



Clean Up The Mess in Your Attic

By:

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When Mitch Matsui recommended hyper-hypnosis, Charlie had painted a mental image of an old woman named Madame Zelda in long purple robes with big, gold hoop earrings. Thus far, however, his introduction to Ronda Wellington had been utterly professional.

Wellington had sent him a pre-appointment survey which took the better part of a day to complete. It had asked him to catalog all of his fears and guilt feelings; the negative self-talk, self-images and self-beliefs that held him back; his worries, sources of stress, causes of procrastination, and self-sabotaging attitudes. If he'd ever had a negative thought, attitude, or emotion, Wellington's questionnaire wanted to know about it.

Her brochure had explained hyper-hypnosis as a full day series of hypnotherapy sessions, a sort of all-out assault on self-imposed limitations. "This is a massive intervention designed to interrupt self-defeating attitudes and behavior patterns, and through the art and science of Metaphorical Visualization to replace them with more useful mental tools," the brochure had concluded.

Now, walking into Wellington's office, Charlie saw what could have been the waiting room in any other professional business. The walls were adorned with paintings from K-Mart, and ancient additions of *People* magazine were scattered about on the end tables. There were no crystal balls, no magic charms, and no parrot squawking omens of dread and doom from a perch in the corner. Charlie checked in and the receptionist escorted him to a room at the back of the office suite. On the door was a sign that read:

**QUIET PLEASE
MIRACLES WITHIN**

Inside was a room much more like what Charlie had expected in the first place. It had thick, plush carpeting and was lighted only by a shaded lamp in the corner. There was no desk in the room, only a wooden captain's chair with a plain cushion on the seat and

the most comfortable-looking black leather lounge chair Charlie had ever seen. The soft music of flutes and guitar suffused the room.

“Dr. Wellington will be with you in a moment. Why don’t you make yourself comfortable and just relax,” the receptionist said, motioning toward the easy chair. Charlie nestled into the chair as the door whispered shut behind the receptionist. The walls, he noticed, were covered with some sort of soundproofing material. His pre-appointment instructions had told Charlie to get a good night of sleep so he wouldn’t fall asleep during the session, but in that environment it was still a struggle to stay alert as he waited.

He’d almost given in to sleep when the door opened again and a short, trim woman who appeared to be in her mid-fifties walked in. She was wearing a sharp blue business suit—no flowing purple robes! “Good morning, Charlie. I’ve spent so much time with your pre-appointment survey that I feel like I know you.”

Charlie felt like a turtle on its back as he struggled to work his way out of the easy chair, but she motioned him to stay seated. “I’m Dr. Wellington, Ronda Wellington.” She shook Charlie’s hand, then took her place in the captain’s chair, positioning it so Charlie could see her with only a slight twisting of his neck.

“You’ve read the brochure, so you know this will be a very intensive day.” She pulled a clipboard from her attaché case and placed it on her lap. “Metaphorical Visualization is a revolutionary new method for rewriting some of the harmful scripts, negative self images, and destructive attitudes that can hold you back.” Her smile and her manner exuded caring and competence, and Charlie felt an immediate bond of trust. “Basically, it’s psychological judo. Rather than tackle the problems head on, we’ll create visual and verbal metaphors—pictures of something else to represent the problems you would like to solve, and the tools you will need to solve them. Here’s an example.” She looked from Charlie down to her clipboard. “You enjoy automobile racing, don’t you?”

Charlie nodded, recalling that was one of the special joys he’d indicated on the pre-appointment questionnaire.

“Imagine you have a busy day before you: projects to complete, meetings to attend, places to go, family and social activities, and so on. Instead of getting up in the morning and making a to-do list, you visualize your day as a Formula One racecourse. Picture any projects you’re not looking forward to as tricky hairpin curves on that track – places where it’s easy to spin out – and the fun stuff you see in your day ahead as long straightaways where you can jam your foot to the floor and really fly. Once you have the course all mapped out, picture yourself as a racecar, all fueled up and ready to go. Whenever you get bogged down during the day, recall that vision of the racecar

named Charlie powering through the curves, and you tackle each task with renewed enthusiasm. That's how Metaphorical Visualization works."

"Sounds like fun," said Charlie.

"It is fun," replied Dr. Wellington. "In fact, it all started more than ten years ago when I was working with children to help them raise their self-esteem. Our most effective results came from these little mind games. And it turns out that it works even better with adults – perhaps because we want so deeply to reengage the spirit of play. We've adapted the technique to a whole range of conditions."

"Like helping people get unstuck?" Charlie asked.

"That's ninety percent of my business. Think of your mind as the attic in the house of your body. Like most attics everywhere, over time it becomes filled with all sorts of stuff – some of it useful, much of it not. Most of us don't take enough time to organize the attic. We need help. And that's what *The Janitor In Your Attic* is all about."

"The janitor in my attic? Sounds kind of silly!"

"Have any of the more serious things you've tried been very effective?"

"You've got me there." Charlie laughed. "Might as well have some fun working on it!"

"That's always been my attitude," said Dr. Wellington. "And you know what? Having fun turns out to be one of the most important predictors of success. The two others are faith and repetition. Now I can't make any guarantees, but I will tell you the more confident you are that this will help you, the more likely it is to work. Have you ever heard stories of people who, through the power of mental visualization, rid their bodies of cancer or brought about other seemingly miraculous cures?"

