imagination. The previously described public speaking example used the First Person technique. If your confidence is not very high, it might be difficult for you to imagine yourself doing a wonderful job as a speaker. in that case, you can try the "Third Person" technique. In this case, you imagine someone who is very good at doing whatever it is you want to imagine yourself doing well. But after a few sessions of imagining that person doing well, you gradually replace that person with yourself in the winning sights, sounds, and feelings of your imagination.

About a year ago I coached the president of a company who had a great lack of confidence about her public speaking skills. Using the Third Person technique, she imagined a woman she admired for her poise and speaking skills giving a speech. After a few days, this woman began to insert herself in that picture - first as a bystander; then as a co-actor in this imaginary drama, and the, beginning with short stints, taking the place of this other woman on the stage as a confident and successful speaker. Within a week, she was able to start imagining with the first Person technique. One week later, after she delivered a very successful speech at a business function, she was thrilled and amazed when a member of the audience told her that she should consider speaking professionally! Not all my students show such dramatic improvement, but anyone who practices the proper principles and techniques of harnessing the power of their imagination can transform their dreams into realities.

So tap the power of your imagination. Turn on the lights in the theater of your mind. Do your homework. Practice multi-channel imagery. Do it with enthusiasm. Have fun. Do it regularly. Then, one day, you will discover that what you imagined with such fervor has become your magical reality. Imagine that!

Dilip Abayasekara, Ph.D., A.S. is a professional speaker, trainer, and speech coach. His focus, through his training company, Speaker Services Unlimited, is to help people discover their own genius and find their path of fulfillment. Dilip Abayasekara was born and raised in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He attended college in the USA, earning an A.A. at Palm Beach Junior College, a B.S. in Chemistry at University of Florida, and a Ph.D. in Organic and Polymer Chemistry at Virginia Commonwealth University. After working for 12 years as an industrial scientist, he surrendered to his avocation - connecting, influencing, and enriching others through the power of the spoken word. Dilip was twice a finalist at Toastmasters International's World Championship of Public Speaking, placing second in 1992. He is among a small number of Toastmasters who have received accreditation by Toastmasters International for professional level speaking skills and outstanding contributions in public speaking. He is currently serving as President of Toastmasters International, the world's leading volunteer organization that helps people improve their communication and leadership skills. Dr. Abayasekara also serves as Special Assistant to the President of Central Pennsylvania College. He is also an adjunct faculty member of central Pennsylvania College in Oral Communications and is an adjunct faculty member of Eastern College's School of Professional Studies in the area of Managerial and Interpersonal Communications.