Walk into any room as yourself

Done Doubting Yourself

How Self-Hypnosis Rebuilds Your Confidence

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A twelve-year-old boy is sitting across from a clinical psychologist who used to be a Navy officer, and the man is holding a shiny metal ball on a chain, swinging it slowly like a metronome.

The boy is still years away from the big titles.

But over the next few years that same man walks beside him as his caddie while he wins three national amateur championships in a row, and when the boy turns professional, other players and caddies start whispering about the two of them and their use of hypnosis.

The boy was Tiger Woods.

Watch him before a big shot and you'll see him close his eyes for a long, still second or two.

A player who trained with the same psychologist says he sees that coach in Tiger every time he does it.

And when the psychologist was asked what made Tiger great, he didn't talk about the swing.

He said it was his ability to stay calm when the pressure was at its worst.

Tiger trained his mind before he had anything to feel confident about, and the confidence followed him onto every course he played.

Now think about the moments where your own confidence goes missing. The meeting where you know the answer and stay quiet. The raise you still haven't asked for. The friend who talks over you again while you smile and let it go.

The night you spend replaying one awkward sentence until two in the morning.

I wrote this for the woman who is done with that.

You're capable, you hold a lot together for a lot of people, and you're tired of feeling small inside a life that looks fine from the outside.

I want you walking into those rooms feeling the way you've always wanted to feel, and I want that to start this month.

So here's what I believe.

I believe you don't need years of digging through your past before you're allowed to feel confident, because the women who change fastest **practise a calm, steady state and collect proof that they can**, both in the same week.

I believe self-hypnosis is one of the most underused tools a woman can have.

It's a focused daydream that you steer yourself, and you stay in charge the whole time.

And I believe the way you talk to yourself matters almost as much as anything you've ever achieved.

That last belief comes straight from the research.

In a study of 335 adults, talking yourself into something was nearly as strong a source of confidence as having already done it, and more than twice as strong as watching someone else do it.

In a trial of about 95 women, eight weeks of short self-hypnosis sessions plus simple self-care raised their self-esteem, and their anxiety and low mood dropped too.

And across more than 84,000 people using a hypnosis app, stress fell after every one of their first ten sessions.

In the pages ahead you'll get:

- • Why the most capable women often feel the least confident, and why your age is on your side

- • The one source of confidence that beats role models, pep talks and being told you're great
- • A short self-hypnosis session you can run on your bed or in the car before a big moment
- • How to listen to a hypnosis audio so you get nearly twice the effect from it
- • A two-minute daily habit that builds proof your mind can't argue with
- • Words to say to yourself that your mind actually believes
- • How the best athletes and performers rehearse the hard moment so it can't throw them

You don't have to overhaul your life to begin.

The calming session takes about twelve minutes lying down, and the daily habit is one small brave act before lunch.

By the last page you'll have a session you can run whenever you need it, a daily habit that piles up real proof, and a voice in your head that's finally on your side.

Tiger had his second with his eyes closed before every shot. Let's go and find yours.



Why the capable one is so often the one who doubts herself

There's a pattern so common it has had a name since the 1980s: the superwoman.

She's brilliant at work, and she's the one everyone calls when something needs sorting.

From the outside she's fine, and "I'm fine" comes out of her mouth on autopilot.

But inside she feels unseen, and she can't explain the loneliness, because everything around her looks handled.

Your strength is real. The trouble is that it slowly stopped being a choice.

When people come to rely on you never needing anything, saying what you need starts to feel like breaking a rule.

One woman described spending her late teens living "like an apology", saying sorry for everything and keeping everyone comfortable no matter how she felt.

Her turning point came when she got sick of denying her own needs.

She started saying her opinions out loud, put herself at the top of her own list, and spoke up straight away when someone was disrespectful.

She also noticed something that freed her: people can't treat you the way you want if you've never once told them.

Then there's the voice that says you're behind.

