

Improving performance

22

Picture someone you know who can do xxx better than you.

Imagine them doing it. Think how they feel as they do it.

Step into the picture – feel it/do it. Internalize those feelings and behaviours.

Now imagine someone 10 times better. Imagine them doing it <the technique>. Picture how they feel as they do it. Step into the picture and feel those feelings as they do it. Internalize those feelings and behaviours – and see yourself doing it.

(repeat)

Glove anaesthesia

26

As you go deeper ... all the feelings are going to disappear from your left hand.

You will not be able to feel anything in your left hand ... just think of your left hand becoming quite numb ... as if it has gone to sleep.

Gradually ... it is becoming more and more numb ... And all the feeling is going out of it.

And as I go on talking to you ... your left hand is beginning to feel colder and colder ... as if it were surrounded by ice.

Just picture your hand being packed round with ice ... and as you do so ... it is feeling colder and colder more and more numb and insensitive.

(After a brief interval during which these suggestions are repeated)

Your hand has now become so cold and numb ... that you are losing all feeling in it.

Soon, you will not be able to feel anything ...

In a moment or two ... I am going to count slowly up to three. When I reach the number three ... your hand will be completely insensitive ... and you will be able to feel nothing at all in your hand.

One ... colder and colder ... More and more numb and insensitive ... Losing all sensation of pain.

Two ... Your hand is now completely numb ... there is no feeling in it at all ... just as if it had gone to sleep.

Three ... Your hand is completely numb ... cold ... and insensitive ...

You just can't feel your hand at all because it is numb. Numb. No feeling. Numb. No feeling. No feeling.

And now ... you're going to transfer this lack of feeling to the part of your body that you desire to feel numb. So, on the count of three you're going to place your numb hand on the part of your body you want to feel numb. And in so doing, you'll transfer this numbness to that portion of your body.

Get ready now ... on the count of three, touch the part of your body you want to become cool and numb. Number one ... number two ... and number three. Release the numbness into another part of your body. Move your hand and transfer the numbness.

(Pause for a while.)

And you've now transferred the calming, soothing, numbing coolness, and you're physically feeling better and better and better. Settling down to normal and the coolness permeates the area. You experience wonderful relief. All the tension is gone from your body and mind and you breathe deeply and relax completely, feeling better and better. Calm, cool, soothing, numbing sensations permeates the area. Better and better. Numbness. Relief. Numbness. Relief.

The 5-minute headache cure

26

Firstly, remember that headaches and other pain could be an indication that something is wrong and a doctor should be consulted. With headaches, they could be caused by dehydration or injury.

Here's what to do:

- 1 Say to your client, "I know this is a strange question, but if this headache had a colour, what colour would it be?". Then ask, "if it had a shape (like a star or a ball, or whatever), what would it be?". Finally ask, "imagine the background has a colour that's different from the colour of the headache, what would that be?".
- 2 "Now gradually make the headache colour the same colour as the background so all you are left with is an outline of the shape. Visualize it happening now."
- 3 "Now make that shape smaller and smaller until it is just about to disappear."
- 4 "And now make it so small, that even if you try to look all over the background for it, you realize it has gone."
- 5 "Lastly, ask yourself, 'if there were a colour of healing, what would it be?' And then fill the background with that colour, top to bottom, right to left until it is completely full of that healing colour."

Sport performance script

46

<http://www.key-hypnosis.com/Self-Help/Visualization-Techniques/LV7-Sports-Visualisation-Script.php>

Now take a deep breath and just ... Haaa ... let it all go ...

Take another deep breath ... and just allow your mind to clear ... that's good.

INDUCTION HERE...

I want you to imagine a day ... a perfect day ... a day when you waken up ... and everything seems just right ... and you think about the day and you know that today is the day that has the most important race of your life ...

Today is the day when you are going to show everyone ... but especially yourself ... what you can do.

Today is the day when you have absolute certainty ... and you can feel it, you can feel it in your heart ... you can feel it in every heartbeat ... you can feel it in your mind ...

and as you think about it you can feel a wave of relaxation spreading from the middle of your forehead ... across your eyes ... and down your cheeks ... down through your jaw ... and your neck ... and your shoulders relax ... and your chest is relaxed and your tummy relaxes ... and you can feel a way going all the way down ... down through your thighs ... and your calves and your feet ... down your arms ... all the way down to your fingers ... Totally relaxed ...

