

10 Ways to Increase Your Confidence

Do you have enough confidence to do whatever you'd like to in life?

Does the thought of public speaking make you weak at the knees? How about travelling alone overseas, going to a social event or networking function where you don't know anyone, or asking someone out on a date or a customer for a sale?

When you find yourself in a situation that takes you outside your comfort zone and makes you feel a little shaky, here are ten ways you can increase your confidence, so you'll look and feel ready:

1. **Smile:**

Ever since I was a little girl, my mum always told me to 'Smile and be confident.' She was right. Smiling can work wonders. You'll not only look happy and confident on the outside, but you'll feel better on the inside too. Physiologically, when we smile, a chemical reaction is produced in our bodies that makes us feel good.

2. **Centre yourself:**

To help stay calm, practise this centering technique. Focus your attention on your centre-point, which is found just below your navel and breathe deeply. As you do this, you're focusing inside yourself rather than externally and, as a result, you'll feel more balanced.

3. **Be aware of and manage your body language:**

Your body language can make you appear to be confident. Notice that simply by changing your physical state, you can control your emotions. Stand tall, hold your head up high, relax the muscles in your face, smile and make direct eye contact when you're speaking or listening.

4. **Ask for what you want:**

One of my favourite sayings is, 'If you don't ask, the answer is always no.' Or, Ghandi's version of this is 'If you don't ask, you don't get.' Get into the habit of asking for what you want. It gets easier each time and slowly you'll notice your confidence will grow. Start small, for practice, and gradually build your way up to bigger things. If asking for what you want feels uncomfortable to you, notice what might be behind that. Do you have any fears around the outcome - for example, would you be devastated if the person said 'no'? Then again, they might say 'yes' too. Do you feel that you're not truly deserving of what it is you're asking for? Or, were you taught as a child not to ask for anything because that would be rude or selfish? One of the best ways to change a situation is to get clear about, and then ask for, what you want. Once you've done this a few times, it becomes easier to do.

5. **Create a positive self-image:**

Always hold a mental picture in your own mind of yourself being successful and having the ability to handle whatever comes your way. Unless this is how you see yourself, no-one else will see you in this light.

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6. Rehearse and be well prepared:

When you take the time to rehearse and prepare for an important meeting, interview or performance, for example, it allows you to practise creating the outcome that you'd like and to smooth out any bumps. The more you practise or prepare in advance, the more confident you'll feel that things will go smoothly. Visualising a positive outcome is a good place to start.

7. Challenge your negative thoughts or self-talk:

A simple way to do this is to ask yourself: 'Is this negative thought I'm having or my negative self-talk really true?' Another way to deal with these thoughts or feelings is to acknowledge them and then let them go. If you'd like to learn a very powerful technique for releasing negative thoughts or feelings, I highly recommend E.F.T. See my website for more details: www.blueskycoaching.com.au/energytapping.php

8. Talk yourself 'into' instead of 'out of' it:

Have you ever talked yourself out of doing something before you even attempted it? When you find yourself doing this, ask yourself: 'What else do I need so that I can do this?' Do you need to develop a skill, get additional information or simply accept that being nervous is perfectly normal under the circumstances and be more courageous?

9. Take a risk:

Try doing one thing each day that scares you. When you move out of your comfort zone, you'll often feel uncomfortable, but the growth in your confidence and the sense of achievement that follow are great rewards.

10. Take action:

Confident, successful people are decisive and action-oriented. When faced with a decision, get clear on the outcome that you want, then make your decision promptly. Don't second-guess your decision or ask for endless reassurances from others before actioning it. Trust in yourself and your ability to make things happen.

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