

MATTMCWILLIAMS

Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

Remember When You Always Won? The Power of Imagination

Do you remember when you always won? When your imagination allowed you to experience the thrill of victory over and over again? The greatest gift you can give anyone, including yourself, is the opportunity and encouragement to imagine great things.

When I was a kid, I always won. I don't mean that literally, but in my imagination it was always the bottom of the ninth inning. The World Series was always on the line. And I always hit the game-winning home run.

In basketball, I must have hit tens of thousands of game winning shots in my mind. There were always five seconds left...

"5...4...3...2...1...the shot is off...and it's GOOD! The crowd goes wild!"

If a real basketball was involved and I missed, I was always fouled. I always had a chance to win.

As I grew older, I played golf. Every day, I faced putts to win the U.S. Open or the Masters. Sometimes on the practice green, sometimes in my apartment or dorm room, but most often in my mind.

Imagination in Writing

I would even spend hours writing our pretend scorecards with record-breaking scores, just to plant the seed that I could shoot such scores. Often when I was writing them out, my negative voices say to me:

"That's ridiculous. You've never even come close to a score like that. Who do you think you are?"

But I kept imagining. I kept stretching the limits of my own mind. I kept challenging the beliefs and voices that told me I couldn't do something. I kept pushing to new levels.

The Power of Imagination

Every time I imagined something, I felt all of the emotions, just as if it were really happening.

I would spend hours during the winter months, playing rounds of golf in my head. I felt the nerves of the final few holes in a tight competition. I felt the joy of making the winning putt.

I did exactly what Major James Nesmith did when he was a POW in Vietnam. For seven years, he did not actually play golf. In fact, he was held prisoner by the North Vietnamese army.

But every day he played an entire round of golf in his mind. He felt the wind blowing, the grass under his feet, he smelled the smells and saw the sights. He felt the grip in his hands, took a practice swing, lined up the shot and hit it. Every day for seven years.

When he returned to the States and played his first round of golf, he shot his lowest score ever...despite not playing for more than seven years.

Your mind is so powerful. If you devote your time and energy to imagining what you want to happen rather than worrying about what *might* happen, you'll begin to believe those things.

I believed I would one day face those putts for major championships. I believed I would do so in front of crowds of 35,000 people. And I had succeeded in my mind.

So, when I faced a 10-foot putt to win a local tournament, I did not feel any pressure. I had faced far more intense pressure in my mind and on the practice green.

What Imagination Gives You

Imagination gives you a destination.

Imagination is like a GPS. It shows you where you want to go. Unless you know the destination and have already seen yourself arriving there, you never will.

Remember when you always won. Spend the time today to imagine where you want to be, what you want to do, who you want to become.

And spend some time helping someone else imagine big things as well. It's the greatest gift you can give someone.

[reminder]What do you need to imagine today? Who can you help to imagine great things?[/reminder]