

Techniques for Boosting Self-Confidence

Confidence Is A State Of Mind

First of all let's demolish a myth that some people believe about confidence
You don't have to be an expert in something to have confidence.

You can have 2 people learning a new task, and one person is learning to do the task with confidence, while the other is making lots of mistakes and getting flustered. It's not about how well you do a particular task, but how you feel inside as you are doing it that makes you confident. If I had to choose to be confident in one area only, I would make that area 'learning whilst making mistakes'.

First identify a situation where you would like to be more confident, for example:

- In meetings with the CEO
- Giving presentations
- Giving honest feedback
- Visiting a client
- In a sales context

Write your situation here:

List 5 situations, in a similar context to the one you have identified above, where you are usually confident.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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4.

5.

Next, imagine you are re-enacting one of the contexts above, feeling very confident, and answer the following questions:

1. How do you feel when you have this confidence?

Answer:

2. How do you hold yourself?

Answer:

3. What is going through your mind?

Answer::

4. Do you have any inner dialogue? What is it saying?

Answer:

5. On what are you focusing your attention?

Answer:

Now adopt the thinking, inner dialogue, posture and emotions you have when confident, at times where you are lacking confidence.

Self Belief

Nothing promotes confidence more than a strong belief in yourself, your capability and in the actions you take. Spend some time thinking about the contexts in which you want to be more confident, and run movies in your mind of how you want to 'be' in each specific situation. Make your mind-movies colourful, big and with a positive outcome. Replay them to yourself and be immersed in the successful outcomes you have created. Tell yourself that you believe you can be confident in any situation. Describe the reasons for wanting to be confident.

The following half statements might help you with this process:

The context in which I want to be more confident is ...

Outcome of mind-movie ...

I can be confident in this situation because ...

Being confident in this situation will mean that ...

Sphere of Confidence

This technique is in common use by media presenters, actors and company presenters. It is very effective at giving you the feeling of confidence – after all, that's what confidence is, a feeling and an attitude. And when you feel confident you can be your best.

Stand upright, with your back straight, and body relaxed.

Breathe slowly and deeply, through the nose, and take the air down to expand the lower abdomen. Hold your head straight and look out just above the horizon. Imagine that you are breathing in confidence, and even more confidence is coming down from the universe, through the top of your head and into your entire body. Your feet have grown roots and you are now able to draw confidence from the earth below.

Next, think of a time when you were very confident. The context is irrelevant.

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Now, locate the feeling you have when you are confident, and imagine this feeling is growing out from your navel in a sphere surrounding your body. The sphere also fills with confidence from your breath, the universe and the earth.

As the sphere grows feel the confidence filling your entire body, until the sphere is encompassing your whole body. Imagine the confidence swirling around inside you and making you strong. Wherever you are, your sphere will be with you, and everyone it touches will feel your confidence.

Smile at your thoughts

You can use this very simple technique to get rid of any thoughts that may be knocking your confidence.

When your confidence begins to weaken it is often because your response to a situation, or to someone else you consider as 'better than you' is negative. For example, imagine observing someone perform a task so elegantly that you doubt you could do it so well. It is not the observation that knocks your confidence, it's your response to it, e.g. 'I'm not that good'.

All you need to do is change your response, and the easiest way of doing that is to SMILE . . .

So whenever you catch yourself responding in this way, just examine the thought you are having, and then smile at it. You will find that the thought disappears and you can access your natural confident state.

Look Inside

Stop looking in the mirror, and start looking inside for your confidence. Your face and body are not going to change radically overnight, and the more you concern yourself with your visual image, the less confident you will become.

The more confident you feel, the more confidence you project, and the more confident you will look from the outside. Of course it's important to look good, but all this takes is a reasonable dress sense, nice haircut and a good standard of personal hygiene. Anything more than this could become obsessive.

