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MODELS OF IMAGERY AND USEFULNESS OF IMAGERY

Hello and welcome to session 2 of the imagery module. So, in this module, we will be looking at the phases of imagery training. We have a few practical exercises. We will be working on the PETTLEP model about how we can write a imagery script, when imagery can be done, what are the situations in which they are useful and also the benefits of imagery. So, in this session, we are looking more at the practical exercises that need to be practised, that need to be implemented during an imagery training program. So, brace yourself for a lot of exercises. When we start an imagery training program for any athlete or any sports person, if you are a coach or if you are a trainer or even if you are an, you know, working with an athlete, the first phase is the education phase, followed by the acquisition phase and also followed by the practice phase.

So, the education phase is a very crucial and important phase, because anybody who is going to learn a new skill needs to know the importance, the value and how it is to be done and the acquisition phase is the phase where you actually learn the skill, do a few practice sessions and finally, in the practice phase, you go ahead with implementing that in your practice sessions and finally, incorporating it into your, you know, match and your tournaments. So, let us look at what happens in the education phase. So, the education phase because it is a new skill that you are going to educate the sports person about, you have to tell them about what is imagery. Imagery is basically recreation of images in your mind, when there is no stimuli or in the absence of being in a court or in a playground or in a stadium, you are recreating a particular image.

The image that is created has to have all the senses, okay? So, you need to have your auditory that is ability to hear, you should have your visual sense that is ability to see the

image, then you need to have your olfactory where you can sense some amount of smell from the scene, then you also need to have your tactile sense that is ability to touch, feel the ball or feel the grip or feel the racket and even the water and finally, you have the kinesthetic sense that is the movement pattern that you experience when you do your particular visualisation. So, these 5 sensory awareness is very important. Then you also educate the athlete about the types of imagery. So, imagery could be having a cognitive function and it also could be having a motivational function and cognitive function, like what we discussed in the previous session, the cognitive and motivational functions are again further divided into cognitive specific and cognitive general and motivational specific and motivational general.

So, depending upon the type of skill or the type of scene or the type of event that you are imagining, it will serve as it is if it is a cognitive function or it will serve as if it is a motivational function like if you see yourself, you know, with a medal or hitting the winning shot or scoring the winning basket, then it will be like a motivational specific because you are, you know, motivating and charging yourself. And finally, in the education phase, you can put an athlete through a basic imagery practice because, you know, many athletes are not abreast or they are not aware of what is imagery or what is visualisation, some people are very new to it, they have not heard about it. So, a very basic imagery exercise could be incorporated. So, let us look at a basic imagery exercise. So, I know that you are all sitting in front of the screen.

So, you could just close your eyes, I will tell you what you need to do. So, close your eyes and you can take a deep breath, feel relaxed and sit comfortably. Once you are comfortable, you can image a red coloured circle in your mind. Once you are able to see it and it is clear in your mind, you could make it shrink into a very tiny dot and slowly you can make it disappear. You can practise this exercise by changing the colour of the circle to green, a big coloured green circle.

Once you see it, you can make it shrink it into a tiny dot and then you can make it disappear. So, you could repeat this many times with different colours. So, this will give you a basic exercise about how imagery or what you can do with, you know, imagining things. Then we move on to the acquisition phase. So, in the acquisition phase, key concepts are how you learn the imagery process and here emphasis on vividness of the image and controllability of the image has to be explained.

Vividness is having a very detailed image. Minute details help you to image better, a very vague and a general scene will not help you to image or see the skill or see yourself doing that particular activity. So, it has to be very clear, very vivid, very detailed. Controllability is your ability to control what you want to see, like you should see yourself winning, you should see yourself executing a shot successfully. So, you should be able to control your ability to see or make an image as how you want to see it. So, there are exercises for the vividness and controllability.

Then we have other practical exercises and finally, we also introduce the PETTLEP program. So, the PETTLEP program is a very important imagery program. It gives guidelines about how you can make an imagery effective. So, let us look at some of the exercises.

