

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FX 6197

# Self-Liberation from Test Anxiety

## Dr. Wallace Sife



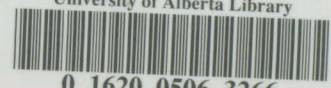
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**Guided Meditative Exercises**

After serving in the US Army infantry in Korea, Wallace Sife returned home to complete his BA at Brooklyn College. For the next three years he worked as a librarian for the Brooklyn Public Library, while starting a MLS at Pratt. Dissatisfied with this he then taught English in Jr. and Sr. high schools, where he also taught and designed his own English and reading curricula for adults in the evening HS division. During this time he completed an MA in English at Brooklyn College, and another MA in educational psychology at NYU, as a specialist in reading.

In his various schools and jobs with the NYC Board of Education he served variously as an English teacher, part-time guidance counselor, reading specialist, and later, while working in the Bureau of English he designed a two year curriculum for high school teachers of ESL (English as a second language).

Later, while teaching in a Jr. high school as a reading specialist he was brutally attacked by adult muggers who secretly entered the school. They smashed him on the head with a hammer and then threw him down a flight of stone stairs. Unconscious for six hours he awoke in a second hospital, suffering from a severe post-concussion syndrome, which included semi-paralysis on his right side, severe headaches and vertigo.

Noticing that when he tried to read he suffered many of the same symptoms of some of his former retarded students who had minimal brain dysfunction, Wallace Sife became determined that he would overcome all handicaps. In addition to exercises of his own design he took the Silva Mind Control basic and advanced courses. In these few painful years he also completed all the remaining coursework for his Ph.D. at NYU in reading and educational psychology. Finding this institution too inflexible at that time to accept a thesis on speedreading, he pulled up roots and began his doctoral studies anew at Union Graduate School, where he completed his Ph.D. in transcognitive educational psychology (a term he created).

During that time, through raw determination and courage Dr. Sife overcame all physical disabilities caused by the mugging. He taught for several years as a private tutor, devised and implemented (as a civilian) a course in reading for the US Army, and taught developmental studies and English as an adjunct professor at New York Institute of Technology.

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# Self-Liberation from Test Anxiety

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## Dr. Wallace Sife

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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# SELF-LIBERATION FROM TEST ANXIETY

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## SIDE I

This recording is specially designed to help people who have problems taking tests. In particular, it is directed to the student who develops feelings of excessive anxiety or panic, which always leads to a temporary impairment of one's intellect and memory. This results in getting test scores lower than they could and should be.

The format will first introduce you to some of the latest successful concepts of transcognitive psychology, as specifically applied to the problems of test anxiety. Toward the end of this side of the recording we will review a list of several effective practices for study, note taking and test preparation.

Side two of this recording has been prepared to guide you step by step in a specially adapted relaxation procedure, which will result in diminishing your anxieties about testing. At the same time, through your use of your own active thinking and meditating on this subject, your own newly realized creative use of self-suggestion will help you develop a positive, almost aggressive, attitude toward your study habits and test-taking abilities. This results in the development of a realistic and fresh new self-assurance about yourself in study and test situations for the future.

Have a pen and paper with you to write special ideas that may come to you during this listening-thinking-feeling session. Play both sides of this recording regularly, as you take time to relax before or after regular study sessions. There will be times, however, when you may feel oversaturated with reading and studying. Your thoughts wander, and your concentration is at a low ebb. This is normal. Take a little time out for some creative escape and relaxation or rest, letting this tape help relax and guide you on several simultaneous levels of consciousness and thinking (or cognition, as we will refer to it from now on).

It may surprise you to learn that developing some tension or anxiety before taking an important test is both normal and necessary. One always performs at his or her best when responding to creative stress. A state of tension before and during an exam is essential to stimulating creativity and heightened awareness. It puts you on a special "mental alert" status. The good test taker is familiar with this state of mind, and effectively uses it to good advantage. As you know, two people with exactly the same knowledge need not score equally on test results. Testing and measurements experts understand this, and allow to some degree for what is called the standard error of measurement.

But this only allows for normal variations in response to test taking. It does not consider your problem, which is caused by excessive tension and anxiety, which, as you are aware, most often causes a temporary "freezing-up" or blocking of what you already know. At such a time, you, the self-made victim, are actually disabled, unable to normally recall or recollect your full knowledge. Notice that I did not use the word or concept of "can't". It is not that you can't perform better in tense test situations; it is just that at this present level of your development you have not yet learned to overcome this self-made and self-defeating response to a particular kind of stress stimulus. It is exactly this point to which I now want to call your attention.

Why do many intelligent people develop these temporary self-defeating responses to tests? There are several possible answers. Those feelings of panic and anxiety, in many instances, could be an "unconscious" response to having tried and failed before, at some time not within your conscious memory. It is a normal human response to block out this kind of and other uncomfortable memories. This process is the so-called unconscious basis of neuroses and complexes.

But you should know by now that no one is free from different neuroses and complexes. The essence of psychological analysis is to learn to identify and modify them to the point where we are able to live happily and comfortably and productively with them. The problems arise only if they interfere with our individual happiness potentials.

