

Developing the Confidence



to Go After
Your Dreams

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"Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings."
~Samuel Johnson

You have the power to cultivate the confidence it takes to be able to achieve whatever you want in life! ***This guide will provide you with a real plan to get started in your quest for confidence and help you accomplish your ultimate dreams.***

First, you'll develop a clear image of what your dream life looks like.

Then, you'll learn the truth about confidence: what it is, what it feels like, and how it will change your life. Selecting a role model of someone you see as confident is an important part of the journey.

Next, you'll discover how to maintain consistent motivation with action steps to keep your motivation in high gear.

Finally, we'll give you tips on finding your own inspiration. Once you're inspired, your confidence will reach its highest levels to compel you to move closer and closer to the incredible dream you desire.

Expect success and enjoy this journey as you apply these concepts to develop your confidence. Your life will change in ways you can't imagine!

1. Visualize Your Dreams

In order to go after your dreams, ***it's important to have a clear idea of what you're seeking in life.*** When you can define the life you'll live when your dreams come true, your passion will ignite. And once your

passion is burning bright, you'll be compelled to develop the confidence you require to achieve those dreams.

Explore the following questions to aid you in visualizing what your desires will "look like."

1. **Who will be living with you?** An important part of the future you crave will likely include others. When you imagine your dream life, who else do you include in the picture?
 - * The better you can visualize the people who you'll want near you, the more you'll beef up your confidence level. You'll begin to think, "I'm working hard to make my dreams come true and I want (a spouse, a child, for example) to be with me. It's going to happen."

2. **What will you be doing?** Thinking about what you want in life is a brilliant exercise because it will help you live in such a way that your dream will eventually materialize. Visualize what you'll be doing.
 - * For example, consider the transportation method you'll use to get around. Maybe you'll be riding a bus or the subway. Perhaps you'll be driving a nice car or walking throughout a small community.
 - * Consider how you'll be spending your spare time in your dream life.

- * Imagining what you'll be doing in your self-designed future will place you in the mindset that will move you closer to your goals. Your confidence will soar as you entertain thoughts of how you'll pass your time.

3. **Which career will you be working in?** Now we're getting to some real specifics about what you want in life—how you'll earn the money to live the dream existence.

- * Maybe you'll be an artist in New Orleans, living in a small apartment with an extra room for your art studio. Perhaps you plan to become a traveling sales person where you occasionally venture out of the country to contact potential customers. Or you hope to open your own small business in a town where you can walk to work.
- * ***Think about what your job environment might look like.*** Maybe you've seen people working in the career you want on television or in movies. As you imagine yourself carrying out the duties of the career you desire, your confidence will rise.

4. **Where will you be living?** As you progress through answering these questions, you can see how your dreams are materializing. You've probably already had bits of thoughts about where you'd be living just by working on the above questions. Now, focus on that question—the ideal location of where you'll be living when you're living your dream life.

- * An apartment in the big city might be the place for you. Or a big farmhouse out in the country is what you desire so you

can have all the space you want. Maybe you'll choose a resort area where you can live upstairs from all the shops and boutiques in order to reside in your chosen element.

- * Wherever your dream location is, visualize what it could look like. ***Your confidence will be bolstered as you imagine living in the place you want to be.***

5. **When will you be comfortable with your life?** You'll become more confident as you reflect on the point in your journey when you recognize you're comfortable and feel you're either close to achieving your fantasy life or have accomplished your desired result.

Imagining what your future will look like on a regular basis will help you build a mindset that encourages your confidence. When you often entertain your visualization, you'll begin to realize, "This is going to happen—I can live the life I want."

"With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world."

~Dalai Lama

2. Study Confidence

When you fully understand what it means to have confidence, you'll be better able to cultivate those feelings within yourself. Some of your study should be more of a personal nature—looking within yourself. Then, you can reflect on others regarding their confidence levels.

Take a look at these questions to aid you in your study of confidence:

1. **What does having more confidence mean to you?** Each person has their own idea of what it could be like to be confident. Consider what it would mean to you to feel more hopeful, enthusiastic, and positive about life.
2. **How will you change? *Thinking about how you'll change as you develop more confidence is integral to actually developing confidence.*** Cognitively, you'll begin to entertain thoughts of specific ways you'll show that you have your life under control.
 - * Perhaps you'll be more outgoing in a room full of people.
 - * Maybe you'll initiate conversations more often.
 - * Or you might play more tennis or excel over others at work.

