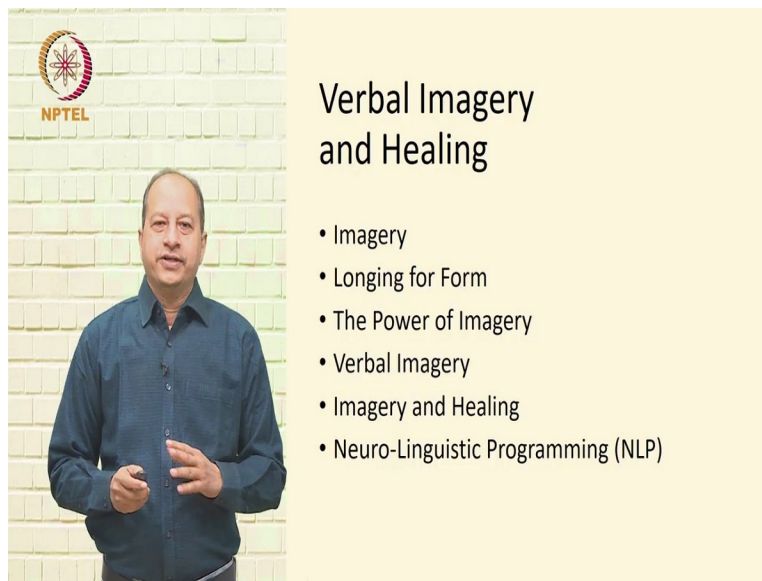


**Literature and Coping Skills**  
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**Lecture – 11**  
**Verbal Imagery and Healing – 1**

Hello, everybody, I am Ajit K Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am back again, with a new topic today. In this lecture, I am going to talk about a verbal imagery and healing. The things that we have talked so far interconnected and all those things together lead to this particular important thing, important area that is verbal imagery and healing. You might have realized that we are moving towards the idea of therapy and healing through a variety of different types of interventions or ideas.

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So, today, I am going to talk about imagery, the power of imagery, longing for form of verbal imagery, imagery and healing, and finally, Neuro-Linguistic Programming NLP. So, that we get to develop a better understanding of what verbal imagery is all about, and the role it plays in healing but before I start, I must tell you all that this is a relatively new area, which has implications for the disciplines of psychology and neuroscience.

So, this is exactly where literature, psychology and neuroscience can come and experience that interface. So, this is a very important area, although it is quite new, and people are gradually

discovering the critical components associated with this area. So, let us take a look at each of these important elements.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:15)



## Imagery

- Cognitive generation of sensory input from the five senses, individually or collectively, which is recalled from experience or self-generated in a nonexperienced form (APA Dictionary of Psychology)
- Imagery represents objects, actions, and ideas in a pictorial way which appeals to our physical senses
- The axiom, “a picture is worth a thousand words” draws our attention to the power of imagery

We will start with the idea of imagery, the moment I say an image or imagery, you begin to imagine a picture in your mind. So, imagery is exactly that imagery is all about seeing a picture in your mind. So, there are two ways we can actually experience an imagery in our mind. Either we come across an actual image, which creates our picture in our minds, quickly, promptly, we do not have to do anything about it, because that will get mirrored that will get reflected in the mind and will see the picture in the mind.

On the other hand, we can also create an image or a picture with the help of words. So, when we use words that have visual qualities, there are several, there are numerous millions of words that have numerous qualities, including the visual quality as well. The moment we use a word that has a visual quality, we begin to see that image.

And there is something else, there are certain associated words that are associated with certain images, the moment those words are uttered, those words are expressed, we begin to see that image because the image is already there in our minds. But having said that, I must tell you all that imagery is all about visualizing.

It is all about seeing an image or a picture and experiencing that image in the mind. So, imagery is important and critical to our understanding of the healing process or the therapeutic process as well. So, I have taken this definition of imagery from the American Psychological Association dictionary of psychology, which says that imagery is a cognitive and generation of sensory input from the five senses.