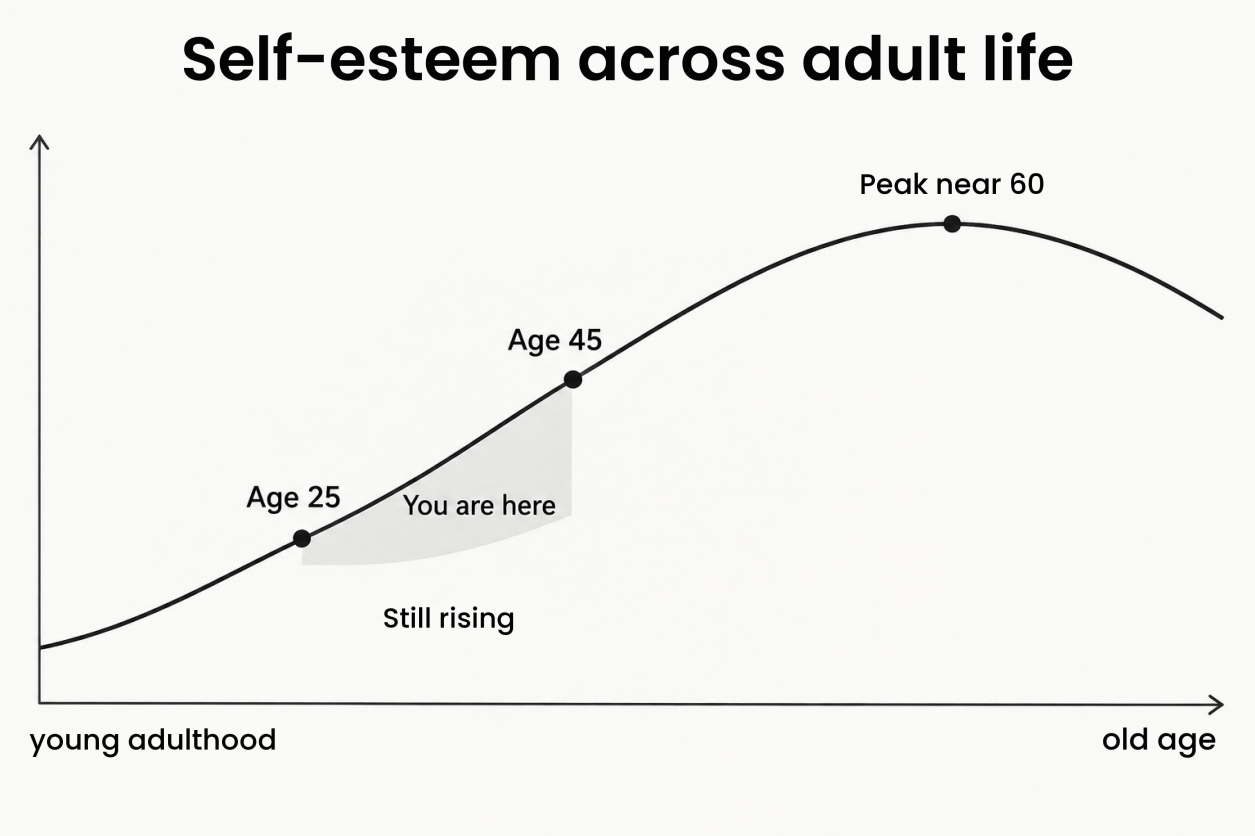
Researchers call it the social clock, which means the unwritten timetable for when you're meant to marry, have children and have your career sorted.

Women who felt they'd missed that timetable have reported feeling less capable, full of self-doubt and lonely, even when nothing else was wrong.

So here's a fact worth keeping in your pocket.

Large studies that follow people across their lives find that **self-esteem rises through adulthood and peaks at around 60**, and the curve is the same shape for women as for men.

If you're between 25 and 45, you're standing on the climbing part of that curve, and a large German study found people in their late twenties, thirties and early forties scored highest of all.



If you're between 25 and 45, the curve is still climbing for you, and you can speed it up.

Where confidence really comes from

Most of us were told confidence comes after the achievements: get the promotion, lose the weight, finish the degree, and then you'll feel good.

That's partly right, because doing things really does build confidence.

What's missing is how much of it you can build before the big win, and how quickly.

A 2025 study of 335 adults ranked the sources of confidence against each other. Having done the thing yourself came first.