"Sure," said Charlie. "I've a friend who swears it was an essential factor in his recovery from leukemia."

"Well, it's the same with Metaphorical Visualization. The more certain you are that it will help you, the more certain it is to help you. And finally, like everything else in life, the more you practice it, the better you will get, and the better your outcomes will be. I'm going to give you some tapes to take home with you, which I hope you will listen to every day for the next several months. You really have to program this stuff in so that it's automatic."

Charlie frowned. "I read that in your brochure, and I'll have to say that I don't really feel comfortable with the notion of being programmed. It sounds too much like brainwashing."

“Well,” Dr. Wellington replied, “every time you watch a TV commercial someone’s trying to brainwash you, but sometimes a good washing can be a healthy thing! Especially when it’s you doing the washing. Close your eyes for a minute now; visualize your own attic – your mind. Think of all the memories, the emotions, the thoughts, the facts and figures, the fears and doubts, the desires and ambitions, all that stuff that’s up there fighting for your attention. Describe your attic for me, Charlie.”

“Chaos. It’s a mess.”

“So let’s use the power of metaphors to bring some order to the chaos. Some of the instincts that have been hardwired into your mind are obsolete. For example, the fight-or-flight reflex was very useful in protecting our caveman ancestors from sabertoothed tigers, but for most of the problems we face today fighting or running away is profoundly counterproductive. A great deal of self-sabotaging behavior is an instinctive reaction to ancient reflexes. To some extent, the hardware is obsolete, so you must consciously reprogram the software.”

Charlie thought about his final meeting with Dick Dierdron. He’d wanted to punch him in the nose and then run away and hide. “I know what you mean,” he smiled sheepishly.

“We’re going to structure our day into four segments.” Dr. Wellington held up four fingers, and as she listed each segment, she pushed one finger back down into her fist. “In session one, we’ll go up into ‘your attic’ and begin to clean up the mess. In session two, we’ll give you tools that will help you do a better job of effectively mastering your emotions. By then, you’ll probably be hungry, so Rebecca will bring you a nice light and healthy lunch.” She smiled and leaned forward, lightly poking Charlie in the ribs with her pen. “I don’t want you falling asleep during the afternoon sessions!”

“In session three, we’ll go through a routine that you should repeat every morning to help you program yourself for a great day. And finally, I’ll give you an evening routine that will help you wind down and prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for the following day. I’ll give you a CD that has both morning and evening tracks. You need to listen to these faithfully, every morning and evening for at least a month, until we’re certain the new routines have been embedded in your subconscious mind.”

Charlie leaned back in the chair and stretched his arms and legs. “Okay, I’m ready,” he exclaimed.

“Before we get started, I need to introduce you to two important characters who are up there in your attic. You need to learn to recognize each of them, to know what they are doing, and learn how to make them work for you, and not against you. Now, I want you to close your eyes and relax.” Dr. Wellington stood up and walked over to a panel on

the wall, where she turned the music up slightly. Charlie did not see her walking back to her seat, only heard her voice floating back toward him across the room.

“The first character you need to visualize is nasty. He’s mean and spiteful. He’s a gremlin, a vandal. He’s the one who is responsible for all of the negative self-talk, the sudden fears and worries, the self-imposed limitations, and all the other mental garbage that keeps you stuck in your rut. Can you picture him running around up there Charlie? Can you picture the little villain with a magic marker in his hand, painting graffiti on the walls of your mind? That’s all negative self-talk is, you know. Mental graffiti.

Charlie instantly visualized an insidious little creature creeping around in his attic, marking up the walls with messages of negativity, pessimism, and despair.

“What’s his name, Charlie?”

Without even thinking, Charlie was able to give the gremlin a name. “Gollum!”

“From Tolkien’s *Hobbit* classics; how appropriate. Now imagine that you have a janitor up there, whose job it is to run around and clean up after Gollum. Someone who can help you clean up the mess and give you the tools to start building your attic into the nice place that you want it to be. Can you picture him?”

Charlie sat quietly for a while, breathing slowly and concentrating, then smiled and nodded his head. “What’s his name?” Dr. Wellington asked.

Without hesitation, Charlie replied, “Spike! Spike was my high school football coach. He could handle any gremlin!”

“Very good, Charlie. Very good.” She watched Charlie for a moment, his eyes still closed and deep in thought, then scanned through the notes on her clipboard.

“Now, Charlie, let’s go up into the attic and straighten things out. Visualize yourself pulling down the ladder, and then crawling up into the attic of your mind. When you get up there, look around for a minute; visualize the mess, the chaos. Take a look at all the graffiti of negative self talk, the fog of confusion, the prison bars of fear and doubt, all the things you wrote about in your pre-appointment survey. All that mess is the work of your Gollum. You don’t see Gollum right now, Charlie, because like most gremlins of his ilk, Gollum is a coward. As soon as you shine a light in him, he runs away. That’s why it’s so important to pay attention to what’s going on up there in the attic at all times – to be mentally awake and alert and paying attention to your own thinking and feeling. Now, visualize Spike coming in to clean up the mess. Your only job is to relax, breathe slowly and deeply, and watch Spike go to work.” Charlie smiled slightly and settled more deeply into the chair, then took a few deep breaths.

