

## 5 Ways to Be More Confident

Discover science-based tips to boost your confidence.



Most of us want self-confidence because we want to feel good about ourselves. But, self-confidence is also important for other things. The higher our self-confidence, the higher our motivation to act. Plus, self-confidence helps increase the chances of success when we do act. That's because when we expect to fail, we are more likely to do so (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002). For all these reasons, it makes sense that we would want to increase our self-confidence. Here are some tips and techniques to do it:

### 1. Know Your Worth

Perhaps the most important part of being confident is knowing your worth (Owens, 1993). We are all worthy. Yet, some of us have a deeply rooted belief that we're worthless. Maybe we feel like we're disposable, unlovable, or just not good in some way. But that's not true.

If this sounds like you, you may have been taught to believe these things about yourself. Perhaps you learned this from overly critical parents, from bullying kids at school, or from a culture that suggested that your gender, race, or other features made you less worthy than others.

Early messages about our worth are internalized and become the basis for our beliefs about ourselves. So, the longer we've had negative self-beliefs, the harder they are to override. It may require ongoing efforts to replace internal monologues of "I'm not worthy", with "I am worthy", or "I have just as much worth as anyone else." Using positive affirmations like these can be a good way to retrain your brain to believe you have worth.

## 2. Know Your Good Qualities

Another important aspect of confidence is knowing that you have good qualities (Owens, 1993). This goes beyond simply having worth and involves recognizing that there are things about you that are good, maybe even great.

Indeed, we all have good qualities. But if we spend our mental energy thinking about the qualities that we lack, we often have little time left to think about the good qualities that we have. If this is something you struggle with, you might benefit from making a list of all your positive qualities (things like humor, determination, creativity, etc....) Then it's just a matter of shifting your mindset to try to focus on these good qualities.

## 3. Know Your Strengths

In addition to knowing our positive qualities, it can be beneficial to recognize our strengths (Owens, 1993). By knowing what these things are, we can put ourselves in situations where we thrive. When we use our strengths, we can end up feeling more confident because we regularly experience being good at something. This reminds us that we are indeed good at things and have reasons to be confident in our skills. So, make a list of your strengths and see if you can find ways to use your strengths more often.

## 4. Be Nice to Yourself

To be more confident, we may also need to develop a more positive attitude towards ourselves (Owens, 1993). Many of us have a cruel inner critic, always putting us down for doing the smallest things wrong or for failing to be perfect. If this sounds like you, it can be helpful to start talking back to your inner critic.

For example, your inner critic may say something like, "You should have done better." If you notice these self-critical inner thoughts, try to stand up for yourself by saying something like, "I did the best I could, and I'm proud of myself for the effort I put in." This self-talk can help you re-write internal scripts that can help you become more confident.

## 5. Do Your Best

By doing our best, we have a locked and loaded response to our inner critic. Any time we hear those inner monologues starting to put us down, we can respond with, "I did my best." And that is all we can do. When we do our best (while not striving for perfection and telling ourselves we could do more), we may be able to give ourselves a bit more of a break and perhaps be more self-accepting.

Although boosting self-confidence can be difficult, focusing on these key skills can help. I hope these strategies will put you on the right path towards increasing your own self-confidence.

### References

- Bénabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2002). *Self-confidence and personal motivation*. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 117(3), 871-915.
- Owens, T. J. (1993). *Accentuate the positive-and the negative: Rethinking the use of self-esteem, self-deprecation, and self-confidence*. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 288-299.