

Social Confidence Pro

The Social Skills Playbook

Face Your Fears and Rise Above Social Anxiety



Bonus:
Reduce Social
Anxiety Guide



IS SOCIAL ANXIETY LIMITING YOUR LIFE?

If your social anxiety seems to be staying the same or even getting worse, regardless of the techniques that you try, and if you are finding that your social anxiety is having a damaging impact on your quality of life, you may need professional support.

At Social Confidence Pro, we are able to provide you with support that sets you on a course for recovery. The coaching you receive will provide you with techniques to deploy proactively when entering a situation where you are likely to feel anxious and stop the anxiety from building.

You will begin to see your role in creating the anxiety, better manage your symptoms and improve your personal and professional life in ways that you never imagined possible.

GET IN TOUCH TODAY

For details on how Social Confidence Pro can help you develop new habits that better serve your goals, click [*here](#) to schedule a chemistry call and see how our programs may be an option for you.

The Playbook

Creating a game plan and the playbook to stand out without succumbing to social anxiety involves a combination of nine necessary actions to reprogram years of limiting beliefs. These actions include:

1. Acknowledge Anxiety: Recognize and accept social anxiety as a natural feeling. Acknowledging it reduces its power.

2. Set Clear Goals: Define Objectives: Clearly outline your professional goals and aspirations.

3. Preparation is Key: Stay informed about relevant topics so you always have interesting topics at the tip of your tongue.

4. Networking Like a Ninja: Focus on building meaningful connections rather than collecting business cards.

5. Breaking Habits: You don't get what you want — you get your habits.

6. Professional Development: Invest in professional development and an executive or specialized coach.

7. Maintain Eye Contact: Demonstrate attentiveness and confidence through eye contact.

8. Gradual Exposure: Gradually expose yourself to social situations, starting with less intimidating scenarios, and celebrate small victories in overcoming social anxiety.

9. Become aware of your subconscious programming. These are the thoughts and behaviors below the surface.

The Social Dilemma

Is social anxiety preventing you from participating fully in some area of your life?

Up to three-quarters of us experience some degree of social anxiety, ranging from mild shyness to debilitating social phobia.

In more severe cases, social anxiety can hold a person back from pursuing opportunities, creating connections, making their voice heard and potentially affecting academic and career progress.

Fortunately, there are practical skills you can learn in this guide that will help you with even in those situations where yesterday you could not conceive the idea of expressing yourself — with your colleagues, customers, or peers. Today is a new day.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) may be used alone or in combination with other types of therapy according to the kind of assistance you require.

CBT helps manage social anxiety and emotional responses it creates.

It's a practical process to work through the sometimes-crippling effects of social anxiety in your daily life.

The practice involves learning what you need to do to manage anxiety and move past it, and skills relating to how to apply these in real life situations.

It really is possible to break through the grip of social anxiety and, once learned, apply these skills in every aspect of life.

Believing Your Thoughts

Imagine you are looking at yourself in a funhouse mirror at an amusement park. Yes, that is you, but your face is not that long, your stomach is not that fat, and your legs are not that skinny.

The mirror is distorting the reality of what is there. When we are anxious, our thoughts get reflected in a funhouse mirror. Worse still, we are unaware of the distortion and take those thoughts at face value, making us even more scared.

When you recognize the distortion in your thoughts, it becomes easier to take them less seriously.

Common Thought Distortions

1.Social Perfectionism

For the social perfectionist, there are only two categories: either you are brilliant, funny, smart, and popular or you are dull, boring, stupid, and an outcast. There is simply no such thing as being okay or good enough.

If you aren't invited to every party, then nobody likes you. If people do not listen with rapt attention every time you open your mouth to speak, you are boring.

When your idea of normal is everyone's approving of you all the time, you've set the bar too high, and you'll never clear it. Nobody is socially perfect and thinking you can be will only lead to shame, yet another social folly.

Here's how social perfectionism works in your brain:

Because no one laughed at my joke, I am not funny.