3. **How will you feel as you develop more confidence?** Maybe you'll shake off those old feelings of not being good enough. You'll likely feel happier. You'll be more comfortable with yourself and your feelings. And you'll feel more excited about the life you've created.
 - * ***When you gain confidence about who you are, your overall feelings will be more positive.***

4. **How will your life be affected when you have more confidence?** Call forth your visualizations about what your life will look like and you'll come up with ways your existence will be enhanced by increased confidence.
 - * ***You'll likely socialize more, have a more successful career, and earn more money upon developing confidence.*** You'll spend time doing the things you truly want to do.

5. **In your estimation, who is the most confident person you know?** Pick someone and identify them in your mind as Ms. or Mr. Confidence. How do they go about life? Having someone in mind as your role model for confidence will provide you with a real-life guide to use to cultivate your own confidence.
 - * Think about relatives, like grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, or even an older sibling to use as your confidence role model. Maybe a teacher you admired or a supervisor or co-worker at work could serve as your ideal model for self-confidence.

6. **What can you learn from your observations of Ms. or Mr. Confidence?** It's not necessary for you to talk to your role model about their confidence level. However, if you're comfortable with approaching them, feel free to ask them some questions.
- * Your keen observations are often all that's required to learn how to stoke your confidence. ***Notice Ms. or Mr. Confidence's attitude, appearance, language, manners, and approach to life.*** What do you see? Begin to practice some of the things you've observed in your model.
 - * For example, if Ms. Confidence seems to always have a positive attitude, work on developing your own positive attitude. If she has a great sense of humor, think about ways you, too, can introduce humor into your social repertoire. If Ms. Confidence shows proper manners and is polite to others, follow her example.
 - * In essence, observe Ms. or Mr. Confidence carefully so you can adapt some of their habits. As you feel yourself changing, your confidence will flourish.
7. **Which reading materials about developing confidence will you read?** A wealth of self-help information is available. Visit your local bookstore and browse the back of the books for lists of references to social and psychological studies regarding confidence.
- * Those resources will likely have research-backed ideas for how you can successfully develop and build on your

confidence. The more knowledge you attain, the more successful you'll be.

8. **Which websites can you peruse for ideas?** As you gain insight and information about confidence, your own confidence will be bolstered. Websites operated by the American Psychological Association and Psychology Today are informative places to start.

- * Also, websites for professional journals provide a treasure trove of research results regarding personality characteristics like confidence.

Your personal and intellectual study of confidence will help you cultivate your own confidence. ***Reflecting on what having confidence means to you, how you would change, and how you would feel as a confident person are important.***

Also, imagining how your life would be affected if you were confident helps you gain a better understanding of confidence and how to grow it.

Finding a confidence role model will provide you with opportunities to observe, learn, and apply some of your role model's ways of living.

Finally, expanding your knowledge base about confidence through reading self-help books and discovering helpful websites will also serve to bolster your confidence reserves.

“Self-confidence is not the same thing as ego. This is not to say that the two don’t (frequently) dance hand in hand down the street, pushing over old ladies in crosswalks and kicking baby kittens. But they are definitely not the same entity.

*Ego is thinking you have all the answers.
Self-confidence is knowing you don’t have the answers,
but being pretty sure that you will be able to find them.”*

~Maggie Stiefvater

3. Prepare For Self-Confidence

You can take some simple, concrete steps to ensure you’re well on your way to finding the confidence you want. Consider practicing the following suggestions in your everyday life. You’ll be amazed at how your feelings of confidence will increase.

The more you perform these steps, the more self-assured you’ll feel:

1. **Smile.** You’ll likely agree that when you see people smiling, you believe them to be more confident than one who is scowling or looking uninvolved. So, even when you don’t feel confident, ***a smile will boost your spirits and those of the people around you.***

2. **Use humor.** When you use humor, others will naturally regard you as being more self-confident. So, work to infuse humor when talking with others. Watch how others bring humor into their conversations if you're unsure about how to do it.
3. **Consistently engage in physical activities.** The more in touch you are with your body and how it works, the more confident you'll be. And there's no better way to help you know your body than to take part in regular fitness pursuits.
 - * Becoming and staying physically fit and strong is one of the most-confidence-building behaviors you can have.
4. **Take care with your appearance.** When you think you look good, you feel good. And *feeling good about yourself equals confidence*. Look your best most of the time. You'll find yourself smiling more and feeling more self-confident.
5. **Strive to be good at something—just one thing.** Find and develop a skill or talent you can be really good at. You'll love the feeling!
6. **Put yourself in a position to utilize your own unique skills and talents.** As you practice doing whatever you can do well, you'll see that your confidence level will climb.
 - * If you're good at working with people, volunteer at your local hospital. If you're a great seamstress, take in mending work. If you do a great job keeping your yard in order, help your neighbors beautify their lawns.

