

The act of attention

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Attention is an activity of the mind.

It is accomplished by forming a mental “image” – visual, auditory, verbal or sensed – of the object of attention.

The act of paying attention is triggered by the following specific intent: that of making a mental image of the object of attention. Through this act, one brings the object of attention into the mind.

To engage the intent of attention,
the mind must be free to “evoke” the object of that intent

For setting up of intent, the following procedure is efficacious:

- a) Giving the specific intent before presenting the subject matter.
- b) After this, presenting what has to be looked at or listened to.
- c) And then removing it from view (if a visual object) or allowing for silence (if a auditory object) so that the process of evoking can proceed naturally.

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A general rule
for bridging between the auditory and the visual modes:

*For a person with **auditory** (or verbal) dominance, to extend an auditory image so as to include visual mind content:*

Take care, for is not while the object of attention is sounding through the ear, that the person functioning in an auditory mode can evoke the corresponding visual image. In order to form the visual mental image, the sound has to be absent on the outside and heard (imagined) only in the mind.

On the other hand:

*For a person with **visual** dominance, to extend a visual image so as to include auditory mind content:*

Take care, for it is not while the object of attention is visible to the eye, that the visually functioning person can evoke the corresponding auditory content. In order to form the auditory content in the mind, the visual object has to be absent on the outside and seen (imagined) only in the mind.

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Intent
or “projet” as it is known in *Gestion Mentale*

Intent is that which engenders and orients us towards a specific outcome. It initiates the act, gives it direction and the impetus to reach for the intended goal.

Antoine de la Garanderie writes (free translation): *Before any act of perception takes place, one needs to enter into a state of intent (“projet”) in order to project in advance the intent to grasp what will be received.*

In other words:

Behind every act we make with our bodies and with our minds, there is the presence of attitudes and expectations. These are implicit in the act. They set directions, lead to certain results; they open the way for the expression of our abilities and, too, they can limit our performance. They underscore the path learning takes.

These implicit attitudes have to do with the personal drive within each individual. As teachers we need to address ourselves to this dimension of being – to engage this intuitive force, allowing it to develop in ways that are helpful to the student and to the realisation of joy in learning.