

Confidence Builder – Test Anxiety

Find a place to sit where you won't have distractions. Get comfortable and gently close your eyes. Give yourself this time to focus and relax. First, scan your body for any areas of tension, or a sense of holding on. Scan your forehead...jaw...neck... shoulders...arms...hands...stomach...legs...and feet. If you do feel tension, in any parts of your body, try to send your breath to that area and let go of the tension.

Now focus on the gentle inhalation and exhalation of your breath. In...and out... If any worries or unwanted images come into your mind during this exercise, just let them be, and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Imagine that you are sitting down to study for a test. You really want to do well. Feel the desire to show all that you know, and to feel good about proving to yourself how well you can do. See yourself reviewing the material and remembering all the important information.

Now imagine yourself on the day of the test. You are feeling some anticipation, and want to get started. You want to show yourself what you know. Though you are a bit nervous, you are also feeling pretty confident. You imagine walking calmly into the classroom and sitting down.

Now, imagine that you are sitting in your chair. You notice what's going on around you. You hear the other students shuffling in their seats, and putting papers and bags away. You remind yourself that you don't need to think about anyone else right now. You return your attention to yourself. You feel the chair under you, and the hard desk. You feel the pen in your hand. You see the test being handed out.

You feel a hint of the old anxiety rising, which you expected. You say to yourself, *"It's just my anxiety; I can deal with it; it's not going to stop me from doing well."*

Now, the test is in front of you on the desk. Imagine scanning over the entire test calmly and confidently. You discover that you already know most of the answers and you feel prepared. You start to organize your time.

You say to yourself, *"I will continue to focus on one thing at a time and not let my anxiety take over. I've taken plenty of tests before and there is no reason I can't do this today. This is my chance to show what I know."*

Take a deep, slow breath and let it all out. Feel your body relax. In this state of calm, you are able to concentrate on the test and see things clearly. Now you begin writing the answers one by one. You are able to remember what you studied. The answers and ideas are pouring onto the pages with ease. Some of the questions are straightforward and you are able to answer them quickly. Some questions are more challenging and you take your time to gather your thoughts. You try your best and find ways to show what you do know.

Now you are finished and you hand in your test. You feel relieved and proud. You say to yourself, *“I got through it. I didn’t let my anxiety take over. I rode it out. And showed what I know.”* Now, enjoy the feeling of being done.

Now that you have finished this test preparation visualization, you are feeling more prepared to take your next test. You are confident that you will be able to manage your anxiety and focus on the test. You feel calm and settled, and ready to focus.

Now, slowly begin to return your awareness to the present. Wiggle your fingers...your toes. Feel your body waking up. Gently open your eyes and bring yourself back to this present moment. You are ready to return to your day feeling calm and focused.