And that is your Racing Relaxation ... that is the feeling you get when you swim a race ...

Allow your mind to wander off to the pool ... See the lanes ... the people ... see the other swimmers ... the officials ... the time keepers ...

None of that is important ... none of that bothers you ... Because you are there to win ...

And as you get onto that pool ... you start warming up ... and inside you are feeling loose ... and relaxed ...

And everything is prepared ... and you are fit and strong ... and all that training ... all that preparation ... is coming back to you ... you feel totally composed ... completely at ease ... completely relaxed ... and ready for what is to come.

And you start ... getting prepared ... into your costume ... and you are picking up your goggles and putting them on ... and you are getting into the water ... making sure you are in the right lane ...

and everything around you goes quiet ... and you focus on your breathing ... and you settle into the start position ... and your eyes are looking straight ahead ... that water is quite cooling ...

and in your mind you can see yourself exploding out of the start ... Relaxing along the first length ... tumble turning perfectly ... kicking while staying under water for so long ... and hurtling unstoppably towards the finish ...

and as you are thinking about that you are getting ready ... and something inside you settles ... falls into place ... and your focus is on the finish ...

and you are breathing gently and easily ... your muscles are like coils of steel ...

And the klaxon sounds ... and you are off ...

And you explode away from the start ... and it's like someone else is doing the swimming ... you feel that power in you ... feel that surge growing in you ... you are exploding down there ... cleanly and crisply away ... roaring down that lane ...

And the strokes start to lengthen ... and you are going ... sailing ... flying ...

and you come up to the first turn ... It is easy, effortless ... you turn, you kick, you stay under the water for an amazing length of time ... like you have been fired out of a slingshot ... hurled out of a catapult ...

and then you're on that final length ...

and as you go down that length ... you are building up speed, you are building up momentum ... everything is coming together ... you pour on the power ... you are shooting down that final length ... hurtling down there ... just being amazed at how well your body is working ... it is all happening automatically ...

The power goes on even more ... and you're powering away like an express train ...

And in your mind, you are relaxed ... as if there is a voice at the back of your head saying "This is easy. This is how it should be" And you feel fulfilled ... complete ...

And at that moment you know that that's exactly what you want to be doing ... exactly where you want to be ... hurtling towards that finish ...

On and on ... nothing in your mind ... just feeling your body respond ... focused on your body ... your legs are working perfectly ... fluidly ... easily ... Your arms are slicing through the water ... you're just eating up the length ... and all you do is to enjoy that feeling of flying ... all that training comes in automatically ...

hurtling towards the finish ... and that finish is ahead ... you are way out ahead ...

and suddenly you become aware ... there are people cheering ... applauding ... willing you on ... people at the poolside ... people in your mind ... and you don't think about it ... because you are still powering down that length ... right to the end ...

And you burst through to the end ... every stroke as if it were your first ...

And you've seen the flags and touched the finish ... and you stand and throw your arms wide ... and you throw your head back ... take in great gulps of air ... and you feel so good ... and you know that this is another winning race ...

and in your mind you can see more ... dozens of them ... one after the other ... and you feel that perfect surge ... as it is off the start and down the first length ...

It is as if you can see yourself from the poolside ... and you can see how you go turn effortlessly ... powerfully ... giant strokes eating up the water ... sailing on and on ... sailing past the others ...

Seeing the look of satisfaction on your trainer's face ... watching the time on the clocks! ... as you do another personal best ...

and you feel you could keep swimming forever ... on ... and on ... and on ... the feeling is so good ...

and it all just comes together then ... life can be so good ... that's what you were born to do ... that's what you want to do ... That's what you are doing ... the ultimate in self expression ... showing who you are through your body ... Pouring on the power and roaring down the lanes ... Hurtling through the turn ... Unstoppable ... again and again ...

Take a moment now and enjoy that feeling ... and build it up ... and allow that feeling to grow ... that certainty ... that pleasure ... on and on ...

and now imagine your next race meeting ... how is that transformed by being in that feeling? ... How does that change how you feel about your performance? Think through every aspect of the race while you are in that feeling ...

Allow your mind to dwell on every part of the race ... from the excitement of knowing today's the day ... to the pleasure of getting there ... getting changed and putting on the goggles ... holding your position at the start ... and just waiting ... that anticipation ... of the pleasure that is to come ... and knowing how good you feel ... and knowing that you can go through the water perfectly ... it is almost as if you are unaware of it ... and it is so easy ... so simple ... It is such a pleasure ...