Okay. So, for an exercise on vividness, I would like you to observe this picture of the swimming pool. See the swimming pool, see the blue-coloured water, see the lanes that are marked, see the side of the swimming pool, observe it for a few seconds. Now, I would like you to close your eyes, feel very relaxed, sit comfortably and imagine that you are in the swimming pool area. Imagine yourself walking into the swimming pool, you take a deep breath and you get the smell of the water. As you walk around the swimming pool, you get the feel of the flooring, it could be wet, it could be slippery, it could be smooth.

You look around the pool, you look at the gallery where the spectators sit, you can see the big boards, the timing boards that are there. Slowly create an image of a competition pool. See yourself at the starting blocks and see the lane lines marked. Slowly see yourself warming up in the pool, feel the water against your skin as you swim and you can hear your teammates cheering. Imagine this for a few seconds, imagine the scene.

Now, slowly open your eyes and come into the present moment. If you want to know how you have done in imaging this particular exercise, you could rate yourself on the various senses: the auditory, visual, olfactory, tactile and the kinesthetic. You can rate yourself from 5 to 1, that is 5 is very well, 4 is well, 3 is somewhat, 2 is poorly and 1 is very poorly. At the first go, if you have not been successful in seeing the images at least well or very well, you could repeat this exercise till you are able to image and also experience all the senses. So, in

every exercise that you do, make sure that you experience all the senses.

Those are very important because that will give you the real life feeling of a particular exercise or a particular routine or a particular competition that you will be going for. Now, we move on to controllability, ability to see what you want to see or experience what you want to experience. I want you to observe this picture for a few seconds. You see a tub of cold water, you see yourself putting your foot into it. Observe this picture well, because you are going to be doing an exercise on this.

So, now moving on to the exercise, again I would like you all to close your eyes, feel relaxed and imagine that you have had an ankle injury, you have twisted your ankle and you need some ice to reduce the swelling. So, you feel pain in your foot and ankle. So, imagine you are putting your foot into a tub of ice water, feel the cold sensation as your foot touches the cold water. You are tempted to take your foot out of the water because you start experiencing a burning sensation and your foot starts to become very cold. Slowly your foot moves from being cold to feeling very numb.

I want you to focus on these sensations. Now the ice treatment is over, imagine you are taking your foot out of the tub of ice water. Immediately your foot begins to regain feeling and you start feeling the burning sensation again. Slowly you begin to feel the warmth from your ankle down to your toes. Now I would like you to slowly open your eyes and come into the present moment and rate yourself on the various senses that you felt.

You can rate yourself again from a scale of 5 to 1. If you have not been successful at the first go in being able to control this image, you can retake the exercises any number of times till you feel comfortable and are able to control the image in your mind. Remember, the ability to see vivid images and also control the images will help you to use the imagery in working and overcoming many of your skills and many of your techniques and drawbacks. After we have done the vividness and the controllability exercises, now we move on to the sport specific okay? And there are a lot of imagery exercises for self practice.

So first we have the general scene followed by a sport scene and we also have a specific skills routine. So what is the general scene? Before we do the general scene, we have to understand that at the beginning when we introduce an imagery program to an athlete or a

sports person there are novices, they are not very knowledgeable about it. So we use something called guided imagery. So in the guided imagery, the athlete is assisted by a psychologist to recreate images and this helps to also learn the technique. So what do we do? We use a script which has been developed in discussion with the sports person and we guide them on a step to step approach or a step to step manner till this task is successfully completed.

So initially players are helped with guided imagery. It is also useful for some players who find it difficult to image. So they are guided and with practice they will be able to do the imagery themselves and also develop their own scripts. So guided imagery is initially used by psychologists to help the players. So let us look at this general scene.

I would like you all to observe the scene. This is a garden full of flowers. There are different colours in this. You can see the gravel or the mud below the flowers. Imagine, see the green bushes and also see the sidewalk of the garden.