Because I didn't receive any compliments, I _____.

Because I wasn't selected for the job, I _____.

Because no one asked follow up questions, I _____.

Fill in the blanks with your perfectionist thoughts.

Because _____, I _____.

Because _____, I _____.

Because _____, I _____.

Because _____, I _____.

Social perfectionism allows no room for error, and it's a pointless way to judge yourself, yet it is the most universal distortion and the most damaging.

2. Mind Reading

If you feel like you are in a spotlight and everyone is watching you, it's only natural for you to also worry that everyone is thinking about you.

As a mind reader, you assume you know what people are thinking, especially when it is something bad about you. You haven't any psychic powers, but somehow you just know. And because you are so certain, you don't bother to check out what is actually happening.

For example, you are talking to a colleague who suddenly becomes distracted. Since you are a mind reader you know that your colleague was bored and looking for an excuse to move on.

1. Who is this for? Describe an interaction you had with someone that made you anxious:

2. What did you think that person was thinking about you?

3.The Spotlight Effect

When a great golfer is driving the ball off the tee in a close match, she isn't thinking about her grip on the club or the arc of her stroke. An actor onstage doesn't watch his hands as he gestures, nor does he listen to his voice as he speaks his lines..

The golfer and the actor want to lose themselves in their roles, not reflect on the mechanics of their performances.

When we turn the spotlight of attention onto ourselves, we become self-conscious. What should be natural and spontaneous becomes an agonizing performance.

Spotlighting makes you feel different and separate from others. Everything you say starts to sound odd or fake. You don't trust or like how you are coming across, and to make matters worse, you assume everyone else is watching you as closely as you are watching yourself.

How can you get into the flow of life and connect with others when you are constantly preoccupied with what is going on inside your head?

We all feel self-conscious from time to time, but most people notice it happening and let it go. They flick a switch and turn the spotlight off.

But when a socially anxious person feels self-conscious, they dial the spotlight up, increasing their self-awareness to the point where they are paralyzed.

So, as you leave the conference room, the spotlight follows you, showing everybody how awkwardly you walk. And so it goes throughout the day when you are living in the spotlight.

Spotlight Exercise

Describe a situation where you feel as if you are in the spotlight.

How do you imagine you are coming across to others?

What feelings do you have that you're sure people around you must see?

Discounting the Positive:

When something good happens to you, do you chalk it up to luck?

When somebody praises you, do you assume the person was just trying to be nice?

Say you were talking to someone and, instead of getting tongue-tied, you actually enjoyed the conversation. Instead of feeling good that sometimes you really do have something to talk about, you conclude:

“Well, she’s really nice, and that’s why I felt comfortable, but most people aren’t like that and I’d totally freeze up talking with them.”

It is difficult to develop confidence when you ignore your successes — when you discount the positive.

Have you ever received a compliment you feel you didn’t deserve? Write it down.

How did you discount the compliment?

In what situations do you seem able to see only what isn't working?

4.Social Perfectionism

Social Anxiety would be greatly reduced if you could get rid of perfectionistic tendencies.

Social perfectionism becomes a problem when it makes you feel so anxious that you want to avoid situations. The problem becomes greater when those situations are ones that are important to you and they affect your income or how you are perceived professionally.

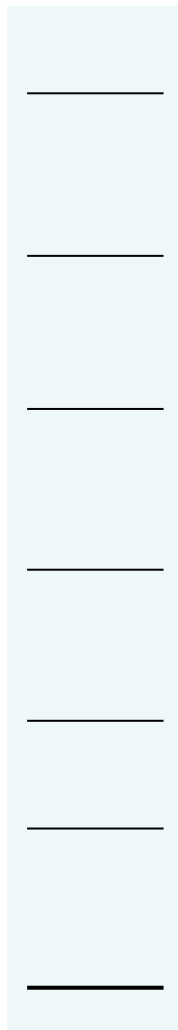
Your Social Perfection Rating

Social Anxiety would be greatly reduced if you could get rid of perfectionistic tendencies.

