



## Uncovering Significant Emotional Events (S.E.E.'s):

In this article I am going to explain to you what S.E.E.'s are and why uncovering them, and treating them with EFT is so important. After this I will guide you through some easy steps to uncover and treat them.

## Limiting Negative Beliefs Make Up Your SAD

As you hopefully remember from the video series “Beat Social Anxiety Disorder”, a social anxiety disorder consists of all sorts of limiting/negative beliefs that you have about yourself, others and the world. These beliefs cause you to view the world in a way that makes you feel anxiety. Changing these beliefs is the main key to overcoming your social anxiety.

*“What is a belief?”*

A belief is a feeling of certainty about something, a thought you have that *feels* real.

Examples can be:

- I'm not good enough
- The world is a dangerous place
- People are out to get me
- People must think well of me and I can't do it
- I am a failure
- There's something wrong with me
- Etc.

These beliefs we have that are responsible for our social anxiety are about how we “must” act in social settings (*I must get everyone's approval, must appear confident at all times, etc.*),

They are cause-effect beliefs (*if someone disagrees with me then that means they don't like me, if people laugh it means they're laughing at me, etc..*)

And they are identity beliefs (*I'm unimportant / I'm not OK / I'm not good enough, etc.*)

These beliefs are the reason why the anxiety is there. Due to the beliefs the world *seems* “dangerous”, and in order to protect you from that danger your subconscious mind gives you the fight or flight anxiety response. It's alarming you that it's dangerous out there.

With the SCS we will release those negative limiting beliefs by doing various EFT exercises to **let go of the belief feeling true**. Once it doesn't *feel* true anymore we change the belief to a positive belief. When we have changed our negative beliefs responsible for our social anxiety to positive ones, the world gets filtered in such a way that our subconscious no longer perceives us to be in danger.

Because of this realization of safety, it then no longer feels a need to fire off the fight or flight anxiety response to protect us.

## How Did We Get These Limiting Negative Beliefs?

When we are born we have two basic fears only; the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. And even though we might be born with a naturally more shy personality, or with genes that have a higher susceptibility to social scrutiny, we are NOT born with a social anxiety disorder.

*And even if you have genes with a higher susceptibility, science now shows us that you can even influence those genes with the power of your beliefs (for more info on this I highly recommend "The biology of belief" by Bruce Lipton)...*

**So since we are not born with these social fears, we have to conclude that we have "learned" them somewhere in life.**

And the beliefs we picked up that cause us to have these social fears come from many sources.

Most of the beliefs that caused you to be vulnerable to developing social anxiety (disorder) stem from your upbringing (they were formed especially during the formative years of your life, age 0-12 and especially your first 6 years of life.); they are there due to the repetitive negative experiences you had as you were growing up. We will work on finding these and changing these beliefs later in the SCS.

Other negative beliefs you "downloaded" from your parents, from religion, from teachers, from your siblings, your peers, the media, etc.

But in this article we will specifically focus on the negative life experiences that you had from which you learned negative/limiting beliefs that are now contributing to you feeling anxious in social situations.

We call these negative life experiences **Significant Emotional Events (S.E.E.)**.

## Why Are These "S.E.E.'s" So Important?

Uncovering the S.E.E.'s related to your social anxiety is so important because these negative life experiences (S.E.E.'s) are at the root of your current social anxiety disorder. They are the building blocks that make up your social anxiety castle.

Let me explain...

So we are born and we start to have experiences. Some are positive, some negative, some neutral.

The neutral ones we don't remember as there was no emotional intensity attached to them (Try to remember what you ate 3 weeks ago on a Wednesday for lunch... You don't remember unless it is routine or there was something special going on which had emotional relevance to you).

The experiences that had a lot of emotion to them we *do remember*. Some of these experiences where you experienced intense negative emotion became lodged in your brain and these old traumatic emotions now get triggered again in our day to day lives by situations that remind your subconscious of these earlier traumas.

S.E.E.'s are basically (mini) traumas.

According to Dr Scaer, a leader in the field of research on trauma, we experience trauma when we are faced with a threat to our well-being, our survival. And that doesn't have to be trauma like rape, torture, kidnapping etc. It can be like losing a job, being ignored by your dad when you are little, getting ridiculed or bullied in school, etc.

It's a situation that you perceived to be traumatic combined with a state of helplessness where you had no control over that event.

What happens when we experience something that we perceive as being traumatic, we freeze. And we store the trauma in our brain.

**Then every time something similar happens to us in the future we get the same emotions back (high anxiety/shame/fear/embarrassment/humiliation) that we felt during the traumatic experience (S.E.E.).**

So say that you for example got bullied in class about you having big ears and you felt humiliated. And for some reason you perceived that as traumatic, you froze, and it became a S.E.E.