- * As you practice your unique skills, you'll realize you *do* have confidence in yourself in those areas. ***Once you have confidence in one aspect, you've opened the door for it to spread.***
7. **Do the things you fear.** If you tell yourself it's okay to be afraid, as long as you follow through with something, then you can find the confidence required to create your dream life.
- * Perhaps you're afraid to start your own small business mowing people's lawns. If that's the case, start small by asking people in your neighborhood.
 - * Or maybe you don't like speaking to groups. If not, place yourself in positions to do it anyway. Millions of people who had this very common fear (public speaking) have found their confidence by taking the Dale Carnegie course, which is offered in most communities.
 - * There are many methods to help you overcome fears. You just have to face your fear and try them.

As you prepare to have confidence, an amazing phenomenon takes place — you'll find you already have some confidence on which to build. Doing things like smiling more, taking part in fitness activities, and keeping care of your personal appearance will help you develop self-confidence surprisingly quickly.

Also, being good at something, using your unique talents consistently, and doing things that you fear will help you prepare for and find that jewel you seek — confidence.

*“One important key to success is self-confidence.
An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”*
~**Arthur Ashe**

4. Discover Motivation

Your confidence is intimately connected to and affected by your level of motivation in life. Therefore, ***it's up to you to discover your own motivation to pursue the life you desire.*** And when you do, your confidence grows.

As you can see, confidence, motivation, and achievement of your life dreams work together in two ways: being motivated to go after the life you want brings about confidence and having confidence motivates you to seek out your desired path.

Try these techniques to discover what motivates you:

1. **Read one self-help book a month.** Reading and expanding your repertoire of knowledge is important in your pursuit of confidence.

- * Reading one self-help book each month will serve as great motivation for you to pursue whatever you're seeking in life. ***Your path to self-development will enrich and fulfill you if you read a self-help book each month.***
2. **Read other books that inspire you.** Taking in new information stokes your fires of creativity, imagination, and motivation. Therefore, exposing yourself to any new information that interests, fascinates, or excites you will aid you in your plan to build confidence and go after your dream life.
 3. **Interview someone who you see as successful.** This person could be someone you look up to. They could be from the field you hope to work in some day. Or it might be someone who works in your current field whom you view as striving for excellence.
 - * Before the interview, ponder what you want to know about the person's success. Write down those questions so you'll be prepared. You could ask the person to meet you for coffee, for lunch, or to come to your home some evening for dessert.
 - * ***Let the individual know in advance the reason for your meeting.*** You might mention you want to ask about her or his work habits and career development. Because your goal is to learn more about motivation, ensure you include some questions about how the person has remained motivated throughout their career.

4. **Talk with your parents and grandparents.** Ask them to share how they were successful in their roles as parents or workers.
 - * Keep in mind that your plan is to discover what motivates others. Ask things like, “How did you keep going forward when things got tough” and “What got you through the rough spots you mentioned.”

5. **Hang out with people who are positive.** When you have a chance to be close-up and personal with positive and successful people, you learn about how others remain positive through trying times and what they do to stay motivated in the most difficult situations.
 - * Plus, you’ll be encouraged to be positive and move forward in your own life. Ultimately, you’ll become motivated to pursue the very life you’ve always wanted.

6. **Write down in simple steps what you must do.** It’s time to get a tangible “picture” of your life now and the steps to follow from this point forward to achieve your dreams. What is the first baby step you can take to be one inch closer to what you want?
 - * Having a checklist to check off as you succeed in completing each step is incredibly motivating. ***Your list will boost your confidence and keep you moving forward.***

7. **Set mini-goals and timelines about how you'll achieve each step.** For example, each month, you could plan to pursue and complete just one step on your list. Celebrate each success. You'll stay focused and motivated. Your confidence will build. Plus, you'll feel excited about moving closer toward your desired life.
 - * Some steps may take you longer than one month to achieve, like taking a 6 week course or completing that college class you need. But the idea here is to use your list to stay motivated, thus increasing your confidence and ability to reach your life goals.

Discovering your motivation will increase your confidence tenfold. Knowing that you're moving forward is a wonderful feeling!

Reading, interviewing a successful person, and talking with close family members about how they've stayed motivated will shed light on how you can focus on being motivated.

In addition, hanging out with positive people, writing out the steps you can take to work toward achieving your dreams, and using that list to move you forward will all serve to keep the fires of motivation bright. And when they burn, your confidence remains ignited.

Whatever you're working toward, you can achieve it!

*"If my mind can conceive it, my heart can believe it,
I know I can achieve it!"*

~Jesse Jackson

5. Expect Success

Building your confidence can and will happen. ***When you expect success, you'll achieve your goal.*** No matter what your endeavor is, there are many pathways to accomplish it.

