

Unshakable Self-Confidence

Confidence is one of those things that seem like a catch-22. If you don't already have a certain measure of self-confidence, it's difficult to become more confident. Don't you need inner strength in order to build your confidence? It may seem so at first glance, but fear not. This guide will walk you through a simple process to build your confidence. (And it will be easier than you think!)

Connecting With Your Inner Power

At a basic level, an unconfident person is someone who has lost touch with his or her inner power. How do I know? Because your inner power is where confidence comes from.

If I asked you to describe yourself, you'd likely start with a physical description, or perhaps mention some of the roles you play in daily life, like mother, wife, brother, employee, business owner, and so on. But those things are not who you ARE, they are what you DO.

The person you are is the very essence of your being. This being might be called your soul, your higher self, or your authentic self. The label isn't important – just the acknowledgement that you are more than the physical person reading these words right now.

Your inner essence is wise, powerful, and all-knowing. He or she has a keen intuition and a bottomless inner reservoir of strength. This part of you has a complete understanding of your true potential and constantly tries to bring it to your attention.

If you're like the majority of people, you haven't been listening. You probably identify more with your physical self than your inner self, and you probably

focus more on your outer life than your inner life. (I can imagine you asking with surprise, “I have an inner life?” 😊) Yes you do; we all do.

However, in this modern age of noise and busy-ness, it’s extremely easy to get distracted by external influences and lose touch with our inner power. At first this doesn’t seem to affect us much, if at all. We still continue on with our daily lives, working and playing, taking care of obligations and responsibilities. As time goes on, we may notice that we feel a little more “spacey” and a little less in tune with our lives. Our inner voice (intuition, if you will) seems to dim and grow distant so we can barely hear it anymore. If we ignore these warning signs, they usually grow in intensity – until eventually we feel completely out of touch, confused, fatigued, weary, and powerless over our lives. We realize too late that we’ve forgotten who we once were.

However, all is not lost! It is very simple to reconnect with your inner self, tap into your inner power, and blast your self-confidence through the roof. When you do, you will be able to create a life of such passion, joy and purpose that you’ll be sure not to repeat the mistakes that led to your disconnection in the first place.

In order to reconnect with your inner power, you need to take a little trip to the very heart of yourself. You need to turn away from outer distractions on a regular basis so you can be reunited with your authentic self. (You’ll be surprised to learn that this process doesn’t take a lot of time, so don’t let the words “on a regular basis” throw you off track.)

There are several ways to reconnect, and all of them involve spending some quality time alone. Here are a few good ways to start:

- Spend time in daily meditation. If you’ve never meditated before, don’t worry, it’s very simple to do. First, find a place to be alone and focus on

quieting your mind. If you feel tense or anxious, try a few minutes of slow, deep breathing and concentrate on releasing the tension from your body. When you feel relaxed and calm, turn your attention to your thoughts. Try to make your mind go blank, and let go of any thoughts that are bothering you. Do this for as long as possible every day if you can (10 or 15 minutes is good to start, increasing up to 20 or 30 minutes as you become more comfortable with it). Over time you will notice yourself feeling much more balanced and centered – and in touch with your inner self.

- Record your thoughts and feelings in a journal. This is a great way to learn more about yourself, as well as giving you a clear record of progress that you can refer back to later. You DON'T have to have good writing skills to benefit from this process. Write for yourself and yourself only. Don't worry about spelling or grammar – if you can understand your chicken-scratch, that's all that counts. Start each entry with an opener like, "Today I feel _____ because _____." This will lead you to more and more things to write about, and before long you'll have filled an entire page (or more). Doing this daily will help you tap into your stream of consciousness and connect you with your deeper thoughts.

- Embrace the silence. This exercise can seem challenging for even the most courageous among us, simply because most of us are not used to complete silence. Usually we have a television, radio, computer or other people around to distract us. The thought of sitting in absolute silence and letting your thoughts drift might not sound appealing at all. It might even sound scary, or perhaps boring. However, don't dismiss it so quickly. Give it a try over the space of a week and I bet you'll grow to LOVE those quiet moments. If you can sit outside in a natural setting, it's even more effective. You won't believe how calm and refreshed you

feel after this exercise, and you'll carry the feeling of inner peace into everything you do.

How do these exercises reconnect you to your inner power? They simply get you back in touch with the deepest part of yourself. Imagine if you had a best friend that you never spoke to, acknowledged or spent quality time with. How would your friend feel about that? Very likely, he or she would feel slighted, neglected, and distanced from you. Most of us would never dream of treating our friends so terribly. Yet, that's exactly what we do to our inner selves. We ignore them completely and then wonder why we feel so empty and disconnected.