This syndrome of test anxiety, which you are so familiar with, is caused by our negative feelings about ourselves and our abilities to perform well. In short, we don't trust ourselves. You may wonder about this highly specialized kind of panic, but you actually have conditioned yourself to experience it before and during important test taking. What could be its long-forgotten shadowed causes? You must take time to reflect upon this. Where and when, in your younger life, did you feel that you failed more than just a test? Or perhaps it was the feeling that you shamed yourself or your parents - or you disappointed them and felt guilt. Maybe it was that you felt alone, needing emotional supportiveness. Failing or doing badly is one way the young mind, unaware of the implications, reaches out for sorely needed attention and compassion. Or it also could be a form of juvenile rebellion against some symbolic repressive authority that let you down. Or the original stimulus may be none of these. An anxiety reaction to testing situations could have other causes, as well, - such as fever, an abnormal diet, poor health, bad sleep, and so on. The problem is that the cause or

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causes have long-since gone, but the effect on you at that time remains with you, now, exactly as it was then.

Whatever the long-since forgotten original causes, they develop and set in the human mind a pattern of behavior that affects us the same emotional way, regardless of how many years pass.

From deep in our "unconscious" levels of awareness we follow the emotional paths of least resistance, that we set for ourselves under the circumstances of our much younger days. On a rational "conscious" level we can observe our human frailties and idiosyncracies, and cannot, at first, fathom the depths of our memories to seek the reasons. But with the help and guidance of creative and sympathetic psychologists we can begin to discover them, and see new lights and perspectives about ourselves. Here begins the end of test anxiety for you. But you cannot be passive to this recording. Think and feel and react constantly to what you are hearing me say.

This recording and guidance alone cannot change or modify your anxiety or panic before a test. Only you can. This tape is a fine tool that can and will help you, if you use it. But there are many good people who, unaware of the reality, develop the test anxiety syndrome through a deep-rooted, unconscious need for self-punishment. These people, in particular, must take special note, for they will do everything right, intellectually, but end up with a "gut-level" and "unconscious" means of self-defeat, particularly in an important and tense testing situation.

In working to modify the panic response to tests we are really dealing with an anxiety reaction, and must take it out in the open and examine it as such. Only in this manner can it be successfully self-treated. But keep in mind that our purpose here is to learn to understand, control and reduce pre-test tension, not eliminate it, entirely.

Anxiety is caused by not knowing how to react to a threatening and uncomfortable situation.

Listen to this recording frequently. Even if, at times, your mind temporarily wanders, don't be overly concerned. Your so-called "unconscious" levels of awareness are registering everything I am saying. Allow some extra time to listen to this before going to sleep, as well as just upon awakening. Even if you drift off at night, before the recording ends, your mind is still perceiving and storing these ideas for you. As a matter of fact, there is a very efficient kind of learning that psychologists call "twilight learning", which takes place just at that "twilight zone" between sleep and full wakefulness. Did you ever have a musical tune or name running through your head all morning, and not know why? It may well be that it was something you just dreamed or heard on your clock radio, just before you were fully awake.

Remember, test anxiety is a well-conditioned and automatic gut-level response to the threat of tests. It is not a response of your intellect. It can be modified and controlled, and shaped to serve your needs, contrary to what is happening now.

Soon you will learn some new skills which will reduce and desensitize the test anxiety syndrome. As this develops, you will gradually form a new sense of self-independence and achievement. The blind, unreasoning fear at first will become controlled, then weakened. And then it can be eliminated. But this requires your patience with yourself, coupled with frequent thinking and feeling sessions and practice with this recording. Keep in mind that we will not want to completely eliminate tension, as some tension is absolutely necessary to keep you mentally alert, as well as flexible and creative in your test responses.

Earlier you heard me use the term "transcognitive psychology". Let me try to give you a simple explanation of what it is and how you can use it to enhance your studies and learning. It has by now been well established that the brain has total memory of all the information that reaches it. People with "photographic" memories illustrate this well. Certainly these rare and gifted people do not scrutinize everything and then "memorize" it. But they can recall with ease everything -which is more that we are used to doing with great difficulty -or not at all. However, with us normal people, hypnosis and, in some instances deep meditation or relaxation, we can bring to the outer level of consciousness things which otherwise would have seemed "forgotten", or even never perceived at all. Special modernized police forensic investigations are now just beginning to use hypnosis as a voluntary means to finding otherwise hidden clues. A famous kidnapping case in California of an entire busload of children, along with their driver, illustrates this. In questioning, after escaping, the driver said he briefly saw a car belonging to one of the kidnappers, but he had no memory of the license, and other details. Yet, under voluntary hypnosis, he was able to precisely recall to his outer level of awareness the exact license, with only one digit missing. It was later though that something must have blocked his view of the missing digit, since this provided that the driver's brain did store and remember everything it perceived, to his own astonishment. All it needed was the recall to his outer level of conscious awareness.

And so it is with your "normal" memory, in preparing for a test. Everything you have studied and perceived is stored in your brain. Since you do not have a photographic memory and are not undergoing hypnosis, the problem you have is to develop a personal method of memory recall of facts relating to your tests. This is not as difficult as it may at first seem.