Close behind it, in second place, came **talking yourself into it**.

Watching other people succeed counted for less than half as much, and encouragement from other people came last of all.

That means the two strongest levers are both in your hands: what you do, and what you say to yourself about it.

You can stop waiting for someone else to make you feel capable.



The two biggest sources of confidence are the two you control yourself.

One set of experiments shows how fast this moves.

Women scored lower than men on a set of spatial puzzles, and the reason turned out to be simple: they had skipped more of the questions.

When everyone had to attempt every question, the women matched the men.

And when people were told they'd done very well, both women and men did much better on the next test.

So the women always had the ability. The gap closed the moment they had a go, and a little belief pushed everyone higher still.

That's why everything here is built on two things: more attempts, and a mind that's ready for them.

Why self-hypnosis works so well on low self-esteem

Self-hypnosis is a deeply relaxed, highly focused state that you guide yourself into.

It feels like a lovely daydream with the volume turned up on one idea.

You stay aware the whole time, you can stop whenever you like, and nobody can make you do anything.

Here's why that matters for confidence.

Your brain has an alarm system whose job is to spot anything that might be a threat and grab your attention with it.

In low self-esteem, that alarm goes off at everything: a look across the table, an unanswered text, your own reflection.

Brain scans show that hypnosis turns that alarm system down, so your attention stops being hijacked and a new idea finally has room to settle in.

In a trial of about 95 women, eight weekly sessions that each ended with a 15-minute hypnosis exercise, plus small self-care tasks at home, raised self-esteem clearly while the women on the waiting list stayed where they were.

Their anxiety and low mood dropped too, and a third of the self-esteem gain came from becoming calmer and more present in the moment.

For anxiety, a review of 17 controlled trials found hypnosis had a strong effect, and it worked best when it was combined with other things the person was doing for themselves.

In a survey of about 700 hypnosis practitioners around the world, building confidence was one of the uses most of them rated as highly effective.

That's why this guide pairs the sessions with action.

Hypnosis gets you calm and ready, and what you do afterwards gives your mind the proof it needs.

> **Worried you can't be hypnotised?** About two-thirds of adults can go into hypnosis to some degree. In the data from more than 84,000 app users, how easily someone went under made almost no difference to how much their stress dropped, so you don't need to be a natural to get the benefit.



The Float Before the Swimmer: your calm-first session

A lifeguard never jumps straight onto someone who's thrashing in the water, because a panicking swimmer will pull them under.

They make sure they're steady and floating first, and only then do they reach for the person in trouble.

The Float Before the Swimmer works the same way. You calm your body first, and only then do you reach for the fear. It's natural to go

straight to the scary meeting or the hard conversation in your head, because that's the thing you want to fix, but then the fear grabs you before you're ready. When your body is already calm, the fear meets something steady and loses its grip.

This order comes from one of the world's leading hypnosis researchers, who starts with the body because it's the one thing a frightened person can control.

He once guided a journalist through it on camera.

The man was so scared of flying that he'd taken medication to get on planes and had even walked off flights.

