

Visualisation/Mental Rehearsal

You are now at a point where you want to start convincing your subconscious mind that social confidence is your current reality. A visualisation practice speeds up this process significantly.

Visualisation records memory and develops beliefs and attitudes without the actual event even taking place. Since your subconscious does not know the difference between something real and a vividly imagined event, visualising yourself socially at ease will attune you to the neural pathway of social confidence.

By visualising yourself as socially at ease over and over again, social confidence will start to feel more and more realistic to you. As you continue to do it over and over again, in addition to working through the rest of the steps in the SCS, the positive emotions you feel when visualising will start to show up in real social situations.

Commit to doing this every day, knowing that this is just a small but powerful part of the SCS, and also knowing that the exercises you will go through in the SCS will make you more and more congruent with being socially at ease.

Below you find a complete description on how to effectively visualise.

NOTE: While visualisation is very powerful, and while I highly recommend you do it daily, it is not essential to achieve social confidence. But, it can speed up your progress significantly.

Can You Visualise?

Start by answering the below questions:

- What is the colour of your front door?
- What is the colour of your car, or you parent's car?

First think about the answer before you read on...

In order to answer that you just visualised. It was brief, but that's all there is to it. Most people won't get crystal clear visualisations like you see on an HD screen. Especially not in the beginning. That's OK! Getting at least a vague, general positive picture of what you're choosing to visualise is good enough.

As you begin to visualise every day it might start out to be challenging. And you might experience some anxiety or uncomfortable emotions. It's OK if that happens. But when it happens, you're visualising things you do not want. So change it.

Make sure it's all positive. Positive faces, friendly people, laughter, smiles, positive phrases being said to you, looks of approval, comfortable accepting and warm vibe around, etc.

You are in control of the images you make in your mind. Change the images so that they are only pleasing. Keep playing around with it, be easy about it, and your visualisations will feel better and better.

Find 2 minutes per day to do this. As you train your visualisation muscles by practicing it over and over, it will get easier and easier.

NOTE: Something you can do before you start your visualisation to make it easier to get into comfortable positive emotions, is to first think of a time where you felt really comfortable around others.

That can be with a friend, a family member, around the dinner table, whatever. When it was also doesn't matter. All that matters is that it felt comfortable. Tune in to that good feeling by seeing what you saw back them, hearing what you heard, and feeling what you felt. Once you've connected to that good feeling, start with the visualisation.

6 Steps To Effective Visualisation:

1. Visualise once a day for maximum 3 minutes.

Maximum twice a day, but only do this twice when you feel good doing so. Once a day is sufficient.

Time this with a stopwatch. Doing too much visualisation will make you lose focus. Aim for just 1 or 2 minutes of focused visualisation. Especially when you're starting out. Visualise, make it feel good, and then stop.

If you can get to only 2 seconds of feeling good, then that's a great start! Build this up as it gets easier and easier. After a couple of days, you can maybe have 5 seconds of good feeling. After a week maybe 15-20 seconds. However fast you progress doesn't matter. It is not a competition. Be grateful for the smallest victories. As you do this more, you will get used to feeling like this more. It gets easier and easier the more you do it.

2. Try to be more and more detailed.

So see those smiles on people's faces as you interact with them, feel how comfortable and relaxed you feel, hear the laughs at your jokes etc. In the beginning, don't worry about whether you are putting in enough detail. Every time you visualise you will automatically incorporate more and more detail.

3. Visualise with emotion.

You want to feel as if what you're visualising is already true. Really get into the emotions. Intend to feel how you would feel, then feel it. Make pretend. Do whatever you can to really feel those good feelings you would experience if you had already achieved your goal.

Feel as though it has already been achieved and your imagery will pull you toward the end result that you desire.

NOTE: The ultimate aim of visualisation is to evoke the feeling that the goal of social confidence has already been achieved.

4. Put yourself in the picture.

You are looking from your own perspective, out of your own eyes. So you see your own hand reaching out to shake that hand. You see the clothing you're wearing, your feet kicking the ball. But you can't see your own face. Important that you look out of your own eyes.

5. Visualise the end result.

Don't worry about how to get to social confidence. That's not what visualisation is about. The only thing you are visualising is the end result.

Pretend you're not anxious, and you are visualising as if it is true right now. Now how it would be in the future. You are mentally rehearsing what life is like for you as a socially confident individual. In the present tense.

6. Take your time.

Find a nice comfortable spot and enjoy this. Make it your 2-5 minutes of fun reality constructing.

Specific Instructions:

Find a comfortable place where you won't be disturbed for the coming 2-5 minutes. Just before going to bed is a good time, but don't do it lying down with your lights out because that's probably a half-assed effort. Commit to doing this properly.

There's a wide variety of social scenes/scenarios that you can imagine. You might visualise yourself confident at work. You might visualise yourself interacting effortlessly with your superior. You might imagine yourself comfortably being the centre of attention. Or perhaps you are imagining yourself meeting new people with comfort and ease.

Pick one specific scene or scenario each day.

Start with the scenes that are more believable for you to feel comfortable in, and work to create some good feeling visualisations. Keep visualising one specific scene until you can only feel positive emotions when visualising that scene.

That may take more than one attempts. That's fine. Take things one slow step at a time. And then slowly build up to the more challenging scenes. This will get easier and easier the more you do it.

Once you have picked your specific scenario or scene, take a couple of deep breaths into your heart (imagine breathing in and out of your heart).

Take a deep breath in through the nose, taking about 6 seconds to completely fill up your lungs. Breath into the belly first, then into the chest. Exhale via the mouth, taking again roughly 6 seconds to breath out all the air. Repeat this for at least 5 breaths.

Now imagine stepping into the picture, into the socially comfortable you. And then look out of the eyes of the socially comfortable you and see what you ideally see, hear what you want to hear, and allow yourself to feel good.

Make sure you imagine an ideal scenario. Pretend you are relaxed and confident, pretend they are being nice, pretend that they like you and you like them.

And while you're pretending, make it as real as possible. You are in control of the pictures you make in your mind, so when you do your imagining, make sure that the images are all as ideal and positive as possible. Have people respond nicely, see friendly faces, and enjoy effortlessly connecting with others.

You are imagining here that your goal is already achieved and that this is your new life. Look from your own perspective, out of your own eyes (you don't see yourself in the picture).

Feel the feelings you would feel, make the visualisation as real as possible. Make the picture/video in your mind big with bright colours. Make it really close to you and look out of your own eyes.

This is all you need to do, once a day. Two minutes of your day. Make the time for it and enjoy it.

Allow yourself to have fun doing this, it's more effective if you do it for the fun of it then when you do it for the purpose of being socially confident.

NOTE: Aim to eventually hold the good feelings and visualisation for about 1 minute (if this is difficult in the beginning, start with 2 to 5 seconds. Then 10. Then a 20. 30. 40. 50 and eventually a minute.

If it is easier for you to feel the emotions and stay focused by speaking out loud what you visualise, do so. Say out loud what is happening in the scene that you are visualising. Make it as real as possible and take your time for it.