

THE MECHANICS OF BELIEVING
OR
HOW TO PROGRAM YOUR HEART

Success is up for grabs! But it does not come free or even cheap. It comes to the person who knows the basic success principles and puts them to effective use in his life.

Hundreds of books have been written on the subject of success, often referring to the same principle by several different names. Each author endeavors to aid the success-seeker on his journey. (Success is, by the way, not a destination, but a life-time journey.) Much of the inspiration for this article was gleaned from the pages of just such books. However, the popularity and success of these success-books does not lie in the brilliance of the authors. It lies in the power behind the principles, the power of God, who is the original Author of all success principles.

"But, I thought I was believing."

Have you ever been guilty of uttering this cry of despair? (Who me? a Power For Abundant Living class grad?) I have, but it happens a lot less often since I've been practicing a few simple techniques.

Each person has three "hearts"--his spiritual heart, his physical heart and his mental heart. By controlling the condition of each "heart", you can control that part of your life. When you get born again you forever determine the condition of your spiritual heart. It is full of the spirit of Christ. When you exercise sufficiently to work your physical heart, it becomes stronger and your whole body benefits. Now, concerning the mental "heart" Proverbs says:

Proverbs 4:23:

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. This heart is where believing comes from. The question then is, "How do you get in control of your mental heart so you can believe what you want to?"

First of all, to find the answer to that question, you must understand that there are two parts to the human mind: 1) the conscious mind, and 2) the heart.

Both parts of your mind are involved in believing. You cannot work directly on your heart. The conscious mind is your workshop. And if you do your part in your conscious mind, you can bring about definite changes in your heart. You can choose what you want to "program" into your heart and thereby control the issues of your life.

The Conscious Mind

There are three steps you can follow to get the thoughts of your choice lodged in your heart.

1. Decision

Decide exactly what you want. Write it down, in detail. Answer these questions about it: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? This is sometimes the hardest step because you may fear failure. But remember, you make the decision and God will help you get there.

Proverbs 16:9:

A man's heart (conscious mind) deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

2. Imagination

Build a picture in your imagination of your goal or desire in its completed form. Your five senses are your own crew of "workers" for building your mind picture. "Employ" as many of them as you can to make your picture vivid. When you think of your goal or desire "see" it in living color, "hear" it in stereo, "smell" its succulence, "taste" its lusciousness, "feel" its richness--all in your imagination.

Imagination, conceiving possibilities and relationships without first experiencing them, is one of your most priceless abilities. It must be consciously directed to be effective. Using your imagination for your crew, it is not easy. It is work.

It is necessary to set aside a special time to practice your mind picture. Your "rehearsal" should be at the same hour and for the same amount of time each day. The ideal time is in the morning when there are the least distractions (Mark 1:35).

3. Repetition

Pick a phrase that summarizes your goal or desire, such as, "I will get my coat," and repeat it over and over to yourself. Why is the repetition of words so important? Words are the "food" your mind feeds on to believe.

Romans 10:17:

So then faith (believing) cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Words are the only means of communication your conscious mind has for influencing your heart. So you talk to yourself to reach your heart.

Psalm 4:4:

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Have you ever wondered why sometimes your best mind picture begins to fade?

You need words to "nail down" your mind picture and keep it vivid.

Repetition makes the difference between wishful thinking and being fully persuaded.

Repetition is not a new principle. Jesus used it with his disciples. In one conversation he repeated his main point, "Ask anything in my name, I will do it." six separate times, trying to help them believe it (John 14: 13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24). Also in Romans 4 God, by way of the apostle Paul, uses repetition to emphasize how Abraham got his righteousness. Abraham wasn't righteous because he kept the law or did good works. Verse 3 says "Abraham believed God, and it (his believing) was counted unto him for righteousness. (Emphasis added.)" The Greek word, logizomai, translated "counted", "imputed" and "reckoned" is repeated eight times in the first eleven verses (Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11). Get the point? Get the point? Get the point?!!

Before you begin repeating your phrase there is one thing to check. Your phrase must be stated in the correct grammatical tense in order to be a "true" positive confession and not a "false" positive confession.

A "true" positive confession is a phrase that is stated in the same tense that the Word states the promise. For instance, when the Word promises that your physical need will be supplied, the promise is made in the future tense.

Philippians 4:19:

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Emphasis added.)