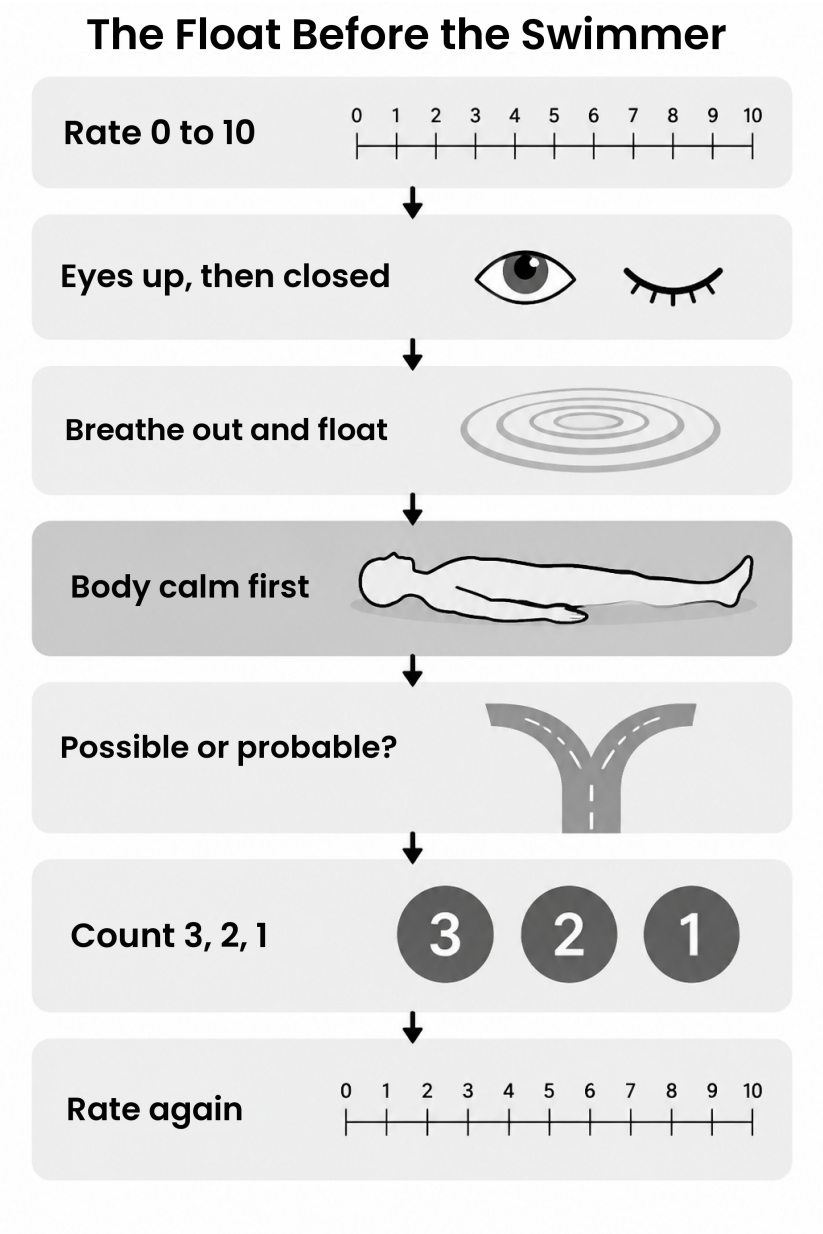
Picturing the plane door closing scored a 2 or 3 out of 10 for him beforehand, and after one session it was down to between 0 and 1.

So when you settle your body first, the fear is much smaller by the time you look at it.

How to do it (about 10 to 15 minutes, sitting or lying somewhere quiet):

1. Rate how stressed you feel right now from 0 to 10, and remember the number.
2. Without moving your head, look up as high as you can. Then close your eyes while you're still looking up.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth, let your eyes relax, and let your body feel like it's floating, in a warm bath, a still lake or drifting in space. Choose whatever place feels safe to you.
4. Stay with your body for a few minutes. With each breath in, take in strength, and with each breath out, think calm. Notice what you'd hear, feel and smell in your safe place.
5. Once you feel heavy and quiet, bring in the situation that worries you. Ask yourself what's possible and what's probable. It's possible your mind goes blank, but it's far more probable you'll say the first sentence and the rest will follow.

6. Now picture yourself doing it well, in as much detail as you can, and say your confidence words to yourself as you watch it happen.
7. Count yourself out. On 3, get ready. On 2, roll your eyes up behind your closed lids. On 1, open your eyes, let your hands float down, make a fist and open it.
8. Rate your stress again from 0 to 10. The drop is your sign it's working.



The fear only comes in at step five, once your body is already steady.

How to listen so a hypnosis audio really works

Lots of women have pressed play on a hypnosis track, lain there waiting for something dramatic to happen, and decided it didn't work.

That's an easy conclusion to reach, but how and when you listen makes a big difference to what you get from the same audio.

The app data from more than 84,000 people showed something useful.

Longer sessions of about 11 to 13 minutes, where people answered prompts out loud or tapped the screen, brought stress down nearly twice as much as short tracks they just listened to.

