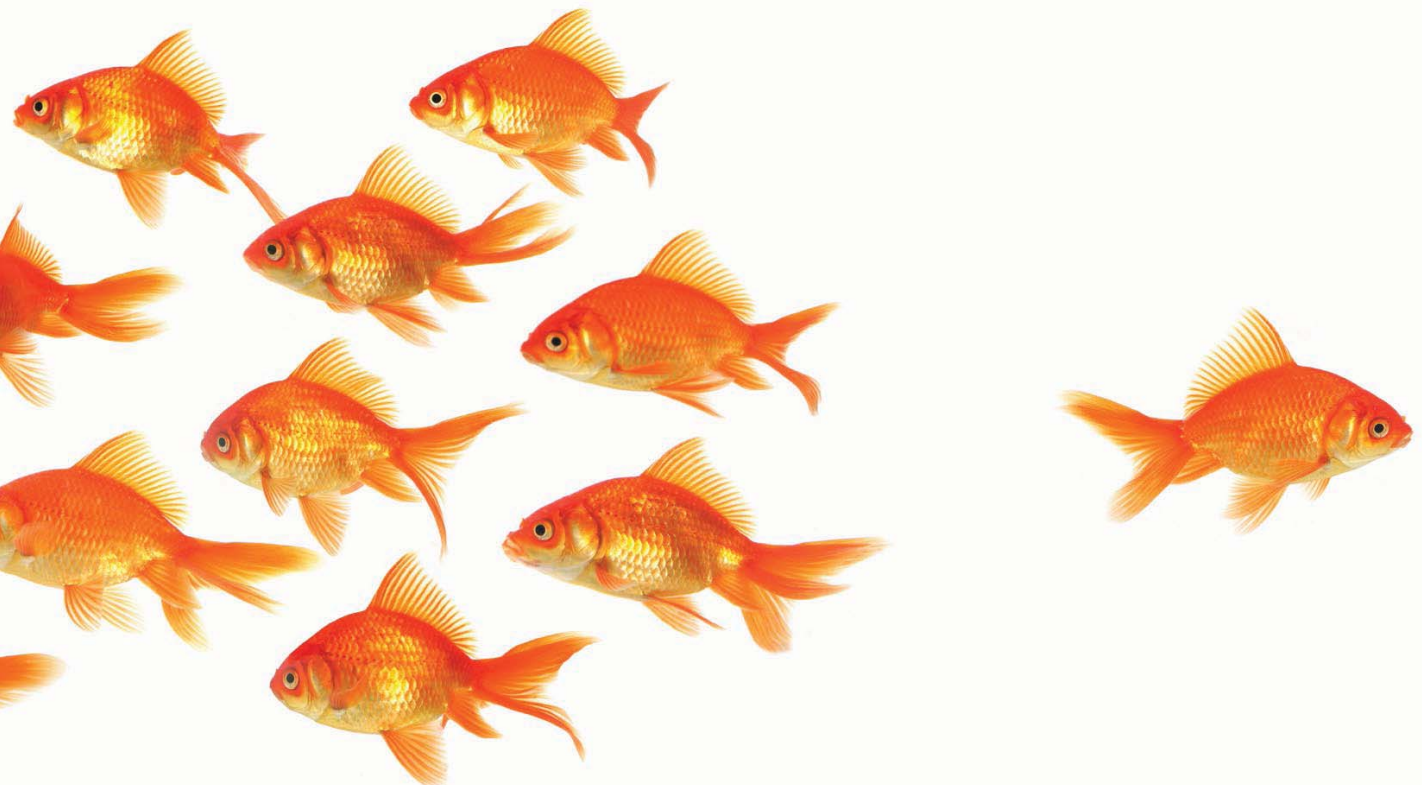


# 10 steps to overcome social anxiety

by Mark Tyrrell

**Full self hypnosis program  
with practical exercises  
and 10 audio downloads**



## 10 steps to overcome social anxiety

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# 10 steps to overcome social anxiety

Mark Tyrrell

## Introduction

## Introduction

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Human beings are social creatures.

We love nothing more than hanging out together. We talk all day long on every subject under the sun, sharing ideas, arguing, learning, instructing, inspiring, entertaining and generally having fun in each other's company. We band together, collaborate, cooperate, plan and organize. Mainly so we can do more things together.

We like to have a few close people to whom we can reveal our hearts, but we also enjoy having larger circles of friends and acquaintances with whom we can have fun times. And even when we're among strangers, we readily find people to connect with, with whom we can feel at ease.

At ease? You wish...?

