

## **FIERCE PREPARATION – VISUALIZE!**

**By Ben Peterson and his son, Andy Peterson**

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Just before Christmas break my son, Andy, wrote an article for our Camp of Champs Campers which he sends by email. I believe his perspective is very useful for the end of the wrestling season when competitors are seeking the extra edge needed for the “big matches” and even the supposedly easier ones.

Andy earned his Master of Science degree in Exercise and Sports Medicine (more commonly known to us as Strength and Conditioning). What he writes about he has both studied and used. Competing in wrestling and football all 8 years in high school and college, Andy loved the intensity of the big season-concluding events. Playing 2 years after college with the St. Louis Believers (now known as the River City Rage) of the National Indoor Football League brought him to even higher levels of skill and intensity. Andy now has 4 years of football coaching experience and is in his rookie year of coaching college wrestling.

Lying in bed at night days before big competitions, I recall visualizing flurries at the end of a close match. I thought through ways of scoring big at the end to win the day. In reality a scrambling, frenzied finish won more than one match for me, which some of you still remember.

Andy’s explanation makes a lot of sense. So, enjoy a good aggressive visualization and see what new heights of intensity you can achieve.

### **Fierce Preparation – Visualize!** by Andy Peterson

The wrestling season is already well under way. Hopefully you came back from Christmas break rested and ready to compete. You might be wondering what you can do to make sure that the end of the season goes even better than the first. How can you be creative to prepare yourself for the final, intense competitions?

First, do whatever you can to prepare yourself physically. Your workout pattern must be geared to prepare your body and mind for repeated explosions and adjustments that take place in wrestling’s 5-7 minute struggles. Try something new or find a way to tweak your typical training pattern. Unashamedly watch the training scenes in the Rocky series for training inspiration! Better yet, find a teammate with similar goals and be creative.

Next, Visualize. When I say visualize, I do not mean giving yourself a positive pep talk or sitting down to endlessly refine goals. There may be some value in those activities, but we are going to focus right now on becoming more Fierce in our movements.

Learn from the mindsets of the great athletes. Each of them visualized themselves doing their sports. And not just winning - because you may not always win when the opponent currently has legitimate advantages. These champions instead visualized themselves making a specific play or making an adjustment to a situation that had previously frustrated them.

Dan Gable talked about “refusing to be pinned.” Legendary football hitters John Lynch, Ray Lewis, Dick Butkus, and Mike Singletary, and legendary running back Walter Payton (from an offensive standpoint) all talk about imagining themselves exploding like lightning through the ball carrier as if there were several men in a row. Bruce Lee talked about staying completely still while “imagining yourself ‘bouncing’ and moving with blinding speed.” Multiple elite instructors

at Camp of Champs talk about exploding through opponents and mentally committing to a technique so you can be fearless and make multiple, fierce adjustments to finish the technique.

Scientists and researchers are now certain that visualizations cause quicker, more powerful and more coordinated movements even without moving a muscle. So even when your body is worn down from intense practices, your brain and your body can learn to work together to make your body an even more powerful wrestling machine.

Imagine yourself exploding through your opponent, adjusting quickly and forcefully to his counters, getting a step ahead in a scramble, and putting the final nail in the coffin when you are both gasping for breathe.

To really maximize the effect, add the visualization to shadow wrestling. Get in your stance or in a position you work from, and think about exploding. Do not move yet however. Just work on exploding in your mind and evaluate whether your body is in the best position to do that. Two more times, only explode in your mind. Finally, let yourself truly explode through the movement. Did it feel like you wanted? If not, go back and make adjustments. Think more sudden, more relaxed, more explosive.

Try this simple experiment to teach yourself to Relax so you can Explode. Hold your fists up like a boxer, but clench your fists and arms hard. Now punch an imaginary opponent and see how it feels. Now, do the same punch, but with your arms held up relaxed until you throw the punch quickly. Which felt more explosive? Try to gain that same feeling in your wrestling. Make your opponent the one who stays tense and tired as you stay Relaxed and Explosive.

Enough talk. Go and try it!

**You can find other articles by Ben, John & Andy Peterson at their web site. Today they run Camp of Champs Wrestling Camps. Contact them at: Camp of Champs, PO Box 222, Watertown, WI 53094; Phone: 800-505-5099; E-mail: [info@campofchamps.org](mailto:info@campofchamps.org); Web: [www.campofchamps.org](http://www.campofchamps.org)**