

The Daily Consideration Practice: Rebalancing SCO

A Progressive Protocol for SCO Recalibration in Ordinary Life

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Introduction

This practice is not about becoming less considerate of others. Others are already present: reliably, automatically, often at the expense of everything else.

This practice is about inserting the self into the moment before a decision to recalibrate the weight of self, compared with the weight of others. Not selfishness. Not indifference. Simply, allowing your own response, your own need, your own preference to arrive before others organize what you do.

For some people, that is the hardest thing in the world because they never learned to put their own needs and wants at the center of anything. Other people always came first.

This practice builds it. One pause at a time. In the ordinary moments of daily life where the self has historically been the last thing to arrive, if it arrived at all.

This practice is not about moral evaluation. It is not about measuring how selfish or selfless you are. It is about one thing only: inserting yourself into the moment before you act. Whether the action changes or doesn't change is secondary. What matters is that

you were present in the decision before the action. The circuit is being built regardless of what you decide.

The Optional Tap

Before asking the question, particularly in early stages, or when the day has been activating and the system feels contracted, the client can use the Alternating Frontal Tap to bring the vmPFC and OFC online:

Place the index fingers of both hands just above each eyebrow, directly over the frontal eminences.

Tap alternately: left, right, left, right, at a comfortable rhythm for 20-30 seconds.

Notice whether something shifts: a slight softening, a widening of attention, a sense of becoming more available.

Then ask the question.

As consolidation progresses, the tap will become less necessary. The question will arrive without it. That shift is itself a clinical marker; the circuit is beginning to operate without external scaffolding.

Stage 1. Detection

Is there something I want, need, or feel here?

When: Before any small decision in daily life, particularly decisions that typically organize immediately around others. What to eat when asked. Which direction to go when someone else has a preference. Whether to speak or stay quiet. What to do with an unscheduled hour. Whether to take something for yourself when there's enough for everyone.

The practice:

Pause, just briefly, one or two seconds, before deciding.

Ask: *Is there something I want, need, or feel here?*

Don't force an answer. Don't immediately check what others need. Just hold the question open for a moment and notice what arrives.

Something may come: a preference, a sensation, a quiet pull toward one option rather than another. Or a sense that you genuinely don't know, which is also information. Or the immediate awareness that you've already organized around what someone else needs before the question was finished, which is the pattern itself becoming visible.

Then act. The practice isn't about changing the action yet. It's about inserting the question before it.

Examples of moments:

Someone asks where you want to eat. Before deferring, pause. Is there somewhere you actually want to go? The colleague who always needs something at the end of the day. Before organizing around their need, pause. Is there something you need right now? The last of something in the shared space. Before leaving it for others automatically, pause. Do you want it?

What this is doing neurobiologically:

The salience network is being asked, repeatedly, to flag the self as a relevant input at the moment of decision. Each time the question is asked, even when nothing arrives, the circuit is being activated. Over hundreds of repetitions, the self begins to register as significant before others automatically dominate.

Progress marker:

The client begins to notice their own response arriving before or at least at the same time as they've checked what others need. The pause becomes shorter because the self-signal is already present.

Stage 2. Encoding

What specifically do I want, and does it matter?

When: The client has been practicing Stage 1 and detection is becoming more reliable. A self-signal is beginning to arrive. Now the practice deepens, from a vague sense that something is present to a specific preference that carries personal weight.

The practice:

Pause before deciding.

Ask: *What specifically do I want here?*

Allow something specific to arrive, not just a general sense that you have a response, but a particular preference, a clear feeling, a definite direction. The vacation you actually want to have. The topic you actually want to talk about. The way you actually want to spend this hour. The thing you actually need right now.

Then ask: *Does it matter?*

Not as a rhetorical question, as a genuine one. *Does this preference carry enough weight to be present in what happens next? Or does it dissolve the moment you imagine others' responses?*

Then act.

Examples of moments:

You're asked for your opinion and you have one, a real one, not a diplomatic version of everyone else's. *Does it arrive? Does it stay?* The unscheduled afternoon. Before filling it with what others need, *what do you actually want to do with it?* The conversation that keeps moving toward what the other person needs. *Is there something you need from this conversation too?*

What this is doing neurobiologically:

The vmPFC is being activated: the circuit that makes the self's own experience personally meaningful rather than immediately subordinated to others' needs. Each repetition strengthens the pathway between detection and personal significance. The self doesn't just arrive, it begins to carry weight.

Progress marker:

The client reports that their own preferences arrive with some felt quality, the signal of something specific and meaningful. The question produces a brief but genuine moment of contact with their own experience, before others organize it away.

Stage 3. Integration

What do I want here, and does that enter what I decide?

When: The client can reliably detect their own response and hold it as personally meaningful. The question now reaches into the territory where the OFC operates: the self's needs and preferences entering the decision before it is made, alongside rather than behind others.

The practice:

Pause before deciding.

Ask: *What do I want here, and does that enter what I decide?*

Hold both parts of the question simultaneously. What you want, specifically, genuinely. And the decision, does knowing that change anything?

The answer may be yes. The decision may shift, you say where you want to eat. You take the last of something. You decline the request at the end of the day. You spend the hour the way you actually want to spend it.

Or the answer may be no, and the decision proceeds as it would have, but now consciously, with the self having been genuinely present in the decision alongside others.

Both are valid. The practice isn't about prioritizing yourself over others. It's about you being present in the computation before the choice is made, alongside others, not instead of them. That is what balanced SCO requires.

Then act.

Examples of moments:

The group decision where you always defer. This time, *what do you actually think?* The favor that's always automatically granted. This time, *do you have the capacity to give it right now?* The conversation that always ends where the other person needs it to end. This time, *is there something you need before it closes?*

What this is doing neurobiologically:

The OFC is being trained to generate forward predictions that include the self's needs and preferences alongside others, in the actual contexts where the self has historically been absent from the computation. Each repetition strengthens the pathway between self-awareness and decision-making. The self begins to be present before the choice is made rather than recognized only afterward, if at all.

Progress marker:

The client begins to report spontaneous awareness of their own response before deciding, without asking the question. The question has become the circuit. The self is

arriving in the computation on its own, alongside others rather than behind them. This is the functional definition of SCO consolidation at the other-prioritized pole, not selfishness, but weighting in its own presence.

Tracking the Practice

Ask the client to keep a brief daily record, not a journal, just a note. One or two lines maximum.

Three questions:

Did I pause today?

Did I arrive?

Did it change anything?

The language is deliberate: did I arrive rather than did someone arrive. The client is tracking the self's presence in their own experience. Reviewing this across sessions gives both clinician and client a direct window into how the circuit is developing: when the self is arriving more readily, when the pause is becoming shorter, when decisions are beginning to include the self as a genuine organizing force.

Clinical Note

This practice works because it targets the exact moment and context where the self is most absent: the ordinary decision point where others have historically organized everything before the self has had a chance to register.

In-session work opens the circuit. This practice consolidates it in the life the client returns to every day.

The progression from detection to encoding to integration mirrors the developmental sequence of SCO itself, and mirrors the protocol stages the client has been working through in session. The daily practice is the protocol living in the world.