This cannot be talking about your spiritual need because when you are born again you have no spiritual need. You are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10). Therefore, the need is in the physical realm, something concrete, and in that case you state your phrase in the future tense, i.e. "I will get my coat."

A "false" positive confession is a phrase that sounds good, but is actually a lie because it does not agree with the Word. In this case a "false" positive confession would be, "I have my coat."

I talked to a girl who was believing for a job. She said when her friends would ask if she had her job yet, wanting to make a positive confession, she would say, "Yes, I have my job," although she actually didn't. She said every time she would make her "positive confession," in her mind those words sounded like fingernails scratching across a blackboard. The reason for that was because she was unknowingly feeding herself a lie and it just didn't set right with her. As long as she said, "I have my job," she didn't get one, even though she was doing her best to find one. As soon as she changed to, "I will get my job," she got it.

When you are believing for abstract qualities to be fulfilled in your life, the process is just the opposite. The Word states promises concerning abstracts in the present tense. For example, look at "boldness."

Ephesians 3:12

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. (Emphasis added.)

In order for boldness to become a reality in your experience, you would state your phrase like the Word states it, in the present tense, i.e. "I have boldness." Were you to use the future tense and say, "I will be bold," it would be a "false" positive confession. Your mind would respond with, "Sure I will, but when?" and discouragement would follow. Stating it in the present tense makes it a "true" positive confession because it is in perfect agreement with the corresponding promise.

By putting your goal or desire into your own words you personalize God's promises, making them your own. By making sure your phrases are in the right tense, you guarantee that you will be speaking the truth to yourself. True words are full of life and energy.

Hebrews 4:12 a:

For the word of God is quick, (alive) and powerful, (energetic)...

When you repeat them to yourself, they will encourage you to look for ways to see your goal or desire come to pass.

There are some things that require the use of both types of phrases, present tense and future tense, in order to fully persuade your conscious mind. Health is one of those things. The Word says that a Christian has been healed.

I Peter 2:24 b:

... by whose stripes ye were healed.

Having health and feeling good are not one and the same. Health is an abstract; feelings are in the physical realm. The problem has come when a person is feeling sick and someone asks him, "How do you feel?" Wanting to make a positive confession he says, "I feel great." He makes this statement with all good intentions, but it is a "false" positive confession. The Word does not say that we have been given good feelings. The Word says we have been given health, and by continuing to say that to ourselves, our feelings will conform. The "true" positive confessions to make in the case of your health are: "I have health." (Use the present tense for the abstract. Say this one to yourself.), and "I will feel better." (Use the future tense for the physical. Say this one to yourself and to your inquisitive friends.)

This technique of repetition can be used for anything you are believing for. At first you may feel like a little old lady, talking to yourself so much. But remember, if you are monopolizing the conversation that goes on in your mind, the Adversary won't be able to get a word in edge-wise. Besides you shouldn't just rattle off your phrase as an end in itself. You should spend time really thinking about what you are saying and associating it with what is already in your mind.

There are several ways you can increase the impact your phrases have on your mind:

1. Look in the mirror while you say your phrase. You will be receiving it through three of your five senses--seeing, hearing and feeling. You may feel silly about doing this at first, even embarrassed, but keep it up because it works.
2. Write your phrase out over and over again. (Remember when your grade school teacher wanted to impress upon you 100 times not to chew gum in class?) You will be using three of your five senses again. If you write on a blackboard you may be able to use a fourth sense, that is if you can smell the chalk.
3. Repeat your phrase to the rhythm of your heartbeat, your gait as you walk or run, a blinking light or the ticking of a clock or metronome. Do not be alarmed if these techniques sound like some that have been used in the process of hypnotism. These techniques can be safely and successfully used for the renewed mind as well, when you know how to use them properly. In order for you to do this, I will explain the difference between the process of hypnotism and of the renewed mind.

Hypnotism is the Adversary's counterfeit for the renewed mind. (He knows a good thing when he sees it. That's why he has used these perfectly good techniques for his evil purposes.) In hypnotism a phrase is repeated over and over to a person who is in a relaxed state by another person. The aim is to by-pass the reasoning process, which is in the conscious mind, and lodge the phrase in the memory bank. In doing this the reasoning process of the hypnotized person is actually weakened. Although the hypnotized person will appear to have successfully and effortlessly learned something, it is short-lived because he has not associated the new idea with what was already in his mind. (This is looking at it purely from a mental point of view. The spiritual consequences are even more destructive.)