And you deserve to succeed ... You can succeed ... You are succeeding now ... You know what success feels like ... You are a winner now ... You are a winner for ever.

You deserve to be a winner ... you are entitled ... to that pleasure ...

And you know that you can just reach out and take it now ...

And enjoy that feeling ... over and over ... and that's what running means to you ...

So now [ClientName] just take a deep breath ... and then let go ... that's right.

And another breath ... and allow your mind to clear ... that's good ...

And you can take as long as you want to come back to the present ... and as you do ... allow you mind to roam over your body ... becoming aware of your muscles ... your bones ... your ligaments ... your tendons ... becoming aware of how they all fit together ... as if you could massage them ... as if there was a hand cleaning and polishing ... firming and toning ... healing ... allowing your body to heal where it has to ... strengthen when it has to ... building up to peak performance ... and you can enjoy that too ...

And allow yourself to feel that ...feel your body making changes ... adjusting ... flowing ... learning ... until you are ready ...

Dickens process

48

The Dickens process is a favourite of Tony Robbins and is based on Charles Dickens' book *A Christmas Carol*, where Scrooge is shown his potential futures.

This process uses your client's conscious mind to visualize two potential futures and attaches feelings to both alternatives, which is what makes the better choice likely to succeed.

Here's what you get your client to do:

Imagine they are at a fork in the road: one path is them continuing to do what they do (eg smoking) and the other path shows what will happen if they change a habit or remove a limiting belief (eg stop smoking).

You ask your client to imagine they choose the 'no change' path, and get them to imagine how bad things will be in 1 year, 5 years, 10 year, and 20 years. So, for a smoker it will be examining their health and perhaps their bank account. Get them to imagine not being able to play with their children/grandchildren because they are out of breath when you move quickly, etc. They must imagine the worst case scenario. Then, perhaps, imagine them having to break the news to their children that they're dying of lung cancer and they won't see them grow up. Get them to really feel what that would be like – experience the pain. The lack of happiness.

Now visualize going back to that fork in the road, and this time, choose the path of change – where a bad habit or limiting belief has been left behind like an old pair of shoes. They've stopped smoking. Get them to imagine how they feel in 1 year, 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years. They are much healthier, more successful because they now have more energy and feel stronger. They get to meet their grandchildren and play with them. They can see themselves enjoying life to the full. Get them to imagine the best possible outcome and the most positive version of themselves. They should really see, hear, and feel it.

Then, come back to the present and that fork in the road and ask them which path in life they want to take. Because of how they felt at the end of each path, they are very likely to make the sensible choice.

Rehearsal/slow-motion rehearsal

58

Be specific about what you imagine

Be realistic about what you imagine

Perceptual positions

59

First position is the athlete. They are totally associated to the experience and seeing and hearing the world through their own filters.

Second position, eg another athlete, is the position for learning and modelling. They experience the world as if they are the other athlete. Do the activity the exemplar is doing.

You may be very surprised with the hunches and intuitions you get when you do the second position exercise above. At the end of the experience make sure you resume to clean first experiencing the world as you normally do.

Third position, eg the audience/crowd, is where they see and hear themselves from outside. It's useful for stepping back and getting insights into situations and seeing and hearing the bigger picture. The feelings are more objective and neutral. From memory they see and hear themselves performing the activity, eg watching a film. They stop at salient points and offer themselves verbal feedback for change.

What have they learned? Release any negative emotions.

Anchoring

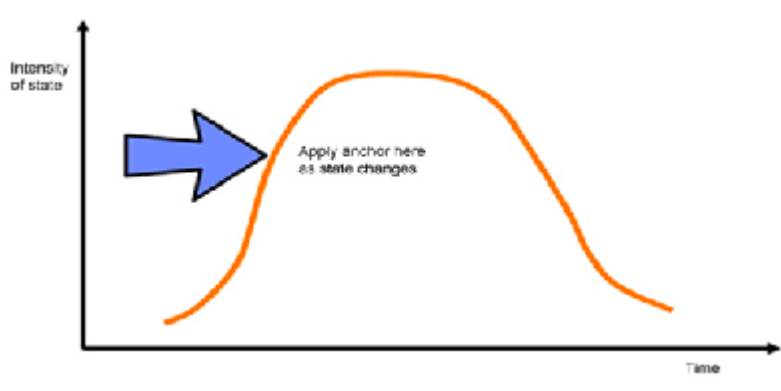
66

Our memories are usually associated with smells, sights, and sounds, etc. And that's why certain smells, sites, or sounds, can suddenly transport us back into a particular time in our memory. That smell of Sunday lunch reminds you of your granny's kitchen, or hearing an old song on the radio reminds you of being with your school friends, or a photo of a place reminds you of a happy holiday there – you get the idea.