Now it is time for us to do the imagery process. So again sit comfortably, close your eyes, feel relaxed and imagine you are in a garden full of flowers. Imagine the fresh smell of the air, the fresh sight of the flowers, the different colours. Imagine yourself walking on the sidewalk. You feel the cool breeze on your body.

You feel happy, you feel positive. Imagine this sight for a few seconds. Now slowly open your eyes and come into the present moment and it is time again for you to rate yourself if you could use all your senses from a scale of 5 to 1. So you rate yourself on each of the senses on a scale of 5 to 1. Now we move on to a sport specific scene.

Whichever sport that you are playing, you could think of a skill in your sport. You can close your eyes, feel relaxed and image that particular skill that you would like to work on. See yourself in your stadium or in your grounds, in your court, in your pitch, wherever you practise. See yourself being there. Imagine yourself performing the activity.

Hear the sounds, feel the body movements and be aware of your mood. Were you happy, were you positive? Imagine this for a few seconds. Hold it there. Now slowly open your eyes and come into the present moment and it is time again to rate yourself. You rate

yourself, how you were performing an activity.

So did you see yourself performing the activity? Rate on a scale very poorly is 1 and very well is 5. Were you able to hear the sounds? Were you able to feel yourself? Were you aware of your mood and were you able to control your image? So this is a very basic sport scene that you could imagine. You could go to a next level where you could see yourself performing the same skill with the coach being around. That could be the second situation. In the third situation, once you have learned imagery to a certain extent, you can build in a situation where you see yourself making mistakes.

You see yourself making errors and then trying to correct the errors. Now this is also very important because this is an advanced skill in imagery where you see yourself performing a mistake and then trying to overcome it. Let me give you an example. An Olympic high jumper was preparing for her jumps during her Olympic event and as she was standing there, she took a certain amount of time every time the bar was raised. So she made a successful jump and she was able to win the Olympic high jump title, the gold medal.

After the event, when she went back home, there was a psychologist who was in the stadium watching this event. He met up with her and he had a discussion with her and he said that, you know, congratulations, you won the medal. But I want to ask you this question that you were taking awfully long before you cleared every bar. Why was it? So, she explained to him that every time she stood before her particular jump, sometimes she would see that she would do the practice imagery, and see herself being successful in clearing the bar. But sometimes she would see herself being unsuccessful in clearing the bar.

So he asked her, what did you do? So she said, I reimagined the scene and I only jumped after I had seen myself successfully clearing the bar. So this is how powerful imagery can be. So as athletes and players, we could incorporate mistakes and errors and also try to see ourselves clearing and being successful in completing this particular skill. Now we look at a model that has been given by Holmes and Collins.

It's called the PETTLEP model. This model helps to create imagery to a greater extent. It helps the imagery to be effective. Now PETTLEP is an acronym. As you see on the screen, P stands for the physical environment, E is for the specific environment, T is the type of task,

you have a timing movement, you have the learning of the content of movement, emotions and finally the P stands for the perspective. Now what the researchers advise is, when you decide to image a particular skill, make sure you follow the PETTLEP principle.

So if you are imaging, the physical environment should be recreated in your mind. So when I talk about the physical environment, you should be wearing the vest, the tunic or the dress related to your sport. If you are a tennis player, you could be wearing a tennis tunic, if you are a basketball player, you could be wearing a western shorts or whatever sport you are playing the same and also the equipment or the implement that you use in your sport should be seen by you, whether it's a ball, it's a racket, it's a cricket bat, it's a volleyball, whatever implement that you are using, it should be the same. So the physical environment should be the same. Then the specifics of the environment, the image skill should be done in the same environment as you would be physically doing it.

So if you are going to practise a free throw in basketball, it should be on a basketball court. It cannot be in you know, maybe in your backyard or it could be in your compound, no, it should be in the specific environment, in your stadium, in your ground, in your court, wherever you practise, that should be there, that's the specifics of the environment. Then the task, the same task like the way it's done in practice has to be done, the same task has to be done when you do the imagery program. The timing, whatever skill you are imaging, has to be in real time. So let us say that you are going to practise imaging a serve, it cannot be in slow motion, it has to be in the same timing as how you would be doing physically when you want to practise a serve, so the real time is important.

