MENTAL TOOLS TO TAP YOUR FULL POTENTIAL

TOTAL Soccer Psychology

by Phil Davies
INTRODUCTION

Every sportsman and women knows the power of the mind. They’ve witnessed their own incredible performances that come from being in “the zone”. With abundant self-confidence nearly anything is possible. Without it you might as well hang up your boots.

The techniques in this book are designed to help you reach a state of peak performance – a feeling of alertness, confidence and energy. In many cases, the nerves, aggression or even fear that debilitate performance have to be eliminated first.

Many of the exercises below originate from the science of Neuro Linguistic Programming (or NLP for short). Developed in the early 1970’s, NLP techniques are now used widely by business people, therapists and athletes alike.

At the heart of NLP is the assumption that we all have our own unique view of the world based on our values, beliefs and past experiences. Even two people sharing or witnessing the same event can view and remember it very differently (just think about how opposing sports fans can have a very different perception of the same game!).

Imagine that two team mates play equally as well in a game of soccer (according to their coach). However, one player remembers only their mistakes, their misplaced passes and wayward shots. The other player, notorious for having a high self-opinion, recalls only their best moments. In their mind, they subconsciously exaggerate the number of well-timed tackles; a successful 30-yard pass is remembered as a 40-yard, defence splitting through ball and their mistakes are dismissed entirely. Which player is more likely to feel confident and self-assured next time out?

And which player is right? The overly pessimistic player or the player with an exaggerated sense of self-confidence? Or is it the coach who watches “objectively” from the sidelines?

In truth, no one is right or wrong and even the coach has his or her own unique perception of the game. From a sporting point of view the best strategy is to choose the perspective that helps to produce the best performance. NLP techniques allow you to do just that – consciously choose your own perception of past and future events. Fortunately, you don’t have to become egotistical and big headed to play with consistency and self-confidence!

The techniques in this book are not simply about positive thinking. Trying to affirm your own success from a state of fear or low self-esteem does little to bolster your self-confidence. Many of the activities will seem strange written down. They may also seem a little time consuming as you read them word for
word. When you apply them you’ll find that they are quick, fun and most of all, highly effective.
20 MENTAL TECHNIQUES
FOR SOCCER PEAK
PERFORMANCE
Technique 1 – Set SMART Goals

As boring as it may sound, effective goal setting is the first step to success in any field. You cannot hit a target if you don’t have one in the first place. In terms of your soccer performance it’s a good idea to set longer term goals that you might have for your career, intermediate term goals for the season and short term goals for each match.

The acronym SMART is a quick and easy way to set effective goals...

**Specific** – Clearly state what you want in the positive (not what you don’t want) and be as specific as possible. For example, it’s better to write “I will score at least 20 goals this season and be my team’s leading goal scorer” than “I want to score more often”.

**Measurable** – How will you know when you’ve accomplished your goal? If you want to have “the best season of your life” how do you determine that? Write the evidence you will see, hear and feel that confirms you have reached your objective. By the same token, if you want to “score at least 20 goals” then a short term goal (for a single match) might be “to have at least 6 shots with 4 or more on target” – something you can measure.

**Attainable** – The perfect goal should inspire you and allow you to believe that it’s possible. It may be a stretch, it may require hard work and dedication but you must believe that if you’re willing to pay the price you can achieve it. Only you can decide whether you are able and willing to do what it takes to get to where you want to be. A goal can be ambitious but still realistic as long as you truly believe it’s possible.

**Relevant** – It can be easy to become fixated on an outcome for the sheer sake of achieving it. It may be something you identified as important in the past and it’s now become the end in itself rather than a means to a larger outcome. Ask yourself if your goal is really relevant to your long-term objectives. Is it the most efficient use of your time and energy?

**Time-Based** – Set a time frame for your goals. It’s good to have several longer-term objectives, perhaps to play professionally or to secure a college scholarship. Set intermediate goals for the season – maybe to win player of the year, be your team’s leading goal scorer or play every game. Then set weekly goals for your training and for each match. These will be the most specific and also the most realistic. Don’t try to conquer the world in 7 days!

