

Building Self-Confidence

With self-confidence you trust your abilities, feel worthy and accept yourself (including accepting your weaknesses, flaws and mistakes). Use the strategies below to develop healthy habits that boost self-confidence. With confidence, you'll enjoy life more and worry less about what others think of you!

Be your own cheer leader.

Use encouraging self-talk to motivate yourself to keep going with difficult tasks, to keep learning new skills, to push yourself to improve.

Here are some examples of encouraging self-talk:

- "You have what it takes to achieve your goals".
- "You can do this"
- "You've coped with difficult things before, you can do it again"



Learn from mistakes and failures.

Life involves trial and error and failure provides opportunities to learn. If you've made a mistake or failed on a task, acknowledge it and learn from it. What worked well? What can you do differently next time?

Have you met anyone who never made a mistake? It's human to make mistakes; no one's perfect so don't be too hard on yourself - you're a work in progress!



Remind yourself of past successes.

Record your successes and achievements on a list and when your confidence is low read it to remind yourself that you can succeed.

Acknowledge how you contributed to the success with effort or skill rather than attributing success to luck or other external factors.



Turn down the volume of your internal critic.

Your inner critic (the voice inside your head that criticises you) destroys your confidence. Notice when your self-talk is critical and replace it with supportive, encouraging self-talk.

Imagine you're talking to a friend and use that same nurturing, supportive tone with yourself.



Don't compare yourself to others.

Most people compare themselves to those who are better than them in some way. This makes them feel inadequate. Focus on personal bests, on building your strengths, or on comparing yourself now to an earlier time noticing how you've improved over time.

If you have to, compare yourself to others who are better and worse on the attribute so you get a realistic picture of where you stand.



Accept compliments graciously.

Instead of batting away compliments ("Oh, that's nothing"), thank the person for recognising something good about you or your behaviour.

With practice, you'll increase your comfort with praise from others. You may even learn to praise yourself!



Learn new skills.

Stable, long-lasting confidence comes from many sources. Don't just base yours on study grades or appearance. As you master new skills, you'll grow in confidence.



Set goals.

Set goals, make sure they're realistic, and take action to achieve them. You'll develop a perception of yourself as someone who successfully gets things done.

Using 'To Do' lists keeps you on track and helps you to feel successful as you check off completed tasks.



Face your fears.

Fear destroys confidence. You can build confidence by gradually exposing yourself to the things you avoid out of fear. Start small and build up to more feared situations.

E.g., if you're afraid of being laughed at, deliberately give a wrong answer to a question, wear odd socks or a silly hat! Once you discover that being laughed at is not as bad as you thought it would be (that you can survive it), you'll feel more confident just being yourself.



Use affirmations.

Changing critical self-talk doesn't happen automatically. You have to work hard to replace it with supportive messages (also called affirmations) like "I am enough", "I am worthy of love" or "I love and accept myself".

Display affirmations on your mirror or cupboards with post-it notes so you repeat them to yourself every day.



More tips for Boosting Self-Confidence

These tips for confidence-boosting are from Barbara Markway's [The Self Confidence Workbook: A Guide to Overcoming Self-Doubt and Improving Self-Esteem](#). You can start your project for increasing your confidence today by buying a [Journal](#) to use for these exercises.

Step by step towards confidence.

If you're wanting to be more confident in a particular way, try a small step first, see what happens, then try another step. Write down what small step you will try tomorrow.



Ask for feedback.

Get used to asking for feedback from others. Try it with a friend – tell them you'll find it helpful to know how to improve in some way. It's not as scary as you think!



Who's your support crew?

Identify the people in your life who encourage you, admire you and make you feel good about yourself. Write about what they say and do that help you feel confident. Use these same strategies to support and encourage yourself.



List your strengths.

Create a list of your skills. When you learn new skills or think of other things you do well, add them to the list. Think about what other skills you have that you're not acknowledging.



Be like your role model.

Identify someone in your life who is self-confident. Record in your journal their qualities and behaviours that make them look confident. Try and emulate what they do. It may feel awkward at first, but with practice you will get more comfortable acting in a confident manner.



Achievements – big and small

Every day, write down 3 things you did well. They don't have to be great achievements – record small tasks you completed too. E.g., remembering to wish a friend Happy Birthday, cooking a meal for someone, tidying your bedroom, getting to every class on time!



When self-doubt helps.

Record in your Journal times when self-doubt was useful. E.g., it made you realise you hadn't done enough preparation for a big task or you needed more information to make a decision.



Fictional characters as inspiration

Keep a record of films and books with characters who over-came difficult times to succeed. Be inspired and motivated by them. Write about times you've succeeded when things were difficult.



Failing well.

Being cautious helps you avoid mistakes but it also stops you trying and learning new things. Don't wait until everything is 100% perfect before doing things. Taking small risks will help you build your self-confidence



Failure is not all bad.

Describe one time that you thought you had failed in some way but then it later turned out that the failure led to another achievement.



Practice kindness.

Doing things for others stops you from focussing on your perceived flaws. But the real bonus is that when you're helping others you're actually helping yourself to feel good about you!



Your confidence playlist.

Write down the songs that make you feel confident, that help you keep going when things get tough. Add songs to the list that make you feel like dancing. Remember, you can create a sense of confidence!



Reality check.

Self-acceptance requires accepting your strengths and weaknesses. It builds confidence. Write about your strengths (how they're helpful) and weaknesses (what they teach you) to develop a realistic and accepting self-perception.



Re-experience confidence.

Write in your journal about times when you felt confident. Include details, like what confidence felt like in your body, how you were talking to yourself, what helped you feel confident?