The higher the level of tension before a test, the more difficult will be the task of memory recall. Recent biofeedback studies have shown that the more one can relax the mind and body together, while creatively thinking or meditating about a problem, the more one can develop the abilities to find solutions. By regularly practicing these transcognitive meditations people are learning how to make fuller use of their memory, creativity, and awareness, in general. By doing this we are coming a bit closer to our amazing human potentials.

A simplified definition of transcognitive psychology, then, would be that it is the study of simultaneous cognition at all levels of the brain's consciousness, in our attempts to find ways to make fuller use of the fantastic abilities of the whole brain. Psychologists and philosophers have always thought that humans use only a small part of their latent brain potential. This has been confirmed in recent studies. But it also has been discovered that most of this activity of the brain comes from

the left half, or hemisphere, as it is called. This left hemisphere of our brain controls our logic, speaking and reading, and in the evolution of man is still used more for more than the right hemisphere of the brain, which controls our abilities and perceptions that are spacial, artistic, holistic, symbolic, musical, and spiritual. Perhaps not so surprising was the discovery that this right hemisphere of the brain is mostly unused - even in comparison to the left half of the brain.

It has been suggested by various sources that the human brain, at this midway point in our evolution as a species, is fully utilizing only five to ten percent of its potential! It is as if we are the potential possessors of fantastic mental powers, but nature has given us the protection of having to grow up and more mature and responsible, as a species, for our own protection. We are just beginning to learn that meditation and what is called the "relaxation response" can enable us to make fuller use of each hemisphere of the brain, in addition to increasing our ability to better synchronize and harmonize the functions of both hemispheres, at the same time.

But now back to the test anxiety syndrome. After all studying is completed and we are actually taking the test, what we must do is retrieve the information that is already stored in our brain. Poor test performance is most often the result of blocking or distorting this recall because of abnormally high levels of tension. We see that good test performance can be achieved by controlling and lowering that tension to the point where it can no longer interfere with our normal processes of memory recall.

We don't want to eliminate tension altogether, since, as I said before, normal test tension is beneficial; it keeps our mental resources and reflexes on a special alert. Realize this and make use of it. Once you do, you will see rapid and considerable positive change. As you know, there is no better self-assurance than having increasing achievement and success.

The person who panics before a test develops a vicious cycle within himself by first sensing this normal pre-test tension, and then growing increasingly anxious about it and how he feels at that moment. When we experience the first signs of this gut-fear reaction we react to them by becoming very upset and thinking a bit irrationally. If this gut-reaction is so irrational that we can't think our way out of it, we set off this emotional cyclical chain reaction that rapidly gets out of control. Bad sensations cause confused bad reactions, which, if not checked immediately, continue on to the ultimate production of panic, test panic.

Here we are faced with a conflict of feeling versus rational thinking. Tension is a normal and necessary experience. Our present maturity as a species, however, has given us the ability and insight to recognize and control tension. As individuals we must learn how to handle panicky, unrealistic gut-reactions, thoughts and feelings, in order to open up avenues of personal growth, which we, otherwise, would keep shut for ourselves.

As mentioned earlier, the remainder of this side of the recording will be used to review a list of several suggested practices for study, note taking and test preparation. You may have to stop it for a minute while you get your pen and paper ready for notes you will take on what follows here, and on side two of this recording.

You are probably familiar with most of these suggestions, but it is good to review them, nevertheless. Naturally, you should give special consideration to those practices that may be new to you.

To start off, you should set a daily schedule for your study and review time. This schedule must be a reasonable one. Don't exhaust or oversaturate yourself by trying to study too much in any one session. If it is possible, you should plan to study for the last hour or so each night, before going to sleep, since you will be taking advantage of some twilight learning, mentioned earlier, as well as the fact that sleep is the least distracting activity to study recall.

Study what you think may be on the test. How can you determine this? Look at previous similar exams, if possible. Ask your teacher. Many students are foolishly reluctant to do this. Most instructors expect your notes taken from their class lectures to play a strong role in the course instruction to be tested. Naturally, reading assignments are also a good indicator of what to expect.

Taking good notes in class does not mean to make a complete record of everything that the teacher says. Write the main ideas expressed and the examples given. Most people do take reasonably good notes, but they are scribbled. This has a negative effect on you, later, when you are trying to decipher and review them. Make yourself take that tiny bit more of time for improved penmanship when you are note-taking. The results will be surprisingly pleasing to you. Try to review these notes promptly, within the same day, if possible. It is suggested that you rewrite these notes as you review them. At that time you have the advantage of seeing the larger view of the entire period's instruction, and you may want to reorganize some ideas and add others to your revised notes. There is a strong advantage in promptly reviewing and studying notes; the sooner you do this the fresher the memories will be of what was taught. Also, the shortened time interval will strengthen the reinforcement and recall of your memory. It is well known that the longer the time delay between learning and reinforcement the weaker will be the conscious retention of recall and learning.

Get to know your teacher's methods. Watch for emphasis on ideas, such as voice inflection, repetition, pauses, chalkboard notes, and so on. These are usually giveaways. In reviewing your daily notes it is good to prepare any possible questions or comments on them for the next session of the class.

Sometimes it is good to review with others for tests, to get some feedback from other students' perspectives. But it can be bad for you to depend emotionally on what your peers think. Remember, you may be closer to some truths than they are. Trust yourself a little better. Remember, if you don't, who else will?