The funny thing is, in spite of our super social natures, being with other people, talking and interacting with them, causes more human anxiety than almost anything else you can think of. For some people, even the thought of dying is less terrifying!

How can this be?

### The long history behind us

The long course of human evolution has favored sociable behavior. A human on their own can't do much. But when they get together with others, it seems like there is almost nothing they cannot do. So our genes positively drive us together.

Humans are particularly brilliant at making the most of complementary skills and talents. We don't *all* have to be super intelligent, or super creative, or super strong, or super good at making things, or whatever. We can pool our knowledge and talents and come up with phenomenal schemes for making the most of the resources all around us, where many different people contribute in all sorts of different ways.

Civilizations, they're called.

An inevitable upshot of this selection for sociability has been the development in the human species of extreme sensitivity to social context. Our relations with other people *feel* supremely important. How we get on with other people, how they get on with us, *really matters*. And this evolutionary process is, of course, still going on.

As an individual, of course, you have no need to care about where evolution is going with all this, but you are still the product of everything that has gone before.

So it's not at all unusual – in fact it is *exceedingly common* – to experience a very strong *desire* to be sociable coupled with a very strong *anxiety* about being sociable, ranging from shyness or awkwardness to outright social phobia.

And the anxiety is not just because socializing is so important.

It can also be dangerous.

My description of human social evolution above all sounds very wonderful, but it's hardly the whole truth, is it?

History shows rather plainly that humans don't always use their amazing collaborative and cooperative talents for positive purposes. Humans *also* get together to be nasty and horrible to each other. With distressing frequency, and with at least as much ingenuity as they put into beneficial activities.

I am sure I need say no more on that front.

And that makes being very cautious and careful about *who* you socialize with, and *how* you socialize, seem only too sensible. Aren't other people best avoided, if they're such a threat?

It's a real dilemma!

If you just steer clear of other people, you might indeed avoid some of the dangers of hostility, but

- your basic sociable nature will be starved
- you'll experience a great deal of loneliness
- you are likely to be less financially successful (because it's 'who you know, not what you know')
- your health might suffer (1)
- you'll miss out on the huge satisfactions to be gained from engaging in positive endeavors with others

- it will be harder to find people to be intimate with
- and you could get very very bored!

## A note on normal anxiety

It's important to remember that social anxiety, even if it seems like an impossible problem for you to overcome right now, is also a *normal* part of human experience.

No matter how socially skilled and comfortable with others we are, there will also be times when we just naturally find social interaction more tricky.

For example, when we fall ill, and have to spend time 'out of the loop', or if we have had to be away for an extended period and so are unable to engage in our normal social activities, it's common to find that we are somehow 'rusty' and a bit awkward, and a little nervous, even with friends. We may 'talk too much' or, alternatively, feel we don't know what to say any more.

In these circumstances, rather than worrying that you've become some sort of freak, or that 'the old problem' has returned, it helps to recognize that you just need some time to re-adjust. You can acknowledge that you're just a bit 'hungry', and go easy on yourself.

## Is it just me?

You may think you're the only person who feels terribly worried and nervous about being with other people in social situations.

Everybody else looks so relaxed! They all seem to find it so easy to talk to each other! They don't stutter or get tongue-tied. They don't blush. They make jokes and contribute to the conversation without making fools of themselves. Goodness, they even *start* conversations!

Don't be fooled. Remember: *"Never compare your inside with other people's outside."*

In any group you find yourself in, about half the people there will be experiencing some level of awkwardness and anxiety, and it's quite likely that one or two of them, at the very least, will be feeling even worse than you. But they've learned to hide it.

You may have learned to hide it too, perhaps better than you realize, so that no one suspects how much you are shrinking inside.

This act of concealment can be both a good thing and a bad thing.

It allows you to engage in social activity and enjoy some of its benefits in spite of how you feel.

It can also, if you know how to exploit this, allow you to ‘practice’ sociability safely until it really does become more comfortable and easy for you (you’ll be seeing more about this as the course progresses).

But the risk of always putting on an act is that you may never get to experience the real thing – feeling naturally happy and relaxed and at ease in the company of others. A very good ‘act’ can, paradoxically, stand in the way of really getting to grips with and overcoming the anxiety. On top of that, it’s exhausting to keep up!

## Here comes the good news

Now of course, some people do just naturally find socializing easier than others, but even the most socially adept person in the world isn’t *born* knowing how to do it.

Everybody has to *learn* how to socialize. It’s a complex business, involving an interplay of your individual personality and preferences, your early family and social experiences, the culture in which you live, the expectations of those around you, and what real opportunities come your way to learn new ways of doing things.