In the renewed mind a phrase is repeated over and over to the person in a relaxed state by that person himself. The aim is to use the reasoning process to associate the new idea with information already in the mind before it is stored in the memory bank. It is more than repetition just for repetition's sake, i.e. "vain repetition." It involves thinking, pondering, or meditation on the phrase (Psm. 19:14). Using your reasoning process along with repeating your phrase is what strengthens and renews your mind.

4. Mix your phrase with the emotion of love, speaking the truth in love to yourself (Ephesians 4:15). Love speeds up the process words must go through to get from your conscious mind into your heart. Love mixed with any thought impulse gives it greater action than any other emotion. Believing is energized by love (Galations 5:6). Mixing love with your phrase intensifies your desire. The greater your desire, the more energy you will have to go after what you want.

Repetition Cautions:

1. Your mind will talk back to you. You may say, "I will get my car," and your mind replies, "Oh, no you won't!" This is normal so don't worry about it. Your new phrase is opening up a new thought circuit in your brain. There will be some resistance until that new thought circuit has been broken in by repeated use. When your mind talks back or thinks negatively it is only mental hesitation and not necessarily unbelief or broken fellowship. Be persistent! You will win!
2. Don't tell anyone what you are believing for. I repeat, DON'T TELL ANYONE!

Romans 14:22 a:

Hast thou faith (believing)? have it to thyself before God.

This is extremely important to remember, especially when you are first beginning to repeat your phrase. You must give yourself some time to work it into your own mind before you share it. If you violate this caution, you run the risk of the person you tell scoffing at your idea or merely not being as enthusiastic about it as you are. When you get this kind of negative reaction before you are fully persuaded yourself, it is very likely you will take the other person's opinion over your own. You will become discouraged and feel like you have been robbed. Then you will have to work that much harder to get your mind back to where it was and again progressing towards being convinced. When you wait until you are fully persuaded before you open your mouth, other people's reactions and opinions won't affect you at all.

It is possible by repetition to build what I call "believing reserves."
You can take a phrase, such as "I can do it." and repeat it without
making reference to any particular thing you want to do. Then when a
situation arises where you would have ordinarily thought "I can't do it."
you will act out of the "I can do's" you have stored in your heart.

The Heart

There will come a time after you have made your decision, after you have
rehearsed your imaginary picture, after you have done your repetitions, that
you will know deep within that you will, absolutely, receive the object of your
believing. This is the point in time when your fully-persuaded mind has
"convinced" your heart. You no longer need to rehearse your picture or
repeat your phrase because now you believe with your heart. At this time
there will come the elated sense of joy and peace that always accompanies
believing.

Romans 15:13 a:

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...

Just as the mind is your workshop, the heart is God's workshop. His part
in believing is two-fold.

1. God opens your heart.

Acts 16:14

And a certain woman named Lydia...whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

God does not make you believe, but the law of believing He has set up makes it possible for you to believe in your heart whatever your mind is fully persuaded of. (See how important it is to be aware of what your mind is convinced of so you can be in control of it?)

2. God brings it to pass.

Psalms 37:5

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

God cannot give you anything until you are fully persuaded you will receive it. Then He has an option: He can either give you exactly what you were believing for or He can do what Ephesians 3:20 says and give you something even better than your wildest imagination. But He cannot do either one until you have carried out your part of the bargain.