It is almost universally said, that you should never cram for a test. The logic to this is good, but there may at times be a situation that is unavoidable. But don't let this happen to you because of careless preparation. If you must cram, though, do it intelligently, and with a method. Be very selective as to what you choose to study in this emergency of short time. Select only what you



think are the major ideas, from your source materials. Don't try to learn too much. There is a normal limit of just so much an individual can learn in a cram session. Survey and skim your textbooks, looking particularly at the beginning, middle and ending of each chapter. Remember, cramming is just skeletal learning, at best. Try not to cram late the night before the test, as this can increase the potential for an anxiety reaction.

Use words and ideas in association, as well as mnemonic and other memory devices. Invent your own acronyms to help recall lists of key words or names. But above all, learn the large picture of what the course is all about. Understand the general concept before you delve into particulars, which, alone, may not give you the overall understanding you seek.

Develop the skill of underlining or highlighting key parts of your textbooks. Write your ideas and reactions in the margins. This does not deface the book; it enhances its worth and personal value to you. Of course, you should own any book before writing in it. There are special felt-tipped pens sold for book highlighting. These come in light colored transparent inks that have the advantage of easily being read through, as well as being highly noticeable and attractive.

In your final preparations for an examination prepare all your notes into an outline. Then write a revised and condensed version of all your notes. Study this revision and go over any concepts or ideas that still may not be clear or sufficiently covered.

Then overview and skim, again, all your books and notes, to gain a final realistic perspective and review of the direction and scope of the material to be tested. Try to anticipate some sample questions. It is clear now, in retrospect, how important it is to try to think with -and ahead of your notes, as you first take them in class.

Don't eat heavy meals or overeat out of nervousness before a study session or test, as this tends to lower your awareness levels. By all means do eat a light, easily digestible meal or snack before taking your test. Fasting or insufficient nourishment may also adversely affect your abilities to function at your best.

When you feel you have reached a point of diminishing returns, while studying, stop and rest awhile. Temporarily do something else relaxing. Play this recording or take a nap, or both -if it fits your schedule.

If, during studying or the actual test, you should feel tension beginning to build up in you, stop for a minute. Take a deep breath, hold it in for a short while, and then slowly let it out. Stretch your body. Try to yawn. Then stretch again. This will help you relax even more, and be able to successfully continue where you left off, content with the self-awareness that you are in control of your physical and mental responses. You can always be in control if you really want to be.

On the day of the test arrive a little early, so there is no last minute rush. Select a choice seat, if you can. Try not to sit with friends, as this is usually distracting. First relax yourself physically and mentally. Feel you are ready. Some people may leave early, near the end of the examination. Don't be upset by this or grow impatient with yourself. Take your full time.

Basically there are two kinds of test questions, the essay and the so-called objective type. If there is an essay part, overview it first. Jot down any associated ideas, notes or facts you may not want to overlook later. If you should run out of time, quickly outline your unfinished points, with a brief note. Remember, the first sentence of your essay should be a specific statement, which the rest of the essay will explain, develop and conclude neatly. Avoid writing anything that is not directly and specifically related to the topic. Don't digress from the specific point you are trying to make.

Objective-type questions vary in form, and include true/false, multiple choice, fill-in, matching and identifying words. It is very important to read the directions carefully. Too often many easy points are lost by giving answers that you think are right, but they are not what the questions call for. Give your answers exactly as they are required. Do not try to interpret deeper meanings than were intended. If a question takes you too long to answer, note it and come back later, if time permits. If there is no penalty for wrong answers, leave no questions unanswered. Always remember that there may be many questions that are easy to you, near the end of the test, but you may never reach them if you waste precious time on earlier ones that slow or stop you. Make educated guesses by eliminating as many wrong choices as possible, but don't slow down.

By studying properly you should have a good idea of the expected format of your exam. Your problem may be more of not knowing how to take the test than not knowing what is being tested.

Remember, there is no such thing as just going through the motions of studying. You must be mentally involved in what you are reading. The difference is great between reading and studying. You must read to study, but the reverse is not true. Studying stresses deliberate, close attention to a subject, with the intention to learn something from it.

Finally, think positively about yourself as a student and as a person. Imagine who you will feel if you get a very high grade on your next test. Sense this. Feel it. It is a good feeling. Associate this good feeling of success with how well you are developing and practicing what is on this recording. Remember, when you think and feel positively about yourself you will be more productive, as well as happy. When you are finished studying for your test, and feel that all the material has been covered, close your books and go to sleep. If the test is in the morning, don't start reviewing again. If it is later in the day plan a short 15 minute review for yourself. You are now as well prepared as you can ever be. Have confidence in this and yourself. It is the lack of this self-knowledge that cause test anxiety and panic. You are ready.

People don't generally notice that their breathing changes with their varying mental states, especially that of anxiety. The oxygen ratio in our blood affects our degree of conscious awareness. But it is little known that this can be manipulated to your advantage. As we learn to develop relaxed breathing this will result in a more relaxed physical and mental state, as well as increase our awareness potentials. We live our lives very unaware of the emotional and breathing patterns we develop and endlessly repeat. Through an increasing awareness we become better able to recognize these

patterns, and resolve and shape them in ways more beneficial and desirable to the real needs of our lives.