An example of a short-term goal (for an upcoming game) might be “to feel confident and full of energy”. You could make it more specific by using a scale of 1 to 10 – “I will feel confident and assured to at least a level 8 out of 10 where 10 is unshakeable self-confidence.” Write how you will know that you’ve achieved that state. Will you have more shots at goal? Attempt intricate skills? What will hear from team mates or your coach? Will you have more possession of the ball because you go looking for it?
Next jot down a series of actions you can take to help you achieve this goal. It could be to use some of the techniques below for 10 minutes every day this week. Another action step might be to ensure you have a suitable meal the night before and on the morning of the game. You might want to design a short pre-match routine that will help you get into a peak state.

**Technique 2 – Relaxation Technique**

Some players find it difficult to sleep the night before a game. On the morning of match day they also feel nervous and restless and this nervous energy can be very draining come kick off time. Here is a simple relaxation technique that will help you to feel calm yet alert. With practice you will be able to relax on cue...

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with your back straight or lie flat on your back. Make sure you won’t be disturbed for 10 minutes and you should turn off any phones, buzzers or beepers.

2. Close you eyes and take a deep breath. On the out breath relax your head, jaw and tongue. Consciously focus on these areas and notice if there’s any tension and release it. Breathe in slowly and as you breathe out again, relax your neck and shoulders in the same way.

3. Breathe in and repeat for your chest and upper back as you breathe out. Repeat for your right arm, then your left arm, then your abdomen and lower back, then your hips and buttocks, your left leg, your right leg and finally your left foot and your right foot. Systematically move down through your body relaxing each part as you breathe out. Keep your eyes closed.

4. When you are physically relaxed picture yourself on a beach. Feel the dry sand beneath your feet and notice how the texture changes as you walk closer to the shoreline. Notice a gentle breeze and then hear the sound of the waves. Notice the faint sound of seagulls in the background. Look out across the ocean to a distant horizon. Feel the warm sun on your shoulders. Take a walk along the beach noticing how it looks, sounds and feels.

5. After a few moments bring your attention back to your body and consciously relax. Feel as though your body is getting heavier, sinking into the ground. When you feel completely relaxed take a breath in and as you exhale say the words “Relax, Relax, Relax” in your mind. As you do notice how relaxed you feel. Breathe in again and as your exhale say the words “Relax, Relax, Relax” again and immediately notice how relaxed you feel. Repeat once more and open your eyes.
6. You may want to stretch as you stand up as this will help to move the blood through your body. If you repeat the entire process (which takes 10 minutes) every day for a week, you will learn to associate the internal command “Relax, Relax, Relax” with a feeling of deep relaxation. When you feel stressed or anxious (and you’re not in a position to lie down for 10 minutes) you can simply breathe out and say “Relax, Relax, Relax” and you will find easy to slip back into that calming state.

Technique 3 – Scrambling Negative Experiences

According to NLP one of the reasons we get nervous or worry about a particular event or circumstance is that our brains make overgeneralizations. For example, someone who has a fear of dogs might have had a previous negative experience of being attacked and now their brain, in attempt to protect them, has labelled all dogs dangerous. Although the response of fear at the sight of any dog might seem bizarre to most of us, it serves a practical purpose for that person. What does that have to do with sport?

So many athletes are hindered by fear or anxiety. In many cases it’s quite common – taking a penalty in a shoot out to decide a place in the final is nerve-wracking for most players. With such high levels of anxiety, muscles tighten, adrenalin courses through the body causing feelings of nausea or butterflies and judgement becomes clouded. It’s the ‘fight or flight’ response designed to get you as far away from the situation as quickly as possible. Obviously it’s a real hindrance to most sports that require some form of skill.

Most players have had negative experiences in the game – times when they felt like quitting the game entirely. Often these memories play over and over again like a stuck record or they become associated with playing soccer in general. Most people aren’t consciously aware of these thoughts. This technique is designed to ‘scramble’ any negative experiences you might have had. By scratching the record over and over it can never be played the same way again and won’t elicit the same feelings of fear and anxiety…

1. Sit in comfortable position and take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes and think back to a time when you failed in soccer – it might be an exceptionally bad game that left your confidence severely shaken.

2. See the event in your mind’s eye and play it like a miniature movie. Don’t be concerned with recalling the exact sequence of events – just pick out any particular negative moments that stand out for you – something someone said, a missed goal for example. Run your movie through for a minute or so and pause it at the end.