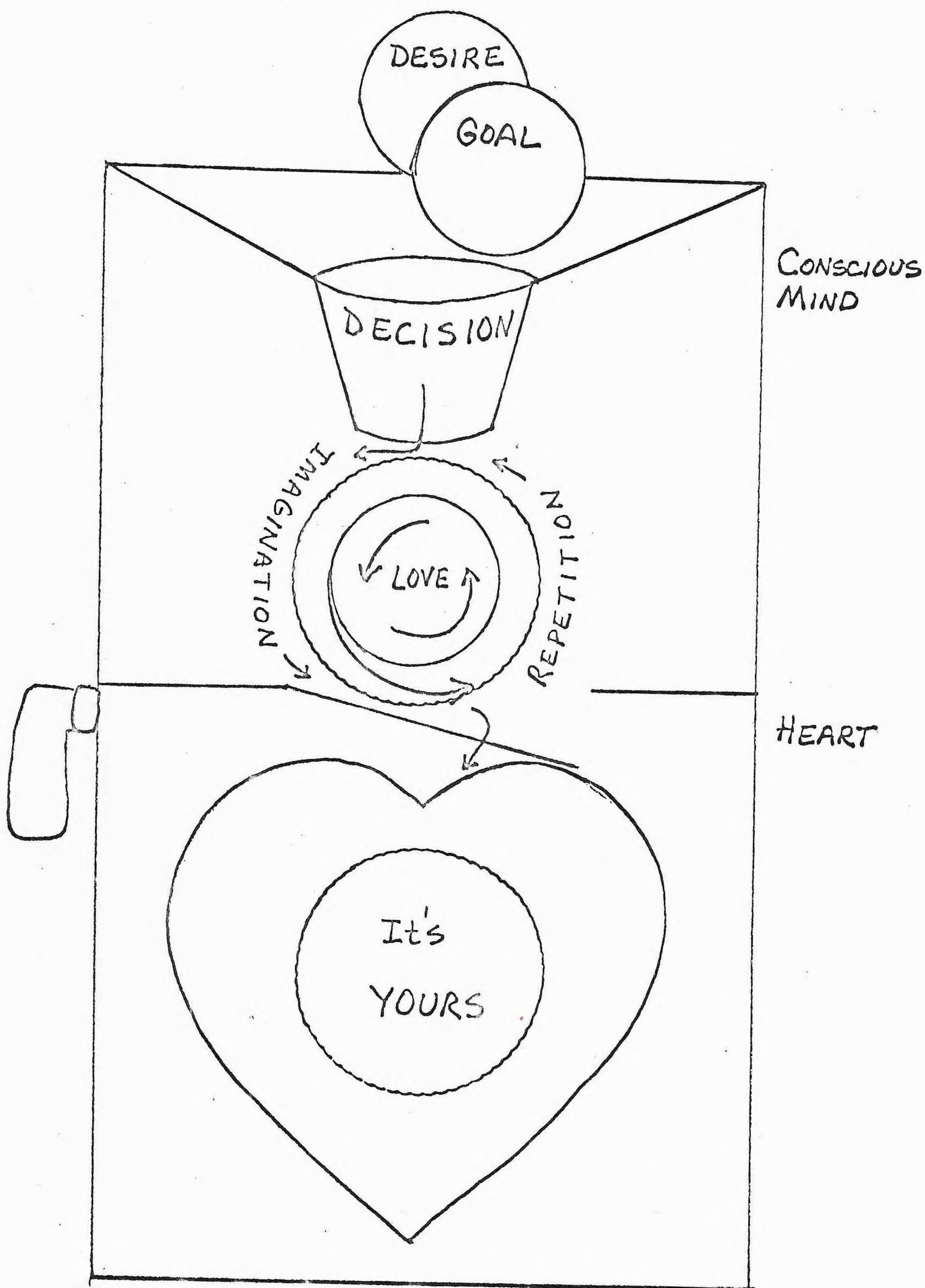
Decision, Imagination, Repetition--Example

Using "Decision, Imagination and Repetition" you monitor your thoughts and completely control what is in your heart. When you control your heart you control your life.

To illustrate how "Decision, Imagination and Repetition" work I will use the example of a coin box on a typical city bus. The top half is glass with an opening on the top for depositing the coins. This portion represents your conscious mind. The coins are your thoughts. You decide what "coins" will enter the "box", how many will go in and how often. While they are in there you give them "weight" by using your imagination, by repeating your phrase and mixing it with love. When your "coins" are heavy enough, the bus driver (God) presses the lever on the side of the "box" and they drop into the lower compartment of the "box", which is your heart. Now, whatever you were believing for becomes yours.

Making a "Believing Notebook"

My own work with "Decision, Imagination and Repetition" has resulted in an elaborate scrapbook of personal goals, which I call my "Believing Notebook." It all began with a "Fully Persuaded List." I decided exactly what I wanted in my heart. The first phrases I chose were, "God loves me. I love God. I love myself." I chose these three "elementary" phrases first because I knew they were things I would always need to believe, things the Adversary would try to talk me out of every day. I had some stubborn fears



in my mind. By simply putting the word "love" into my mind through conscious repetition, the fear began to leave. I literally saw I John 4:18, "... perfect love casteth out fear," taking place in my mind.