The development of skills leading to muscle and autonomic nervous system relaxation is another major exercise you will learn and practice and develop, here. Coupled with these exercises you will learn to relax both, your body and mind, at will.

During this guided relaxation I will be discussing various aspects of your test anxiety problem. At this stage you will be thinking deeply or meditating directly and positively about the problems and the methods I will lead you in, which can eventually extinguish the negative aspects of your test anxiety. In a real sense this will be a guided meditation, using the positive power of your awareness to gradually shape your responses more to your own liking. This must involve, however, your own positive thoughts and self-suggestions. These helpful autosuggestions that you will use while at this very relaxed level are part of a creative process called self-programming.

During these transcognitive exercises in relaxing body and mind you are at all times in complete control of what is happening. It is not a form of external hypnosis, because you, the meditator, are always aware and in full control of all your senses. You can, if you desire it, immediately bring yourself down to your normal level of awareness. With some practice you will, just as easily, be able to quickly return yourself to this relaxed meditative state, without always having to listen to this recording.

Have your pen and paper ready to use again. At this point you are going to perform a necessary experiment with yourself, which can eventually lead to the desensitization and extinction of test anxiety.

By using your memory and imagination as strongly as you can you are going to let go and make yourself recall what sensations and feelings you have had during test anxiety. This recall is necessary and to be successful you must really want to feel these bad things again, here and now, during this controlled procedure. The bad feelings and anxiety will last only a very short while, and going through this deliberate recall you will soon learn to gain full control over these feelings. To learn to handle them you must first learn to see and sense them for what they are. You have heard of different kinds of psychological therapy sessions where it is necessary and productive to let go and recall bad memories. This is based on the same concept.

This is the end of side one of this recording. The guided meditative exercises are on side two. It is suggested that you repeat this side before first playing side two. Later on, when you develop proficiency in self-programming positive ideas and feelings, it can be a good practice to experiment with side two, alone.

## **SIDE II**

I'm going to ask you now to let go, and recall the last time you experienced strong feelings of test anxiety. Remember what it felt like. Relive this unpleasant experience in your mind. Remember what effects it had on you. Let go, now, and feel and sense how it upset you. What are your feelings, again? While you are beginning to reexperience test anxiety here, now, feel and sense yourself in the next important test situation that you are preparing for. How do you feel if you learn you must take this test tomorrow, and you are unprepared, you are not ready? Sense how your stomach tightens with worry and apprehension. Remember those feelings of self-doubt and worry. Are you really prepared enough to pass or do as well as you want? Did your hands get sweaty and your mind a little bit panicky for a moment? Now, deliberately make yourself feel those upsetting sensations, again. Let your gut-feelings get hold of this memory of irrational and upsetting upheaval. What is it like to feel blind fear during an important test? How did you feel when you blocked out even the simplest things you studied the day before, like names, places, events, ideas that you did know? The worst is going to happen! Do you remember that gut feeling? React to these sensations. Don't think, but feel! React. Let go and sense this test anxiety at its worst, and what it does to you. This anxiety can paralyze you with fear and make you unable to function normally. Remember the worst it ever did to you. Sense these feelings and your fear of the unknown. Get hold of these awful feelings. Your mind and whole body are reexperiencing them, now. Take your time and don't think, but feel that test anxiety. You are feeling and sensing what was real. Remember those bad, intense blind reactions. Feel and sense again the real thing. You remember them well. React to them, and react again! Let yourself go and even overreact, if you can. It is so important to re-experience the real thing, now.

Is your stomach tight and bit queasy? Are your palms warm and sweaty? Can you feel the perspiration of fear dripping down from your armpits? What happens to you when you can't remember even what you reviewed just a while ago? How does it feel? You can't answer the test questions the way you know you should. You feel that what you already answered is not good. Remember how this fear tightens you up and blocks your memory add logical thinking? Sense these feelings. Experience them again. They are real.

All right, now, while you are feeling these things again take the pen and paper you set aside earlier and write down some quick descriptions of what is going on inside you. What are you feeling? Write individual words, phrases, anything that you feel - in any order or disorder. Repeat things, if you feel them again. Don't take time to write whole sentences. Use phrases, words, associations, anything, to try to express what happens during this test anxiety. Is your hand a bit shakey?

All right, now, stop! Take a deep breath, and let it out again, slowly. What was your breathing like, earlier? Did you feel your heart pounding and your blood pulsing? This practice session is over, now, and those feelings will go away quickly. As you are calming down, begin to realize what you did in this experiment. The closer you came to your real test anxiety feelings the more you can benefit, now.

Take another deep breath and hold it in a short while, and then even more slowly, let it out. As you exhale slowly let it come out like a long sigh. Take your time and do this again, and listen to the



noise your exhaling makes, and let yourself sense how your body tension is leaving you with each exhaling. You are now relaxing your whole body. Your mind relaxes, also, as you are doing this. By taking slow, deep breaths, and then holding them in a while before even more slowly letting them out you are practicing controlling your new awareness and ability to relax completely, to relax your body and relax your mind, feeling more and more at peace, and comfortable as you do this.

