

Confidence at social events: Visualise feeling comfortable.

By Karen Rayl

If you really are anxious about attending a gathering, work at visualizing yourself as comfortable and confident.

Try this trick. Twice a day (preferably just before going to sleep at night and on awakening in the morning) imagine yourself at the social or work event feeling happy and relaxed and sharing witty repartee. Just take five minutes and sit quietly seeing the faces of people smiling and accepting you as a fine conversationalist. In your mind's eye see them paying attention to you and responding to what you say. Hear them actually saying what great company you are and watch people coming over to join you.

Make this visualisation as vivid as possible, hear people saying good things, see their approving faces and, most important of all, *feel* the great sense of being comfortable and accepted. YOU MUST PRACTICE THIS. This may sound strange, but it is a well-established technique for improving all kinds of human performance, such as modern healing, the performing arts and sports.

Control your visualizations. We humans visualize all the time but we just aren't aware that we do it and, therefore, we don't control it. Being uncomfortable in social and work gatherings can partly be due to negative images that make you feel bad about yourself. So, from today, control the images you make in your head. Stop immediately any negative pictures about what may go wrong or what mistakes you'll make and swap them for good pictures.

Pretend being confident. Pretending is a good trick to play on yourself. You are not forcing yourself to be more confident, you are only having fun by acting. In addition to your twice-daily five-minute visualizations, take some actions to show you are confident. For example, consciously remind yourself to stand up straight. Practice walking a little faster than you normally do and take bigger strides. Speak slightly louder and slower than you would normally. Start now to sit in the front rows at presentations and to ask more questions in meetings.

Visualize and pretend to be confident and you'll find yourself routinely acting with assurance in your life!

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