

Personal Development Resources

Quick Guide to Building Self-Confidence and Preparing Yourself for Success

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Self-confident people seem at ease with themselves and their work. They invite trust and inspire confidence in others. These are all attractive characteristics to have.

But it's not always easy to be confident in yourself, particularly if you're naturally self-critical or if other people let you down.

In this Quick Guide we will help you understand the steps you can take to increase and maintain your self-confidence.



What is Self-Confidence – and why is it important?

Self-confidence means trusting your own judgement and ability. It's about valuing yourself and feeling worthy, regardless of any imperfections or what others may believe about you.



Confidence and Behaviour

Look at the table below, which compares confident behaviour with behaviour that's associated with low self-confidence. Which thoughts or actions do you recognise in yourself and the people around you?

Confident Behaviour	Behaviour Associated with Low Self-Confidence
Doing what you believe to be right, even if others mock or criticise you for it.	Changing your behaviour based on what other people think.
Being willing to take risks and to go the extra mile to achieve better things.	Staying in your comfort zone, fearing failure, and avoiding risk.
Admitting your mistakes and learning from them.	Working hard to cover up mistakes and hoping you can fix the problem before anyone notices.
Waiting for others to congratulate you on your accomplishments.	Telling everyone how good you are as often as possible to as many people as possible.
Accepting compliments graciously. "Thanks, I really worked hard to do that piece of work. I'm pleased you recognise my efforts."	Dismissing compliments. "Oh, that piece of work was nothing, really. Anyone could have done it."

As these examples identify, low self-confidence can be self-destructive, and may express itself as negativity.

Self-confident people are generally more positive – they value themselves and trust their judgement. But they also acknowledge their failures and mistakes and learn from them.



Why Self-Confidence Matters

Self-confidence is vital in almost every aspect of our lives, yet many people struggle to find it. Sadly, this can become a vicious cycle: people who lack self-confidence are less likely to achieve the success that could give them more confidence.

For example, you may not be inclined to support an idea from someone who's visibly nervous, fumbling, or constantly apologising. On the other hand, you are more likely to support someone who speaks clearly, holds their head high, and answers questions confidently.

Confident people inspire confidence in others, their co-workers, their bosses, their customers, and their friends. And gaining the confidence of others is one of the keyways to succeed. In the following sections we'll explore how you can do this.



How to Appear More Confident to Others

You can show self-confidence in many ways: in your behavior, your body language, and in what you say and how you say it.

Projecting a positive image to others can help you to improve your self-confidence. It's not simply a matter of "faking it" – if you project with confidence, others are more likely to respond well, and this positive feedback will help you to believe in yourself.



Body Language

Numerous studies have identified that you can build confidence just by the way you move your body and hold yourself.

When we feel anxious, at meetings for instance, we tend to make ourselves smaller by slouching, hunching our shoulders, and bowing our heads. Simply sitting up straight can make you feel less stressed and more assertive.

If you're speaking to people, spreading your hands apart with palms slightly toward who you are speaking to shows openness and a willingness to share ideas.



Face-to-Face Communication

People with low self-confidence often find it difficult to make a good first impression - whether they're meeting someone for the first time, speaking in a meeting, or giving a presentation. You may be shy or unsure of yourself, but you can take immediate steps to appear more confident.

Engaging with people is important, so maintain eye contact while you talk. This shows that you're interested in what the other person is saying, and that you're taking an active part in the conversation. Don't fidget or look away while the conversation continues, as this can make you appear distracted or anxious.



Restoring Confidence Lost at Work

We can all lose confidence at work from time to time. Maybe you come up with great ideas but struggle to make your voice heard in meetings. Or you feel lost or isolated without the company of your colleagues while working from home.

To address short-term dips in confidence, first try to identify the cause of the problem. If you feel that there are tasks you can't do, it makes sense to improve your skills.

Speak to your Personal Development Manager (PDM) at t2 and ask them to provide you with our Quick Guide to completing a personal SWOT Analysis to make the most of your talents and abilities to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. Then draw up an action plan to work on the areas where you're not so strong with your PDM as part of your learning.

Other people's attitudes or behaviour can contribute to your lack of confidence. You might feel that your co-workers make unfair assumptions about you. Maybe you're being bullied or are subject to microaggressions. If so, you need to call this behaviour out and report it to your employer and if it is your manager report it to HR. Workplace bullying is never acceptable in any situation.

People with low self-confidence often feel that they don't deserve to be happy, and that it's somehow justifiable for others to treat them badly. While the feeling may be very real, the belief is certainly not!

Three Ways to Build Your Confidence

While there are quick fixes to address acute issues with your self-confidence, building confidence in the long term requires making some changes to your lifestyle and forming robust plans. Here are three ways to do that:

1

Build Confident Habits

To develop and improve your self-esteem, aim to develop good habits – and break bad ones! Regular exercise and a healthy diet can dramatically improve your physical and mental health. And studies have shown that getting a good night's sleep is linked with increased optimism and self-esteem.

2

Review Your Past Achievements

Your self-confidence will increase when you're able to say, "I can do this, and here's the evidence." If you decided to complete a personal SWOT Analysis, you'll have identified things that you're good at, based on your past achievements.

List the 10 things that you're most proud of in an "achievement log." Then use them to make yourself more confident about what you can do. These statements are particularly powerful if you tend to undermine your confidence with negative self-talk.

3

Set Confidence-Boosting Goals

Setting and achieving goals – and seeing how far you've come – are key ways to develop self-confidence.

If you have completed one, use your Personal SWOT Analysis to set goals that play to your strengths, minimise your weaknesses, and take advantage of your opportunities.

When you've identified the major goals, you want to achieve, clarify the first steps you need to take. Make sure that they're small steps, taking no longer than an hour to do. This will get the ball rolling and improve your confidence through the achievement of appropriate goals.

Key Points

When you're self-confident, you trust your own judgment and abilities, and have a strong sense of self-worth and self-belief.

You can take immediate steps to project greater self-confidence and address the factors that dent it. You can then develop these short-term strategies into ways to build and maintain self-confidence in the future.

Developing good habits, reviewing past achievements, and setting yourself targeted goals will improve your self-esteem, and build and maintain your confidence for the long term.