

A PICTURE IS WORTH...

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It's been said that "A picture is worth a thousand words." That's because every picture has its own story to tell.

So what does that have to do with the game of pool? Well, the pictures that I'm referring to are the ones we hold in our minds before we take any shot in the game.

Pool is a game of position, and we must always have an idea of where we want the cue ball to be, what we want to achieve, and what the end result will be. We begin with the end in mind first and work our way backwards. All of this begins with a clear mental picture, a vision, or a goal of what we want to accomplish.

Without one, we find ourselves taking very difficult shots, snookered, or worse yet, scratching. It would be like an architect trying to construct a building without a blueprint. As the saying goes, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll wind up somewhere else".

Before taking a shot to pocket an object ball, take a second to visualize the ball disappearing into the pocket and the cue ball landing where you intended for perfect position. If playing a safety, visualize where the object ball and the cue ball will end up after you've taken the shot, making sure your opponent can't see the ball, and is forced to kick. Make it a point to develop this positive habit and add it to your routine.

The theory of positive visualization not only applies to playing position, it also applies to our overall games and what we wish to accomplish in our pool playing. To reach the highest levels of play and to succeed, we must be able to see ourselves making difficult shots, succeeding in tough situations, making great comebacks, and winning against the best players. We must be able to see ourselves as the players we wish to become before it can ever happen. Remember that "The harvest will be a reflection of the seeds that were planted."

Professional athletes spend time on their mental games visualizing winning the races, the trophies, and the championships. It's one of the things that's most admirable about champions; their ability to visualize positively, which manifests and translates into positive results, confidence, winning, and success.

There is a quote which says "If you can see it and believe it, you can achieve it". Every great achievement in history started out as a vision or a picture in someone's mind.

Next time you're competing in a match or tournament, take inventory of the mental images or visions you're holding in your mind. Are they positive or negative? Are they successful? Are they the images that a winner would be visualizing?

Remember that the most important piece of any jigsaw puzzle is the box cover; it has the picture of what we're trying to accomplish, it gives us direction, and it is the blueprint we need to succeed.

No matter what skill level you are, the greatest barriers that will have to be overcome will be found within yourself. Make it a point to practice positive visualization, and you'll find yourself taking your game to the next level. Remember to begin with the end in mind, and very soon your picture will be telling its own story.

Until next time, keep practicing, play well, and we'll see you in the winners circle!

Jim Carmona