3. Now rewind that movie at triple the speed. See all the people moving backwards, any words they said spoken in reverse going back into their mouths. See the ball travelling backwards quickly. Make it amusing.
When you reach the start pause the movie again. Don’t try to be perfect, the idea is to have fun with it.

4. This time run it forward at triple the speed but make the film black and white. See everyone moving quickly like they do in old movies. Listen to their high-pitched voices. Run it through until the end.

5. Now run it backwards, this time add all kinds of wonderful and weird colors into the mix. Put ballerina skirts on the opposition; make all the people around you tiny! Give them Mickey Mouse ears. And as you rewind back to the beginning play some fairground music in the background.

6. Repeat again, running it forwards. This time make it faster. If anyone said anything to upset you, shrink them down, pick them up in the palm of your hand, see them cowering and smile at them. Set them down and continue the movie. Run it backwards and forwards, over and over, getting faster and faster. Add in as many crazy images and events in as you can think of.

7. When you’ve finished stand up and open your eyes. Walk around for a moment then think back to that negative experience. Notice how you feel about it now. If you gone through the process correctly, chances are some Mickey Mouse ears will pop up or you just won’t be able to picture the scenario properly.

For particularly negative sporting experiences you may want to run this technique several times over a few days.

**Technique 4 – Deal with Difficult Opponents (or Team Mates)**

Are you the kind of player that gets intimidated by the opposition? Perhaps there is a particular player on your own team who makes you feel inferior and deflated before you even start the game. Here’s a simple technique that builds on the last one to help you deal with opposing competitors...

1. Think of a specific opponent or team mate who intimidates you. Picture how they look, how they move, they way they speak.

2. Now shrink them down and place them in the palm of your hand and say something amusing to them. Put them back down and watch them return to normal size. As with the technique before alter your mental perception by adding amusing characteristics to the person – whatever comes to mind. Try to address the way they look, move and sound. The more bizarre you can make it the more effective the exercise will be.
3. The key to making this exercise work is to repeat over and over until you can no longer perceive the person in the same way again. You may want to do this exercise a few times a day for 3-4 days.

Some soccer players become very frustrated with referees and officials. They can’t help but become agitated by decisions they feel are incorrect, especially if it costs their team a goal or even a match. The trouble is, when your energy and focus is on the referee and not on the game, you can’t perform to the best of your ability. In fact, as you get angry at a poor decision so your performance is negatively affected, which leads to even more frustration and so the downward spiral continues. Use this technique to remove or lessen your response to referees...

1. Imagine a referee (a specific person is not important) and see them giving a bad decision. You could also choose a past memory.

2. Now see yourself trying to reason with the official, pointing out their error. This referee is particularly obnoxious and arrogant – someone who would normally cause a great deal of anger.

3. Now run that movie through the same process as in technique #3 until you can smile (or even giggle) at the thought. You might want to finish by imagining a referee giving a poor decision in a future game and then seeing yourself reacting coolly, even calming your team mates down.

Technique 5 – Anchoring

Do you know the story of Pavlov’s dogs? A Russian Scientist named Ivan Pavlov noticed that dogs salivated every time they were fed. This was a natural response to the stimulus of food. He then rang a bell every time the dogs were fed until after short while just by ringing the bell he could trigger his dogs to salivate. The response of salivating, which characterized the feeling of hunger, had been linked or anchored to the sound of the bell. What is more interesting is that he could cause the dogs to salivate even after they had just been fed. Pavlov had conditioned his dogs to link a stimulus (the bell) and response (feeling hungry), which were not logically connected in any way. Humans are no different.

Have you ever used a perfume or aftershave that maybe you haven’t used for a while and it suddenly reminds you of a specific holiday or event? Or maybe a piece of music reminds you of specific memories each time you hear it? Does the flag of your country or the strip of your favourite sports teams evoke a certain feeling each time you see it? These are all examples of anchors. You don’t consciously think about what each of the stimuli means to you – they just trigger certain emotions and memories.

You can use anchoring to literally feel confident or relaxed or motivated on cue. By getting yourself into a particular emotional state and they repeating a
unique trigger over and over, the two become linked or anchored together. Here’s the basic process for creating an anchor...

1. Identify the state you want to elicit on cue. It could be a feeling of confidence, motivation or relaxation. We’ll use confidence in this example.