So concentrate on the inside. What you are capable of, what you have learned, and the dedication, commitment and focus you have to achieve whatever you decide you want. Make a habit each morning, after briefly checking the mirror, to connect with your inner resources of motivation and drive, and you will feel more confident each day.

Compete with Yourself

Stop comparing with other people and compare with yourself instead. Sometimes confidence is low because of the tendency to compare with others.

When we see someone doing something better than us we can feel bad about our own performance. Also, if you are very competitive, and like to compete with other people, you will not come first all the time.

So confidence isn't about beating others, it's more about doing things as well as you can, and any comparison is with your own previous performance. What did you learn the last time you did this particular task?

And it's OK to observe other people, as long as you are not comparing. With observation you can pick up tips and ideas to use, and this is one way of learning new things. So learn to observe without comparing, and learn to compete with yourself alone.

Aspects of myself I want to compete with are:

Affirmations

Self-talk is one way we give ourselves important messages. Some people have very negative self-talk, with messages that defend an insecurity or avoid risk. This does nothing to help confidence. You can increase your feeling of confidence by repeating some affirmations at certain times of the day, or when you want to be most confident.

These affirmations might include:

- I am becoming more confident
- I can learn how to do (task)
- Every day I am improving in my ability to (task)
- I can focus on what's important and make smart decisions

Make up some affirmations of your own and remember to recite them at least twice a day. An affirmation describes what is possible, and what can be, given no mental barriers. The affirmation helps to break down mental barriers.

Note your affirmations here:

The Breath of Confidence

This is a little like meditation, and you can do it just about anywhere. Whether you are sitting, standing or walking, make sure your posture is straight, especially your back; breathe in and out through your nose; take the breath down to the lower abdomen, and relax your body.

Breathe in slowly for a count of 8 and hold the breath for a count of 8, then let the breath out slowly to a count of 8. With each breath imagine that the air you take in is pure confidence itself. Imagine it as a white mist spreading throughout your entire body and giving you the feeling of confidence.

Now move your mind to concentrate on the situation where you would like more confidence, and imagine being in that situation now, as you continue to breathe as described above.

When you next encounter the situation where you would like to have more confidence, begin the breathing just before you engage, and keep it going all the way through to the end.

Adopt Confident Gestures

When you are lacking confidence it will show in your body language and your gestures. The body will attempt to be less noticed, and so the gestures will become much smaller. So you can get the feeling of confidence back by reversing the body language.

For example:

- When making a suggestion, gesture in a big way with your hands and adopt a supportive facial expression.
- When listening, are you showing that you are listening, by holding your head to one side and concentrating on what is being said?
- When arriving do you greet people with a confident handshake, hug, or kiss?
- When leaving, do you make a decisive exit after saying goodbye to each person in turn?
- When speaking, are your words precise and clear, with a confident voice tone?

- When you are speaking, if you express your words with some clear and precise hand gestures, you will appear more confident.

Be Decisive

Nothing kills confidence more than indecisiveness. Each morning make a habit of writing down the things you want to achieve that day, and stick to it like glue.

Even if there are only 2 things on the list, it doesn't matter what those two things are, just be sure to do them. Indecisiveness often comes from a lack of vision and direction, or a fear of something, or assumptions and conjecture about the value of any particular activity. When you catch yourself in any of these modes of thought it is time to just do something for the sole purpose of getting it done. At least that's decisive.

Focus with Clarity

When you have a lack of focus your confidence will fall. This is because your attention has no guide and will be pulled in all directions. This may well lead to a drop in your confidence, as you no longer have a clear purpose for engaging in certain activities.

Spend some time meditating on your purpose within the context where you have low confidence. For example, imagine that you want to be more confident with selling your products or services. Do you know what your purpose is for engaging in this activity? Is it to make profit? To deliver value? To grow the business, or some other overall purpose?

Chances are that if you are unable to answer this question your confidence may be low as a result of the inconsistency of your approach to your customers. Consistency is important to confidence. When you are absolutely clear about your purpose, then you will know how best to interact with your customers, confidently.

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