

8 Ways to Boost Your Confidence



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Successful people often exude confidence—it's obvious that they believe in themselves and what they're doing. It isn't their success that makes them confident, however. The confidence was there first.

Think about it:

1. **Doubt breeds doubt.** Why would anyone believe in you, your ideas, or your abilities if you didn't believe in them yourself?
2. **It takes confidence to reach for new challenges.** People who are fearful or insecure tend to stay within their comfort zones. But comfort zones rarely expand on their own. That's why people who lack confidence get stuck in dead-end jobs and let valuable opportunities pass them by.
3. **Unconfident people often feel at the mercy of external circumstances.** Successful people aren't deterred by obstacles, which is how they rise up in the first place.

No one is stopping you from what you want to accomplish but yourself. It's time to remove that barrier of self-doubt.

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Confidence is a crucial building block in a successful career, and embracing it fully will take you places you never thought possible. With proper guidance and hard work, anyone can become more confident. Once you pass a certain point, you'll feel it from the inside.

Here are eight bulletproof strategies to get you there.

1. Take an honest look at yourself.

Johnny Unitas said, "There is a difference between conceit and confidence. Conceit is bragging about yourself. Confidence means you believe you can get the job done." In other words, confidence is *earned* through hard work, and confident people are self-aware. When your confidence exceeds your abilities, you've crossed the line into arrogance. You need to know the difference.

True confidence is firmly planted in reality. To grow your confidence, it's important to do an honest and accurate self-assessment of your abilities. If there are weaknesses in your skill set, make plans for strengthening these skills and find ways to minimize their negative impact. Ignoring your weaknesses or pretending they're strengths won't make them go away. Likewise, having a clear understanding of your strengths enables you to shake off some of the more groundless feedback and criticism you can get in a busy, competitive work environment—and that builds confidence.

2. Say no.

Research conducted at the University of California in San Francisco showed that the more difficulty that you have saying no, the more likely you are to experience stress, burnout, and even depression, all of which erode confidence. Confident people know that saying no is healthy, and they have the self-esteem to make their nos clear. When it's time to say no, confident people avoid phrases such as "I don't think I can" or "I'm not certain." They say no with confidence because they know that saying no to a new commitment honors their existing commitments and gives them the opportunity to successfully fulfill them.

3. Get right with your boss.

A troubled relationship with the boss can destroy even the most talented person's confidence. It's hard to be confident when your boss is constantly criticizing you or undermining your contributions. Try to identify where the relationship went wrong and decide whether there's

anything you can do to get things back on track. If the relationship is truly unsalvageable, it may be time to move on to something else.

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4. Seek out small victories.

Confident people tend to challenge themselves and compete, even when their efforts yield small victories. Small victories build new androgen receptors in the areas of the brain responsible for reward and motivation. This increase in androgen receptors increases the influence of testosterone, which further increases your confidence and your eagerness to tackle future challenges. When you have a series of small victories, the boost in your confidence can last for months.

5. Find a mentor.

Nothing builds confidence like a talented, experienced person showing you the way and patting you on the back for a job well done. A good mentor can act as a mirror, giving you the perspective you need to believe in yourself. Knowledge breeds confidence—knowing where you stand helps you focus your energy more effectively. Beyond that, a mentor can help educate you on some of the cultural inner workings of your organization. Knowing the unwritten rules of how to get things done in your workplace is a great confidence booster.

6. Schedule exercise.

A study conducted at the Eastern Ontario Research Institute found that people who exercised twice a week for 10 weeks felt more competent socially, academically, and athletically. They also rated their body image and self-esteem higher. Best of all, rather than the physical changes in their bodies being responsible for the uptick in confidence, it was the immediate, endorphin-fueled positivity from exercise that made all the difference. Schedule your exercise to make certain it happens, and your confidence will stay up.

7. Dress for success.

Like it or not, how we dress has a huge effect on how people see us. Things like the color, cut, and style of the clothes we wear—and even our accessories—communicate loudly. But the way we dress also affects how we see ourselves. Studies have shown that people speak differently when they're dressed up compared to when they're dressed casually. To boost your confidence, dress well. Choose clothing that reflects who you are and the image you want to project, even if that means spending more time at the mall and more time getting ready in the morning.

8. Be assertive, not aggressive.

Aggressiveness isn't confidence; it's bullying. And when you're insecure, it's easy to slip into aggressiveness without intending to. Practice asserting yourself without getting aggressive (and trampling over someone else in the process). You won't be able to achieve this until you learn how to keep your insecurities at bay, and this will increase your confidence.

Bringing it all together

Your confidence is your own to develop or undermine. Confidence is based on reality. It's the steadfast knowledge that goes beyond simply "hoping for the best." It ensures that you'll get the job done—that's the power of true confidence.

A version of this article first appeared at TalentSmart.com.