2. Choose a trigger that will act as your anchor. It should be something unique that you’re not likely to do out of habit. A good example is squeezing your thumb and middle finger together on each hand. Or you might make a fist as you say, “Yes!” in your mind.

3. Think back to a time when you felt really confident. In your mind’s eye relive that experience. Make the images big and bright. See it from the perspective of your own eyes (rather than watching yourself from a distance). Hear what you recall hearing at the time. Notice any smells or tastes if there are any. The more graphic you can make the mental experience, the easier it becomes to get back into the same mental state. It helps if you stand up and actually move your body in the same way. Perhaps stand with the same posture and gesture with the same certainty.

4. If you can’t recall a suitable experience then think of someone you admire. See them performing with total self-confidence. See how they move. Notice their posture and facial expression. Now step into their body as if putting on a new suit of clothes. Notice what they hear and how they feel. In a sense, act as if you are them.

5. As you begin to feel more and more confident, right at the peak of the experience fire your anchor – squeeze you thumb and middle fingers tighter for example as your say “Yes!” with a strength and certainty in your mind.

6. Now think of another time when you felt confident and performed exceptionally well. Relive that experience and right at the peak fire your anchor.

7. Repeat with the same or different memories 5 or 6 times every day for a week. Test your anchor by breaking out of your confident state (i.e. walk around, watch the TV etc.) and then fire your trigger. You should begin to feel confident or at least find it easy to get into state of confidence.

8. Use your anchor before and during a game or just before any dead ball situation like a free kick or penalty.
Technique 6 – Rehearse Your Skills

Practice does not make perfect – practice makes permanent. Unfortunately, for many players, physical practice only further ingrains bad habits and poor technique. The problem compounds if they get frustrated or disheartened in training sessions. Remember from ‘anchoring’ above that the brain is quick to link things up that occur together repeatedly – in this case it could be the site of a soccer ball and a feeling of low self-esteem.

Mental rehearsal allows you to practice a skill or even something more general like success, perfectly, every time. The brain cannot tell the difference between a vividly imagined event and a real event. This is reason why scary movies and nightmares can cause physical responses associated with fright. If you’ve ever been involved in a heated argument or confrontation that upset you, chances are you played that event over and over during the rest of the day. You will also feel the same feelings of stress as your body continues to release hormones into your blood stream - all in response to a thought.

Scientific studies into various sports have shown that a group of athletes using only mental imaginary can develop motor skills as effectively as a group who practice physically. And because the brain appears to remember every single event (successes and failures), mental rehearsal may take less time because in your head you succeed on every occasion! Here’s how to use mental rehearsal…

1. Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down. Take a few deep breaths and relax. If you have mastered technique #2 then now is an ideal time to use it. Mental rehearsal is difficult when your mind is racing. Close your eyes.

2. Choose a specific skill or ability to work on. It might be taking free kicks or shooting at goal or tackling for example. Be as specific as possible however. Concentrate on one type of shot for example – perhaps a lob shot over the keeper’s head or a volley from a wide cross.

3. Imagine a venue for you mental practice. It should be somewhere you are familiar with and a place you feel comfortable with. It could be your home ground or simply a local playing field. Picture the venue in detail. Notice the length of the grass. See the surrounding landscape. What is the weather like? Who is with you helping you develop your skill? What are you wearing?

4. Now run through the actual skill in your mind’s eye as though you are looking from your own eyes (as opposed to seeing yourself from a distance). Suppose you want to work on your headers at goal. See the ball coming in from the wing. Feel your feet shuffling for position on
the ground. You might say to yourself “eye on the ball” as you watch it travel towards you. Feel the impact with your head – a sweet contact. Then see the ball fly into the goal exactly where you aimed to place it. Have a goalkeeper at your session too and watch them desperately trying to reach your perfectly placed header.

5. DO NOT try and be perfect with this. Don’t try to notice every single intricate detail. In real life the brain can only consciously perceive two or three things at once. When you play for real you don’t notice every little detail – only certain things stick in your memory. Take the same approach to mental rehearsal. Try to complete the skill in what you feel is real time rather than slow motion.

6. Now repeat the skill. This time vary it slightly. Perhaps the ball comes in from a different angle. Or maybe you start your run from a different position. Just as no two events would be identical in real life practice nor should they be in your mind.