Then when you are in a situation now where someone innocently asks you if you ever had your ears pierced, your brain might perceive this situation as similar to the one where you got ridiculed and you will start to get that same feeling of humiliation back that you felt back then.

This is because your brain generalizes experiences, and it perceives this current situation to be similar to the traumatic experience (S.E.E.) where they made fun of you.

**The negative feelings from the S.E.E.'s we had in the past get triggered by experiences in our current life.** Most of the negative emotions we experience in our day to day life, especially the more intense ones, are actually just old S.E.E.'s that get triggered.

Now once you use the tools I am about to give you, and you release the trauma (you do this by eliminating the negative emotions, and changing the limiting/negative beliefs learned during that experience) from a S.E.E. you get rid of one of the possible triggers to your social anxiety. Plus you eliminate some of evidence your subconscious mind has that social situations are dangerous.

## Some Random Examples Of S.E.E.'s:

S.E.E.'s can literally be anything that **you personally** experienced as traumatic. For something to be traumatic now as an adult of course takes a lot more than it took as when you were just a small child. A look of disapproval from your dad might not be such a big deal as it was to you when you were just a small child.

And something that you experienced as traumatic can by someone else be experienced as 'no big deal'.

This is OK, it's about YOUR experience.

If something is traumatic for you but not for others then this is not a character defect on your part. This has just been traumatic for you because of your emotional state at the time, your interpretation of the event and the beliefs you have formed early in life.

Examples are:

- Your mother yelling at you in front of your friends for something you didn't do
- Your dad ignoring you when you showed him something you were proud of
- You overhearing people whispering about you
- You being mocked in class by Derrick
- You getting rejected by your crush
- Your dad spanking you
- Your mom getting angry at you for no reason
- Your parents fighting

- Your friends teasing you about your clothes
- You messing up something a reading assignment in front of the class
- You seeing your sister get rejected
- Your older cousins trying to scare you with a ghost story etc.
- You becoming red when you get asked out
- Etc

These negative experiences we had in the past (S.E.E.'s) impact us heavily in our current life. This is because -as I mentioned earlier- the S.E.E.'s get triggered by things we experience today.

One of the key steps to overcoming your social anxiety disorder is to uncover those S.E.E.'s and then with the help of some very powerful techniques release the negative emotions from the memory and change the limiting negative beliefs learned there that are now responsible for you filtering the world in such a way that you feel anxious.

## **Our Brain And A Helpful Metaphor:**

Since this concept of S.E.E.'s in relationship to your social anxiety might be new to you, let me give you a helpful metaphor. But before I do, consider these two basic functions of the brain:

1. *Our brain is always moving away from pain and towards pleasure and it also tries to keep you safe at all times.*
2. *Everything your brain does is done with a positive intention. It is always trying to serve us.*

### **Cesar and the sable tooth tiger...**

*"Once upon a time there was a caveman named Cesar. He was happily walking through the jungle as he saw a big rock. As he passed the rock, a big sable tooth tiger jumped out at him.*

*Cesar's body was equipped to respond to the situation and deal with this emergency. His body caused a hormonal response and his heart started to beat faster. His blood vessels got constricted, his body was pumped with adrenaline, and our Cesar was ready to fight or flight.*

*Rather than fight the tiger, smart little Cesar turned around and ran for his life. By some good fortune he miraculously made it to his cave and survived.*

*After a few days Cesar was happily walking through the jungle again. But what do you think happened when he saw the big rock?*

*His brain had saved all the information of that traumatic event. The sights, the sounds, the smells, the feelings, the thoughts, even the physical sensations. And his brain had saved all that information as part of his survival instinct. It did so to protect him.*

*So of course the same thing happened.*

*His heart started to beat like crazy, his veins got smaller, adrenaline was pumped and he experienced the same fight or flight reaction again.*

*But this time there was no tiger...*

...

*What happened was that the caveman's brain linked the rock to the danger of the tiger.*

*It was trying to serve Cesar by trying to keep him safe from danger by giving him the fear response upon seeing the rock. The brain remembered what happened last time!*

This is how the subconscious mind works and this is what is happening to you too.

When you experience intense negative emotions in a certain situation, something simply triggers a S.E.E. and you get the emotion back you originally felt during the Significant Emotional Event.

And there can be a lot of S.E.E.'s affecting you in the here and now.

So in your life around you, a lot of things "trigger" you. By trigger I mean that something (something you see, hear, feel, smell, taste) reminds your subconscious mind of a S.E.E. earlier in life. And you then relive that negative emotion from back then.