So **join in**. When the audio asks you to picture something, picture it on purpose. When it asks a question, answer it in your head or out loud.



Answering the prompts, even silently, gives you far more from the same session.

Timing matters just as much.

The calm from a session shows up right away, so the women who get the most from it use it **before the moment**: in the car before the interview, at lunch before the afternoon presentation, the night before the conversation they've been dreading.

Bedtime listening is lovely, and the session just before the hard thing is the one that changes how it goes.

As for how often, hypnosis therapists often ask people to practise for 10 to 15 minutes twice a day, and more on hard days.

Some give every client a recording to play daily for the months they're seeing them. And go easy on yourself while you're under.

Trying too hard to make something happen keeps the trance light, so let it be the gentle daydream it is.

> **If you only change one thing:** listen just before something that scares you, and answer every prompt in your head. Do that a few times and you'll feel the difference in the room itself.

The Morning Brick: proof your mind can't argue with

Self-hypnosis gets you calm and ready. **The Morning Brick** gives your mind the evidence.

Every day you lay one brick, which means you make one small attempt you'd usually avoid, write down exactly what you did, and then replay that real moment in your next session.

It works because doing the thing yourself is the biggest source of confidence there is.

On top of that, a large review of self-esteem programmes found the biggest gains came from the ones that gave people specific feedback on what they'd actually done.

Remember the puzzle experiments too: the women caught up the moment they attempted more questions.

The Morning Brick is how you attempt more questions in your own life, one small one at a time.

Write down exactly what you did. "I'm brave" is easy for your inner critic to argue with.

"I asked for the deadline to move to Friday and gave two reasons" is a fact, and facts are very hard to argue with.



One small brick laid: finishing her point instead of letting it go.

How to start

1. Each morning, pick one small thing you'd usually dodge: speaking once in a meeting, sending the email you keep drafting, or returning something that's wrong.
2. If someone talks over you, try the line one woman used to stop living like an apology: "Oops, I don't think you realised, I hadn't finished my point yet."
3. Afterwards, write one line about exactly what you did, with no comment on your character.
4. When you can, ask someone you trust a specific question, such as "What worked in how I put that?"
5. In your next self-hypnosis session, once your body is calm, replay that real moment from start to finish and let yourself feel it again.
6. You'll know it's working when the bricks start to feel smaller and you find yourself picking bigger ones.

Words your mind can grow into

Affirmations work beautifully when they're built the way the people who've succeeded with them build them.

Choose a specific belief, word it so your mind can grow into it, and say it with feeling every day, ideally while you're in hypnosis and picturing yourself living it.

That's when your mind is most open to a new idea.

Two kinds of wording slide in easily. The first is progress wording, which describes the direction you're heading in.

The second is identity wording, which describes the kind of woman you are. Here are a few to borrow or rewrite in your own words:

- I'm becoming a woman who says what she needs, and every week it comes out more easily.

- I'm the kind of woman who finishes her point.
- My needs count as much as anyone's at this table.
- I'm learning to let people see the real me, and the right people like what they see.
- Each time I speak up, my voice gets steadier.

The women who get the most from their words add one more move: they talk to themselves by name or as "you", the way a good coach would.

"Katy, you've handled harder rooms than this. Say the first sentence."

Speaking to yourself like that gives you a little distance from the fear, and it's the self-talk that sits second only to real experience as a source of confidence.

For the big moments, there's a quick version that top researchers have tested.

Just before something stressful, write a few lines about a value you already hold dearly, such as your kindness, your family or your loyalty, and why it matters to you.

In one study, students who wrote a few short lines like this minutes before a pressured task solved problems better than those who didn't.

Writing it freed their minds to think, so two minutes with a notebook in the car park can help you think clearly in the interview.