7. Continue until you have completed about 10 perfect skills – 10 perfect headers in our example. Next, you might want to imagine the ball being crossed in from the other wing and repeat the process. Similarly, if you are practising a certain type of shot, complete 10 with one foot and 10 with the other foot.

8. Finally, in your mind complete 10 skills in game situations. Imagine playing at different venues against different opposition. See what you would see. Hear what you would hear. Feel what you would feel. As you successfully complete the skill this time imagine the reaction of team mates, coaches and anyone else watching. Enjoy the sense of satisfaction and achievement as you imagine being successful.

The brain is very good at generalizing and adapting. You don’t have to practice in real life from every conceivable angle in every imaginable weather condition on all different pitch surfaces just to improve. Neither is that necessary when rehearsing mentally. Keep this exercise fun by changing the scenario or the conditions slightly each time.

Technique 7 – Mental Role Modelling

This technique expands on the one before. It is an excellent way to accelerate your mastery of any new skill. Essentially, you pick a role model – someone who you know is the best at performing the skill you wish to master, and copy their movements. Here is the process...

1. Think of a skill you would like to master – taking free kicks at goal for example.
2. Next, think of someone whom you admire and who is considered one of the best in your chosen skill. If you can obtain some video footage of them it makes the technique even more effective.

3. Watch the video footage of the skill several times closely. It might be David Beckham taking one of his famous free kicks for example.

4. Now close you eyes, take a few deep breaths to relax and watch your role model perform the skill – as though you are watching from a distance. Pay attention to the surroundings as well as the actual player you are modelling. Run this mini movie several times in your head.

5. Now starting from the beginning of the skill, mentally pause the movie in your mind. Imagine stepping into their body like putting on a new suit of clothes. Look down at your hands and feet as you realise that you are inside the body of your role model. Repeat the skill from this new perspective and notice how it feels, what you see and hear. Run through this 10 times.

The human brain is very good at picking up subtle changes in the body language of other people. Even if you are not consciously aware of it, you will be able to recognise the movement patterns and posture that are characteristic of your role model. Using this technique, you can transfer what you see on the outside to what it feels like internally and that will help you perform the skill just like them!

Technique 8 – Focusing on The Game

Most people talk to themselves – at least internally! It’s a fundamental part of thinking, whether it’s mentally running through a specific task or as part of daydreaming. Internal dialogue as it’s known, can often become so habitual that we don’t even notice it until we stop and pay attention.

The game lasts 90 minutes with frequent lulls and breaks. Unlike a sport such as tennis where players have to concentrate every second the ball is in play, soccer players can easily succumb to lapses in concentration. Their minds wander. They begin to focus on irrelevant thoughts such as what they plan to do later that day. Even thinking about what your team is doing wrong and how the tactics need to change is a distracting thought. Some players get a song in their heads they just can’t stop from playing!

Peak performance or playing in the ‘zone’ occurs when you are completely focused on the task at hand. Nothing else matters. The noise and interference of distracting thoughts is completely blocked out.

How can you achieve this state of concentration and focus? You must be proactive with your thinking and internal dialogue. That simply means rather than letting random thoughts pop into your head, you should have a few
mental cues to concentrate on during the game. One of the most effective ways is to ask yourself a series of questions throughout the match…

- Where is the ball right now?
- Where is the ball going next?
- Where is my marker?
- Where is the best position for me to be right now?

Write down a 3-4 questions and memorize them. Set a goal for one of your games just to notice your thoughts. If you find your mind wandering, if you start talking to yourself about something irrelevant, get your focus back on the game by asking your questions.

Technique 9 – Manage Internal Dialogue

Sometimes our internal dialogue is much more damaging than simply distracting our focus and attention. Many players criticize themselves over and over again. That nagging voice in their head asks, “Why I am so useless?” or “Why do always feel nervous?” or it says, “I’m just not good enough. I feel really tired and unfit”. This negative self-talk can be very destructive. It’s like a self-fulfilling prophecy as it puts the player in a negative frame of mind, which ultimately leads to a bad performance.

The best way to deal with this is to interrupt the voice in much the same way as you interrupt images in technique # 3…

1. Think of some of the negative things you say to yourself when you play soccer – particularly if you make a mistake. It might be something like “I just can’t do this.” or “Why do I keep mis-kicking the ball?” If you can’t think of anything specific make a note to pay attention next time you are playing or training.