If you've had a lot of S.E.E.'s, you get triggered a lot. And since your brain generalizes situations, more and more situations start to look like one of your S.E.E.'s to your brain. And you get triggered more.

So your subconscious mind also starts to label more and more situations as dangerous, and as a result give you anxiety in all these situations in order to protect you. Until at one point your brain starts to get used to the emotion of anxiety and you literally become addicted to being in that emotional state.

The good news is though, that for all of the above stated challenges there are solutions. And when you successfully treat a S.E.E. -when you release the negative emotion and change the limiting beliefs- you get rid of one of the building blocks of the social anxiety.

## **A Classic Case Of Social Anxiety Disorder**

Becky is 11 years old and in a bit slow in reading. When she gets asked to read in front of the whole class, she's being made fun of. She feels humiliated.

This seems like a normal experience for a lot of people. And not everyone that experiences such an event feels humiliated, or develops social anxiety.

However, given the resources, propensity to social anxiety, Becky's limiting/negative beliefs she gathered from her upbringing that made her more vulnerable to developing social anxiety, and her mental state at the time, she experienced this as a trauma (S.E.E.).

It was for some reason too much for her brain to normally deal with. So the trauma got locked inside her brain. Becky's brain (always trying to serve her and keep her safe) stores the information to avoid it in the future.

Every time Becky is now in a -to her generalizing brain perceived as- similar situation, the same emotion of humiliation gets triggered again.

Since she now has situations she feels humiliation, she becomes afraid of being in these and starts to avoid them. In doing so, Becky starts to build up anticipatory anxiety. She fears feeling humiliation again and feels anxiety about that when she's in social situations. The anxiety when she is in the social situation is basically her brain warning her "careful, this situation is just like when you felt humiliated, you might experience it again!"

Now since the brain generalizes and tries to serve her, it thinks it's doing Becky a favor by linking danger to more and more situations where she could potentially feel humiliation. And as a result she starts to feel anxious in more and more situations.

Because of this anxiousness she feels, and her now increased sensitivity to becoming embarrassed, Becky experiences a few more "social trauma's" (S.E.E.'s) like this.

Now, 10 years later, Becky is 21 and she has a full blown social anxiety disorder.

## **EFT And S.E.E.'s**

For EFT to be most effective it is important to always think of the earliest time you can remember a certain S.E.E. This because the younger we are, the more vulnerable we are to trauma. And the oldest memory is the one that holds the trauma. It's the one where the trauma was learned.

If you are for example are looking for a S.E.E. where you felt rejected it is important that you come up with the first time you can remember feeling rejected. So it's much better to come up with the time you felt rejected when you were 6 as opposed to a time you felt rejected a days/weeks/months/years ago.

By going for the oldest memory we find out where you **learned** the feeling of rejection. Once we have that S.E.E. we can treat it and 'unlearn' the feeling of rejection.

So always look for the earliest memory (S.E.E.) you can find when I advise you to look for a S.E.E.

**There is one exception to this.**

Sometimes there is a S.E.E. that is not the earliest, but has a lot of emotional intensity to it. Because of this we then first treat that one before we treat the earliest one.

*An example:*

My client John has a fear of rejection. I ask him to bring up the fear of rejection.

Once he feels that fear (by imagining getting rejected for example) I ask him what that fear or rejection reminds him of. Now the earliest time John felt this (I later find out...) is when his dad went to sea and rejected his goodbye hug.

However, when I ask John the question, the first thing that comes to his mind is the biggest rejection in his puberty. He had been building up the courage to ask his crush out to the prom.

Once he finally did, she harshly rejected him on front of everyone and ridiculed him.

Because this event was so powerful in a negative way for John, we first have to treat this S.E.E. before we can move on to the earliest memory.

**Whatever the subconscious brings up first when we ask it a question is what should be treated first.** But in general we almost always need to clear the earliest memory we have.

These negative memories (S.E.E.'s) can literally be anything. And it does not have to be related to social situations. It can be something really traumatic, or something that seems rather insignificant at first.

The reason why it is a S.E.E. is that it has been traumatic for you because it was too much for you to handle *in that moment in time* (again, as a small child things that seem insignificant to you now as an adult can be a BIG DEAL to a 5 year old...) given the resources, beliefs and mental state you had. It could have been something simple such as a look from someone, or a frown.

## The Action Steps:

The action steps you will be taking now is you will make a long list of all the S.E.E.'s you've experienced in your life. This will be an exercise that you come back to as you will remember more and more S.E.E.'s. Negative memories will pop up in your mind at weird times of the day, and sometimes when you get triggered of course. Once that happens, write it down and later add it to your list.