This rating exercise can give you a clue to your level of social perfectionism. Evaluate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. Use 1 = disagree strongly and 5 = agree strongly.

- When I tell a joke, everyone should laugh.
- If I stumble on a word, people will think there is something wrong with me.
- If I say something that turns out to be incorrect, people will think I am not intelligent.

- If I forget people's names, they will think I don't care about them.
- If someone criticizes what I am wearing, I have bad taste in clothing.
- Awkward silences don't happen in normal conversations.
- If I say something that someone takes the wrong way, I am insensitive.
- When giving a presentation, I should be relaxed and confident.
- If I appear nervous people will see me as weak.



A vertical light blue bar with seven horizontal lines, used for scoring the items in the list above. The lines are positioned to the right of each list item, and there is an additional line at the bottom for the total score.

TOTAL:

How did your answers add up?

Your total isn't a scientific measurement, but generally speaking the higher you scored, the more likely it is that you don't allow yourself any slack in social situations, and that is where anxious feelings begin to swell.

Any effort you make to connect with others that isn't received with a 100 percent positive reaction is considered a failure. This social phenomenon is shared among nearly all socially anxious people.

Right now you may be saying to yourself: “Those statements don’t sound like anxiety, they sound realistic. I’m not an anxious person. Considering that anxiety is created in the mind, it does actually make sense that not achieving perfection would be among the causes.

By not allowing any possibility of failure in your social actions, you are expecting yourself to always be interesting, relaxed, funny, smart, or whatever you think you should be.

You are setting a higher standard for yourself than for others who are not so shy. It is this high standard, an impossibly perfect standard to maintain, that is making you feel more anxious.



BONUS

Social Anxiety Reduction Guide

10 minute meditation for social anxiety and nervousness

Take 10 minutes from your day to ease social anxiety and feel better, more confident and calm with this guided meditation.

[*Download Now*](#)

How can I quickly calm my social anxiety?

Try these quick and easy techniques if you feel a rush of anxiety building inside you:



1. Brain Stimulation

Stimulating both sides of the brain to stop anxiety is absurdly simple yet amazingly effective.

Grab your phone, keys, a ball, an apple or anything you can toss or pass from one hand to the other and think of something that causes you social anxiety.

When you can feel that anxiety somewhere in your body, pass the object back and forth, from one hand to the other, crossing the midline, so you are stimulating both hemispheres of the brain.

It will have a more rapid effect if you keep one hand in front of you as the other swings out to the side each time you pass the object.

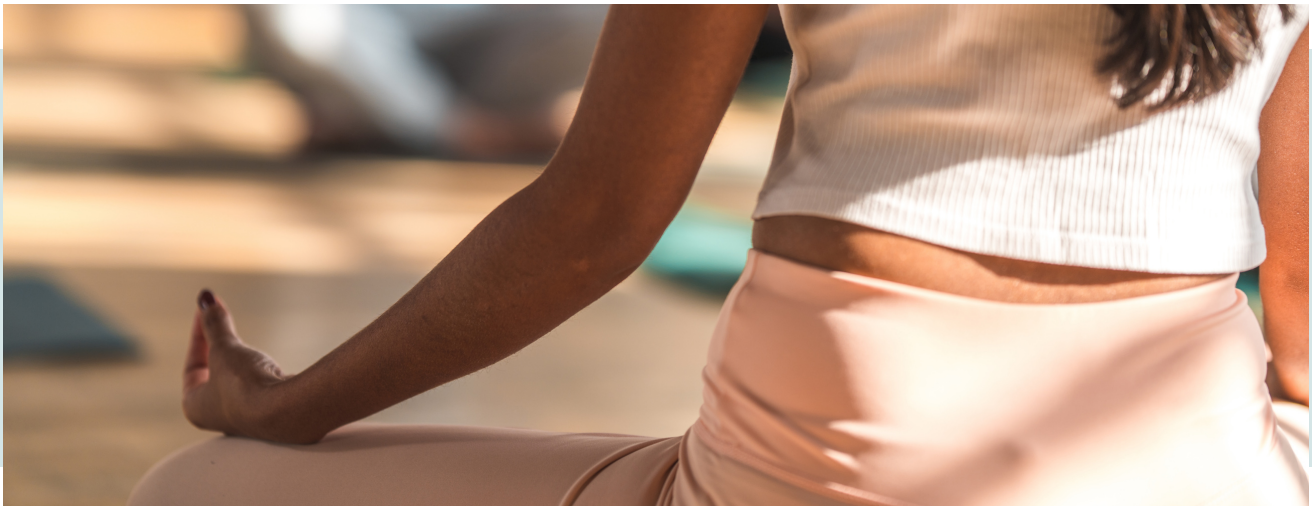
Do this for a minute. Stop. Take a deep breath, and check in. The anxiety may have dissipated. This is because by activating both hemispheres, you are spreading blood and electrical impulses throughout the brain and this floods that area of association and diffuses it.