Try to remember, now, how you felt before -your blood pressure, pulse, tension in your stomach, the muscles of your whole body. If you can, add to your list of words and ideas associated with how you felt. Sense what was going on in yourself.

Pause, now. Realize what you are doing. Your mind is a wonderful thing. Since you could deliberately make those feelings appear you can make them go away, just as easily. Look at what you have written. Take a good check on yourself, now, and see what these irrational feelings really are. Ease up on yourself and push them away. You don't want them.

Now, take another deep breath, hold it in a while, and let it out as slowly as you can. Sit up straight, arching your back. Stretch your arms and body, and try to make yourself yawn. Sense how you are relaxing yourself by doing these things. Now, sit calmly and quietly, Feel your body and your mind relaxing as you do this. Look how you can turn your tension on and off!

Using hindsight, think of the last time you took an examination and felt test anxiety. Recalling and practicing this can put you in full control during your next real test experience. See those fear responses for what they are, your own creations.

You have just performed a very necessary and informative experiment with yourself. Each time you play this part of the recording you will be able to more and more objectively recognize your responses, and automatically change and shape them more to your liking and well-being. Eventually, as you become so familiar with these test anxiety responses you had they will diminish and become repugnant to you. This is the desensitization process that you can give yourself. By using your recall of the worst things you felt during past encounters with test anxiety you now can extinguish them, yourself, starting with these methods. The mind is a most wonderful thing, It can create its own real miseries and happinesses. And you can always be in control, if you really want it.

Now, before I begin the guided relaxation meditation I want you to repeat in your mind these five key words: Calm, Relax, Ease, Harmony, Self. I will repeat them: Calm, Relax, Ease, Harmony, Self. We will consider them again, in a few minutes. Now I'd like you to close your eyes and take a deep breath and let it out slowly, slowly, like a sigh. And once again, slowly take another deep breath, holding it in a little, then slowly letting it out again -slowly, relaxing as you do so, more and more. Feel yourself beginning to relax deeper and deeper.

To help you start to relax yourself even more I am going to count from five to one. On every descending number you will be able to relax more and more, and feel yourself going deeper and deeper into a more relaxed, healthy state of mind, where you will at all times remain fully alert and aware mentally, hearing and understanding everything I say.

Five, Four, Feel yourself relaxing and going deeper. Three, More and more comfortable, deeper and deeper. Two, One. You are now at a deeper, more relaxed alert level of mind.

I want you to think about the top of your head and your scalp, and by an act of your imagination and will I want you to imagine relaxing all the muscles, nerves, skin and pores, and even the roots of your hair. Sense the scalp relaxing, letting loose the tightness and tension there. Feel your scalp relax.

Mentally move down, now, to your forehead. For a few seconds deliberately tighten and wrinkle the muscles and skin of your forehead. Now, relax these muscles. Feel the difference. Brush your hand across your forehead and feel the worry wrinkles relax and smooth out. Sense this.

Relax your temples, now. Imagine the feeling that someone is gently, slowly, carefully massaging your temples, relaxing the muscles and the skin at your temples. Feel this. Feel yourself gradually growing more relaxed in your mind, as well as your body.

Feel your eyes relax, now. Sense the lids growing heavy and heavier, and all your eye muscles relaxing, as they grow more restful. Feel the release of tension and pressure in your eyes, from the relaxing lids, though your eyes, right into the center of your head. Feel yourself gently relaxing, deeply relaxing, thoroughly relaxing. You feel very comfortable, very much at ease, now, very very relaxed.

Relax your cheeks, now. Let go any tension or tightness of your cheeks and their muscles and skin. Feel your cheeks growing smoother and more relaxed. Feel yourself growing increasingly relaxed and apart from worries or cares. Feel how comfortable and relaxed you are becoming.

Relax your lips, Relax your jaw. Now move your jaw from side to side a few times and feel the muscles relax and grow slack after you stop. Let your jaw hang loose and slightly open as you feel the tension and tightness slowly ebbing away from you. Feel your whole self relaxing completely, thoroughly.

Deliberately tense the muscles of your jaw and neck, and hold this tension for a few seconds. Now, let go and relax them. Concentrate your attention on the muscles of your throat as you relax them. Feel the difference as you also relax the muscles and tendons in the sides of your neck. Gently rub the sides of your neck and feel the muscles and tendons relaxing and growing softer, easing loose any tightness that may be there.

And now concentrate your attention on the tightness of the muscles and bones in your neck and spine. Sense the feeling at the back of your head and upper neck, and very, very slowly sense your tensions down to your middle back, and down to your lower back, and all the way down to the bottom of your spine. Relax all of the nerves and muscles at the back of your neck. Feel the tightness in your spine, and as you feel your way down relax all of the tension in each of the muscles, each of the tendons, each of the vertebrae in your back. Sense yourself beginning to relax them,



slowly, all the way down to the bottom of your spine. Relax your entire spinal column. Imagine how it feels if someone were gently, yet firmly pressing a hand from the back of your neck all the way down your spine, over and over. Sense this, feel this and how good it feels. Sense how your whole spine is relaxing. Feel this and how good it feels. Sense how your whole spine is relaxing. Feel how thoroughly your whole body is relaxing, now, feeling more and more distant from any tension or tightness that may have been there before. Feel yourself relaxing thoroughly.