Individually or collectively, which is recalled from experience or self-generated in a non-experienced form. So, if we try to understand the implications of this definition, we get to know that it is a cognitive generation of sensory input from five senses. So, it is all about perceiving and processing, because we perceive things around us through our senses, it can be a sound, it can be an image, a picture, it can be a smell, it can be taste, it can be touch, we perceive things around us through our senses.

And while we are doing so, it may be that we perceive the same thing through multiple senses. That means, if we are watching a video, there is a possibility that will definitely perceive it through our sight, and then through our ears as well. So, the visual and the auditory aspects will be combined, and the perception will happen around the same time.

So, when we perceive things around us, it may happen that we perceive those things either through just one sense, or a combination of more than one sense. So, it is all about perceiving things. And then these perceptions are either recalled from experience, or they are also self-generated from a non-experience, for example, we have never experienced something like that, and we can still perceive it, we can still generate that particular imagery in the mind, even though I have not experienced it earlier.

Or if I have experienced it earlier, it will promptly lead to the generation of an image in the mind. So, that is how the dictionary of psychology of APA introduces the idea of imagery. So, if we try to simplify these ideas, we get this imagery represents objects, actions, and ideas in a pictorial way, which appeals to our physical senses.

So, the moment we come across an image, we actually get to see an object or an action or even ideas. So, which are presented to us in a pictorial manner and that particular experience, appeals to our physical senses as well. And then, we can strongly suggest, or we can repeat what people

have repeated over ages, the axiom, a picture is worth a thousand words. So, that means a picture can easily accumulate a thousand words.

So, when we understand this idea, that means the moment we come across an image or a picture, we can understand that the same picture can be presented through a thousand words. Or, if we reverse it, we can say a thousand words can come together to create the picture. So, a picture is so powerful, and imagery or an image is so powerful, that it definitely leads to a variety of effects on us, both psychologically, neurologically and thus leads to our wellbeing. So, we will see that in a while.

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But before that, let me ask you to take a look at these two images, one on the left one on the right. And then when you look at the image on the left, you must be feeling something you must be experiencing something. So, take a few seconds to look at the image on the left first focus on it without focusing on the emotion right. What exactly are you experiencing or feeling? Does the image disturb you or it comforts you?



I am sure the image is disturbing you. It is distracting. It is disturbing. It is not making you comfortable. In any case, in comparison, the image on the right probably makes you comfortable. It does not disturb you now you can understand what it is, it is exactly what we call the longing for form. We humans have this natural tendency to long for form, to desire form. We do not comfortable thing with things that are formless chaotic, not orderly, and disturbing.

So, every time we come across such ideas, we promptly, long for form. So, this longing for form is an important human tendency. And that is exactly what drives us towards imagery. Because images give us that much desired form. For example, when it comes to converting words into a picture, we may not be comfortable with those words, because they are so scattered. And it will, we will find it absolutely difficult to connect those words, in the same way as we connect the dots to create a complete image.

So, the words will definitely disturb us, because they appear to be chaotic, we need to connect them so that we can create an image a picture. And once we do so, we will feel relaxed will feel comfortable. So, the picture making process with the help of words is in fact a challenging process, which is very, very akin to this chaotic image.

Once we use those unruly lines used in the chaotic image on the left, to create something like the image on the right, which is very, very patterned, and very, very soothing to the eyes will feel comfortable. So, therefore, it is our human desire that ultimately drives us towards form. So, we are not comfortable with chaos, we are comfortable with form order. So, that is one big reason why we or the human brain is so attracted towards visuals, imagery.

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## The Power of Imagery

- Imagery is our constant guide which allows us to create and experience life conditions
- Emotional mental imagery is a simulation of reality
- It is the language of the mind. The mind speaks in images and then translates those images into words
- Imagery relates to us in action, words, or thoughts. When we set an intention, it places a positive or negative energy charge on each thought or action.

Cont.

That brings us to the idea of the power of imagery. So, the moment you begin to think about the power of imagery, these are some of the things that might come to your mind. So, let us take them up one by one. Imagery is our constant guide, which allows us to create an experience life

conditions. I will give you a task, a very brief task, if I ask you this question, what is life according to you?