When you begin devoting some attention to your inner self again, he or she blossoms! You rediscover your passion, joy and vitality, and you awaken a powerful awareness of your interconnection with the universe and everything in it. Don't be surprised if you also begin to feel closer to friends and family members, co-workers and clients. You might even begin feeling more compassionate toward complete strangers. All of this is the result of a deep connection with your inner self.

Finally – and most importantly – you'll begin feeling more positive about yourself again. You'll feel less tempted to be harsh with yourself, and you'll be better able to appreciate yourself genuinely and sincerely. You'll have more patience with yourself, and you'll discover a tiny seed of strength and power growing larger within you, eager to burst forth in new life. That's confidence, of course!

Honoring Your Strengths

The more aware of your inner self you are, the more easily you'll be able to recognize and honor your strengths. By "strengths" I mean the things you are naturally good at, or you've become good at through repetition.

Honoring your strengths is an important part of building your confidence, because your confidence is often based on your perception of your capabilities. If you believe you're good at communication, you will approach all communication with a high level of confidence. If you believe you stink at athletics, you'll give them less effort because deep inside you'll have a little voice telling you not to bother.

Recognizing your strengths can be challenging if you don't already have strong self-confidence, because your belief in your abilities is likely low. Even if you do have talent in a certain area, you may not believe you do – so you won't see it as an asset. What you need to do is start small.

First, get a clean sheet of paper and a pen, and begin by writing down anything you think you may be naturally good at. Don't worry if you're not great at it, just focus on things you can do marginally well for now. List things that seem to come easily to you, or things you feel pretty confident doing. (Examples: sports, organization, writing, event planning, photography, computer gaming, etc.)

Next, write down anything you've become somewhat experienced in, like things you've had to do in your job, or activities you've gained a certain level of mastery over. (Examples: driving, accounting, dancing, juggling, salesmanship, customer service, etc.)

Are you surprised that your list isn't as empty as you feared? It's going to get better!

Now, write down your positive character traits, things you believe yourself to be. (Examples: kind, friendly, loving, trusting, patient, etc.)

Look back over your list for a moment. Pay particular attention to the activities you've mastered as you did them over and over.

Here's the million-dollar question: If you were capable of learning and excelling at **these** activities, aren't you capable of mastering **others** too? Of course you are!

Are you feeling a bit more optimistic about your potential now? Are you beginning to see that by expanding your beliefs and honoring your strengths, you can achieve nearly anything you desire?

As you get into the habit of honoring your strengths and stretching your limits, little by little your confidence will begin to grow. Eventually the process becomes much easier, because the more confidence you have, the more quickly you can build more.

Affirming Your Abilities

Now that you have a clear idea of your strengths, it's time to begin affirming your abilities. This may seem like the same thing, but it's quite different. Your strengths are things you are naturally good at, or have become good at. Your abilities are all about your **POTENTIAL**.

One major step in building your confidence is becoming aware of your potential for growth. The exercise of writing down your strengths was a good start and likely gave you an insight into your capabilities. Now you need to explore these capabilities a bit further.

Take another sheet of paper and write down everything you've ever **attempted** (not just succeeded at, but anything you've simply TRIED to do). Your list can include the obvious things like walking, cooking, driving, dancing, dating, eating, drinking, working, swimming, and so on. Also include the things you may have tried only once like skydiving, singing, marriage, business, and so on.

After you've written down everything you can think of, look over your list and make a checkmark next to the things in which you've experienced success. Even if you were only **slightly** successful at something, or you only tried it once and it wasn't a complete disaster, check it.

(NOTE: Did you know that one definition of success is "a favorable result"? That insight changes your perspective a little, doesn't it? You've probably been successful more than you realized.)

Now look at your list again. Are the majority of the items on the list checked? I bet they are. Why do you think that's important? Because it means that simply TRYING something (once or more than once) will result in a certain measure of success. It means you're not as stupid or ineffective as you may have thought. If you were even moderately successful at the items on your list, doesn't it follow that you could be successful at other things too? When you really get this, it's a HUGE insight.

Now – what if you only have a couple of items checked off, and the rest are unchecked?

First, reconsider whether you are being too hard on yourself. Is your concept of success in balance? Success doesn't have to mean perfection. If you were

able to do well at something (even slightly well), or receive any kind of favorable result from it - that is success!