This is something you can do anywhere. As soon as you start to feel that anxiety, simply grab an object—keys, a bottle of water, anything will work as long as you are moving both your arms and crossing the mid-line of your body.



2. Say “No” to Stimulants

Caffeine and alcohol can often have the opposite effect to what you might think. Coffee for example has been proven to induce more anxiety – especially when drunk in high doses. Alcohol too can, on the face of it, help us to calm down if we’re feeling anxious. However, over time alcohol and social anxiety don’t pair well together and will worsen any symptoms of anxiety you’re currently experiencing.



3. Use relaxation techniques

When you feel anxious, your breathing becomes rapid and shallow and your muscles tighten. This can impact your body by increasing your heart rate and bringing about light-headedness, nausea and sweating, among other physical symptoms of social anxiety.

There are plenty of relaxation exercises to help reduce social anxiety. These focus your breathing and identify areas of tension in your body which you can then release.

Here is a simple breathing exercise that you can use in the presence of others and nobody will know what you are up to:

- Take in a slow deep breath through your nose for four seconds. Imagine filling your lungs from the bottom right to the top, making them as full of air as possible.
- Hold the breath for a count of three
- Exhale gently through your mouth for a count of six. Focus on relaxing any tense muscles.
- Working your way up your body, tensing body parts for five seconds and releasing.
- You'll feel the tension drift away as you do this process

When you breathe in, this raises your heart rate slightly, and breathing out lowers your heart rate slightly. So, by breathing out for slightly longer than you breathe in, this can help you to lower your heart rate.



4. Got Sour Patch Kids?

This technique is called Sensory Grounding. Chewing sour candy stimulates multiple sensory experiences, and the way it works is similar to a pattern interrupt when you want to break a habit.

Sour candy contains ingredients like citric acid and tart flavorings that activate taste receptors on our tongues. When these flavors interact with your tastebuds, the sourness redirects your attention, thus calming the anxiety. Yes! You can keep a stash of chewy, sour candy in your purse or pocket and pop one in before entering an anxiety-inducing situation.

Not a fan of sour candy? Alternate sensory grounding techniques include:

Sensory Objects:

- Keep objects with different textures (smooth stone, soft fabric, rough paper) and touch them mindfully to ground yourself in the present.

Aromatherapy:

- Use calming scents such as peppermint, lavender, or chamomile. Inhale the scent deeply and focus on the sensory experience.

Going Barefoot on Snow or Grass:

- Both have the same effect of stimulating the brain and redirecting your consciousness.

Guided Imagery:

- Close your eyes and imagine a calming and safe place. Engage your senses by visualizing the details, sounds, and sensations in that imagined space.

Tactile Stimulation:

- Carry a small object like a stress ball or textured fabric that you can touch and manipulate to provide sensory input.

Cold Water Splash:

- Splash your face with cold water. Notice the temperature and the sensation on your skin.