Your efforts to develop your confidence are enhanced when you expect success.

Try these ideas to help you believe in yourself and expect success:

1. **Think positively.** Affirm within yourself that you'll accomplish your goals. Keeping a positive mindset will aid you in your quest to expect success.
2. **Refuse to allow negativity into your life.** Preventing negativity will provide a space in your life to fill in with positivity. If practicing this method means you must avoid certain people, so be it. ***Just say "no" to negativity.***

3. **Practice refuting negative thoughts using thought-stopping.**
When those negative thoughts creep in, imagine the word, “NO” in large capital letters. Then, replace the “NO” with a more calming and tranquil thought, like swimming or taking a walk in nature.
 - * When you learn to block negative thoughts from your life, you’ll be more likely to expect success.
4. **Vow to move forward in the process of achieving your dreams.** Promise yourself you’ll work your steps (from the list you made earlier) to get closer and closer to the life you desire.
5. **List your top five strengths. *Reviewing your strengths will help you realize that you have a lot of things going for you.*** You’re strong in a number of ways. You have talents and skills. And if you’re good at those things, you’ll learn to excel in other areas, too. Knowing your strengths will help you feel good about yourself.
6. **Journal the compliments that others consistently give you.** Nothing helps you feel like you can succeed like basking in the positive words others say about you. So you never forget them, write them down.
 - * Re-read them whenever you want to boost your efforts to live your dreams.

- 7. Look for the common threads in the compliments you jot down.** The commonalities will tell you about some of your strengths. Perhaps there were some positives that you were unaware you possessed.

When you take these steps to build up your expectations to succeed, you'll be closer to developing the confidence you seek. Thinking positively, using thought-stopping to banish negative thoughts, and promising yourself to move forward are powerful steps in your quest for confidence.

Also, knowing your top strengths, journaling positive comments from others, and knowing how others feel about you will aid you to expect success. You're on your way to confidence!

*"Because one believes in oneself,
one doesn't try to convince others.*

*Because one is content with oneself,
one doesn't need others' approval.*

*Because one accepts oneself,
the whole world accepts him or her."*

~Lao Tzu

6. Get Inspired

When you're truly inspired, you'll be compelled to have confidence. What does it mean to be inspired? To be inspired is to be especially encouraged to do something. You're excited and compelled to go forward, regardless of the quest. ***You can overcome any challenge when you're inspired.***

Seek out people, places, and things that inspire you.

Consider these ideas to help find inspiration:

1. **Think back on prior successes.** You'll be pleasantly surprised how excited you get when you ponder your past accomplishments. ***Avoid minimizing your successes.***
 - * For example, you might have made it through a very rough year in 7th grade.
 - * Perhaps your family moved just when you were getting ready to start high school with all your friends and you rose to the occasion.
 - * Maybe you performed well in a job interview and got the job.
 - * Possibly, you painted every room of your house three years ago on your own.

2. **What is the one thing you're the most proud of in your life?**
Write about the situation: what you thought about it at the time, how you felt, what you did, and how things turned out. Let your pride flow. You made it through and as a result, were wiser, kinder, or stronger.

* ***Build on your pride to build on your confidence.***

3. **What can you learn about that experience? *This step is the most important of all when reflecting on what you've done well over the years.*** When you connect with what you learned, that's knowledge you'll carry with you for the rest of your life. And knowledge is a great confidence-enhancer.
4. **Profit from challenges.** See challenges as they truly are: chances to practice living so you can do better the next time a similar situation comes around.
5. **Be brave.** Find the courage to re-visit past rough periods in your life and identify what you learned from those difficult times. Let your lessons from prior challenges build your confidence and ignite your momentum to move you forward.
6. **Acknowledge the fact that you made it through.** The bumpy path you traversed brought you to where you are today. Recognize you can go even further. There's no better confidence booster than knowing that you made it through some very trying times and emerged into the light again.

When you seek to get inspired, you'll become excited about whatever you're working toward in life. Your inspiration will instill the confidence you want and need to keep moving in the direction of your dreams.

*"It is only necessary to have courage,
for strength without self-confidence is useless."*

~Giacomo Casanova

7. Summary

Finding your own confidence is a journey well worth taking. As you progress through the above steps, your interest in your own life will grow. You'll realize you can do almost anything you put your mind to.

Visualize your dreams. Discover your motivation because it will urge you in the direction of whatever you want in life.

Expect success. When you know you can do it, you will. Find inspiration because it lights up your passions and compels you to go forward.

Know that you truly can develop the confidence you desire. Start the journey to confidence now. Your dreams are waiting!

"Believe you can and you're halfway there."

~Theodore Roosevelt