

6 ways to immediately boost your self-confidence

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In turbulent times like these, it can be tough to be confident. But confidence can be your refuge. A strong, steadfast vessel that stays afloat even upon the stormiest of seas. Without a , you may find you lack the emotional resources to push forward and remain on an even keel.

Possessing confidence is also pivotal when staying true to your convictions. If you care about the world -- and how you move within it -- confidence can be your true north: a constant reference point that allows you to in any life situation. Whether it's your relationships, work, or even the relationship you have with yourself, confidence has a significant impact on your decisions and hence, the changes you make in your life.

Sustain self-confidence by practicing the following:

1. Straighten up -- and stay energized.

Remember those “ gentle reminders” in your formative years? can affect your physical and mentalhealth. Slouching can send the wrong message when meeting new people, during a jobinterviewor any other scenario. A asked one group of students to walk in a slumped position, while another group was asked to skip down the hall. The researchers found that the “ skippers” had more energy and felt more positive throughout the day.

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The mind-body relationship is undeniable. When you are feeling energized and dynamic -- the byproduct will be a boost in your confidence level. But even if you are tired, simply straightening your spine and sitting or standing with assurance will send the brain a message that supports self-confidence.

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Finally, be sure to . Averting your eyes or looking around the room engenders suspicion and may damage your credibility.

2. Strike a pose.

As social psychologist Amy Cuddy's groundbreaking "power posing" work brought to light a few years ago -- the mind responds to something she refers to as "hi-power" poses and "low-power" poses. Cuddy says that your confidence level thrives when you strike a pose that occupies a lot of space -- these are power poses (such as the Wonder Woman, crime fighting pose). When you are feeling powerless the tendency is to make yourself physically "small" -- meaning an inward, more closed position -- such as when we slouch. Cuddy and her team concluded that you could "fake it until you make it" if power posing does not come naturally to you. and see how it works.

3. Identify your core beliefs.

There are many ways to identify your beliefs, by working with a coach, therapist or, if you are particularly introspective, through journaling. The idea is to remain inquisitive and discern how your core beliefs serve you -- for good or for ill. Limiting beliefs will reveal themselves in repetitious, painful thoughts such as: "I'm not good enough" or "I will never get what I want."

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Neuroscience tells us that we can get stuck in a negative thought pattern -- and train our brain to repeat these unfulfilling thought patterns over time. Like a needle stuck in the groove of a record -- your thoughts can play the same track over and over. This negativity seeps into your consciousness and
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ultimately shapes who you are until you uncover what's going on, and make the corresponding positive changes.

4. Choose a mantra.

Once you've become more aware of your limiting beliefs, the way to create a new neural pathway to a more positive way of thinking is through repetition. You have likely heard that empowering mantras or affirmations, designed to boost your confidence, can be very powerful. (See this for more ideas.) It may seem silly to you at first, but give it a try. The first step is to ensure that your mantras are believable. For instance, if " I am powerful" is your chosen phrase -- and you have a hard time believing it -- perhaps " I am going to be powerful" is a more believable first step to coaxing your brain into believing this statement. Repeat your positive affirmations aloud (whenever possible) and silently to yourself often. It may be hard to believe, but this can be a surefire way to break negative thought patterns.

5. Ask for feedback.

Asking for feedback can help you uncover some of the roadblocks that may be contributing to less than optimum levels of confidence. It may also help you to come to terms with your strengths and areas of development so you can make positive, deliberate progress. Seek opinions from non-judgmental, trusted advisers, friends or family-- and ask them to be honest with you. Seriously consider this feedback and then take the necessary steps to utilize your strengths while working on letting go of what may be holding you back.

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6. Stop striving for perfection.

Observe your standards. It has been proven (particularly in women), that when you strive for perfection, it can have a deleterious effect on your self-esteem if things don't go as planned. Reshma Saujani, the founder of Girls Who Code, summed it up beautifully in her TED Talk, . Saujani presents the case that boys are encouraged to be brave and take on challenges not expecting a perfect outcome -- while most girls are taught to avoid risk and failure, and strive to be perfect in most everything they do. This perfectionist phenomenon has created a feminine culture that tends to "play it safe." So be brave -- try something new, step shamelessly out of your comfort zone and don't be afraid to make mistakes.