All if I ask you to define life, you will suddenly find it an extremely difficult question to answer, you will find it to be an extremely difficult task. I have tried this with new people and all of them find it an extremely difficult task to respond to or complete. Because we suddenly do not know how to name life, we do not have a name for it life is life we do not have another name for it.

So, we may go into lexical meaning, but that will not suffice. So, every time somebody asks you what is life according to you? You will either say life is a struggle, life is a journey, life is a game, life is a battle, life is a struggle. Life is this life is that. So, when you are using these words to talk about life, what exactly are you doing?

You are trying to create an image of life by using another idea an alternate idea. So, for example, if you say life is a journey, so you are using the image of your journey, you are suddenly creating that image and trying to explain what do you mean by life? So, the naming activity, the naming task, or the expressive task will suddenly turn out to be extremely difficult for you.

But it will be easy the moment you find an image, it is a journey. So, you have the image of a journey in your mind and you are equating that with your idea of life. Therefore, you say life is a journey or you can say life is a struggle life is a battle life is a war or life is this or life is that. So, every time you try to talk about life, you actually use an image to talk about it.

So, that is the reason why imagery is our constant guide, as it allows us to create and experience life conditions. Emotional mental imagery is a simulation of reality. For example, we have already discussed what simulation is all about. And I have also told you that literature is one of the best forms of simulation because it offers to us a model, which can be replicated, which can be generalized through abstractions, simplification and competition, we get a model that can be replicated, that can be generalized.

And that can be used to enhance our understanding of a variety of things, and then we can extend that yet further. So, emotional mental imagery is in fact a simulation of reality. So, if somebody is suffering, actually, in reality, so that can be or created as an emotional mental imagery. And

then you will suddenly begin to experience the same kind of suffering or pain, because of the simulation, the simulated movement, or events.

So, therefore, emotional mental imagery is a simulation of reality. So, imagery is also the language of the mind, the language of mind, because we know, the right side of our brain is where these imageries or visuals are produced. And those images and visuals help the left side of the brain to carry out of a variety of functions. So, it is the language of the mind imagery, because we try to understand make sense of things with the help of images of them.

So, the mind actually speaks in images, and then translates those images into words. So, if I suddenly asked you, how are you feeling? You suddenly create an image in your mind of that particular feeling, and then you find a word to talk about it. But at the same time, I must also tell you that most often we find words to be inadequate to express that particular feeling in us.

So, there are occasions when people prefer to use an image to express how they are feeling and that particular moment rather than use words to do so. And that is one big reason why we have these smiley and icons and stickers, and so many things to help us with this particular activity, the task to express adequately. So, that is the power of imagery.


And then imagery relates to us in action words or thoughts. When we set an intention, it places a positive or negative energy charge on each thought or action. So, when it comes to performing a variety of tasks, like playing a cricket match, performing a surgery, we all need to act in a certain manner. So, imagery helps us rehearse those activities even before they actually happen or take place.

So, the right kind of imagery will place the right kind of energy that is positive energy on our thoughts or action, the wrong kind of imagery will definitely lead to the production of negative energy in us. So, if I am a surgeon and I am going to perform a surgery, a very critical surgery tomorrow I may begin to rehearse the entire process, through images.

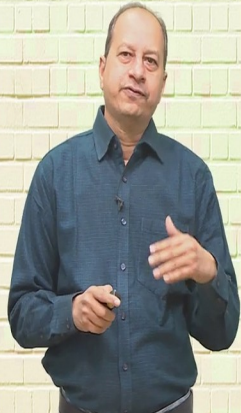
And at every stage, I need to create the right kind of image so that my positive approach to the whole process does not get affected. That is exactly how great surgeons are great sports persons do. Athletes, especially, they practice a lot of imagery, well before they are there for the final action. So, that is the power of imagery.



