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I recall specifically seeing my mother and father suspended upside down, themselves surrounded by a crowd of 5000, all with their hands stretched way above their heads reaching downward, yes, downward towards a bright blue sky. I had pictured this exact scene many times. This time however, it was for real. I was smack in the middle of a very difficult trick, known as the Mc Twist 540, competing as the youngest snowboarder in the 2006 Winter Olympics. I had visualized the pipe, the path along the pipe, the trick and my perfect landing over and over during my waking hours, my sleep and again during my practice. Visualizing my goal had allowed me to correct potential mistakes before they actually occurred. The training had proven successful. Visualization was not the only tool in my training toolbox. They also included many hours of mental preparation, accompanied by the physical training. It took years of determination, perseverance and daily hard work. Even after a full day of spills, crashes and falls my evenings were necessarily spent seeking sponsors that would support me.

The Olympics was merely the culminating event, this came, after my winning many competitions in various World Championships. Along my journey to the Olympics, I had to pay, by earning, my own way, sometimes only a couple of rubles at a time. I set aside my aches and pains but continued to visualize the spectators upside down, as I performed the first, of many body flips, and drove on...

I am now sitting here at the Clifford Chance Law Office in Paris, where I am working as an intern. In the evening, I now visualize myself being in an amphitheater surrounded by a bouillabaisse of talented students from around the world. As we listen to lectures by some of Harvard's greatest legal minds I can hear the clicks of the laptop keyboards as my fellow Harvard students refuse to look up at the professor as they believe it may cause them to mistakenly hit the wrong key.

While traveling to foreign countries for training and competitions, I tried to visualize what it would be like to actually live in one. To my delight, at the age of 16, I won a scholarship and was awarded a participation in a one-year exchange program in France. This experience was the first time I had not only

to compete, but had to do so in a language that was orthogonal to my native Russian. Luckily, now, in addition to French and Russian I am also fluent in English and Norwegian.

Motivated by my interest in international and legal affairs and in public speaking, I was accepted by the University of Paris to study law. The visualizations can sometimes be frightening. I remember with trepidation, on the very first day of class being sternly told that though we were now 2000 incoming students, we should be well aware that only 300 of us were expected to graduate. So I closed my eyes and began to visualize myself as one of those lucky 300.

As I push hard on the envelope of my future images I can see myself being an attorney, defending my clients, attempting to improve the lives of those I represent. I believe that debating in a court is also a form of competition. It is even more rewarding than cheers from the crowd. The competition of ideas and the search of compelling arguments require both skill and practice not unlike sports training. At trial, small changes make large differences, just as in sports tiny errors, might lead to a tragic injury. The legal system and the sport world look backward to precedent, though in sports we talk about breaking one's own records as well as the world's best. I visualize doing both. Being prepared for the unknown as I face new challenges. Following the rules of the game I will push to the extremes - this time in the legal world. I believe that law will enable me to do intellectually, what snowboarding, has enabled me to do physically.

While working 12 hours a day, I know that it is just another step in my training before studying at HLS. This experience gives me an insight into the life of a lawyer, the opportunity to conduct due diligences and attend hearings. I am particularly drawn to the challenges I find at the intersection of International business law and arbitration..

Now I am practicing another visualization. This time I am standing on the stage, being handed my Law diploma by the Dean. I can see and hear the Dean congratulating me. I look over, and again see my mother and father amongst other spectators, reaching their hands towards the sky. However this time they are all right side up.

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