Then learning of the content of movement. So here once you have imaged a particular skill and you find that you have been successful, it's time for you to upgrade that skill. So you got to look at what other extra techniques that you could add in, what other upgrades you can do in that particular skill. Moving on to emotions, emotions play a great role, they help the nervous system, they help to activate the muscles. So whatever emotions you feel or have felt when you execute a particular task, the same thing should be there when you image it. You are happy, you are sad, you are disappointed, you know you are angry with yourself, all these emotions have to be incorporated into your imagery.

And finally the perspective. Doing imagery involves seeing yourself do it, right? So you

see yourself executing the task. So the PETTTLEP concept or the PETTTLEP principle is very important to be followed if you want to do successful imagery and also see some kind of improvement in the particular skill or whatever you are looking to work on. Now we move on to a small exercise because we have been talking so much about you know imagery and imagining. Now let us just break a little bit of the momentum and talk about testing your knowledge.

So the imagery model is called DASH, okay? So the answer is PETTTLEP. Vividness means having very clear images. L in pet lab means, learning the movement and the last two are true or false. Imagery does not help to deal with injury and pain.

The answer is false. It does help. Fifth one, imagery must be done during off season. So the answer is true. So here the answer is here in front of you. Now we move on to the last phase which is the practice phase. So as I have already discussed in the acquisition phase you have learned many practical exercises.

So in this phase it is imagery in practice. So you are doing your imagery in practice. You are trying to follow the particular sequence, follow the particular routine into the practice sessions. You discuss with the coach or the psychologist what are the various skills that you want to image or what you want to work on. It could be a new skill, it could be an existing skill, it could be overcoming certain anxiety or nervousness which we will be seeing in the next slides. Then you write an imagery script with the help of a psychologist or a coach and slowly once you are comfortable in the practice session you apply it into the competitive arena.

Let us look at where all imagery can be effective, where all imagery can be helpful. So imagery can be useful to learn a new skill, deal with anxiety, performance issues. You can use imagery for pre-performance routines, how do you work as a team and also recover from injury and deal with pain. So in the small call outs you have, a bowler has a problem of bowling good line and length.

Imagery is useful for developing good line and length. A basketball player keeps missing free throws, layups and field shots. Imagery can be used to perfect the skill. A volleyball player is experiencing anxiety and nervousness before a game. Imagery can be used to

overcome anxiety and nervousness and a tennis player wants to get back into the game after an injury. So the imagery technique can be used in two ways, one is to overcome the injury, see himself playing or can use that time to develop certain amount of skills which he was found lacking or found wanting during the time when he was playing.

So how do we write a script? So it is a three-step process. So remember when we write the script you cannot just directly go to the skill, you need to follow a sequence so that you create the memento or the tempo for imagery in a particular routine or a technique. So the first step would be having a very relaxed mind, closing your eyes and breathing deeply. In this script we are looking at a competitive event. So you start with the competition, you can see yourself warming up, stretching, being aware of the competitive arena or the stadium, the crowd and the environment. Once you have imaged this successfully, the second part of the script would be imaging the event itself.

So every move, okay, every strategy that you do, every shot that you play right up to the finish line and also to the end of the competition. All the thoughts and feelings that accompany you in every stage of your or at least some particular stages of your action. The third phase is post competition or after the competition, shout of the crowd, your victory, your reaction, feeling happy, receiving the award. If it is a team game you join your team in celebration and it goes on all the way up till you leave the court or leave the grounds or leave the match. So you have a start and in the mid part is where you actually focus on the skills, on the match, on your game and finally you conclude with an ending and where you see yourself being victorious.