Let's expand a bit on what is meant by "favorable result". This doesn't have to be exclusive to external results. It can absolutely include favorable internal results. Here's a good example of a favorable internal result: Let's say you had to give a presentation at work and you were terrified of public speaking. You knew you couldn't back out of giving the presentation, so you forced yourself to do it. Even if you completely bombed and the presentation was terrible, you would still probably feel a sense of pride that you did it at all! Facing a fear is absolutely a favorable result!

Secondly, understand that the number of items checked off on your list doesn't matter a bit. Even if you only have one item checked off, it still stands to reason that if you were successful at ONE THING, you can be successful at others.

Trusting Yourself

The exercises in the previous two sections were meant to help rebuild some trust in yourself again. When we fall out of touch with our inner selves, an unsettling sense of distrust begins to brew beneath the surface. We feel wary of this inner awareness, and think we know better about what is best for us (that's the ego talking). Eventually we begin to ignore the hunches and gut feelings that would otherwise be a great asset in our lives.

As you begin to spend more time with yourself and reconnect with your inner power, and as you begin to honestly assess your strengths and abilities, you begin to feel more in tune with your authentic self. Little by little you begin to

trust her or him again, and rebuild the bonds that form a stable inner foundation.

Over time, you realize that your inner self is not your enemy but your greatest ally. You begin to understand that any failures or blockages you experienced were a direct result of the disconnection from your inner self, and you commit to bridging the gap you created.

Throughout this process you may face some challenges, scary moments when you aren't sure if you can trust your inner self. Perhaps you'll feel a nudge to move in a certain direction and then have doubts about whether it's a genuine insight or wishful thinking. Or you might feel confused and scattered, still unsure what your inner self is trying to convey to you.

The best way to overcome these initial challenges is to **keep testing the strength of your connection**. Start with something small, like asking your inner self to guide you in your decision-making during the upcoming day. Then as you are faced with choices during the day, pause for a moment and turn your attention inward as you consider your options. See if you feel any physical sensations about a particular choice. Does your gut tighten with anxiety when you consider making a move? Or do you feel an inner urging to choose a certain option? If you feel comfortable trusting these hunches, do so. You might be surprised by how accurate your initial hunches are.

If you do experience problems when you trust your intuition, simply keep working at it. It may seem frightening at the beginning, but in very short order you should be feeling much more confident about making decisions, and you should notice that your choices are becoming wiser and more beneficial every day.

Besides strengthening your natural inner guidance moment to moment, you should also focus on learning to trust your higher self to know what is best for you in the grand scheme of things. Too often we allow others to direct our lives because it's easier than forging our own path. We're afraid to upset someone, or offend them, or hurt their feelings, so we let go of controlling our own lives and let them do it for us.

As well-intentioned as those people may be, they do not know better than we do what is best for us. The choices they make for us can be unfulfilling, misleading or downright dangerous.

Make it your mission to trust your inner voice. Again, the more time you spend getting reacquainted with yourself, the more quickly you will gain a greater understanding of who you are and what you really want in your life.

If you find yourself struggling to rebuild trust with your inner self, consider doing a simple exercise to get the ball rolling: Write a letter of apology to your inner self.

An apology for what, you ask? If you've ever put yourself down because you weren't good at something, or belittled yourself, berated yourself, or gotten angry at yourself; if you've ever insulted yourself or thought little of yourself, or called yourself "stupid," or refused to honor yourself in any way, you have set a cycle of destruction in motion within yourself.

Writing a letter of apology to your inner self can help reverse the process and get things moving in a positive, nurturing direction again. The letter doesn't have to be long or painfully detailed, just sincere. Tell your inner self that you never meant to be so harsh, demanding, close-minded or impatient. Admit that you weren't seeing the whole picture and you now realize that your actions

created an inner divide. Most importantly, stress your commitment to doing better now.

The point of this exercise isn't to humiliate you or emphasize your "wrongdoing". It's to help you see that your inner self doesn't deserve anger or abuse. Your inner self has been trying to reach out to you all along; you just weren't willing to listen yet. Don't be hard on yourself for this, for it's something we all do to a certain degree. Just acknowledge that you are ready to begin changing your habits – and then do it.

Expanding Your Vision

The stronger the connection you have with your inner self, the easier you will be able to expand your vision. By this I mean having the willingness to imagine more for your life.

Low self-confidence usually results in small (or non-existent) dreams. If you don't believe you are capable or deserving of something better, then naturally you will settle for what you can get.

You may notice your vision automatically expanding as you begin to feel stronger, but you can also make it a more purposeful process. Here is a simple exercise to do this:

First, write a description of where you are in your life right now. Include details about your marital status, friendships, career, financial situation, health and fitness, and overall happiness. Note which areas you are satisfied with, and those you wish to improve.