“Have you got the image of Spike in your mind?” Charlie nodded. “So the first thing he’s going to do is clean out all the garbage that’s littered around. There’s a ton of garbage, isn’t there, Charlie? You know what the computer guys say: garbage in, garbage out. For a lifetime, your mind has been letting all kinds of garbage come in. Oh, you weren’t conscious of it at the time, but you let it in and it stayed.” Dr. Wellington was scrutinizing Charlie. His eyes didn’t open, but the smile had been replaced by a confused frown.

“Let’s start with the easy stuff,” she continued. “Almost every time you’ve watched television or gone to a movie, you’ve absorbed images of violence and negativity. Although you haven’t been consciously aware of it, these images have slowly and insidiously shaped for you a vision of the world as a frightening and hostile place. Now, relax and breathe slowly; picture in your mind a garbage dumpster that’s open at the top. Visualize Spike walking around with a broom and a dustbin, sweeping up all the images of hatred, violence, rejection, and death that you’ve seen during the thousands of hours you’ve spent in front of the television. Watch him dump those images into that garbage dumpster. Can you see him, Charlie, sweeping the place up?” Charlie nodded again.

“Concentrate, Charlie, fix that picture in your mind. Keep watching Spike, sweeping out those frightening and negative images.” Charlie’s brow furrowed as he struggled to keep the picture in his mind. Dr. Wellington continued. “Now, picture Spike driving up in a big forklift and hoisting that garbage dumpster full of negative images. Can you see it?” Charlie nodded. “Watch him drive the forklift over to a great big dumptruck, raise the lift as high as it will go, and drop all those negative images into a dumptruck. Can you see it, Charlie? Imagine that on the side of the truck the words are painted, ‘Garbage Out.’ Can you see that?”

Wellington watched Charlie breathe. “There’s much work to be done up here, isn’t there? Spike’s just getting warmed up. Can you see him rolling up his sleeves like he really means business?” Charlie responded by simply squeezing his eyes more tightly shut as he struggled to keep the image in his mind. The music had become deeper and darker, with bassoons and bass replacing the flutes and guitar.

“Your attic is also full of mirrors. They are what creates your image of yourself, and it’s often not a very flattering image. That’s because most of the mirrors in *your* attic are funhouse mirrors! What you see when you look in them is not the real Charlie, but a twisted and distorted caricature. Those mirrors have to go! Can you see yourself walking up to one of those mirrors? Do you see how the glass waves and ripples, and throws back a cartoon image of you with stubby little legs and a neck like a giraffe?” Charlie smiled and snorted. He was drifting deeper into Dr. Wellington’s game.

“That’s the mirror Gollum put up to create a self-reflection of your business self. All those years at Logistics Precision, your colleagues thought you were so talented and

capable, and you could only be astounded at how easily fooled they all were. Well, Charlie, they were seeing the real you and you were seeing the funhouse mirror image of you. And now, you're thinking about starting your own business. The real Charlie, the Charlie that everyone else sees, will succeed in that business. But the funhouse mirror Charlie would probably fail." Charlie shuddered slightly, then squirmed in the chair, squeezing his eyes more tightly shut.

"And here comes Spike, pulling a hammer out of his belt. Watch him, Charlie, as he yanks out the nails that are holding that funhouse mirror up, then rips it off the wall. It's heavy, so he struggles to manhandle it over to the dumpster. Watch him hoist it over the side, then listen to the shattering glass as it hits the bottom. Picture Spike hanging another mirror in its place, a normal mirror, and take a look. See yourself in that mirror, Charlie, the way everyone else sees you, dressed sharply in your business suit, a man who is obviously capable and trustworthy. That's the real Charlie McKeever, and that's the image you must permanently fix in your mind."

Dr. Wellington shifted slightly in her chair, never taking her eyes from Charlie's face. "Now watch Spike push his cart along to the next mirror. This one has a big bulge in the middle; it makes you look fat and ridiculous, like a soccer ball with toothpick arms and legs." Charlie laughed. "This is Charlie the parent as seen in Gollum's funhouse mirror. This is not the parent your children see – at least not most of the time," and here both Wellington and Charlie smiled, "but it's the picture Gollum wants you to see: spoiling your children rotten, doing a lousy job of disciplining, always at work when you should be at home – is this a familiar reflection?" Charlie nodded.

"Familiar, but not real. The real image is that you, like every other working person, are struggling to do your best to meet what often feels like an impossible load of demands, but the things you are doing right vastly outweigh the ones you're not doing right. So let's just have Spike rip down this mirror, and dump it – can you hear the glass break as it shatters at the bottom of the dumpster? – and put up a new mirror, one that reflects the real Charlie McKeever, who is a dedicated, loving and devoted husband and father."

Charlie's lip quivered as he thought about his family, and how badly he wanted to do the right thing for them. In that moment, he knew Dr. Wellington was right, that his image of himself as a worker and as a family man were not consistent with the real facts.

"There are many more funhouse mirrors to be removed, Charlie. That will be one of your assignments in the coming months. But if you look closely, you'll notice something else on the walls of your attic up there – lots of graffiti. That's the negative self talk, the doubt, the false beliefs that hold you back. You see, Charlie, Gollum is basically a lazy coward. He doesn't want to work hard, and he's afraid of change. So he paints the walls with lies about you and your abilities. You see those lies every day, and you begin to believe them."

