



How to Build Self Confidence

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In conversation with a journalist a few days back, I was asked what tricks I knew that would help build self confidence – he said that he had been discussing this with a number of other people, in preparation for an article he was writing on the subject. I suggested to him that self-confidence “tricks” are like trying to stop a damn bursting with a sticking plaster and that, no doubt, he had been at the receiving end of a lot of the usual nonsense that passes for conventional wisdom when it comes to building self-confidence.

Why would you not have absolute and unshakeable confidence in yourself anyway? If you don't believe in yourself no one else will. The problem with attempting to build self-confidence in the face of daily factual evidence to the contrary will leave you ending up feeling worse about yourself, your qualities and your capabilities than you did in the first place. For example, if you're afraid of public speaking, psyching yourself up before you take the stage by telling yourself that you're a great public speaker, that you're going to “knock 'em dead” and that you're going to exude self-confidence once you walk onto the stage, will have absolutely no effect when the lights go down and it's your moment to speak. If you've been crap at it for years, no amount of telling yourself that you're great will make you any less crap. In fact, that fact that you will be, once again, so crap, will not only confirm to you that you were right to think you were crap in the first place, it will make you feel that any efforts you made to talk yourself into self-confidence failed dismally – you'll feel even worse.

The root cause of people's lack of so-called self confidence lies not in the evidence of their daily lives but in a self-belief system that was constructed for them during their formative years by those who were important to them – parents and peers. As adults, the negative evidence of their daily lives is the result of their own behaviour which is dictated by their belief system. In other words, your adult life is a self-fulfilling prophecy! But this is only true if you're prepared to listen to what my clients call the “little voice in your head” that whispers (or sometimes shouts) “no you can't!”

Unfortunately, years of psychological research point to the fact that, as normal adults, our default state of mind is constantly paying attention to those voices – we are constantly tripping ourselves up, constantly reconfirming that we were right to believe ourselves to be crap in the first place. But it's all a charade, our subconscious mind is shadow-boxing with the memories of childhood events

that made us feel good or bad about ourselves. They're not real and they're certainly not happening in the only place and time you actually have to be at your very best – the here and now.

As a responsible adult, you have a choice – and, whether you know it or not, it's a choice that you already make, every single day, moment to moment. You can choose to pay attention to those voices that create this illusion of lack of self-confidence – that's your default setting. Or you can choose to pay attention to the reality of what is actually taking place in the here and now, uncoloured by your own preconceived notions about yourself. It's a choice that you currently subconsciously make automatically in favour of your childhood voices. It's a choice that you're going to have to make consciously and deliberately if you want to free your inner potential and forget about this self-confidence nonsense.

You've got to choose to be present in the moment. If you're present, you will have presence – the hallmark of all great people. If you have presence, you will be impressive and attractive – not just to those around you but, as modern science proves, you will attract into your life the things that you need to happen to enable you soar to the heights of success and abundance that any of us can achieve – and that definitely includes you! In order to make this deliberate choice, you need to know the difference between being present or being buried in your past. In other words, you need to experience what it's like to be fully present. You can only do this using your five senses – the only interface that you have with the real world and, indeed, the only means that you have of paying attention to the present moment.

You need to experience this difference of state of mind at times and in places where it makes no difference – when nobody's depending on you to make a speech, chat up that guy or girl at the bar, where nobody knows or cares what you're doing. In other words, you need to find places and times to practice being present, so that you can get used to the difference and be able to be present when it really matters. A suggestion: set aside fifteen minutes every day or two to go for a walk – not to think things through but to clear your head and to see, feel, hear, smell and taste what's passing you by as you stroll. Don't think about what's passing by, don't let your mind wander. Simply see, feel, hear, smell and taste each new experience for what it is, as it passes. This is the essence of presence. Presence of mind takes your mind's attention of those negative voices and liberates you to be all that you can be in the here and now.