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## 6 Self-Confidence Builders that Help You Withstand All Winds of Doubt

**Self-confidence is a powerful, skillful, development and use of “self”.** It is an inner strength, linked to self-assurance, self-esteem, self-image and self-worth. Like any strength building practice, one must exercise the skill for it to fully mature. Confidence does not magically appear in a person.

Confidence grows, develops and strengthens day in and day out as:

- 1) a person stretches their abilities more and more,
- 2) a person conditions their self-talk so that it reinforces the truth about one’s potential and strength, and
- 3) is nurtured and reinforced by others or the negative and shaming perspectives of others are neutralized.

Everyone can grow in confidence to make the right decisions, take the next step, bounce back from a setback, and recover from a trauma, regardless of the circumstances that may have created doubt within them.



## **Engage in 6 start, stop, and yielding practices that steadily build confidence.**

### **Start**

**1. Develop opportunistic risk management abilities.** Risk management is the ability to look at a situation on the horizon, all the different ways it may play-out, and all the different opportunities one has to capitalize on the situation while mitigating or minimizing the risks in the situation. When our confidence wanes, we look at situations and only see risks. We worry and lose self-assurance. When we develop opportunistic risk management abilities – multiple perspective objective situation assessments, anticipatory possible outcomes, anticipatory opportunities for benefits and positivity, anticipatory paths forward – then our confidence in possible next steps grow.

**2. Step out of your comfort zones.** Go back to your dreams and visions and buy the tickets to them. Start doing things that you dreamt of but never had the guts to attempt. Take a class. Say ‘hi’ to some people. Ask for help. Get a coach. If you are afraid to manage an entire meeting, then volunteer to speak for 5 minutes at first, then 10 during the next meeting. Confidence builds as we expand our comfort zones by taking steps into a few known/unknown zones. You don’t have to step into a panic zone, just gradually into your desires, goals, and dreams...little then larger.

### **Stop**

**3. Refuse to hold any version of “I can’t” in mind.** This phrase is akin to committing psychological suicide. Every time a person allows an “I can’t” thought to take root in mind the person is killing every other thought of possibility that could arise, every hopeful thought, every affirmational thought that could steady one’s inner ground. Monitor your self-talk, even if the monitoring is disturbing and uncomfortable at first. It’s your talk. You’ve conditioned it inside of your mind. What has been conditioned can be reconditioned. Monitor your self-talk. Then, stop the lies that you’ve told yourself or repeated within your mind, which you may have heard from others (“you can’t”, “that’s not possible”, “why are you trying”, etc.). Stop the lies by reminding yourself that this kind of self-talk is not the truth. It never was the truth.

**4. Refrain from listening to people who cast doubt** on you or on any possibilities. Pessimistic, fearful people, even with good intentions, spread fear and infect others with doubt. They give themselves permission to be pessimistic and fearful by saying, “I’m just trying to be realistic” or “I’m just trying to help you”. Planting seeds of fear and doubt, and squashing rising commitments to confidence, is not helpful. They simply want to share their fear. True friends, colleagues and family members bolster confidence with affirmations, motivations, prompts to take the first step, and through a sharing of ideas or offers of support. All of these things reinforce confidence. So, stop listening to people who cast doubt. The moment you hear doubt or fear uttered, negate it in your mind (e.g., “*This is simply not true*” or “*It may be true for this person but not for me*”). If you see a trusted person, with whom you count on for support, roll

their eyes or exhibit other types of body language that conveys doubt, write their support off immediately (e.g., “I’m not sharing more with them” or “I’m not turning to them for support, they are listening but not supporting”). Place boundaries around their communications by saying, “I shared my ideas or state of being with you because I expect confident support, not doubt. If you want to offer practical ideas for me moving forward, I’ll take them. If not, wish me the best and we’ll move on from this conversation. But, by all means, don’t share your doubts. They are not helping me.” Building confidence is practiced by empowering yourself to say what needs to be said and do what needs to be done. You can begin by practicing making statements to or setting boundaries with people who claim to be supportive of you.

## **Yield/Adapt/Change**

**5. Adapt your speech, body language and presence** in different situations and circumstances. You may have been used to, or conditioned to, show up in a certain way (e.g., more passive, more reflective, more hesitant, deferring to others first, asking for the opinion of others, or acting based on the perceptions and opinions of others). Now, in every situation you must adapt and show up differently, little by little. Perhaps you can make the decision to be an active part of a conversation instead of passive. Perhaps you will choose to assert your opinions and ideas or be more direct with people. Every time you choose to show a new ‘actively confident you’, you are reconditioning your mind, self-image, and inner confidence. One confident action builds on another: like developing layers of muscle.

**6. Yield to a goal, need or desire.** Instead of waiting any longer, develop a mini-action plan focused on something that you have wanted to do but have been afraid to do (e.g., losing weight/going to the gym, having an important conversation that you have perceived as ‘difficult’, making a choice to explore a new job, planning for a trip that others have suggested you shouldn’t take, etc.). Divide the mini-action plan into small steps, as small as you need them to be. Then take the first three steps within a brief period of time, sequentially. Taking the first step will make you smile and allow you to release a breath of gratitude towards yourself. But taking three sequential steps in a short period of time builds confidence. You will become consciously aware of a fact: “I really can do this.”

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