



MARVEL @ The Art of Using Our Imaginations

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We use the word "imagination" all the time, yet do we know what it actually means AND are we able to use this extra-ordinary superpower to the full?

We use words such as *information, knowledge, intelligence, imagination* often – yet do we know what each one means and use them correctly? Or is our inability to handle words properly causing all sorts of critical crises? Such as when we talk about computers being *intelligent, aware* or *creative*?

To "imagine" simply means to think of something you haven't experienced yourself. For example – you can imagine *flying cars* existing in the FUTURE, and some may have been built in the PAST, so they may exist in the PRESENT still, but have you ever seen or travelled in a *flying car* yourself? Probably not – yet you can imagine them because you know what *cars* and *flying* are like already.

What we cannot do is imagine things not based on existing experiences – colors we haven't seen before, dimensions which are not like the ones we exist in, or life forms not made up of carbon-based cells. For example, life forms which have no bodies, only minds, and can freely travel through time and space like gods. Can you imagine the experience of not being born, growing up, growing old and dying – just being pure mental processes never worried about sickness or death? We can describe such a sentient, formless being with words, but can you actually imagine what life without a body would feel like?

Can computers, which have no bodies but do process data, "imagine"? No. Computers process basic numerical symbols so all they can do is process data in all sorts of ways which make no sense to them – because only cell-based brains have access to qualitative sensory inputs – these allow us to feel what colors, shapes, smells and other experiences feel like and mean to us. This is how narratives emerge – from living experience – not sets of raw 1s and 0s.

Your imagination in fact allows you to travel in space and time without moving a muscle into an unlimited number of potentially realistic or unrealistic worlds and know what it would feel like in theory – but why have we evolved this superpower? Our ability to imagine alternative realities is an evolutionary tool which allows us to prepare for all sorts of developments in order to live longer, healthier, happier lives. Yes, the power to imagine what our *PASTS, PRESENTS* and *FUTURES* might be like is essential not just to our survival, but also the point of being alive – only this way can we learn and TODAY use what we learned YESTERDAY to make the world TOMORROW different and therefore worth experiencing at all (if we could not imagine new ways of being, all our days would just be the same over and over and over again, ad infinitum...). Also – as far as we know, only we humankind can imagine AND describe alternative realities using complex languages to other human beings around us. It's because of this ability to imagine and communicate all sorts of imaginary scenarios that we have evolved to be the smartest and therefore the most powerful beings in the observable universe. So now:

COMPREHENSION CHECK > *Can you give a simple definition of how our imaginations work and why they are essential to us all living long, healthy, happy lives? How will you use your imagination from now on – for yours and others' sakes?*