2. Say the phrase in your mind in silly voice. Say it in a really high-pitched, nasal voice or talk like Scooby Doo for example. Say it over and over – at least 10 times.

3. Now repeat this for the next phrase and so on.

4. As soon as you notice yourself saying something negative to yourself during a game, immediately say it in that silly voice. You will find it very difficult to take yourself seriously and hence it won’t have the power to make you feel bad!

Destroying negative self-talk is great step towards playing with greater confidence and energy. Take it a step further and develop a list of positive affirmations that inspire you. An affirmation is simply a statement about who you are or what you plan to do. For example, “I am an outstanding player and
I am right at the top of my game” or “This game is easy, I feel so fit and full of energy”.

The first key to affirmations is that they must mean something to you. Don’t use perfect grammatical English if that isn’t how you speak. Pick phrases that inspire you – three or four is enough. Memorize them and then use them often during the course of a game.

The second key point to making affirmations work is to say them to yourself with a strength and certainty. Don’t just repeat them in a mundane, monotone voice. Put some enthusiasm and energy into it!

Finally, one of the best affirmations is to say, “I am…” and then add the name of someone you really admire that plays the game. As you say “I am…,” adding the name of the player, act as if you are actually that player. Move the way they do, talk to team mates in the same way you think they would. Really try to mimic your role model.

Technique 10 – Change Your Beliefs

Belief is a powerful thing. You’ve probably heard the story of Roger Bannister and the four-minute mile. As soon he broke through what was considered an insurmountable physical barrier, hundreds of people all around the world matched his achievement in the following few years. The barrier was actually one of belief.

You many not recite your beliefs every time you step on the soccer field. Some of them you will accept so unconditionally that you may not even be aware they exist. And the less aware of them you are the greater the impact they will have on your performance.

No amount of physical practice or even mental rehearsal can compensate for a negative belief. You might say “I really want to win more headers” or “I really want to score more goals” but if you believe you are too small or you can’t finish under pressure then to all intents and purposes, you are right.

Remember, our beliefs are not necessarily true – even though we really believe they are. They are simply our perceptions of the world – generalizations based on pieces of “evidence” we have picked up along the way. What’s interesting is that life is filled with so much “evidence” that we could literally choose to believe whatever we like.

Here’s one effective method for changing negative beliefs…

1. Identify any negative beliefs that don’t support your game. It doesn’t matter how ‘true’ you think they are, just add them to your list.
   Examples include:
   • I’m too small
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- I’m not good enough
- I’m no good with my left/right foot
- I always get nervous before a game
- I’m not fit enough. I’m not as fit as the others
- I’m too old
- I always mess up in trials
- I never play to the best of my ability
- I can’t play in that position
- I’m really injury prone

2. Choose one belief to work on and then think of a positive belief that will support your game. It should be something you can at least accept. For example if you hold the belief “I’m too small” rather than saying “I’m really tall” which you won’t accept, you might choose to believe “I’m good enough to play against any opposition” or “I use my physical strength and determination better than any player I know which is why I stand out”.

A good way to state a positive belief is to suggest improvement. So for example, instead of saying “I’m easily good enough to get a scholarship” you might want to state “I’m good enough to get a scholarship now and every day I’m getting better and better.”

3. Think of the evidence that backs up your old belief. What past experiences support the belief that you can’t play in a particular position for example? Recreate that memory and scramble it as in technique #3. Now think of another piece of evidence and do the same. Once you have scrambled all the memories and evidence that supports your old belief you can replace it with a new, empowering belief.

Sometimes a belief might be based on something other than personal experience. If you believe you are too old for example, it might be based on things you’ve read or heard rather than someone telling you, you were too old. In this situation just imagine a few scenarios that epitomizes your belief. Imagine being rejected because of your age. Imagine well-meaning friends telling you to give up and focus on something else because you’re too old. Then scramble those thoughts.

4. Now think of some evidence that backs up your new belief. This can be based on specific memories or you might want to create new scenarios in your mind. State your new belief to yourself and then run through the evidence in your mind in vivid detail. For example, if your new belief is “I always perform in pressure situations and I love the challenge of a trial” then see yourself performing superbly well in a trial. If you’ve ever performed well in any kind of trial in the past, even when you were very young, recreate that memory in vivid detail.

5. Spend the next few days stating your new belief to yourself and then vividly imagining evidence that supports it.