Charlie's heart dropped, as though a sudden black cloud of dread had moved in and settled over him. Dr. Wellington's pre-appointment survey had asked him to make a list of all the negative self-talk he could identify; his list had gone on for three pages. Now the entire roster was playing back through his head, only it was as if someone else was talking to him, assuring him that he was not good enough, was not making it, would never make it. "This is ridiculous," that little voice chided. "Don't you have better things to do than lie in this chair all day playing mind games with this charlatan?"

"Gollum is painting on the walls up there again, isn't he?" Dr. Wellington asked. Charlie nodded. "That's a good sign. He's feeling threatened; you're loosening his control, and that scares him beyond imagination. And here comes Spike, just in time."

Charlie clamped his eyes shut even tighter, struggling to bring back the image of Spike. Dr. Wellington continued, "Spike is pushing a utility cart full of paint cans and brushes. Pay attention Charlie. He's prying the lid off of a can of paint and stirring it up. Now watch him go up to each piece of graffiti, all that negative self talk, all those lies that Gollum keeps repeating in your head, and cover them up with clean white paint. The words 'You're a loser' painted out – gone. And from the bottom of his cart, Spike pulls out a beautiful little needlepoint and hangs it on the wall where the graffiti was before. It says, 'I Am a Winner and Winners Don't Quit.' Can you read it Charlie?"

At the corner of awareness, Charlie noticed a flute floating above the bassoons as Wellington spoke again. "You made the most important step before you ever came to my office, Charlie, and that was when you wrote down your repertoire of negative self talk. Now you recognize it for what it is, and every time it comes up you can holler for Spike to paint it out and replace it with something that's positive and true. After a while, once Spike is embedded in your mind as deeply as Gollum is now, this process will become automatic. And the more you do it, the easier it will get. There's a lot more graffiti to be cleaned up in the following months, but for now you and Spike need to do something about the weeds of doubt."

Charlie wasn't sure where he was on the continuum between wakefulness and sleep as he peered down a long dark hallway sided by walls covered with graffiti, and gave a start when Wellington spoke again. "In the pre-appointment survey, you described your dream of the ideal future. It's a beautiful dream: building a business that creates jobs and touches many lives in a positive way; spending your days doing work you love to do; building your dream house out in the country. Frankly, Charlie, it's a dream you can make happen, and it's a dream you deserve to enjoy seeing happen."

Dr. Wellington looked closely to gauge the impact of her words, but Charlie showed no change in expression. "I want you to picture that dream now Charlie, see your ideal future as a beautiful garden. Imagine the most beautiful place you have ever seen. On the canvas of your mind, paint a place that is alive with flowers and bushes, plants and

trees. See the flowers in a riot of red, pink, orange and blue, and the trees and bushes in all their greens and yellows and browns, swaying in a soft breeze. Let each tree and bush, every flower, represent a goal you have accomplished. Walk through your garden. Listen to the little brook that babbles underneath the footbridge that leads into it. That's the future you deserve Charlie. A place of breath-taking splendor and peace."

Dr. Wellington noted the slight smile now on Charlie's face, and that he was breathing more slowly and deeply. She sat quietly for several minutes, allowing him to savor the image. Then she took a deep breath and continued. "That picture, that garden, is your certainty. It's your destiny – your memory of the future. But you can't always see it so clearly, can you? It's as if some days your garden has been choked over by weeds, and they grow so fast that pretty soon they're all you can see. Those weeds are your doubts: doubts about yourself, about your ideas, about other people, doubts about money – your doubts are the weeds choking the garden. While you're out there in the future building your beautiful garden – your memory of the future – your little gremlin, Gollum, is up in the attic planting seeds of doubt. And of course, everyone knows that weeds grow much more quickly than flowers do. Unless you take immediate action to eradicate those doubts, they can choke out the flowers before they ever have a chance to establish themselves."

As Charlie visualized the garden of his dream future being choked over by weeds, he felt an infinite sadness, an emptiness he had not experienced since his beloved boyhood dog was hit by a car. He felt helpless and paralyzed as he watched a jungle of weeds sprouting, creeping, and blossoming throughout his garden. Then, as each one opened its hideous head to the sun, it spewed out a horde of new doubts, more terrifying and paralyzing than their progenitors had been. At that moment, Charlie felt the emptiness of a farmer watching his crop being devastated by locusts, or of a businessman watching his factory burning to the ground in a fire. Dr. Wellington could see his teeth grinding as impotent rage welled up in his heart.

Wellington nodded to herself. "I want you to picture yourself on this side of that footbridge looking into your garden. You can only catch glimpses of the garden through the forest of weeds, and the bridge itself is choked to a complete close. Can you see that Charlie?"

Charlie nodded almost imperceptibly. "You feel helpless, don't you? Helpless and furious." Charlie felt again the emptiness he'd experienced at the funeral of his little dog. "Now focus in more closely on the image of you. Notice that you're wearing work clothes: you've got on denim coveralls, a red flannel shirt, and heavy work boots. Can you see that?" Charlie nodded. "Zoom in on your head and notice that you're wearing industrial eyeglasses and ear protection. Can you see it?" Charlie nodded again. "Look again, Charlie. That image must be crystal clear in your mind: you in your work clothes

– your battle gear so to speak – standing at the foot of the bridge. Can you see yourself there?” Charlie took a deep breath and nodded again.

