



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME
SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
&
MENTAL TRAINING

KUNASHNI PARIKH
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



Pre-Performance Belief Protocol

Purpose:

This protocol is designed to **raise your self-belief before performance**—not by hype or false confidence, but by **activating evidence, memory, focus, and emotional regulation systems in the brain.**

It works for:

- Sports competitions
- Stage performances
- Exams, interviews, public speaking
- Any environment where **pressure is high and outcomes matter**

Self-belief before performance is not about convincing yourself—you're great.


It's about **reminding your nervous system that you are prepared, capable, and safe to perform.**

The 7-Step Protocol (At a Glance)

1. Recall your strengths
2. Record past wins (4 wins)
3. Re-anchor your belief: *Why you can do this*
4. Visualize the goal
5. Calm the nerves with box breathing (2 minutes)
6. Say your affirmation
7. Listen to optimal music

1. Recall Your Strengths

The Science



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Under pressure, the brain shows a **negative bias**—the amygdala becomes more active and filters information toward threat and doubt. Actively recalling strengths re-engages the **prefrontal cortex**, which restores balance, confidence, and decision-making.

✓ Instructions

Silently or on paper, list:

- 3 technical strengths
- 2 physical strengths
- 1 mental or personality strength

Be specific. Not “*I’m good*”—but *why* you’re good.

2. Record Past Wins (Write 4 Wins)

The Science

Memory recall of success activates the same neural circuits as real achievement. This **conditions the brain toward expectancy of success**, reducing uncertainty and fear.

✓ Instructions


Write **4 past wins**—big or small:

- A match you handled well
- A moment you stayed composed
- A situation you adapted under pressure

These are **proof**, not motivation.

3. Visualize the Goal

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The brain does not fully differentiate between real and imagined action. Visualization activates **motor, sensory, and emotional circuits**, priming your system for execution.

✓ Instructions

Close your eyes and visualize:

- yourself entering the performance
- executing key actions smoothly
- finishing strong

Keep it **short, positive, and present-tense**.

4. Calm the Nerves: Box Breathing (2 Minutes)

The Science

Box breathing down-regulates the sympathetic nervous system and activates the **parasympathetic (calming) response**, lowering heart rate and mental noise.

✓ Instructions

For 2 minutes:

- Inhale – 4 seconds
- Hold – 4 seconds
- Exhale – 4 seconds
- Hold – 4 seconds

Let your body settle before moving forward.

5. Revise Your Strategy

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Clarity reduces anxiety. When the brain knows *what to do next*, uncertainty drops and confidence rises.

✓ Instructions

Mentally review:

- your opening plan
- one adjustment you'll make if needed
- your focus cue

You're reminding yourself: **this is familiar territory.**

6. Say Your Affirmation

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Affirmations act as **attention filters**. They guide the brain toward confidence-relevant information and reduce mental noise under pressure.

✓ Instructions


Choose **one short, believable statement** and **one instructional statement**, such as:

- "I am ready."
- "I trust my training."
- "Focus on the ball"
- "Stay center"

Say it slowly, once or twice—nothing forced.

7. Use Music to Get Into Your Zone

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Music influences emotional arousal, rhythm, and motivation. The right music helps you enter a **familiar, confident performance state**.

 **Instructions**

- Use music briefly before performance if possible
- Choose tracks that energize or ground you—based on your need
- Stop the music before you enter the final performance environment

Let the **state carry forward**, not the sound.

Final Note

This protocol is not about forcing confidence.

It's about **remembering who you are when pressure tries to make you forget**.

You've prepared.

You've earned this moment.

Now allow your training to speak.

Wishing you clarity, calm, and a strong performance.