This is good news.

Because if socializing skill is something that you learn, and not some immutable ‘fact’ about you like the color of your eyes, then it really doesn’t matter whether your experience with social interaction up till now has been good or bad. It’s perfectly possible to learn new ways of engaging comfortably with others – and enjoying it.

And that’s what the **10 steps to overcome social anxiety** course is all about.

We believe that everyone – and that includes you – can learn and change. We’ve looked closely at what exactly goes on when people get together and identified the factors that can make you feel nervous when dealing with others. And we’ve developed a structured program that anyone troubled by social anxiety can follow in order to overcome their fears and really begin to enjoy being with other people.

Each Step on this course covers one important facet of social anxiety in detail. You’ll find lots of useful information that will help you understand yourself and others better, as well as practical exercises to help you develop a wide range of flexible psychological and relationship skills.

But this course is not just about learning a lot of psychological theory (fascinating though it is). It’s about completely *changing your life*.

So each Step includes a specially selected audio hypnosis session designed to help you more easily absorb and integrate powerful new behavior patterns and helpful mental



attitudes. Until it feels *completely natural* to you to automatically feel, think and behave truly comfortably and easily with others. No more 'acting'.

And far from having to strive obsessively to remember every little thing we'll talk about on this course, you can *relax* and *absorb the material over time*, making it as naturally and deeply yours as your mother tongue that you learned to speak so fluently without even realizing that this was what you were doing.

## Ready to commit?

Making big changes in how you feel about and deal with other people requires a serious investment of your time and energy. To get the maximum benefit, you need to make a strong commitment to yourself:

- to read your material – over and over
- to listen to your downloads regularly
- to do the exercises
- to practice your new behaviors
- to be patient with yourself and give yourself time
- to notice, monitor and celebrate your progress

and most important of all

- NEVER EVER TO GIVE UP!

## How to see how you're doing – the Progress Checker

We've put the material in this course together very carefully to make it as easy as possible for you to use, and to review as often as you need. Each Step provides you with vital information, tips, exercises and information about related material.

The related material includes

- links to other associated downloads you might like to purchase (these are suggestions only – they are *not* required for the course)
- links to *free* informative articles to enhance your progress and understanding.

Each Step includes a Progress Checker sheet containing two identical charts. We recommend that you print out several copies of the Progress Checker for each step you undertake and keep them sorted in a folder. (For your convenience, we have also put

all the Progress Checker sheets together at the end of this document, to make them easy to find and print out.)

The Progress Checker makes a number of statements on the topic covered in that Step, and asks you to indicate how true these statements are when applied to you. Nobody is going to see this information but you. Be honest and *fair* with yourself.

We recommend that you fill in the first chart on the day you start that Step, *before* you read the material or listen to the download. This will give you a base line against which to monitor your progress.

It's only natural that, when you start, most answers will tend to fall to the left hand side of the chart.

At the end of the 7-day assignment period, complete the second chart.

Each week after that, continue filling in a Progress Checker for that Step, even when you have moved on to a subsequent Step.

And so on.

Keeping tabs on yourself like this helps you to notice even small improvements and helps you to stay committed.

Even *one* move to the right on the chart is progress, and you should be ready to appreciate and congratulate yourself on the smallest positive change that you notice. Always remember that you have a long term goal here, and it's little steps that will get you there. From time to time you may see a big jump, but gradual, steady, sustainable progress is what you are really after.

When do you stop filling in your Progress Checkers? You won't need us to tell you...

Right, it's time to start! You won't regret taking this course.

Good luck.

## **Mark**

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### *Notes*

(1) See: [Social isolation, loneliness, and all-cause mortality in older men and women.](#)

# 10 steps to overcome social anxiety

Mark Tyrrell



## Overcoming shyness

## Step 1

## Overcoming shyness

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Welcome to the first step in your **10 steps to overcome social anxiety** from Hypnosis Downloads.

**ACTION POINT!** Remember to fill in your [Progress Checker](#) before you start!

Shyness hurts. Literally. When we *feel* socially rejected (whether we actually have been or not) or even when we *fear* we might be socially rejected, the same regions of the brain activate as when we experience physical pain. (1)

When shyness strikes, it deals a double whammy. First, there's the shyness itself, the feeling of embarrassment, the anxiety, the wanting to hide from the spotlight, the fear of being judged negatively. But then there are also the feelings you have *about* being shy.

People talk about feeling 'stupid' or 'not as good as other people' or 'like a fool' for being shy. So not only do they have the shyness itself to deal with but also, often, all the self criticism that goes along with it; one client told me: "I hate myself for being shy!"