Now, deliberately tense up your shoulder muscles. Shrug your shoulders forward, and tense them for a few seconds. Now let go and relax them. Feel your shoulder muscles and bones loosen and relax as you do this. Move them around for a moment, and sense how relaxed your whole body becomes when you stop moving them around. Sense the difference from before.

Become aware of your breathing now, and notice how slow and naturally rhythmical and relaxed it has become. Feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed, more and more comfortable, more and more at ease and restful.

Make a very tight fist, now, with both hands, and tense all the muscles and tendons of your fists and your wrists and your lower arms. Hold this, tight as you can, feeling the tension grow there. Now let go and relax them. Sense the difference. Relax your upper arms. Feel how comfortable this is getting. Relax your forearms. Relax your wrists. Relax your hands, each finger, each tendon and muscle. Sense how your hands and palms grow a little warm as you relax them -as you allow the blood circulation to flow naturally, nourishing and restoring your relaxing hands and arms. Feel your arms tending to grow a little warm and heavy as you relax and rest them.

Slowly take a deep breath, hold it in for a moment, and then even more slowly, let it out. And as you do this, sense and relax all of the area of your chest -outside and inside, the skin and the muscles, your lungs and all the other organs and cells that you can imagine in this area. Sense this. Feel them relaxing. Very slowly now, take another deep breath. Hold it in a short while, and then, even more slowly, let it out. Sense how relaxed and good this feels. Relax any tension or tightness in the lungs and heart area. Just relax completely, allowing your body to heal and nourish itself, naturally and restfully far from any tension that you may have had before. Sense your chest area and your entire upper torso relaxing. Feel how comfortable and so much at ease it is. Sense your whole body relaxing, more and more, deeper and deeper.

Now, deliberately tense your stomach area muscles. Hold that tension in for a few seconds, and let it go. Feel the difference as you let your body return to its natural, normal state. Take another deep breath, letting it out very, very slowly. And as you do this focus your senses on your abdominal area. Imagine the relaxation and warmth increasing there. Relax your solar plexus. Relax your abdomen, and all of the muscles and nerves that were tense and tight. Sense them gently relaxing. Sense your inner organs and tissues in this area, and feel them relax and grow restful, allowing them to relax naturally, and to nourish and replenish themselves, allowing them to relax and feel healthy.

Sense your hips, the bones and muscles and skin. Relax the entire area of your upper thighs. Feel your knees relaxing -and the calves of your legs. Feel them relaxing and growing warmer with healthful circulation and rest.

Now tense the muscles of your feet as much as you can without bringing pain. Feel your feet and toes curl and pull on your tendons and muscles. Relax them, now. Relax the lower portions of your legs, releasing any tension or tightness that may have been there. Your ankles feel loose, and you can feel your blood rushing through this area, warming and nourishing it. Now sense your feet relax -the heels, the arches, the toes. Relax the tendons and the muscles and the nerve endings in your feet. Feel them relaxing and growing more rested. Feel the soles of your feet grow slightly warm with relaxed, healthy circulation.

Now sense your entire body, Feel how relaxed and rested it is. Imagine any remaining tightness or tension passing out of your body through the bottoms of your feet. Feel your whole body relaxed, completely relaxed, completely at ease.

Now, slowly, take another deep breath. Hold it in a little. As you exhale slowly I want you to imagine that there is a warm, gentle flow of medicinal healing water, delicately fragrant, gently flowing over the top of your head, down your body and over your feet. Imagine and feel this warm, relaxing flow cleansing and healing and purifying, as it gently pours over your head, down your torso and arms and hands, over your legs and feet, leaving your whole body feeling purified, cleansed, relaxed and healed. Feel yourself now, very deeply and relaxed and rested. It feels good to relax so completely, so thoroughly.

You are calm as you relax, and you are at ease and in harmony with yourself. Now take another deep breath, very very deep, and let it out very, very slowly.

And as I continue to talk to you I want you to use your imagination and see a soft, white cloud, sparkling in the energies of the bright full sun. I want you to imagine yourself, now, in that cloud, and resting on it, softly. As I count slowly backward from ten to one you will feel yourself relaxing more deeply and thoroughly. Sense yourself floating restfully on that cotton, white cloud. TEN - Perhaps you can feel the softness of the cloud around and under you. NINE - So relaxing, so at ease, so completely, wonderfully comfortable. EIGHT SEVEN - Drifting along, now, resting deeply, resting softly, resting so completely, drifting deeper and deeper into a deeper, sounder level of consciousness and awareness. Your mind is completely alert and relaxed at this new level of awareness. SIX - Completely comfortable and relaxed. Completely at ease and rest, drifting down slowly, so peacefully, drifting down deeper and deeper, so relaxed and yet so alert. FIVE - You are so very, very comfortable, so much at ease, drifting down on that soft, white cloud. FOUR - You are into a new state of relaxed and increased awareness, now, a new state, where anything is possible if it is good and you want it. -A new level of awareness and alertness, where you are so very, very comfortable. THREE -Very relaxed, so comfortable, so at peace and at ease, and yet so very much aware of your thoughts. Moving deeper and deeper, now, relaxed. TWO - So completely relaxed,



now, so comfortable, so very much at ease, moving downward into a new, deeper level of mind, where anything and everything is possible, if it is good and you want this goodness. Drifting, deeper and deeper and deeper. ONE - So deeply, so thoroughly, so completely relaxed, at ease and wonderfully comfortable. All of the worries or cares that may have troubled you have now drifted far away, so you can no longer feel or sense them.

