

10 things you can do to boost self- confidence

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“ Low self-esteem is like driving through life with your hand brake on.” --

Maxwell Maltz

Nobody is born with limitless self-confidence. If someone seems to have incredible self-confidence, it's because he or she has worked on building it for years. Self-confidence is something that you learn to build up because the challenging world of business, and life in general, can deflate it.

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An , a request for a refund from a customer or a flat rejection from investors can all cause our self-confidence to dwindle. Well-meaning but sometimes unkind comments from those closest to us can also hit us hard.

On top of this, we have to deal with our inner critic of self-doubt that constantly tells us that we are not good enough. When bombarded by so many elements that threaten our self-confidence, we need to take charge of building it up for ourselves.

As we teach at , building a successful business requires a thick skin and unshakable confidence in your ability to overcome obstacles. Here are 10 things you can do to build up your self-confidence.

1. Visualize yourself as you want to be.

“ What the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve.” -- Napoleon Hill

Visualization is the technique of seeing an image of yourself that you are proud of, in your own mind. When we struggle with low self-confidence, we

have a poor perception of ourselves that is often inaccurate. Practice visualizing a fantastic version of yourself, achieving your goals.

2. Affirm yourself.

" Affirmations are a powerful tool to deliberately install desired beliefs about yourself." -- Nikki Carnevale

We tend to behave in accordance with our own self-image. The trick to making lasting change is to change how you view yourself.

are positive and uplifting statements that we say to ourselves. These are normally more effective if said out loud so that you can hear yourself say it. We tend to believe whatever we tell ourselves constantly. For example, if you hate your own physical appearance, practice saying something that you appreciate or like about yourself when you next look in the mirror.

To get your brain to accept your positive statements more quickly, phrase your affirmations as questions like, " Why am I so good in making deals?" instead of " I am so good at making deals." Our brains are biologically wired to seek answers to questions, without analyzing whether the question is valid or not.

3. Do one thing that scares you every day.

" If you are insecure, guess what? The rest of the world is too. Do not overestimate the competition and underestimate yourself. You are better than you think." --

The best way to overcome fear is to face it head-on. By doing something that scares you every day and gaining confidence from every experience, you will
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see your self-confidence soar. So, get out of your comfort zone and face your fears!

4. Question your inner critic.

“ You have been criticizing yourself for years, and it hasn’t worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens.” -- Louise L. Hay

Some of the harshest comments that we get come from ourselves, via the "voice of the inner critic." If you struggle with low self-confidence, there is a possibility that your inner critic has become overactive and inaccurate.

Strategies like cognitive behavioral therapy help you to question your inner critic, and look for evidence to support or deny the things that your inner critic is saying to you. For example, if you think that you are a failure, ask yourself, “ What evidence is there to support the thought that I am a failure?” and “ What evidence is there that doesn’t support the thought that I am a failure?”

Find opportunities to congratulate, compliment and reward yourself, even for the smallest successes. As Mark Twain said, “[A] man cannot be comfortable without his own approval.”

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5. Take the 100 days of rejection challenge.

“ No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” -- Eleanor Roosevelt

has become famous for recording his experience of “ busting fear” by purposefully making crazy requests of people in order to be rejected over 100 days. His purpose was to desensitize himself to rejection, after he became more upset than he expected over rejection from a potential investor. Busting fear isn’t easy to do, but if you want to have fun while building up your self-confidence, this is a powerful way to do it.

6. Set yourself up to win.

“ To establish true self-confidence, we must concentrate on our successes and forget about the failures and the negatives in our lives.” -- Denis Waitley

Too many people are discouraged about their abilities because they set themselves goals that are too difficult to achieve. Start by setting yourself small goals that you can win easily.

Once you have built a stream of successes that make you feel good about yourself, you can then move on to harder goals. Make sure that you also keep a list of all your achievements, both large and small, to remind yourself of the times that you have done well.

Instead of focusing only on “ to-do” lists, I like to spend time reflecting on “ did-it” lists. Reflecting on the major milestones, projects and goals you’ve achieved is a great way to reinforce confidence in your skills.

7. Help someone else.

often enables us to forget about ourselves and to feel grateful for what we have. It also feels good when you are able to make a difference for someone else.

Instead of focusing on your own weaknesses, volunteer to mentor, practically assist or teach another, and you'll see your self-confidence grow automatically in the process.

8. Care for yourself.

“ Self-care is never a selfish act -- it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others.” -- Parker Palmer

Self-confidence depends on a combination of good physical health, emotional health and social health. It is hard to feel good about yourself if you hate your physique or constantly have low energy.

Make time to cultivate great exercise, eating and sleep habits. In addition, dress the way you want to feel. You have heard the saying that “ clothes make the man.” Build your self-confidence by making the effort to look after your own needs.

9. Create personal boundaries.

“ Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself.”-- Harvey Fierstein

Learn to say no. Teach others to respect your personal boundaries. If necessary, take classes on how to be more assertive and learn to ask for what you want. The more control and say that you have over your own life, the greater will be your self-confidence.

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10. Shift to an equality mentality.

“ Wanting to be someone else is a waste of the person you are.” -- Marilyn Monroe

People with low self-confidence see others as better or more deserving than themselves. Instead of carrying this perception, see yourself as being equal to everyone. They are no better or more deserving than you. Make a mental shift to an equality mentality and you will automatically see an improvement in your self-confidence.