Grounding Through Taste:

- Slowly savor a calming taste, such as a piece of chocolate or a mint. Pay attention to the flavor and texture as you eat.



5. Visualization

Visualization is the formulation of a mental image of something. It brings together aspects of mindfulness and breathing techniques to give you another way to calm yourself down and stop anxiety from spiraling out of control.

One example is the 5,4,3,2,1 technique. Close your eyes, take 3 deep breaths and:

- Name 5 things that you see - this can include big objects like buildings, trees or houses as well as small objects like a pen or a pair of glasses.
- Name 4 things that you can feel - recognize four things that your body is touching, including your socks against the skin of your feet, the feeling of your shirt or the arm of the chair that you're sitting on.
- Name 3 things you can hear - focus on the ambient sounds you may not usually focus on, such as nature and the wind.
- Name 2 things that you can smell - while this one may seem difficult at first, when necessary, walk around until you find two scents.

- Name 1 thing that you can taste – this may be the after-taste of a drink,
- meal or chewing gum. Or have a sip of a drink, and focus on the flavor



6. Burn it off

When you're anxious, it can sometimes be too hard to perform a technique like deep breathing, as your adrenaline makes it difficult for you to concentrate. In these moments, try doing something that rids your body of this adrenaline, which could include:

- Tasks that require a lot of energy to complete
- High intensity exercise
- Timing a fast walk
- Go outside and get some fresh air
- Offer to help the host (at a party/event)

It's important to try and 'release' the anxiety you're feeling. These activities can calm your brain and body, helping you to focus and think rationally.

If doing something physical isn't working, try writing your social anxiety away. An anxiety journal can help get negative thoughts out of your head or be used as a way to think clearly about how you're going to remain calm once you've finished writing.



7. Question and challenge your thoughts

When our mind focuses on these types of unhelpful and irrational thoughts, rather than being rational and healthy, this causes anxiety.

A useful technique to help calm anxiety is to learn how to pause and move past these destructive thoughts, before they have a chance to take hold. Learning this technique may take some practice but is a strategy that is well worth mastering.

When you feel yourself having an unhealthy thought, pause and really think about the following:

- How is this thought going to make me feel?
- Is it a fact or an opinion?

- Is it a rational or irrational thought?
- What are other outcomes to think about?

You may find it difficult to do this technique automatically at first. So try keeping a journal in the evenings, where you jot down any unhealthy thoughts that you had during that day which made you feel anxious. Take the time to consider these thoughts and answer the questions above. By practicing this, you will learn to pause and move past unhelpful thoughts as you have them.



8. Find your Vulnerability

The saying goes that a problem shared is a problem halved. You might be surprised how effective opening up to people about your perceived shortcomings can be. They can offer you some valuable perspective.

Take a measured approach when speaking to your boss about your social anxiety and why for example you find it difficult to lead the team meeting. Solutions can only come from speaking up, and your boss may suggest that you find a coach and the company will share the cost.



9. Unwind

Science has shown how music can be great for offering an immediate and effective means of calming yourself down. A study in the journal of Social Psychology found that music can be considered a means of stress reduction in daily life, especially if it is listened to for the purpose of relaxation.

If you're able to break away from whatever is causing you anxiety, put on some classical or slow and soft pop - - or whatever works for you. This might be especially useful when you're experiencing social anxiety in your workplace, as you can get back to your desk and switch off with a few minutes of calm music.



I've been there. And I know it all too well.

You love what you do and know you should excel, but sometimes you just don't have anything to say. You overthink the smallest issues, you feel "less than".

The good news is that those are just thoughts, and I can help you think better thoughts.

Social Confidence Pro helps smart, high-achieving professionals and businesspeople stop struggling socially so they can overcome self-doubt, eliminate social anxiety, and find your voice so you can get seen, be heard and make a bigger impact.

These are changes that will last forever.

And we can help you, too.

LETS TALK!

- *Susan*