



Building Self-Confidence

CREATE AND MANIFEST YOUR DIVA STYLE

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10 Easy Ways to Build Self-Confidence

You probably know someone – maybe several “someone’s” who just exude confidence. You might even have wondered, “What’s their secret? How can they be so positive about themselves?”

The good news is that you, too, can be that confident. Yes, you can be the one that everyone envies and wonders about!

Surprisingly, *self-confidence comes not from some inner gift, but from the things you do.* For many, those actions occur naturally or have become ingrained in them. Because such people have done these things a lot in the past, they habitually do them now. By practicing these same actions, you’ll be taking the steps necessary to build your own self-confidence.

USE THESE STRATEGIES TO BECOME MORE SELF-ASSURED:

1. **Take care with your appearance.** How you feel about yourself is reflected in your appearance. Ensure your hair is styled and your clothes are well-fitting when you go out. When you know you look great, you feel great about yourself as well.
2. **Smile and look people in the eye.** When you smile and make eye contact, it shows that you have a certain ease about you. People see this and respond positively toward you, giving you a lift as well!
3. **Give genuine compliments to others.** Complimenting others shows that you feel good enough about yourself to give positive feedback to others.
4. **Know your strengths.** Focus on doing whatever you’re best at. You’ll feel like an expert and know without a doubt that you excel in that area.
5. **Accept your imperfections.** Letting go of the need to be perfect means you’re comfortable enough with yourself to admit your imperfections. After all, we all have them. Imperfections only show that you’re human – not that you’re flawed!

6. **Be prepared.** Practicing this motto isn't only for Boy Scouts. Preparedness will show you that you can be successful at whatever you set out to do. *Being prepared increases confidence because you know what you're doing.* You've practiced in advance to perform whatever needs to be done.
7. **Have goals and work to achieve them.** When your life has direction, you know where you're going. You'll be consistently working toward accomplishing your aspirations. Because you have goals, you'll see the progress you're making, and you'll feel certain you'll eventually accomplish them.
8. **Embrace whatever it is you love.** Making time to do what you love makes you happy, content, and excited about your own life. *It also makes you feel more in control of your life, which adds to your self-confidence.*
9. **Excel at work.** No matter what kind of work you do, you can strive to be the best at it. Developing a reputation at work as the "go to" person who can always get the job done is a fabulous confidence-builder.
10. **Forget about your ego.** *When you give up the need to prove something, you'll be free of feeling compelled to put on airs and impress people.* Instead, you'll become more authentic and real with yourself. Prove to yourself instead of to others that you're competent and confident and others will see it anyway.

Building your self-confidence takes time, focus and effort. However, your faith in yourself will grow with every small step you take. Start today and begin living as the person you always dreamed you'd be.

Become Better at Anything Through Deliberate Practice

Deliberate practice is the path to getting better results in any field. *It's a specific method that makes the difference between an ordinary performance and an outstanding achievement.* These are some guidelines for engaging in deliberate practice and specific applications for how to use it in your daily life.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DELIBERATE PRACTICE

1. **Be patient.** A large body of research confirms that it takes about ten years before most people develop into a virtuoso, whether you want to be a pianist or a titan of industry. Plus, that ten year figure seems to be a minimum rather than an average.
2. **Aim for consistency.** As you would expect, you must practice regularly. Just like kids forget their course work during summer vacation, *you may squander your efforts if you take prolonged breaks.*
3. **Understand the learning curve.** It's natural to enjoy dramatic results when you first take up anything new. Then, you hit a plateau where you need to become more strategic if you want to keep advancing.
4. **Hone in on specific areas.** Identify the areas where you want to improve and focus your practice there. For example, you may have acquired an extensive vocabulary in French but need to spend time listening to native speakers to improve your pronunciation.
5. **Be prepared for lots of repetition.** *The willingness to endure repetitive drills is what distinguishes the best performers.* Keep in mind that the most productive methods may not feel like a lot of fun.
6. **Keep your sessions relatively brief.** Researchers have found that three to five hours a day is the absolute maximum for most people, spread over individual sessions of ninety minutes or less. *Pace yourself* according to the amount of time during which you can maintain an intense level of concentration.

7. **Set specific goals.** Use a blend of goals related to both outcomes and the process itself. The important thing is to approach your usual tasks with the mindset of becoming better at them.
8. **Expand your mental model.** Try to identify all the factors that go into your chosen experience. Keep adding to the list and experimenting with new combinations. For example, keep a journal so you can spot what conditions support or sabotage your healthy diet.
9. **Seek feedback.** Outside observers may spot weaknesses that you fail to see. Partner up with a more experienced friend or hire a coach.
10. **Evaluate your progress.** Check in regularly to review how you're doing. Ask yourself what is going well and where you need to make changes.

SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS FOR DELIBERATE PRACTICE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. **Enhance your exercise routine.** Sports are one field where deliberate practice has been studied extensively. You can use the same techniques as professional athletes to get the most out of your yoga classes.
2. **Get creative.** Music and other arts are also areas where practice obviously matters. You may want to resume the piano lessons you started as a child.
3. **Move ahead in your career.** Any occupation can be broken down into tasks where you can make continual improvements. Brush up on your financial management skills or take a more systematic approach to making successful sales calls.
4. **Enrich your relationships.** Even interpersonal relationships have many aspects that respond to practice. Experiment with delivering constructive criticism more tactfully with your family and co-workers.

Deliberate practice requires time and hard work, but anyone can reap the benefits, regardless of whether you think you have any special innate talent for the activities you care about most. ***Focus on the areas where you want to improve and be patient.*** Over the long term, diligent repetition and targeted feedback will pay off.

How Journaling Can Benefit Your Self-Development

Journaling is a fantastic way to supercharge your self-development efforts. When your thoughts are still in your mind, they can be challenging to analyze objectively.

Getting things out of your head and down on paper provides a totally different perspective.

Thinking tends to be very sequential; one thought leads to the next, which leads to the next. We get caught in a linear track and miss out on the bird's-eye view of the whole thought process. With journaling you gain the ability to see things from a third-person view versus a first-person view.

THREE GREAT BENEFITS OF JOURNALING

1. **Solve complex challenges.** *When you write the issue at hand down on paper, the solution for a complex challenge often suddenly becomes obvious.* The ability to re-examine the issue from a third-person perspective can make all the difference.
2. **Increase clarity.** One of the best times to lean on your journal is when you're filled with uncertainty about what action to take. Many things become clearer when you can get them down in writing.
3. **Validate your progress.** Sometimes we feel like we're spinning our wheels and not making genuine progress. When you're feeling this way, go back and review your old journal entries. You'll be amazed at how much progress you've made since then. And you'll also probably realize that you're taking huge strides right now, too!

HOW TO START A JOURNAL

You might envision creating a journal in a one of those blank books you can pick up in the bookstore. While this option certainly has a romantic feel to it, *you might want to consider keeping an electronic journal.*

- Electronic journals can be essentially free; you could start a blog on a free website or simply use your word processing program.
- The big advantage with electronic journals is the ability to search for things. Imagine going back through 10 years of written records, trying to find a specific entry.
- Additionally, if you type faster than you write, an electronic journal can be beneficial when you're trying to get complex thoughts out in a short period of time.
- Also, there are several software programs available specifically developed for journaling. If you can spare the \$20-\$30, they're worth checking out, and provide a lot more flexibility than the traditional pen and paper approach.

HABIT-FORMING: MAKE JOURNALING A DAILY ACTIVITY

Even if you think that there aren't enough interesting things happening in your life on a daily basis to bother recording them, don't let that deter you. New habits are much easier to implement if the activity is performed on a daily basis. Even getting down a couple of sentences every night is a great idea. You'll be surprised how often you'll write much more.

This practice can even help make your life more exciting and fulfilling. Just knowing that you have to journal each night may compel you to make your life a little more adventurous, just so you have something interesting to write. Try it! During the day, you'll notice that little thought in the back of your mind wondering what you can write about tonight.

Get started with your journal today. It's an activity that has little to no cost but provides numerous benefits. You'll see your clarity increase and have a much better sense of just how much progress you really are making in your life. Start journaling today and watch your self-development take on a new perspective.

The Structure of Personal Change

Personal change starts internally with a shift in mindset. The resulting external changes grow from this internal foundation. So now that you know where to start, how do you go about making these adjustments in your approach to life?

To really achieve personal transformation, several major stages must be crossed. Now, this doesn't mean that change must always take place slowly, only that all significant shifts will follow this sequence, regardless of how long the process takes.