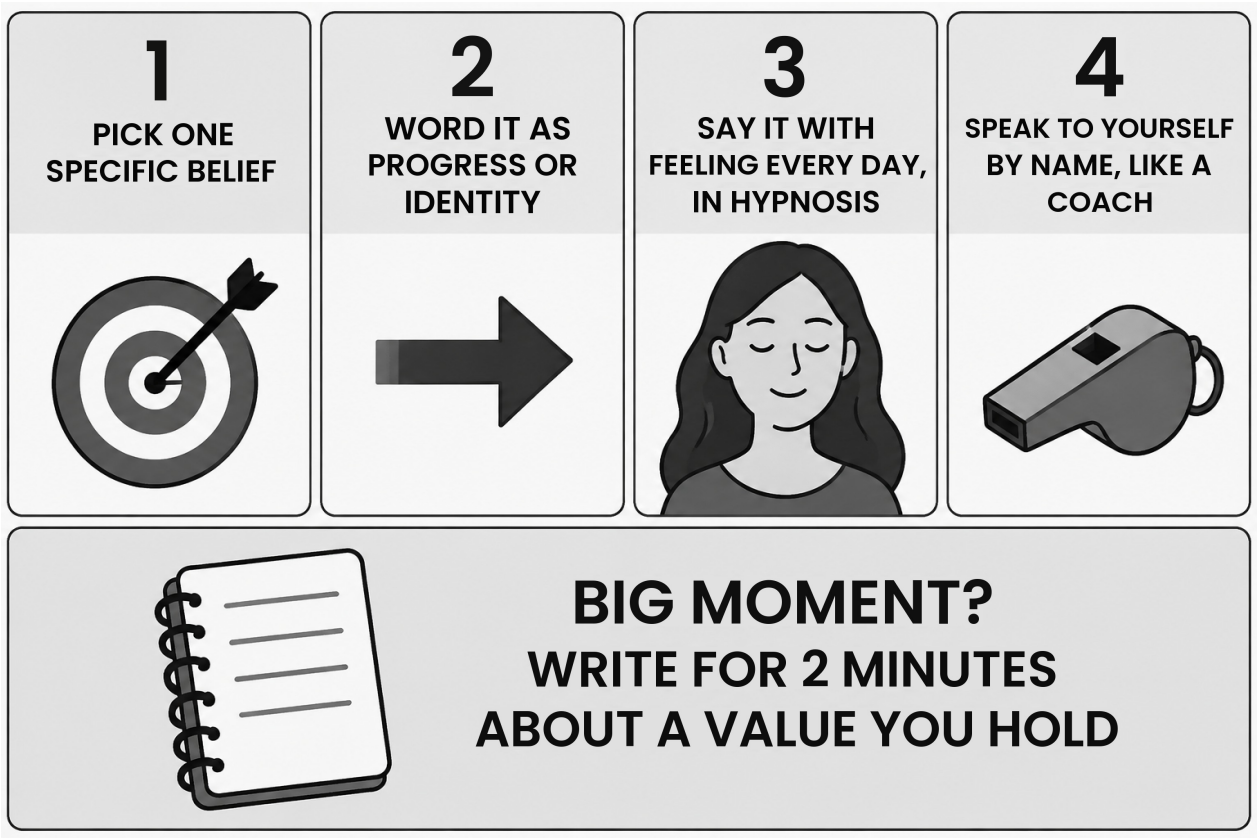
Beyoncé took words a step further.

She has talked about creating a stage persona, Sasha Fierce, who took over when it was time to work and protected the real her.

That's self-suggestion with a name on it: a confident version of yourself that you build once and step into on cue.

You could give yours a name and invite her in at the end of every session.

> **If kind words make you feel worse at first,** that's normal. Saying "I accept myself as I am" can stir up the opposite feeling, because the words are touching an old sore spot. Keep your hand on your heart, soften the wording a little, and keep going gently. It eases with practice.



Rehearse the hard moment as well as the happy ending

Picturing yourself confident and successful is powerful, and the very best performers add something to it.

They also rehearse the moment it wobbles, so when it happens for real they already know what to do.

> **I would visualise what could happen, what I want to happen and what I don't want to happen, because when it happened I was prepared for it.**
>
> Michael Phelps

Tiger's coach taught him a pre-shot routine of letting every distraction go before he played, summed up in three words: relax, review, refocus.