When you find a S.E.E., give it a short name (examples: Harry made fun of my virginity, Ramona rejected me in the club, The teacher called me a dumbass, Tony slapped me in the face, I blushed when Jenny mocked me etc.)

You probably already know some of the events that happened to you that have upset you. But for further S.E.E. detective work I have a list of questions for you below. These questions are designed to find the S.E.E.'s related to your social anxiety. Use these to uncover your S.E.E.'s.

It's not unusual to find more than 50 or a 100 S.E.E.'s.

You most likely won't have to treat all S.E.E.'s to get some relief though, as a generalization effect takes place when you treat 5-10-20 S.E.E.'s.

### **When you treat 5-20 S.E.E.'s the general feeling of social anxiety diminishes A LOT.**

I recommend treating ALL the memories you find, as the more you treat, the more naturally happy and confident you will feel.

#### The steps:

1. Find a S.E.E. by answering one of the questions below or by thinking of (social) experiences that you might think that may have contributed to your social anxiety. Do NOT relive the memory that you find yet, this part comes later.

2. Do NOT actually imagine the S.E.E. but GUESS on a scale from 0-10 (0 = no emotion at all, 10 = most intense emotion possible) how intense emotion you would experience IF you were to imagine it. A guess is simply that, the first thing that comes to mind, go with that. Again, please do NOT imagine it yet (you don't want to traumatize yourself).

3. If this S.E.E. were a movie that you would play in your mind, guess how long it would be. It should be a singular event. Something that, back when it happened for real, did not last longer than anything between a second or a few hours.

IF you were to run the movie in your mind in the here and now, it should be no longer than 3 minutes. Again, do NOT run the movie in your mind

*Note: If it's a memory that happened over days, weeks, months etc -an example would be "being bullied"- it is not one single S.E.E., but multiple S.E.E.'s. In this case, use the "Bundling Baggage Bundles" article and the "Bundling Baggage" video to get rid of all of them at once.*

4. Give the S.E.E./movie/memory/incident a name (If your guess in step 3 was higher than an 8 out of 10, give the movie a vague name. So rather "4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic" than "Uncle John molested me")

This will give you a list that might look something like this:

1. Teacher mocked my ears 8 out of 10
2. Harry made fun of my virginity 6 out of 10
3. Ramona rejected me in the club 7 out of 10
4. The teacher called me a dumbass 5 out of 10
5. Tony slapped me in the face 7 out of 10
6. I blushed when Jerry mocked me 10 out of 10
7. I froze up when I had to introduce myself at my new school 8 out of 10
8. Mom scolded me in front of the family 8 out of 10
9. Mom hit my sister 8 out of 10
10. Dad made fun of me in front of my crush 10 out of 10
11. Jimmy humiliated me by his comment 7 out of 10
12. The mean girls mimicked me at school 9 out of 10
13. Etc.

The questions to ask yourself for uncovering your remaining S.E.E.'s (When you answer the questions below, try to find **the earliest S.E.E.**, and the **most emotionally intense S.E.E.**

Those have the most impact on us negatively. (The S.E.E.'s that made the biggest negative impact on us have happened to us when we were small as everything has much more impact when you're a small child).

So when we clear those early and intense S.E.E.'s you will notice the most results. However, list all the other S.E.E.'s you find as well:

- If you had to live life over, which experience would you prefer to not have happened?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **rejected**?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **scared**?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **humiliated**?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **ashamed**?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **embarrassed**?
- What is the earliest memory you have of feeling **anxious**?
- What is the **most humiliating experience** you've ever had?
- What is the **scariest experience** you've ever had?
- When have you felt the **most ashamed** ever?
- What is the **most embarrassing experience** you've ever had?
- What are the **5 experiences you've had where you felt the most anxious**?
- When, where and why did you experience the most social anxiety (can be multiple S.E.E.'s)?
- When, where and why did you feel **judged** (can be multiple S.E.E.'s)?
- When, where and why have you felt **rejected** (can be multiple S.E.E.'s)?
- When, where and why have you felt **disapproved off** (can be multiple S.E.E.'s)?
- When, where and why have you felt **the most insecure** (can be multiple S.E.E.'s)?

Extra tip:

Finish the sentence below to make easy titles for your S.E.E.'s:

The time when...

- Wendy caught me cheating
- I failed to read out loud in class
- That guy called me a loser
- Etc

When you are ready with your S.E.E.-list for now, go to the video "Clearing a S.E.E" and first pick one of the less emotionally intense S.E.E. titles of your list and go through the video following the advice.

Then use the article "Clearing A S.E.E." to completely treat your negative memory, and then once you are familiar with the process and see the results and get confidence in the method, pick the earliest and most intense S.E.E.'s.

