**Survive and Thrive**

**Positive Thinking and Visualization**

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| Positive Thinking and Visualization  |
| Training section to revisit: | Refer back to sections 2 (mental toughness) and 3 (positive thinking and visualization) |
| How to use: | Prepare and practice positive talk before the situation arises, then use immediately before and during the event |
| Impacts | Mental Toughness, resilience |

Mental toughness, mental fitness, and resilience can benefit from psychological tools, including positive thinking, visualization, and learning to control the controllables.

All of which impact what you know, feel and believe to be true.

**Affirmations**

Consider and document several situations that you have either faced or expect to encounter, along with short, supportive statements that provide strength at difficult times.

Example:

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| **Affirmations**  |
| **Situation** | **Affirmation** |
| Exam | I study wellI succeed even in stressful situations |
| Presenting | I’m confident and comfortableI enjoy presenting and sharing my ideas |

For completion:

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| **Affirmations**  |
| **Situation** | **Affirmation** |
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**Self-talk**

Again, identify the situation causing you concern, feelings of lack of control, or a dip in confidence.

Talk to yourself, as you may advise a friend or colleague in a similar situation.

Example:

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| **Self-talk** |
| **Situation** | **Affirmation** |
| Interview | I have prepared well for this interview, and have a great deal of experience and expertise, that will benefit the company. |
| Project at work | I have completed similar projects before, I will take previous learnings apply them, listen to my team, and move towards delivery. |

For completion:

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| **Self-talk** |
| **Situation** | **Affirmation** |
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**3 Achievements**

Write down three achievements (small or large) at the end of each day is an ideal way to focus on the positives – rather than the negatives — and carry that positivity through to the next day.

For example:

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| **3 Achievements** |
| **Achievement** | **Review the success** |
| Business Meeting | I entered the meeting prepared and achieved the buy-in I had hoped for |
| Family Time | I put down my laptop and sat and talked to my daughter about her day. |
| Business Planning | I listed all the outstanding activities at work, assigned a priority, and identified the support I needed. |

For completion:

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| **3 Achievements** |
| **Achievement** | **Review the success** |
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**Visualization**

Positive mental images can favorably impact both mind and body. Mental rehearsal is a proven way to prepare for challenges and assert control over your inner voice.

Mentally working through the steps in as much detail as possible can be as real to your mind as performing the activity.

The following guidance will help identify the most appropriate environment and time to make positive mental imagery come to life.

* Find somewhere quiet and calm, where you feel safe, and are unlikely to be interrupted
* Close your eyes, and take slow, deep breaths until you feel peaceful and your attention is focused
* Bring to mind the setting – past or future – that brings the feeling of panic or concern
* Rehearse the steps involved, for example, a presentation.
	+ Consider waiting for your turn, watching the previous presenter,
	+ Walking to the stage and the podium
	+ Taking a deep breath, delivering the first line of your presentation
	+ Imagine how well it goes, feeling relaxed, and in control
	+ Bring the room to life. The colors the smells, the noises, and the faces of the people watching
	+ See them listening intently and enjoying the presentation
* Repeat the visualization multiple times, in as much detail as possible, until feelings of panic or fear begin to subside.

De-sensitization will occur by repeated exposure and reduce the heightened level of anxiety.

**Control the Controllables**

In a notebook or whiteboard, write a vertical list of possible outcomes to a real or imagined situation.

Place what went well, at the bottom, and less well at the top.

Then, identify what was within your control.

For example, a challenging meeting:

* Did attendees arrive prepared?
* Were accurate notes and actions taken?
* Was the agenda followed, and all points covered?
* Was everyone heard?
* Was agreement reached over the key decisions?

For those points in the bottom left corner, that were successful, and under control, no action is needed.

For those that were within our control but did not go well – top left - recognize why they were not successful? Focus more attention there next time.

Outcomes on the right-hand side, in the ‘uncontrolled’ part of the chart, require extra focus.

If they went well, it was down to luck and cannot be relied upon.

What can be done in the future to gain the control needed – additional resources, appropriate skillsets, training, further preparation?

The aim is to review the items and over time, move them into the controlled, successful, bottom left box.

**Can’t control**

**Can control**

**Went Well**

**Not So Well**