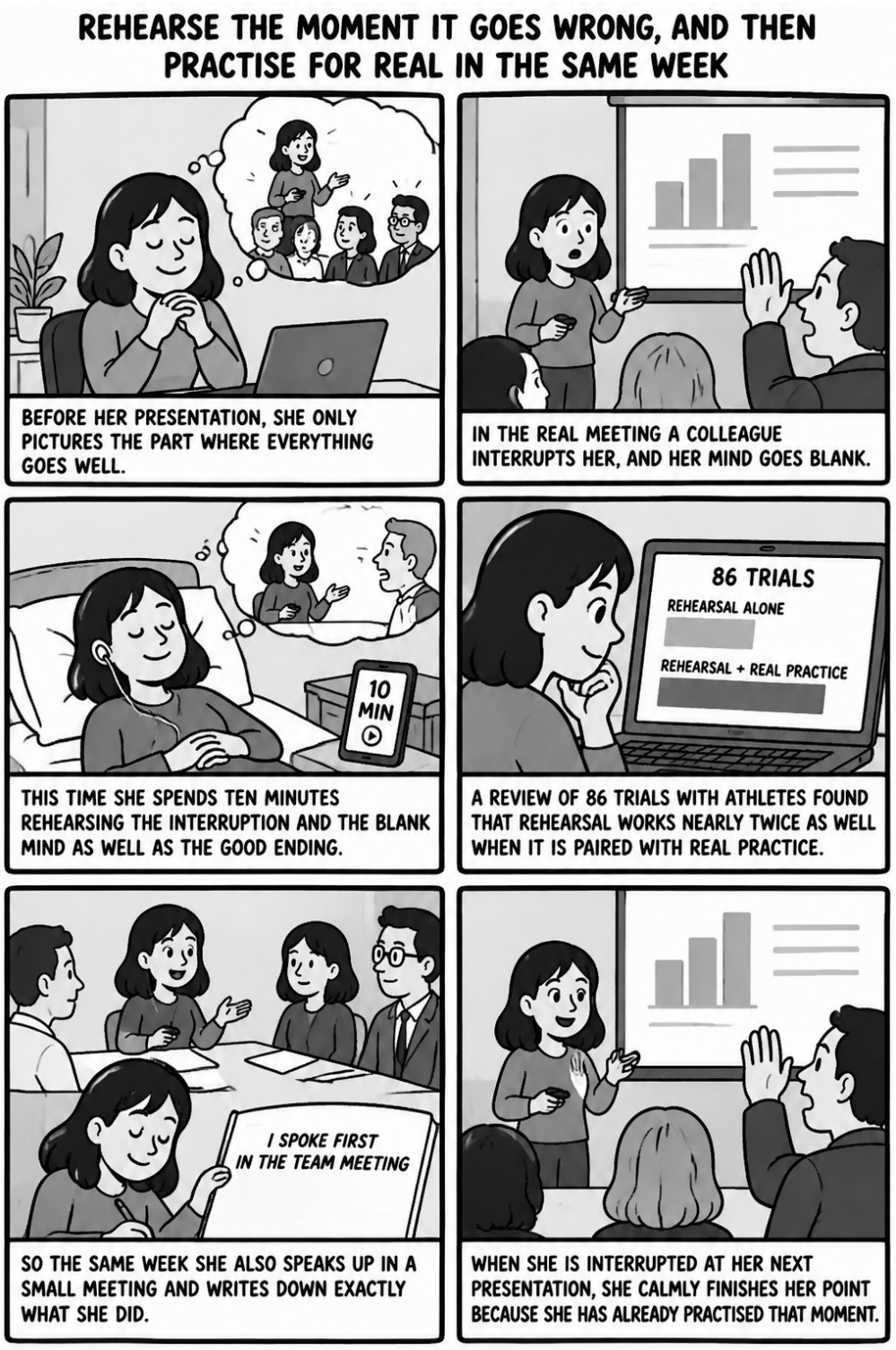
When a younger player asked Tiger what he does under pressure, he said you keep things simple and you don't change a thing.

That calm was practised long before it was needed.

A 2025 review of 86 trials with athletes found that mental rehearsal worked well on its own, and nearly twice as well when it was paired with real practice.