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- The signature phrase "I think I can, I think I can" in the famous children's book *The Little Engine That Could* and the importance of positive thinking
- Visualizing specific scenarios can greatly facilitate successful outcomes (I see I can, I see I can)
- Orchestrating moves in sports, surgery, and designing
- Imagery helps the mind and body to relax. It also helps us manage anxiety, stress, and depression and give you a better sense of control and wellbeing

So, to continue with the power of imagery, look at this particular thing, the signature phrase, I think I can I think I can. So, which actually occurred in the famous children's book in the little Engine That Could went on to become one of the most famous lines and went on to be associated with one of the most famous approaches, that is positive thinking. So, that is exactly how we came to know about positive thinking. I think I can, I think I can.

So, how did that happen? I think I can I think can, you are actually repeating your thoughts, I think I can, I think I can. And that resulted in a great deal of positive thinking. If we extend this idea, we get positive visualization, which I am sure is far more powerful than positive thinking. So, when we visualize a specific scenarios, we can actually facilitate successful outcomes, I just talked about the surgeons case or the athletes case.

So, if he can visualize specific scenarios, we can do that. So, we can convert I think I can into I see I can I see I can, because I can see it, therefore I can. So, thinking is less powerful than seeing. Therefore, positive visualization is far more powerful than positive thinking. So, that is how moves in sports, surgery and designing are orchestrated. They are all done through positive visualization techniques.



You visualize it, you visualize that you are reaching the area doing it, it is happening to you, you visualize everything, right from the moment, start to finish and then the celebration, the recognition, everything, if you can visualize, you will feel energized, you will feel charged. So,



that is the power of positive visualization. So, imagery helps the mind and body to relax, we all know that. It also helps us manage anxiety, stress and depression.

And it gives you a better sense of control and wellbeing. So, with the help of imagery, we can relax, and we can take care of all these negative emotions. For example, if he can create an image of something that drives you that makes you feel positive towards it, then that is definitely going to help you. And that is definitely going to result in your wellbeing. So, that is the power of imagery.

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## Verbal Imagery

- The night was black as ever, but bright stars lit up the sky in beautiful and varied constellations which were sprinkled across the astronomical landscape.
- (Colour, shape, and pattern)
- Words create pictures in our minds
- Our brain associates words with a very specific mental image, which is brought to the forefront when triggered by reading or hearing that word
- Verbal imagery through the use of visual words allows us to perceive the message

Cont.

So, that brings us to the idea of verbal imagery. Why verbal imagery? There is something called visual imagery and pictures only. But in comparison to visual imagery, verbal imagery is far more important. I have used an example to explain what verbal imagery is all about. The night was black as ever but bright stars lit up the sky in beautiful and varied constellations, which were sprinkled across the astronomical landscape.

When you read these lines, or when you read these words, are you being able to see any image? Do these words create an image in your mind? If the answer is yes, that means you are being able to do it, you can actually create images with the help of words, because these are visual words, most of these words are visual words, they have the power to create an image in the mind.


If you are able to see something, see a picture of something, then you know that you are able to experience imagery. So, what exactly do we see we see color, we see shape, and we see pattern, for example, sprinkled, across the astronomical landscape, the sprinkling pattern, that is the pattern. And we also see the shape varied constellations, and we see several colors, some black, and then the bright stars. Brightness, black and we can also see the night.

So, that is the, that is the power of verbal imagery. When it comes to verbal imagery, we are in fact invited to engage in it, so that we create the image. So, it is not only an image making process, it is also a meaning making process. Therefore, when it comes to imagery, verbal imagery becomes more important than visual imagery.

So, because these words, create pictures in our minds. And how is that picture created? That picture is created with our intervention, because we engage, and that engagement will make us not only create that image, but also enable ourselves to ensure our wellbeing healing. So, we all know our brain associates words with a very specific mental image, which is brought to the forefront when triggered by reading or hearing that word.

A simple example can be Apple, the moment I say Apple, you can see an apple because your brain associates words with specific mental images. If I say elephant, you can suddenly see that elephant. So, that is verbal imagery. And verbal imagery through the use of visual words allows us to perceive the message. So, we not only create an image, we also try to perceive that message, the message, which is encoded in that particular utterance or right up. So, that is verbal imagery.