“Take a closer look at your face, Charlie. Have you ever seen such a look of determination? Your jaw is set firmly, your eyes are clear and resolved. You are the hero, Charlie, who will not give up the quest without one last gallant fight.” Dr. Wellington noticed Charlie’s jaw set as his real face mirrored the picture in his mind. “You are the hero, but there’s one thing missing, isn’t there? King Arthur had his sword, Joan of Arc had her lance. You need a weapon, don’t you? Look down at your hands, Charlie, and take a look at what you’re holding. It is a giant...” she paused for what seemed an eternity as Charlie’s fingers clenched to grasp his imaginary weapon “...weedwhacker!” A huge smile lit up Charlie’s face. At that moment, his expression reminded Dr. Wellington of her teenage son slaughtering evil aliens down at the video arcade. “Watch yourself pull the starter, and hear it roar into action. What you have in your hands is a Sears best-quality industrial-strength weedwhacker. And you’re a hero on a mission. Your mission, Charlie, is to save the garden of your future dreams from those weeds of doubt. Rev up your weedwhacker, Charlie, and start walking across the bridge chopping down every weed into a shredded, mangled stump.”

By now, Charlie was totally absorbed in the game. Dr. Wellington smiled and leaned back in her chair as Charlie’s arms lurched back and forth, hewing down the imaginary villains on the bridge. “Keep going, Charlie! Keep going! Go save the rosebushes. Rescue the birdbath. Clear out the path to the gazebo!” She sat silently for a few minutes as Charlie continued his assault on the barbarian weeds. At length, she spoke again: “Oh, good, here comes Spike. He’s pushing a great big wheelbarrow and has a couple of rakes. It’s time to set aside the weedwhacker and get rid of the carnage. Do you see yourself and Spike raking up all those dead weeds and throwing them in the wheelbarrow?” Charlie nodded. “Good. Once the wheelbarrow is full, Spike will take them out to be burned. And while he does that, you will spread weed killer all around the garden. That will keep the weeds from coming back for a while. But I must warn you, weeds of doubt are not like ordinary weeds. They’re tougher and more resilient. But if you spend a little time weeding the garden of your future dreams every day, it will stay beautiful.”

Charlie sighed deeply, in the manner of someone who has just completed a tough and challenging task. “Now, picture yourself again. You’re a mess, but a happy mess. There’s dirt all over your face, except for two big white circles where your safety glasses were. Your clothes are filthy, and your boots are caked with mud. But there’s a huge smile on your face. Now, just walk around your garden for a bit. It’s beautiful again, isn’t it? And off in the distance, up on a small hill, your dream house faces out over the pond. Luxuriate in this vision, Charlie. You’ve worked hard, and you’ve earned it.”

Dr. Wellington was quiet for a long time, allowing Charlie to revel in the dream. She didn't speak again until she noticed him starting to fidget. "There's one more job we have to do, Charlie, and I've saved the most difficult and dangerous job for last. When you were preparing yourself for this visit, I had you make a list of the fears you see holding yourself back. It was quite a list, Charlie, an ugly list. Gollum has taken all of those fears, any one of which might have been only a little obstacle, a small stone you could easily step over, and amalgamated them into a huge rock of fear. I want you to picture that rock now, Charlie. Gollum has taken all of your fears – fears of failure, rejection, bankruptcy, humiliation, commitment, and all the others, and cemented them together into a massive stone of dread. Visualize this boulder now, Charlie – see in your mind the massive weight of your fears, and the jagged edges that cause you so much pain. It's much too big to move, because by the time Gollum has added all of your fears, it's not just a boulder; it's a small mountain. What are we going to do with this huge rock of fear, Charlie?"

Charlie shook his head and shrugged. In his mind, he was seeing a miniature version of El Capitan at Yosemite: massive and immovable.

"Well," continued Dr. Wellington, "like any other huge undertaking, we're just going to have to break it into smaller parts." A sudden confusion set into Charlie's features so she explained. "We're going to blow that rock up, Charlie, blast it to smithereens! For this job, however, Spike needs professional help. Picture a road leading up to that big rock of fear. You and Spike are standing at the end of the road, in the shadow of the rock, and you're waiting."

This was always Dr. Wellington's favorite part. It was why she called Metaphorical Visualization her "magical science." At some point during every successful session, the process transcended science and became something more mystical – something magic. That was happening now. She and Charlie were synchronizing. She felt herself being guided by some greater awareness to the images, the metaphors, that would be most effective in helping Charlie get unstuck. It was the hardest work she would ever do; she never scheduled appointments the day after a hyper-hypnosis session because she was physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. But right now, she was in that exalted state of flow where the world outside disappears, time stands still. If she was successful, she knew that for the rest of his life Charlie would consider this day to have been a dramatic turning point. There was a cataclysmic struggle being fought on an emotional and a spiritual plane, and she could not afford to lose. By the end of the day, she and Charlie, linked together in synchronous flow, had to subjugate Gollum and take away from him the weapons he used to terrify Charlie into a state of passive submission.