Most athletes in those trials rehearsed for about ten minutes at a time, a few times a week, for several months.

For you, that means running your hard moment in the Float Before the Swimmer, including the bit where someone interrupts or your mind goes blank, and then laying a Morning Brick in real life the same week.


REHEARSE THE MOMENT IT GOES WRONG, AND THEN PRACTISE FOR REAL IN THE SAME WEEK
BEFORE HER PRESENTATION, SHE ONLY PICTURES THE PART WHERE EVERYTHING GOES WELL.
IN THE REAL MEETING A COLLEAGUE INTERRUPTS HER, AND HER MIND GOES BLANK.
10 MIN
THIS TIME SHE SPENDS TEN MINUTES REHEARSING THE INTERRUPTION AND THE BLANK MIND AS WELL AS THE GOOD ENDING.
86 TRIALS
REHEARSAL ALONE
REHEARSAL + REAL PRACTICE
A REVIEW OF 86 TRIALS WITH ATHLETES FOUND THAT REHEARSAL WORKS NEARLY TWICE AS WELL WHEN IT IS PAIRED WITH REAL PRACTICE.
I SPOKE FIRST IN THE TEAM MEETING
SO THE SAME WEEK SHE ALSO SPEAKS UP IN A SMALL MEETING AND WRITES DOWN EXACTLY WHAT SHE DID.
WHEN SHE IS INTERRUPTED AT HER NEXT PRESENTATION, SHE CALMLY FINISHES HER POINT BECAUSE SHE HAS ALREADY PRACTISED THAT MOMENT.

Your first seven days

1. Day 1: Run the Float Before the Swimmer once, slowly, using the steps above, and write down your before and after stress scores.
2. Day 2: Lay your first Morning Brick before lunch and write one line about exactly what you did.
3. Day 3: Pick two affirmations from this guide or write your own, and say them during your session while you picture yourself living them.
4. Day 4: Before something that makes you nervous, run a session or write about a value for two minutes.
5. Day 5: Replay a real brick from this week inside your session, including one moment that could have gone wrong.
6. Day 6: Make your brick a little bigger than your first one.
7. Day 7: Read back your week of bricks. That list is proof, and you'll start next week from there.

Self-hypnosis is very safe, and serious problems are extremely rare.

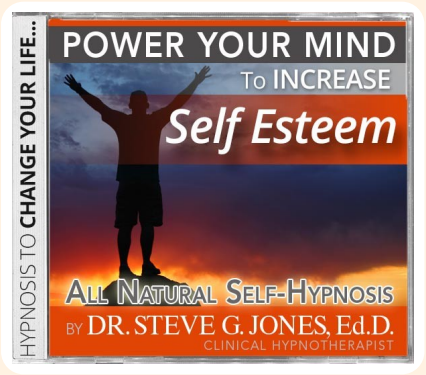
If you live with schizophrenia, a dissociative disorder, seizures, PTSD or recent serious trauma, or you're in extreme distress, talk to a professional first, and use self-hypnosis alongside your treatment.

When the first person at work says "you seem different lately", you'll know exactly why.

You stopped waiting to feel ready and started training for it, the same way the greats do.



Let a clinical hypnotherapist guide your sessions so you can just listen



You know the steps now, but it's hard to guide yourself and relax at the same time.

A recording lets you close your eyes and follow along.

Increase Self Esteem is a hypnosis MP3 from Dr. Steve G. Jones's Gold series.

- It is recorded by Dr. Steve G. Jones, a clinical hypnotherapist with more than 40 years of experience, so an expert's voice does the guiding.
- It comes as a download, so you can put it on your phone and listen before your next hard moment.
- It costs $29.95 once, while a single private hypnotherapy session in the UK runs about £150.
- You can play it before the meeting or the call you dread, then lay a Morning Brick in real life that same week.

You can download it today and use it for your next session tonight.

Get the self-esteem audio

I may earn a commission if you buy through this link, at no extra cost to you.

This is general education, not medical advice. Check with your doctor before you change your diet, exercise, medicines or supplements, especially if you have a health condition, are pregnant or take medication.

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