Then, review the descriptions and ask yourself if you have been holding back in any areas of your life, and if any of those situations can be expanded. For example, you might enjoy your job as an accounting clerk, but you have a secret wish to go further and become an accountant. Lack of confidence may have prevented you from even considering going back to school for a degree, but as you build your confidence you might be feeling a desire to expand that part of your life. Listen to these inner nudges!

You don't have to take action on them right away, but at least be honest with yourself that you have a desire to accomplish more in your life. For each area of your life, consider ways to expand or improve upon them. Remember, you're just brainstorming right now, so don't censor yourself. Just jot down notes and ideas for what you might like to create in your life eventually.

Periodically, revisit these notes and see if you feel ready to make some changes. Ideally, you want to be in a mental state that makes challenges seem exciting, yet still maybe a little nerve-wracking. Hint: if the thought of a particular challenge brings on a full-blown anxiety attack – you're not ready.

The whole point of expanding your vision is really about expanding your BELIEFS of what is possible for your life. Again, this will begin to happen naturally as your confidence grows, but you should also commit to being proactive with the process.

Believing You Deserve More

Have you ever noticed that confident people are also certain of their own worth? Not only do they have the confidence to follow their dreams, they know with certainty that they deserve the good things they seek.

As you build your confidence and get reconnected with your inner self, your self-worth should begin to grow in proportion also. However, there are things you can do to help the process along.

The first involves developing an understanding of why we feel so lousy about ourselves in the first place. What really causes low self-worth?

- Being constantly criticized by others (especially authority figures) lowers our self-worth.
- Being bullied by peers lowers our self-worth.
- Criticizing or berating ourselves for our mistakes lowers our self-worth.
- Consistent negative reinforcement from others or ourselves lowers our self-worth.
- Blaming ourselves for the abuse we receive from others lowers our self-worth.
- Believing the negative things people say to or about us lowers our self-worth.

You likely recognize many of these examples from your own life, either currently or as part of your past. However, understand that as badly as others may have abused you, YOU have picked up where they left off. If you grew up with a critical mother that always had something negative to say about you or your accomplishments, you may feel that she is to blame for your low self-worth. She may have initiated the process, but you continued it. It wasn't her hurtful words that caused your problems; it was your decision to BELIEVE HER.

The same goes for any bullies you have faced in your lifetime, any impossible-to-please bosses, critical friends and demanding spouses.

In order to turn this around, you need to begin believing in yourself again (if you ever did). You need to shift your perception of yourself from a worthless person of no value to a person of great value and capability. How? Positive reinforcement, of course!

Just like negative reinforcement can wear down our self-worth, positive reinforcement (from ourselves and others) can begin to build it back up again. Here are just a few ideas to begin building your self-worth:

- Treat yourself with kindness, compassion and love. Do something nice for yourself for a change. Make it a priority to get enough rest, take good care of yourself and speak kindly to yourself. If you catch yourself speaking negatively about yourself to others, or mentally berating yourself, stop and change your language to a more positive focus.

- Express kindness and love to others. This may not seem to be related to your own self-worth, but remember that people are inclined to treat you the way you treat them! Make an effort to compliment the people in your life more often. Speak kindly and offer to help others in whatever way you can. That doesn't mean neglect yourself and become a doormat. Keep these activities in balance with your own self-care, but in general make an effort to reach out to others in positive ways. This will encourage them to reciprocate, and you will receive positive reinforcement from others more frequently. (Note: this does NOT work the same in abusive relationships. Very often the nicer you are to abusers, the more abusive they become. This pertains only to normal, healthy relationships.)

- Keep affirming your positive qualities. Read over the lists you made while completing the exercises in this report. Make new lists about your growing accomplishments. Honor the unique aspects of yourself and constantly strive to discover more and more great things about yourself. The more you focus on growing yourself as a person, the more things about yourself you will find to feel good about and be proud of.

The great thing about all of the activities we've covered so far is that they are self-perpetuating. As you build your confidence, you'll notice your self-worth increasing also. As you focus on increasing your self-worth, your confidence will also grow. As you focus on expanding your vision, you'll begin to believe in your capabilities more, and you'll begin trusting yourself more, and you'll feel a deeper connection to your inner self beginning to blossom - and on and on it goes! Doing any and all of these activities will result in growth and healing in the other areas too. And the further along in the process you get, the more effortless it becomes.

Becoming What You Desire

I'm about to share a powerful technique with you, something that can change EVERYTHING in a split second. It's deceptively simple and it's something you can do anywhere, at any time. It does take a bit of practice to fully master, but after only a few tries you should be an old pro at it.