"You and Spike are looking at this hideous boulder, wondering how you can ever get it out of the way, when you hear a rumbling noise headed down the road in your direction. You look back, and see a column of dust rising in the distance. Watch it as it gets closer,

and the noise becomes louder and more distinct. Now you see it's a column of trucks. They're drab green with big white stars, so you know it's a military battalion. Now Spike tells you it's the demolition team he's called for. They're going to blow up the rock, and haul out the pieces."

Dr. Wellington paused to allow Charlie to paint the mental image, then went on. "The column pulls to a stop. A couple of Humvees at the front, and then a whole line of bulldozers and dumptrucks. A man jumps out of the leading vehicle. He looks like someone you've seen before. He's got a red bandanna wrapped around his head, and he's not wearing a shirt so you can see he's got huge muscles."

Charlie mouthed the word, "Rambo."

"Actually, you've just met Spike's friend Ramrock. He's the demolition expert. Now you see men piling out of Jeeps and trucks, and they're all carrying equipment of some sort. Watch them, Charlie, as they go up to your big rock of fear and begin drilling holes – can you hear the jackhammers? – and then stuffing them full of explosives. It's a huge rock, so this is going to take a while." Dr. Wellington paused for a moment, as Charlie visualized Ramrock's demolition team swarming over his rock of fear like ants on a candy bar.

"Now, watch Ramrock going around and carefully inspecting each and every charge. He's checking the wiring to make sure it's properly connected, and then running it back to the detonator. Can you see that?" Charlie nodded. "Now they've lined up all the dumptrucks to form a protective shield, and you and Spike are huddled down behind a great big wheel. You hear Ramrock hollering for everyone to get down, and look up just in time to see him pushing the plunger of the detonator. Instantly, it seems that you've been plunged into the pit of hell. There is a searing flash of light and heat, followed immediately by the loudest explosion you've ever heard. Then the rocks start falling. Can you see yourself huddling under the truck to get out of the way?" Charlie nodded.

"When the dust finally clears, you crawl out from under the truck. The big, ugly rock of fear is gone. Instead, the ground is littered with all the rocks that represent each individual fear. Watch yourself, Charlie, as you walk over and pick up the rock which represents your fear of humiliation. It's heavy, but by itself, it's manageable. Watch yourself heave it up over the side of one of Ramrock's dumptrucks. Can you see that?" Charlie nodded. "Good. Now, just sit back and relax and watch Ramrock's team go to work. There are bulldozers everywhere, pushing the rocks into piles, and then shoveling them into the dumptrucks." She paused as Charlie visualized this. "When all the rocks have been cleaned up, Ramrock says goodbye and leads his crew back down the road where they came from. You and Spike turn around, and there in the distance is your dream, your memory of the future, and the rock of fear no longer stands in your way."

“It’s a beautiful, sunny day and you are experiencing a freedom you’ve not felt in a long time – freedom from fear. Your attic is clean and organized, and we’ve taken all of the garbage out: all the funhouse mirrors, the graffiti on the walls, the weeds of doubt, the rocks of fear, it’s all gone. I’m going to leave for a while now Charlie, and let you enjoy your peace and your freedom. When you’re ready, get up and move around a little bit. Drink a glass of water. When I come back, we’ll begin our second session, where we build the infrastructure and give you the tools that will assure your success at achieving your memory of the future.”

Charlie was still resting in the chair when Dr. Wellington returned. She touched him lightly on the shoulder, and then resumed her seat in the captain’s chair. “How are you doing?”

Charlie laughed. “I think I have a headache from when Ramrock demolished that rock.”

“I’m not surprised,” said Dr. Wellington. “I could feel the shock wave all the way across the room!”

They both laughed, then sat in silence for a moment before Dr. Wellington asked Charlie if he was ready to continue. He nodded, closed his eyes, and stretched back into the chair. “Picture yourself back at the entry to the attic,” she instructed. “See yourself pulling down the ladder again and climbing up into the attic of your mind. Take a look around and enjoy it, Charlie, because you might not ever see your attic this clean again.”

Charlie smiled as his attention drifted inward. At that moment, it almost seemed he could smell the fresh white paint and see his image reflected off of the sparkling linoleum floors. “For this next session,” Dr. Wellington continued, “we’re going to be doing some heavy construction. Working in your attic is a lot like refurbishing an old house – it’s a project that never ends. But in this session, we’re going to install some equipment and machinery that will help you keep Gollum under control, and stay focused on your memories of the future.

“The first step is to give you a way to keep your attic organized. Every day, you are faced with a barrage of new information, old memories, thoughts and emotions, and it can all be overwhelming at times. So what we’re going to do is visualize Spike constructing a massive set of shelving in the warehouse section of the attic. It’s essential that you visualize this very clearly now, so you can come back to it quickly later. Imagine Spike putting up steel shelves, row after row of them, in your mental warehouse. Can you see him working as he drags the shelves in, hear the pounding as he fixes each one in place?” Charlie smiled. “Good. You just keep watching Spike work. Let me know with a small nod of your head when Spike is done, and the entire warehouse is fitted out with shelving from one end to another.”