So what exactly is shyness?

### Overcoming shyness: knowing the beast

The first step to becoming less shy is to understand what shyness does to people; to see it as a *pattern* and to remember that patterns can be changed.

Shyness has to do with:

- anxious thoughts and feelings in **anticipation** of meeting new people (or even people you see regularly)
- anxious thoughts and feelings in **company**

- feeling **unable to express yourself** or your ideas (and the associated frustration)
- feeling very **self conscious** rather than relaxed during some conversations
- **misusing your imagination** by assuming you 'know' what other people 'must be' thinking about you
- **avoiding** certain conversations, occasions where you might be 'in the spotlight', or even just going out and seeing people
- **focusing too consciously** on what should be happening *unconsciously* – like your facial expression and every word you say. (Imagine if you had to consciously focus on every step you took when walking – that would certainly spoil your spontaneous enjoyment of the walk!)

'Shyness' is a mix of how we *feel* affecting how we *think* and *behave*.

The ten steps of this overcoming social anxiety course will help change all three of these facets of shyness.



Shyness makes  
us overthink

## Exercise • What about you?

So the first thing to think about is: **When are you shy?**

It's easy to just assume that the answer is 'all the time', but this isn't so. When you're alone, or with certain family members or friends, then you will either feel less shy, or even not at all shy.

Take a sheet of paper and write down when you were least likely to be shy and most likely to be shy. What has it been doing to you? How did it make you feel, think, act?

**I am least likely to be shy when...** (situation)

**Example:** *I am least likely to be shy when I'm doing the shopping. Having a clear task to do seems to make it easier to speak to people like the checkout assistant.*

**I am least likely to be shy with...** (person/people)

**Example:** *I am least likely to be shy with my aunt and uncle. I feel like they accept me and don't judge me, so I can relax round them, and even have a laugh.*

**I am most likely to be shy when...** (situation)

**Example:** *I am most likely to be shy when I have to be part of a group activity. I feel like I'm expected to contribute in some special way, and I don't know how, which makes me feel stupid. So I try to stay in the background and just agree with the others.*

**I am most likely to be shy with...** (person/people)

**Example:** *I am most likely to be shy with people who are much older than me. I feel like there's this gulf of understanding – they don't understand me, I don't understand them, so I don't know what to say to them.*

## Shyness stops us reacting naturally

Being shy means that you worry excessively that there is a 'wrong thing' and a 'right thing' to say, a 'wrong way' and a 'right way' to look or act. And that if you slip up even once you may be shut out of the group or rejected in some way. Shy people tend to over-estimate the likelihood that they will be negatively judged or rejected.

## Shyness – the vicious cycle

Feeling shy can work like a kind of self-reinforcing feedback loop. Worrying that you are acting shy and haven't said anything much can make you feel *more* anxious, thus making the shyness worse.

There is a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' element to this too, in that 'acting shy' can, in turn, make people around you feel less at ease, so making *you* feel like you are 'doing it all wrong'.

Either way, shyness begets more shyness.

## The effects of shyness

Being excessively shy means that, among other things, you

- miss out on social, romantic, or career opportunities
- get frustrated
- can't be really honest, because of feeling reluctant to say what you really think, even when it would be beneficial to do so

So really think about what shyness means to you. What has it made *you* do, or not do?

Get to see the pattern of it. Because it's that pattern we are going to change on this course.

## Overcoming shyness by overcoming self focus

A few pages back I mentioned the idea of going for a walk and thinking about every single step you take as you go along. Now imagine actually doing that.

If you were to try it, you would find yourself walking much less naturally, and you would be more focused on what was happening in your legs and feet, your own experience, than on your surroundings. You would, in fact, be trying to control what

should be a mostly *unconscious* activity with your conscious mind, constantly checking whether you are 'doing it right'. When you do that, it simply *can't* feel natural.

Shyness makes us do exactly this in a social context.

Feeling shy makes us less observant both of other people and our surroundings. (2)  
Shyness demands that we focus in on what *we* feel and think about *ourselves*, rather than on the situation as a whole and on the other people present.

### Exercise • Total recall?

Purposefully put yourself in a situation where normally you might expect to feel shy. (The thought of doing this may be scary, but think of it as a scientific experiment!)

As the situation is progressing, make a conscious effort to **notice** and **remember**

- what **two** different people are wearing
- **three** things that are talked about, and
- **five** things about the place (color of the walls, number of windows, type of flooring, that sort of thing)

Afterwards, write down as many of these as you can.

