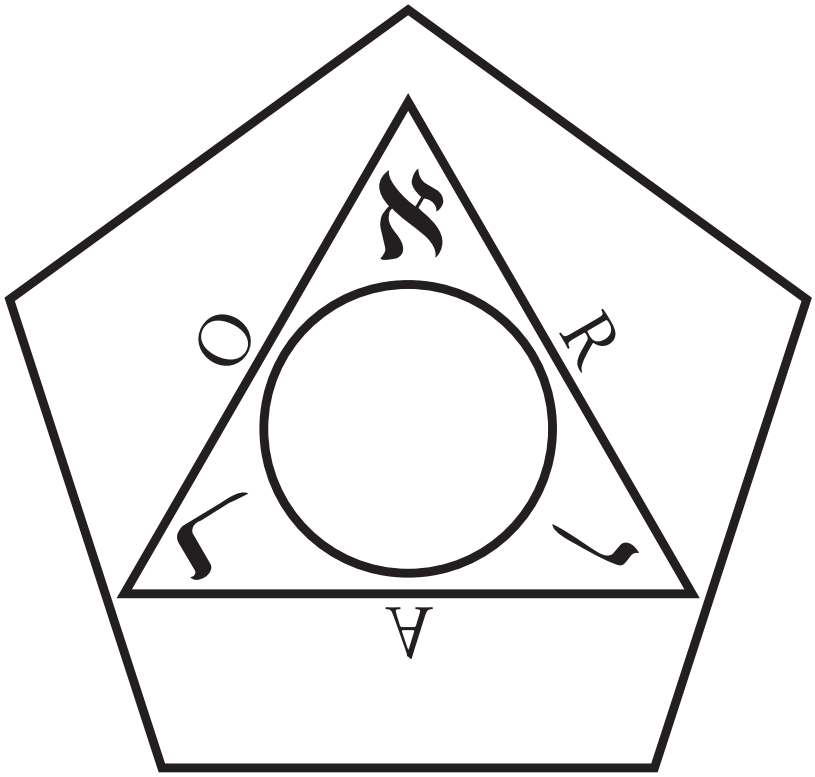
Academy of Reflection

— COURSE MATERIAL —



Developmental Activities for Imagination Skills

AOR1140

Prerequisite Courses

- *Basic Methods in the Intentional Practice of Awareness (AOR1000)*

Prerequisite Reading

- *None*

Course Guidelines

- None

Introduction

Most of us know how the imagination can be stirred by music, how it can carry our minds away in daydreaming, and how we can slip into the alternate realities of our dreams during sleep. Yet the intentional use of imagination can be a very powerful technique of inner work. For example, you can use the imagination to enter scenes depicted in our degrees and experience them from different perspectives or as different characters. You can also interact with various characters, allowing them to dialogue spontaneously with you. Each of these ways of working in the imagination can yield deeper insight into our degrees.

As with most human abilities, a small percentage of people are naturally gifted with great talents in this area, and a small percentage are severely challenged. However, most of us have the potential to develop considerable imagery skills. It might even be said that we are capable of extraordinary skills, if only because the imagination ordinarily remains relatively undeveloped for most people. This course provides simple yet effective exercises that can enhance your ability to willfully direct your imagination and focus your consciousness more completely within it.

Part 1 - Static 2-D Imagery

1. Use a bright red marker to draw a triangle on a white sheet of paper. Be sure to fill the triangle so that it is solid red.
2. Lay it on your lap or set it down in front of you, and then take a little time to relax and center yourself with basic meditation.
3. Once you feel relaxed and centered, fix your sight upon the center of the triangle. Try not to blink or move your eyes off the center of the triangle.
4. After staring for some time, you will eventually notice that the triangle and the page seem to glow. This additional light comes from the afterimage that is naturally formed by your nervous system. When you see this glow, inhale while closing your eyes and attend to the afterimage. You will see a green triangle on a black rectangle, and it may flash back and forth between these new colors and those of the original image.
5. Breathe naturally as you examine the image in your mind, trying to see it as sharply and vividly as possible. You may notice that it changes size or that the shape begins to distort, but attempt to hold the image as steadily as possible for as long as possible. Notice the differences between the afterimage and the image that arises while remembering the red triangle on the white paper. These are different yet interconnected ways of seeing with the mind's eye.
6. When you are ready, exhale while opening your eyes slowly, and then repeat steps 3 through 5. Limit your session to approximately 20 minutes.

As you progress through repeated sessions, feel free to use other colors and shapes, such as a purple square and compass. In this case, the afterimage will produce a gold square and compass. The more you practice this exercise, the more your mind will respond to your will, and eventually, simply thinking of a shape can actually generate the afterimage without having to look at the drawing.

Objectives:

- Document at least 60 minutes of practice with static 2-D imagery.

Part 2 - Static 3-D Visual Imagery

1. Select a fairly simple object that is small enough to hold in one hand, such as a coin, cup, pen, or cell phone.
2. Hold it in your hand or set it down within reach, and then take a little time to relax and center yourself with basic meditation.
3. Once you feel relaxed and centered, gaze upon the object as you hold it in your hand. Don't turn it around, but instead look at it from this one angle, attending to every little detail.
4. At some point, inhale while closing your eyes slowly, allowing the image to remain in your consciousness.
5. Breathe naturally as you examine the image in your mind, recalling as many details as possible.
6. When you are ready, exhale while opening your eyes slowly, looking at the object from the same angle as before, allowing the image in your mind to connect with the image you are receiving through your eyes.
7. Again, attend to the details from this one angle.
8. Repeat steps 3 through 7 until the image is as clear as possible in your imagination, trying to hold the image for a longer and longer period each time. Limit your session to approximately 20 minutes.

Objectives:

- Document at least 60 minutes of practice with static 3-D imagery.

Part 3 - Dynamic 3-D Visual Imagery

Conduct this part as before, except that you turn the object slowly in your hand, learning how its image changes with the movement, and then recreate the changes and movement using your imagination.

Objectives:

- Document at least 60 minutes of practice with dynamic 3-D visual imagery.

Part 4 - Dynamic 3-D Tactile-Visual Imagery

Conduct this part as before, except that you now also attend to and try to recreate the feeling as well as the sight of the object moving in your hand.

Objectives:

- Document at least 80 minutes of practice with dynamic 3-D tactile-visual imagery.

Part 5 - Dynamic 3-D Audio-Tactile-Visual Imagery

In this part, use an object that makes a sound, such as a bell, and attend to and recreate the sound, feeling, and sight of the object in your imagination.

Objectives:

- Document at least 100 minutes of practice with dynamic 3-D audio-tactile-visual imagery.

Part 6 - Advanced Dynamic Imagery

In this part, choose some path to walk in your home. After basic meditation, rise and walk slowly along that path, attending to all the sensory details you experience along the way. When you reach the end of the path, turn around and retrace your steps to return to your original location. Then sit in meditation as you attempt to recreate the journey as vividly as possible in your imagination.

Objectives:

- Document at least 240 minutes of practice with advanced dynamic imagery.

Part 7 – Reflective Writing

Reflect upon your experiences with Parts 1-6. With at least 500 words, summarize your experiences and insights, noting how they are personally meaningful to you in one or more of the following areas:

- Understanding of self
- Relationships with others
- Experience and appreciation of Freemasonry
- Relationship with the Divine