THE 6 STAGES OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

- 1. Awareness.** Nothing will change until you're aware that something needs to shift. This stage can occur over time. Perhaps you become aware of some nagging feeling that things aren't as good as you'd like them to be. Maybe you notice a long held belief that no longer serves you.
 - This stage could also happen suddenly. If you recently suffered a heart attack, you're probably very aware of necessary dietary or lifestyle changes.
 - Also, keep tabs on your negative emotions. *They're often your subconscious attempting to provide you with awareness of needed changes.*
- 2. Examination.** After becoming conscious that something isn't quite right, some thought needs to take place. You might start by asking yourself these questions: "What's wrong? Why do I feel this way? What needs to change? Does anything really need to change? Can I live with this the way it is?"
- 3. Intention.** If the process passes the examination phase, we then may enter into intentionality. A decision has been made to change and the intention is there to remove a belief or behavior and replace it with a more appropriate alternative.
 - In many ways, this is the most powerful step. At this point you've truly decided to change and to replace something old with something new. *With enough intention, nearly anything is possible.*
- 4. Action.** *However, only with action do you actually begin to experience change.* At this point, you've already come a long way. You've taken what may have started as a dull sense of discomfort and given it a name and a face.
 - You might even feel more uncomfortable now than you did in Step 1; now you're more aware of what's going on. If you're feeling helpless about a situation, bear in

mind that this is frequently the result of reaching Stage 4 but then failing to take any action.

5. **Improvement.** As you discover what works for you, your initial actions may be inadequate or incorrect. When changing yourself, a fine-tuning process occurs until a sufficient solution is found. This is largely trial and error. You simply keep making adjustments to your approach until you hit on an effective solution.
6. **Integration.** This stage may take some time; new habits can require some effort before they take hold. At the completion of this step, you've fully adopted the new belief or behavior. The initial discomfort that started the whole process should be gone now, since the cause of that uneasiness has been alleviated.

Having a fundamental awareness of these steps will help you go from experiencing emotional discomfort to feeling whole and satisfied. *The next time you get a nagging feeling that something isn't right, take the time to examine your emotions.* Do this every time you feel something negative, and you'll grow into the person you always dreamed of being.

Mastering the Art of Self-Talk

Each one of us engages in self-talk. Do you find yourself saying things like, “Urgh, I’m late again,” or “It would be just like me to mess up this presentation?”

Wouldn’t you rather hear things like, “I did a fantastic job on that project,” or “My clothes are fitting better now that I’m exercising more?”

Mastering the art of self-talk means you speak truthfully and positively to yourself. When you are skilled at this, you’ll feel empowered and encouraged. As a consequence, your days will be happier, you’ll work harder to achieve your goals, and you’ll feel better about yourself.

The power of your self-talk is all-encompassing. ***Your self-talk influences what you believe about yourself and how you’ll behave in the future.***

TRY THESE TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU MASTER THIS LIFE-AFFIRMING ART:

1. **Keep it real.** When you’re honest, you’ll feel more comfortable with yourself. If you know you could have done better on a work project, acknowledge it to yourself. Part of making progress and improving in life is being genuine with yourself about what you’re doing. You can do this without being brutal.
2. **Avoid self-criticism.** Although being honest with yourself is important, do it in a helpful and informative way. Instead of saying, “I messed up,” acknowledge your decision to perform to a higher standard. Tell yourself how you’ll respond in the future.
3. **Be positive.** Talking to yourself in negative or self-deprecating ways is self-sabotage. If you hear the same things over and over, you start to believe them. Make sure what

you say to yourself is positive.

4. **Focus on your strengths.** As you listen to your inner voice throughout your day, you'll notice that you inadvertently make comments about yourself. Saying "Why did I do that? That was dumb," isn't very conducive to moving forward and doing your best.
 - ***Instead, if you recognize your strengths in the situation, you're compelled to move ahead and tackle the next task with gusto.*** You might tell yourself, "At least I thought the situation through and believed I was doing the right thing. Next time, I'll do things differently."
5. **Be nice to yourself.** When you're talking to yourself, are you kind? Do you take care with your own feelings? When you show a caring attitude toward yourself, you'll also perform better.

SUBSTITUTIONS IN YOUR SELF-TALK USING THESE SUGGESTIONS

- Instead of saying: "Nothing I do ever turns out right," try, "I am focusing on how I can succeed when I do this particular task."
- Rather than thinking: "I should have gotten up early to exercise this morning," say, "Now I'm going to do my exercise DVD" or, "I'll walk this evening right after work."
- If you were going to say, "There's nothing really special about me," change it to, "Everybody has strong points and mine are..."

Do you see how what you say to yourself influences what you believe and the choices you make in life? ***To ensure that your self-talk is empowering and encouraging, practice the tips above.*** You have the power to create the life you want by mastering this crucial art.