But it's not just nice memories. Perhaps you over indulged on ouzo on holiday, and now the very smell of it makes you feel nauseous. And it works for repeated actions. As you go through a ceremony for the millionth time, the movements remind you of why you are in that place and how you expect to think and feel. The more an anchor is reinforced, the stronger it becomes.

So, anchoring is something that can take place quite naturally. And sometimes we can be unaware that an anchor has been triggered and we can be surprised to suddenly feel scared or happy or whatever.

According to NLP expert Tad James "Any time a person is in an associated, intense state, if at the peak of that experience, a specific stimulus is applied, then the two will be linked neurologically". When this happens, the 'state' (ie how a person feels) is anchored to the stimulus.



Knowing that this 'anchoring' phenomenon exists allows us to use it to help our clients.

Successful anchoring depends on four key things:

- 1 The intensity of the experience – when setting up the anchor, the client needs to be associated to the context (which means involved in the situation rather than observing from a distance). Ask them not just to see the special place, but to turn up the colour, contrast, and brightness to get the richest image, and similarly turn up the submodalities (jargon alert: see box below) of the other senses.
- 2 The timing of the anchor – the anchor should be installed at the peak of intensity of the resource state (resource state means the state you and the client want the client to be feeling, eg when that feeling of relaxation is greatest) and held for 5–15 seconds. See Figure 1.
- 3 The uniqueness of the anchor – it needs to be something that is unusual such as pinching a finger and thumb or pinching an ear lobe. If the anchor chosen isn't unique, the client is likely to fire it at other (unwanted) times, which will weaken its effect.
- 4 The replication of the stimulus – the anchor must work each time it is fired, and this must happen outside of therapy.

Importantly, the response needs to be pure and not polluted with other stray thoughts, emotions, etc. And the client can practice and reinforce the anchor when they are on their own.

And remember, you can anchor, say, that feeling of calm relaxation in your client with a kinaesthetic anchor (touching the ear), and a visual anchor (the letter inviting them for an interview), and an auditory anchor (when they hear the first few bars of a specific song being hummed). That way, there are three 'reminders' triggering the desired emotional response.

Let's suppose that the client is struggling with performance anxiety. They have to give a presentation and they are worried about how well they can do it.

Ask them first what stimulus they want to use. Some people prefer rubbing their ear, some like pressing their finger and thumb together, or holding their wrist. There are plenty to choose from. And it doesn't have to be just kinaesthetic, it's just it's often easier if it is "Close your eyes and think about what it feels like to be confident and in control". This is better than saying: "Can you remember a time when you were really confident?", because they may answer "No". Make sure your client is highly associated. You can do this by asking them to consider the sensory submodalities, eg: "As you experience those feeling of confidence and control ... go right into those feelings, float down into your body ... What are you seeing? What are you hearing? What are you feeling? And turn up the colours even higher. And the contrast ... and brightness ... turn those even higher to see that image really vividly. And notice all the positive sounds that are associated with being confident in this situation ... and turn up the volume on these ... and notice the timbre, tone, etc. Allow yourself to notice how you feel inside ... and, again, turn up all the positive feelings." You can add smell and taste and external kinaesthetic elements, if it seems relevant.

There's no need to ask what the client is seeing, hearing, and feeling, but you can if you want to.

Remember to notice their posture and facial expressions, which should show them being more confident (eg their chin may rise).

When your client is at the peak of their confident experience and all their senses and emotions are engaged, the anchor is applied. You say: "Now pinch your middle finger and thumb together" (or whatever the previously agreed anchor was). "And hold it" – you need them to maintain the stimulus for 10-15 seconds. You want the client to do this only for as long as they appear to be optimally associated with the desired state – and no longer. Then say, "and let go".