The point is to start practicing changing your focus from *internal* (on yourself and your feelings) to *external* (the place and the people).

## On becoming less self conscious

We overcome shyness not when we feel wonderful but when we spend less time thinking about ourselves and more time focusing outward onto others and our immediate environment.

In fact, when people talk to me about coming out of shyness, they often describe it as like 'forgetting themselves' and just enjoying the situation.



Imagine, if you were just focusing on the steps of your walk, you might not notice (and would therefore certainly fail to appreciate) the trees, other walkers, that fifty dollar bill at the side of the path...

I've talked a lot about what shyness is, but I also want to talk about *destination*.

## Overcoming shyness means knowing where you want to be

If you are very shy, or at least shyer than you'd like to be, then it might feel 'natural' to focus on that shyness, to think and worry about it. And, as I've said, it is important to know how it 'works'. But a large part of overcoming shyness is building a 'blueprint', a sort of map in your mind of *where you want to be*; how you'll *know* when the shyness is no longer a problem.

The more detailed and vivid a sense of your future *beyond* shyness that you build (rather than just thinking about how bad the shyness is right now), the more likely it is that you'll naturally move toward that future.

## Exercise • Picture the scene

Write a **detailed description** of how life will be different for you with much less shyness.

Here are some questions to inspire you:

- **who** will notice?
- **what** exactly will they notice?
- **how will you feel** getting up in the morning?
- what's the very **first thing** you'll notice about being more socially confident?
- **how will you look** to others?
- what will you be able to **do and feel** that you haven't been able to do and feel up till now?

Write maybe 500 words or more and really **think about what your answers are telling you.**

When you've done that, spend some time really strongly *imagining* what these changes will be. Picture the scene as brightly and vividly as you can, as if you are making a movie of it.

**Repeat** this bit of the exercise every day.

If a map is to be useful to you, you need to know exactly where you want to be!

## ASSIGNMENT 1

### Overcoming shyness

Download [Overcome shyness](#) and **listen** to your download

- **every** day
- **at least** once a day
- for **7** days
- or until you **notice at least half** of the progress indicators shown below

#### Progress indicators

- you notice you've started to **feel naturally less shy** and calmer
- you find that after meeting people you **recall more about other people**, what was said and even your environment
- you find you **beat yourself up less** regarding shyness
- you feel **less concerned with what others might think** of you
- you start to **enjoy social interactions** a little more
- you **'forget to be self conscious'** more often than not

### Supplementary material

#### Related downloads available to purchase

[Overcome insecurity](#)

Feeling insecure in our dealings with others can make us feel more shy, and feeling shy can make us feel more insecure – an unhappy two way street.

#### Recommended FREE articles

[Overcome shyness in 5 easy steps](#)

Right, that's all for now! Be sure to learn all you can from this first session. Relax with the material and 'make it your own' so that it starts to be second nature for you.

Remember to look out for your progress indicators and record them on your Progress Checker!

Next time we'll be looking at overcoming social phobia, which will deal with the *physical* side of anxiety and how to calm that down when it matters.

All the best for now

## Mark

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### Notes

- (1) Researchers from the University of Michigan discovered that the same regions of the brain that become active in response to painful sensory experiences are activated during intense experiences of social rejection. See: '[Social rejection shares somatosensory representations with physical pain.](#)' Kross E, Berman MG, Mischel W, Smith EE, Wager TD. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2011 Apr 12;108(15):6270-5. Epub 2011 Mar 28.
- (2) '[Cognitive processes in social anxiety: the effects of self-focus, rumination and anticipatory processing.](#)' Tanna M. B. Mellings and Lynn E. Alden, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z4 January 1999. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, Volume 38, Issue 3, March 2000, Pages 243-257

## Overcoming shyness – Progress Checker

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How true are these statements of you?	Slightly	Partly	Fairly	Mostly	Totally
I am feeling less shy generally					
I am able to remember things about the people I meet					
I don't beat myself up about being shy					
I don't worry so much what others think about me					
I enjoy social interactions more					
I don't think about myself so much any more					

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How true are these statements of you?	Slightly	Partly	Fairly	Mostly	Totally
I am feeling less shy generally					
I am able to remember things about the people I meet					
I don't beat myself up about being shy					
I don't worry so much what others think about me					
I enjoy social interactions more					
I don't think about myself so much any more					



I hope you found Step 1 of the 10 Steps to Overcome Social Anxiety course useful

If you would like to try the whole course, you can [read about it here](#).

All my very best,

Mark Tyrrell

Co-founder of Hypnosis Downloads

Author of 10 Steps to Overcome Social Anxiety