Feel how you are now deeply, thoroughly relaxed. You are at a deeper, happier, healthier level of mind, that you can create for yourself. Your thoughts can heal and your mind can bring peace. Your mind can function easily at this level, and you can easily think and imagine and develop anything that is good for you. It feels so good to be at peace with yourself. So good, so relaxed, so quietly and calmly happy and aware of your mind's ability to more easily complete any tasks that you may desire to consider or solve.

At this point I would like you to stop for a moment and think in relaxed meditation about yourself. Remember what test anxiety used to do to you. Remember that list you made of all the negative things it did to you. You don't want them to happen any more, and you will not allow them to happen. It is in your control. With this thought repeat those five words to yourself: CALM, RELAX, EASE, HARMONY, SELF. I will repeat them: CALM, RELAX, EASE, HARMONY, SELF. I am CALM in my mind, now. I can now RELAX my body and muscles, at will. I am developing EASE in my new learning about myself. I sense a new HARMONY of my body and mind. I sense my SELF growing with this awareness and confidence.

You are now very much at ease, with your mind and body functioning more efficiently than before. This new sense of HARMONY and SELF feels good. It is good. It will help you learn to develop many positive things that you want -to improve yourself. It will help you to be rid forever of those old feelings of test anxiety. Sense yourself growing increasingly relaxed and apart from these worries and cares. Be aware of how you are already developing a new sense of HARMONY and SELF knowing that you have already begun to outgrow those test anxiety feelings.

Take another deep breath, holding it in for a moment, and then slowly letting it out, again. As you are doing this, think of those key words, CALM, RELAX, EASE, HARMONY, SELF. Sit relaxed, now, relaxed completely, relaxed thoroughly. And once again think and feel and meditate over your improvement and your feelings of self awareness and accomplishment and well-being, imagining and feeling all your desired goals in this practice already well on their way to being completed. Feel your self-gladness. Sense this. The more positive feelings, emotion and gladness you generate now, the better it is for you. Feel yourself as you want to be, whole and happy. Meditate on this for a short while, now. (pause)

And as you continue to relax, now, drifting down, deeper and deeper relaxed, slowly take a deep breath, holding it in for a moment, and then slowly, very slowly, letting it out. And as you are doing this every cell and fiber of your being -your mind, your body are already in the process of renewing and restoring and healing. As you relax yourself physically, and as you relax yourself mentally, and as you relax yourself totally in the manner, easily concentrating your mind, listening to each word that I say, you allow each positive suggestion to take complete and thorough effect to help you, deeply and naturally, on all the different levels of consciousness and mind activity. You are using the methods of mental relaxation and control, which you are now experiencing. This will be used in your everyday life, so that in any testing or examination situation in which you will discover more and more, day by day, that you can better relax and concentrate your real mental powers. You will find it increasingly easier to relax and concentrate casually, or with great deliberation. Whatever the testing activities you are involved with, you will be increasingly better able to relax and apply yourself to, more thoroughly and efficiently, allowing your real mental abilities to better flow just when and how you want them to. You can concentrate efficiently and be more creative in your responses. It feels good to have this relaxed confidence in yourself. In applying your own positive mental powers constructively you become increasingly creative and self-sufficient and beneficial to others, as well. And as this develops you feel more and more relaxed, capable of greater concentration and achievement, and capable of greater value and pleasure to yourself and others around you.

As you continue to relax and meditate on this, you are becoming better aware of your increasing mental abilities, which strengthen and reinforce themselves every day, as you continue to grow and become more and more of that person you've always admired, that person you always wanted to be. All of these positive suggestions and ideas, which you accept, are now planted firmly and deeply and permanently in the deepest reaches of your mind, at all levels of awareness and consciousness. You are in the process of ever growing better and better -more aware of your own increasing mental abilities to help yourself, more and more happy with yourself and what you can do.

Feel yourself drifting, now, relaxed and drifting, deeper and deeper relaxed, deeper and deeper relaxed. And as you are relaxing now, your body and your mind have become infused with health and readiness to function and study more efficiently and more happily. Feel this within yourself. It is good.

In a moment I am going to count from one to five and then ring a gentle gong. At that moment you will open your eyes, feeling wide awake, feeling fine and in excellent spirits. You will feel as if you had awakened from a happy, relaxing nap, yet you will remember everything good that you considered and meditated on during this session. At the end you will feel so good that you will smile to yourself as you open your eyes. ONE TWO -You are beginning to come out slowly, now. THREE -Coming out a bit more now, fully relaxed and rested. At the count of five you will open your eyes, be wide awake and alert. You will smile and feel happily rested, glad to be fully awake, alert and aware. FOUR -Getting ready, now. FIVE (Sound of the gong) Eyes open, now. Wide awake. Feeling fine and in excellent spirits. Feeling better and better each time you do this meditative relaxation exercise.