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NPTEL



- Psychology describes language and visualizations as two basic ways our mind manages memories and processes information. These ways are called the “verbal” and “mental imagery” systems
- These two cognitive systems also point to the two basic ways humans express themselves to others: by creating words and visual images.
- The mental imagery system tends to be more sensory, holistic, fantasy-based, emotional, and personal. Images more easily arouse the senses
- Images provide the sensory vehicle to ground, extend, and enrich our perceptions and understanding of life situations

To extend this idea, psychology describes language and visualizations as two basic ways. Our mind manages memories and processes information. And these ways are called the verbal and the mental imagery systems. And these two cognitive systems also point to the two basic ways humans express themselves to others, by creating words and visual images, with the help of those words.

And the mental imagery system is more sensory, holistic, emotional, and personal because images more easily arouse the senses. And you all know that and therefore, a picture is worth a thousand words, because it can easily arouse the senses. Therefore, images provide the sensory vehicle to ground, extend and enrich our perceptions and understanding of life situations.

So, that is the reason why we engage with verbal imagery. These are the things that happen to us. So, they act as a vehicle to ground to extend and enrich our perceptions, our perceptions of first grounded, then those are extended, and in the process, they get enriched and ultimately what we derive? We derive a greater understanding of life situations.

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## Imagery and Healing

**Coping imagery**

- Picture yourself coping with difficult events. See yourself managing, perhaps struggling or battling, but nevertheless getting through it – attaining success

**Goal Imagery**



- First, vividly picture a goal and then imagine yourself taking the specific steps necessary to attain it. For example, if you want to learn playing piano, imagine yourself achieving a certain level. Then picture yourself doing what is necessary to achieve that goal (e.g., practising more, passing on leisurely activities)

So, that brings us to the idea of imagery and healing coping imagery is one of the popular imagery techniques, there are several imagery techniques. But for our convenience, I picked just two imagery techniques. The first one is coping imagery, you can do that. Just imagine, you are coping with difficult events. And also imagine you are managing while struggling or battling, but you are somehow getting through it finally, achieving success.

So, when you do that, you can actually begin to cope with difficulties or challenges. So, that is coping imagery, the others goal imagery, which is goal directed behavior, I have already talked about it. So, you can vividly paint a goal and then imagine yourself taking the necessary steps to attain your goal and this is an example of that. So, you can do so.

So, if you want to learn playing piano, you can, imagine yourself achieving a certain level and then you do a variety of things. If your goal is to perform a surgery successfully, then you can create necessary steps to attain that particular goal. So, coping imagery and goal imagery are two very important and popularly used imagery techniques for healing.

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## Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

- John Grinder and Richard Bandler developed the NLP
- Modeling, action, and effective communication are key elements of neuro-linguistic programming.
- The belief is that if an individual can understand how another person accomplishes a task, the process may be copied and communicated to others so they too can accomplish the task.


Now brings us to the idea of Neuro-Linguistic Programming NLP, it was developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler of the University of California. NLP or Neuro-Linguistic Programming is based on the idea of modeling, action and effective communication. So, if you remember, a piece of poetry is in fact, an instance of modeling, we have already talked about it, how it actually presents a model, a simulated model, which encouraged encourages us to perform some action.

And then it also encourages us to go for effective communication, somebody is communicating something with us or something to us, all we need to do is to decipher that particular message, and then get engaged with that message through our empathic approaches, and then try to extend it beyond that.

So, the belief is that if an individual can understand how another person accomplishes a task, the process may be copied, and communicated to others, so they too can accomplish the task. For example, if you read a piece of poetry, and you find a character who is struggling with a certain type of emotional challenge or existential challenge, you begin to walk along with that character, to see how that character is in fact trying to overcome that particular issue or challenge.

So, once you get to know that that person has accomplished that particular task, that process may be copied and communicated to others as well. So, that is the power of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, which can be used in order to ensure our wellbeing.

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So, that is the end of today's lecture. I am sure you must have liked the things that I brought to the fore today. We are going to talk about these things in greater detail as we move on. In my next lecture, I am going to talk about a few instances, with the help of which I will explain how verbal imagery can actually lead to our wellbeing. So, thank you for joining me.