Ask: "What's your mobile phone number backwards?" This breaks state and stops the client associating the stimulus with an unresourceful state. (Jargon buster: the unresourceful state is the feeling of being nervous, etc.)

You can repeat these two stages a couple of times to ensure the anchor is linked to the resourceful state.

Now, ask the client to fire the anchor by pinching their finger and thumb together by saying: "I want you to pinch your finger and thumb together". Ask: "How does that feel?" It should immediately reintroduce the desired state of confidence. If it doesn't work or works quite weakly, you can repeat the installation phase to make it stronger.

Ask the client: "Imagine it's next week and you have to give your presentation. How do you feel?" Then get them to press their finger and thumb together and ask again: "Now how do you feel?" They should report feeling more confident.

Finally, ask the client: "Is there is any reason why the new anchor could be detrimental in any way?" This ecology check may identify any problems with the anchor, but typically everything should be OK.

7-11 breathing

67

1 – breathe in for a count of 7.

2 –breathe out for a count of 11.

Use diaphragmatic breathing. Continue for 5-10 minutes or longer and enjoy the calming effect on your mind and body.

Plus, counting to 7 or 11 is a distraction technique, taking your mind off your immediate concerns.

Peripheral vision relaxation

68

This is a great way of relaxing in situations that are becoming stressful. Usually, we use 'foveal' vision, where we concentrate on one point in front of us and notice all the details about that one point, and ignore everything around it. It's an area of the eye with photoreceptors that are mainly cones. 'Peripheral' vision, takes in everything that's happening in front and around us. It uses different light receptors in the retina and different neural pathways in the brain. Outside the fovea area (except for the blindspot), the photoreceptors are mainly rods. Foveal vision is linked to arousal of the sympathetic nervous system (fight and flight)) while peripheral vision is linked to parasympathetic arousal (rest and digest).

Here's what you do:

Just find a point straight in front of you and up a bit, and focus on it. Now gradually become aware of what's around it... and let your vision spread out in front of you to the corners of the room, as your eyes continue to look at that point and you become more and more aware of the periphery of your vision. If you stretch out a hand to one side of you, you might find the point on the edge of your vision where you only see that hand when you wiggle the fingers. Let your awareness also spread behind you...just let your senses of hearing, touch, smell, and spatial awareness spread out to the periphery as well...and notice how you feel changes...

With peripheral vision, your client should experience certain physiological changes, a change in their breathing from higher to lower in the chest, their face and jaw muscles relax, and sometimes their hands became warm. If they usually have an internal dialogue going on, they might notice it becoming quieter or stopping altogether.

Circle of excellence

68

The Circle of Excellence technique was originally developed by Dr John Grinder as a basic self-anchoring process that can be used to elicit, create, and stabilize desired states. It allows a person to access the resource or skill they need just when they need it.

Here's how to use it:

- 1 Imagine a circle on the floor, big enough to step into.
- 2 Get client to think of a future challenging situation.
- 3 They need to remember a time in the past when they dealt with a similar situation. Or imagine how they would like to deal with the situation. Or imagine a friend/film star/etc who could deal with the situation.
- 4 Add to the Circle of Excellence every resource that they imagine they will need.
- 5 Step into the circle and feel all those resources filling their body. (VAKOG).
- 6 Step out of the circle. Whenever they need those resources they can imagine stepping into the circle.

Urge surfing

68

This can be used to experience the cravings/urges in a new way and to 'ride them out' until they go away. Remember that urges pass by themselves. Imagine that the urges you feel are like ocean waves that arrive, crest, and subside. They are small to begin with, get bigger, and finally break up and dissipate.

- 1 Practise mindfulness.
- 2 Watch your breath. Don't alter it.
- 3 Notice your thoughts. Without judging them, feeding them, or fighting them, watch your thoughts, like bubbles, simply floating away. Gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- 4 Notice the craving experience as it affects your body.
- 5 Focus on one area where the urge is being felt and notice what is occurring.
- 6 Notice the quality, position, boundaries, and intensity of the sensation.
- 7 Notice how these change with the in-breath and out-breath.
- 8 Repeat the focusing process with each part of the body involved.
- 9 Use a helpful mantra, if you want, like, "this too shall pass" or "I can ride out this desire" to help replace unhelpful thoughts.
- 10 Be curious about what occurs and notice changes over time.