What is this amazing technique? **BECOME WHAT YOU DESIRE.** If you desire to be confident, become confident. If you desire to be successful, become successful. If you desire to be wealthy, become wealthy.

You may be furrowing your brow, wondering what the heck I'm talking about. Isn't this the old "act as if" technique? Like "fake it until you make it"? Not quite.

What I'm proposing is an actual mental SHIFT. Not faking, becoming. It seems like the same thing, but it's vastly different. When you "fake" something, you are aware that you are faking it. You are an actor playing a role. You are not "becoming" something or someone else; you are simply pretending to be something or someone else. Therefore, you are not fully invested in the process; therefore you do not receive the full benefits.

When you "become" what you desire, you are stepping into a new reality (even if this new reality exists only in your mind). It's more than acting; it's shifting your mind-set so that you FEEL what you would feel if it were your reality, and you THINK what you would think if it were your reality, and you DO what you would do if it were your reality.

Can you sense the power in this technique? I assure you, it's incredibly effective.

Here's how to begin:

- First, consider what you want to "become". You can start with something simple to begin with, like becoming happy, peaceful or motivated. Take a few deep, slow breaths and try to relax your body.
- Then, think about what you want to become and consider the feelings that would go along with it. If you want to become happy, you'd likely experience feelings of lightheartedness, joy, and optimism. You'd be smiling, laughing and maybe even humming to yourself.

- Once you have a firm mental picture of this state of being, mentally SHIFT into it. Imagine stepping smoothly from one state of mind to another. If you do it correctly, you should immediately feel genuinely happy. Your spirits will lift and you'll have a keener awareness of everything around you.

You can use this very same technique to boost your confidence through the roof! The other exercises in this report will help you to increase your self-confidence over the long-term, but this “becoming” technique can help you feel much more confident **any time you need to**.

At its core, a lack of confidence simply reveals a limiting belief: a belief that you're not good enough, strong enough or talented enough (or just “enough” in general). This “becoming” technique will help you change those underlying beliefs.

As you shift into a mind-set of self-confidence, you are in effect CHOOSING TO BELIEVE that you are already confident. You are telling your subconscious mind that your old beliefs were unproductive and you are choosing to embrace new beliefs.

Let's go through the process of “becoming” confident:

- As with the previous example, spend a few moments relaxing your mind and body. Do some slow, deep breathing and let all tension flow out of your muscles.
- Imagine what it feels like to be confident, to be absolutely convinced of your ability to do anything. Imagine the sense of self-assurance and centeredness that would accompany such a belief.

- Then mentally SHIFT into this new state of being. Instantly you should feel a difference. Fear, doubt and anxiety should have fled and been replaced by a sense of clarity, inner strength and purpose.

If you don't get it right away, don't worry. Remember, it will probably take some practice. But once you get comfortable with using this technique – WOW! Everything will change faster than you believed possible. You'll suddenly realize that you have much more control over your thoughts and emotions than you ever suspected. You'll be able to choose your mind-set, control your reactions to any situation, decide your confidence level and boost your self-worth - all by performing a simple mental shift.

One Step at a Time

After reading this report you may be feeling ready to tackle your low confidence and change your life in dramatic ways. This is wonderful and I encourage you to hang on to that motivation for as long as possible. But I also want to insert a warning here: motivation has a way of diminishing when challenges appear.

Right now you may feel convinced that you can increase your confidence and transform every aspect of your life into something profound and meaningful – and you can. However, be sure to keep in mind that building your confidence is a PROCESS.

The going may be rough at the beginning. You might find yourself faltering when you face challenges or bump into inner blockages. During those times, let your fear and uncertainty be the FUEL that propels you through the rough spots. The more aggressively you can work on your fear and doubt, the more quickly you'll see real progress.

Here's the good news: all you need to begin is one tiny seed of belief that your life can be better, that you can be stronger, and that you have what it takes to make lasting changes. This one tiny seed of belief will be enough to give you the courage to stretch a toe beyond the limits of your comfort zones. Once you've stretched that toe over the line, you'll start craving more, and more and more! And the further along the path of self-discovery and actualization you go, the easier it seems to get.

In the meantime, be gentle with yourself through this process. Be willing to push yourself, but not TOO hard. Take little steps at a time and keep striving for growth and progress, even if it's slow. Once you begin seeing some positive changes taking place, you'll be eager to push yourself a little bit harder. But until then, remember one step at a time will still get you there.

To your success

Iain Legg

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