While I repeated these three phrases, I recalled every experience of love I could remember from the past. I concentrated on the acts of love people showed me in the present. And I imagined every experience of love I hoped for in the future. I took each of my five senses, one at a time, and thought of how God was communicating His love to me through that particular sense at that very moment. Whenever I read the Word I would ask myself, "How does that show me that God loves me?"

After doing repetitions for several days, I began to see results in my mind. My mind picture of what love is began to become (and is still becoming) more vivid, detailed and alive.

My next step was to decide on some definite goals and divide them into categories: mental, physical, spiritual, travel, material, musical, etc. I took a sheet of paper for each category. On one side I put short-range goals, on the other side, long-range goals. Under each goal I wrote out the exact method I planned to follow to attain that goal. I also picked out an appropriate phrase to repeat for each goal. Last of all, I wrote out a paragraph describing myself accomplishing my goal. I wrote this paragraph in the second person, putting it in the form of a compliment, and making it easier for my mind to receive.

Here is an example of one of my goal sheets:

Mental Goals (short-range)

1. Practice the presence of God.

Phrase: "God is right here, right now."

Method: 5 minutes of repetition 3 times daily.

Read 2 chapters in the Old Testament daily imagining
that I am the one doing the talking to God.

"Every day you wake up excited about the tenderness and compassion of your heavenly Father. You know Him in the face of your Saviour Jesus Christ. He surrounds you with Himself. You cannot help but respond to one who adores you so."

(The paragraph can also be stated in the form of a command if it is a hard picture for your mind to see. "Wake up every day...")

In addition to the written sections, I illustrate my goals with pictures and boldface lettering from magazines, with picture postcards and other photographs. I use whatever makes the greatest impression on me. I re-worked the whole notebook four times in the first year I had it. Most of my long-range goals are still the same, but I keep up-dating my short-range goals to keep them current. I date each goal--when I make it and when it comes to pass. I keep all of my old goal sheets to review the plans and documentation of my successes.

One last section I have most recently developed is a group of "Bless Letters" that other people have written to me. They are complimentary letters that I read for encouragement and positive reinforcement of my good points. Also among them are letters from people expressing the success of their "Believing Notebooks."

I have listed the specific steps for goal achievement and have shown you the ways that I carried them out. The steps are what is important, not the exact duplication of my methods. You take these steps and carry them out, putting your own interest and personality into them. Although the steps remain the same, you will want to do things in your own colorful way.

Summary

The mechanics of believing are not mystical concepts floating somewhere beyond reach. They are precise, predictable principles that can be understood and systematically applied. Make a definite decision on a goal with your conscious mind. Paint a picture of your goal with your imagination, using all of your five senses, if possible. Choose a phrase that depicts your goal and repeat it to your self, mixing the words with the emotion of love. Your conscious mind will set up a new thought circuit in your brain and your goal will become part of your heart. At that time you believe and your goal comes to pass.

For even more insight on how God's principles for goal achievement have worked for others, you may want to look into what I consider to be the most outstanding sources I consulted for this information:

BELIEVING NOTEBOOK

Contributing Books

Self-love: Dynamic Force to Success - Robert H. Schuller

Love Yourself - Walter Trobisch

Your Fear of Love - Marshall Bryant Hodge

Looking Out For #1 - Robert J. Ringer

Success! - Michael Korda

Improving Your Self-image - Norman Wright

Think and Grow Rich - Napoleon Hill

The Magic of Believing - Claude Bristol

How To Get Control of Your Time and Your Life - Alan Lakein

How To Win Friends and Influence People - Dale Carnegie

Power! How To Get It and How To Use It - Michael Korda

How To Stop Worrying and Start Living - Dale Carnegie

Life Is Tremendous - Charlie Jones

The Magic of Thinking Big - David J. Schwartz

Success Unlimited - monthly magazine

Sensuous Woman - "J"

Total Woman - Marabel Morgan

The Power of Sexual Surrender - Marie N. Robinson, M.D.

Zig Ziglar tapes and others from Success Motivation Institute

How To Make Your Wife Your Mistress - Lois Bird

How To Be a Happily Married Mistress - Lois Bird

Bring Back Romance - Natalie Willner