In this similar fashion, scripts can be written for specific techniques. It can be, you know, for learning a new skill or working on an existing skill, honing your skill whatever that you desire to work on. When can imagery be done? So there are many phases or many times that imagery can be done before and after practice. Usually advocated before and after practice because before the practice you could see yourself doing certain skills where you have found wanting and where you have been working on. So that will help you during the practice session and after practice is, if you have gone wrong you could probably work on that skill sets so that, you know, in the next practice session you will be, you know, better in that.

Before and after competition, so before competition again giving you a head start before the

actual start of your matches and after competition would be like a post or debriefing about what are the areas that went wrong or what are the skills that went wrong. It could be during off season because off season is a time when players usually do not do much of, you know, they work more on their strength and they work more on their body conditioning. They are not playing matches so they have little time to work on even the mental skills so imagery could be done at that time. During breaks in the action, so if you are playing a game or a sport where you get breaks in between like basketball you could have quarters or a half time, tennis it could be between games, it could be between sets, you could do the imagery practice at that time. During your personal time many athletes and players prefer to do imagery before they go to bed because they are relaxed and they have completed all their commitments for the day and, you know, they find that is a personal space time.

So imagery could be done during that time and also when you recover from a particular injury because injury recovery is also important. So the most important thing is what works best for the athlete or the player or the time in terms of timing the athlete could adopt that. So if you feel you are comfortable to do it before practice you could do that or after practice. If you want to do it before the competition you could do it or after the competition. So this is an individual preference. So you should see what works for you because some people before the competition get nervous, they get anxious, they feel that it reduces their performance.

So they could, you know, probably defer it to after the competition. So I will give you a particular example about how players or athletes did visualisation before the competition and it went terribly wrong for them. So four athletes who are relay runners were going to an event to participate in a 4 into 100 metres relay. So they took a train from their hometown up to the stadium or up to the grounds. So they had a good enough amount of time as they were travelling in the train or in the metro. They were all standing and each one said that they are going to practise visualising each of them doing their leg or they are running that particular leg. So first they all practise each one practising their image themselves running.

Later on they all said that they are going to image themselves for one minute each running that particular leg. So till they reach the stadium they kept visualising and they kept imaging themselves running. When they went to the event they actually completed last in the event. So they found that they were so exhausted in their mind running that particular leg, their legs were exhausted and finally they found that they could not run during the actual relay run.

So sometimes it can horribly go wrong. So it is a very individual preference that can be followed by players. We have here an audio clip from Nitin Kumar Sinha who is a tennis player and he talks about how visualisation and imagery has been useful to him. Hi I am Nitin Kumar Sinha an international tennis player and I am playing at the highest level in the country. Yes I do use visualisation in my sport and I feel it helps me a lot because I feel it makes my muscles and my mind believe that it has already made that shot and it becomes easier to follow up when I am hitting the actual shot. So I usually use visualisation before matches on how I want to play points or how I want to play tennis today and also sometimes before serves on how I want to hit the serve.

It's just visualising in my mind the action of how I am going to serve and I feel it helps me a lot when I am actually playing in the match or when I am just going to serve. I feel visualisation helps you a lot like I said with believing in yourself because you have already seen yourself do it and it's just that the body starts to believe it more and then it just happens with your subconscious mind. So I feel visualisation helps me a lot in my sport. Thank you. What are the benefits of imagery you know? What is it in there for the athlete? What are the uses or what are the benefits and what are the advantages?

So it helps them to improve their concentration and motivation. Sports confidence can be improved. It's a great way to control our emotions. As you all know, imagery can be used to acquire skills and also practise certain strategies. It's helpful to prepare for competition and also to deal with pain and injury. So there are a whole host of benefits that imagery could offer that is why it is said that it is one of the most widely used cognitive tools of mental training.

So finally we come to the recap of this session. So we discussed about the three phases: education acquisition and practice phases. We discussed when imagery could be used. We did a whole lot of practical exercises in imagery practice. We also learnt how to write a script and finally we also learnt about the different uses of imagery. So with this detailed session we come to the end of it and in the upcoming sessions we will be looking at also some practical exercises working with athletes about how visualisation can be done. Thank you.