Dr. Wellington watched patiently until Charlie gave a small nod of his head. “Now, Charlie, imagine Spike carrying in boxes and putting them on the shelves. The boxes are of all different sizes and many colors – some are even an unusual shape. Watch him put the boxes neatly up on the shelves. He’s putting some of them up on the shelves labeled ‘Emotions,’ some of them go on the shelves labeled ‘Names to Remember,’ others are going on the shelves labeled ‘Facts’ and ‘Figures.’ On and on he goes, down the rows of shelving, and as he does he’s sorting out all the knowledge, the emotions, the thoughts, everything that goes on in your head. Keep watching him load boxes as I talk.” Charlie nodded again, very slightly.

“Here’s how you’re going to use those shelves, you and Spike. Every time you learn something new, you’ll take a second to visualize Spike putting that box of information in the proper place on the shelves. Likewise, every time you meet a new person, you’ll close your eyes for just a second to visualize Spike putting a box with that person’s name and image in the right place on the shelves. Any time you have a hard time remembering something or someone, rather than fighting to dig up the name by yourself, you will simply visualize Spike going back through the shelves and bringing you the right box. You’ll be surprised, but the more you practice the more you’ll find that this indirect approach actually works better.”

Charlie watched Spike struggle to hoist a particularly large box onto the shelves. Wellington went on. “You know how you can become confused when you get fatigued late in the day?” Charlie nodded. “Again, don’t fight it. Rather take a few minutes to sit quietly with your eyes closed and look up in the attic. What you’ll see is that your warehouse looks like it’s been shaken by a minor earthquake and there are boxes everywhere. Don’t try to think it through at this point, simply watch Spike going up and down the rows of shelves, picking up boxes and putting them back in their proper place. Very shortly, you’ll feel like you are back in control.” Charlie watched Spike work, and noticed that the music had given way to a single guitar. “Okay,” Wellington said, “take one last look back at the warehouse. Are all the boxes up off the floor and on the shelves?” Charlie nodded with a slight smile. *If only it would be so easy*, he heard a small voice inside his head say, and then another voice replied, *it can be*.

“The next thing Spike needs to do is install fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Often, your emotions act the same way a fire does in a building. They build up slowly and covertly, creating stress and emotional tension. Then, seemingly without warning, they erupt into a full blown temper tantrum, panic attack, or stress-out. The trick is to see it coming and then have a system to douse the flames before they rage out of control and cause you to do something or say something you’ll regret later. So right now, picture Spike going around putting up smoke detectors throughout the attic. He’s putting up red detectors for anger, purple detectors for stress, and yellow detectors for fear. If you can fix these images solidly in your subconscious mind, they’ll go off when your emotional temperature starts to rise. If you’re paying attention, you’ll hear them, take a

deep breath, and calm back down. For the times when you don't catch it in time, we'll also need a back-up system to put out the flames."

As Wellington spoke, Charlie noticed how that creating a mental image of Spike working was coming much more easily. "Here comes Spike again, and this time he's pushing a cart loaded with PVC piping. This is for your emotional fire sprinkler system. As you watch him setting up his ladder and begin hanging these pipes from the ceiling, and then installing the sprinkler heads in them, think of the situations where you will want this sprinkler system to go off before your emotional flames get out of control. When a building is burning down, it's too late to install a sprinkler system. Likewise, the more you can anticipate the frightening, angering, and stressful situations that might send you off the handle, the more effectively your subconscious mind will activate this system in time to prevent a blow-out. Finally, picture Spike installing a mammoth exhaust fan at one end of the building. When your sprinkler system goes off to put out a fire, there's likely to be a lot of smoke in the aftermath. That makes it hard to see reality effectively. If you close your eyes for a moment, breathe deeply, and visualize this giant exhaust fan blowing away the smoke of anger, stress, and panic, you'll recover much more quickly."

Wellington waited longer than usual, seeing that Charlie was deeply engrossed in this mental construction project. "Before you leave today, I'm going to give you a map of your newly outfitted attic. Until you have it totally memorized, you'll want to spend some time every day mentally walking through this map, and visualizing all the new equipment that's been installed. Like the auxiliary powered generator, which is our next item. We all have moments when we run out of energy. In your pre-appointment survey, you mentioned that this often happens to you in mid-afternoon. Now, instead of running out for a cup of coffee and a candy bar, you can just visualize this emergency power generator kicking in to give you the boost you need until your primary system kicks in again. In today's afternoon sessions, I'll show you how to keep it charged and ready; for now it's only important that you visualize this big generator being installed in as much detail as possible, and that you believe it will start up any time your energy level starts to fade."

Charlie thought about the inevitable slump that followed his afternoon candy bar and cup of coffee, and from the shadows of his mind heard Gollum wail that he could never go a day without them. "While we're in the heavy equipment zone," Wellington said, "there are still a few more things to do. First, let's check out the furnace of desire – the old fire in the belly. Can you see it there, big and brooding? Looking like something that's been misplaced from a steel foundry? We all have a furnace like that, but unfortunately in most people it's grown stone cold. Can you feel the warmth of your furnace as we get closer? The day you can visualize that furnace and actually break out in a sweat is the day you become unstoppable. Now, visualize that beside the furnace door is a big pile of logs; logs of ambition. In the afternoon session, I'm going

to show you how to make daily rounds through your attic. One of the things you'll do is toss another log of ambition into the furnace of desire every time you pass by. As you visualize that furnace becoming hotter and hotter, you will become more and more determined to succeed.”

The music was still soft and soothing, but Charlie noticed that a distant french horn gave it a new sense of urgency as Wellington spoke again. “As you go through the workbook and tapes I'm going to give you, you'll undoubtedly design some new heavy equipment of your own. But before we go up to the control center, let's install one of my favorite pieces of industrial machinery – the electromagnet of universal awareness. Picture in your mind a giant magnet. It's U-shaped, with wire coils wrapped around it, and it's connected to a control panel with a keyboard. At any time, whatever you most need, type your need as clearly and explicitly as possible into this keyboard. Are you visualizing a keyboard with a screen set in the middle of the control panel? Once you've entered what you need, visualize a big power switch and see yourself turning it in. The electromagnet will then begin to send out the signals that will attract the help, the money, and whatever else you need and have programmed into the control panel. It's especially helpful, when you get discouraged, to remember that electromagnetic waves are invisible. The magnet may be pulling something in your direction which you can't yet see, but will surely come to you so long as you don't quit.”

In his mind, Charlie stood dwarfed at the base of the electromagnet, and could hear it thrumming its message out to the universe. “One more stop, Charlie, and it's the most important one: the control center. Imagine the thinking part of your brain as a magnificent computer. This afternoon, I'll show you how to program it with positive and affirming screen savers, but for now let's visualize Spike upgrading the memory and central processing unit. Imagine him installing new circuits and bigger disk drives in your brain. It won't happen immediately, of course, but the more often you visualize your mental hardware being upgraded, the more effectively your mind will work.” Charlie nodded and flexed his fingers. “Now imagine you've entered the communications center. Up here, we need to install two vital pieces of equipment. First is a highly sensitive satellite dish to bring in signals from all over the universe. You know, many of the ancient mystics believed that we are all profoundly connected in the web of life. Modern research into the nature of prayer suggests they weren't far wrong. The simple act of someone thinking a positive thought about you can give you strength and courage, even if they are far away. Even if you're not consciously paying attention, embedding this satellite dish in your subconscious will help you collect healthy and positive emanations from all around you. Equally important is the broadcast antenna. Picture something that looks like a short wave radio set. Anytime you find yourself hurting or in need of something, simply pick up the microphone and broadcast your plea – or if you prefer, your prayer – out into the universe, and believe that it will be guided to the person most able to help you.”

Charlie nodded. Just the other day he'd been thinking of Cheryl von Noyes, and within minutes she'd called his cell phone. "Just two more stops, but both of them are vitally important. First is your future scope. Imagine something that looks a lot like a periscope. Any time you feel overwhelmed by the daily press of events and lose sight of your ultimate goal, stop and relax for a moment. Imagine yourself raising this scope way up high, above the chaos that seems to swirl all about you. Point it in the direction of your memory of the future, and the vision will help you keep your current circumstances in a better perspective."

An image of an airliner breaking out above the cloud layer popped into Charlie's mind, an image in which the view went on to an infinite horizon. "Finally," Wellington said, "let's visit your navigation center. This contains two very important devices. First is a compass, keeping you pointed in the direction of that memory of the future. Any time your intuition tells you that you're getting off track, take a moment to visualize this compass. Your subconscious wisdom will help guide you back in the right direction. And last but not least, picture a big flywheel, just like the flywheel on the engine of a car, spinning around to keep your momentum going. Any time you feel yourself bogging down, losing momentum, visualize this flywheel, spinning 'round and 'round, keeping you going during the times that Gollum would rather you give up."

Before concluding the morning session, Wellington took Charlie on a grand tour of his newly cleaned and remodeled attic. Together, they walked through the garden of his future dreams, inspected the walls to make sure that Gollum hadn't put up any new graffiti, polished the new self-image mirrors, and picked up the last few rock fragments from the boulder of fear that Ramrock and his crew had exploded. Then they double-checked all the new equipment they'd installed.

After lunch, Dr. Wellington gave Charlie mental routines for getting started in the morning, and for ending each day. He visualized Spike going through his attic, stoking up the furnace of desire, programming positive and affirming screen savers into his mental PC, reorganizing the boxes on the utility shelving, cleaning up the walls and polishing the mirrors. Charlie came up with some of his own metaphorical visualizations, including a first aid kit for hurt feelings and having Spike put up roadblocks on all the detours – the fears and doubts – that Gollum tried to place on the road leading to his dreams of the future.

At the end of the day, Wellington gave him several workbooks and a set of audiotapes. And a hug. "You're a winner, Charlie. The world really needs to have your dreams come true. Don't ever let Gollum get the upper hand, not ever again."

As Charlie walked to his car that evening, he saw another memory of the future. His organization would become a vehicle by which Dr. Wellington could share the art and science of Metaphorical Visualization with millions of others. Charlie heard Gollum

sniggering, then visualized Spike grabbing the little vandal by the scruff of the neck and stuffing him into one of the little cages that Pam used to take their animals to the vet. “You stay in there for a while,” Spike said. “I’ll let you out when you learn how to behave yourself.” Charlie sat behind the wheel and imagined himself getting ready for a big formula one race tomorrow. He was going to enjoy using Metaphorical Visualization!