



▶▶ health & wellness  
By Carlene Murray

# CULTIVATING Confidence

**How's your confidence today — your self-assurance of trusting and appreciating your own abilities, qualities, value and worth? Did you know confidence is not something you have, but actually something you create?**

Tony Robbins states, "Being confident is nothing more than a feeling of certainty that you can be and accomplish whatever you set your mind to. Creating confidence is not about knowing it all; it's about trusting that no matter what happens, you'll be able to handle it and learn from the outcome. Confidence comes from within, and you can find ways to believe in yourself at any time."

All of us experience times of self-doubt or limiting beliefs because we are not born naturally confident.

Most people work at it, building up their confidence "muscle" over time. Our self-confidence is like a muscle because we can strengthen it through practice, repetition, and positive reinforcement. And when it comes to confidence building, our mindset has everything to do with it.

Research suggests that confidence is also vital to our health and psychological well-being. So the great news is, you can *learn* and build your confidence. Check out these quick tools and confidence-building exercises

to help you skyrocket your self-confidence, appreciate and own your amazingness, and soar!

### Visualize Your Most Confident Self

Practicing visualization is a great way to leverage your most powerful weapon (your mind!), change your self-perception, and become the confident you that you desire. Start by imagining the most confident version of yourself. Create a detailed, highly specific picture in your mind. What does that "you" look like? How are you dressed? Where are you? How

do you talk, think, and act? Put as much thought and energy into fleshing out the intricacies of this version of you as if to breathe it into being. Write down a detailed description of your most confident self. Write down what you see and don't question it. Let your imagination go wild.

### Utilize Affirmations for Positive Self Talk

We believe what we tell ourselves, which can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on what our inner voice is saying. If your inner voice is negative, doubting, or judgmental, using affirmations can actually retrain your brain to think more positively. If you're not familiar with affirmations, they're positive statements that help you set an intention for who you want to be and how you want to feel. Try reciting an affirmation like, "I am confident and courageous" to yourself whenever you're struggling in the confidence department. Repeat the affirmation over and over to yourself as often as you can, and over time — it'll become an unconscious belief!

Look up positive quotes and affirmations. Write down the ones that speak to you and meditate on them daily. You can write them out over and over as part of your morning routine, or spend a few minutes looking in the mirror and reciting them. This helps shift and elevate your energy.

### Question Your Inner Critic

If that little naysayer in your head is really giving you grief and making you question everything about yourself, try challenging it with a direct question like, "Where's the evidence of that?" Taking a logical approach to the truthfulness of that inner voice is not only illuminating, but can very quickly identify and help you call "bullsh\*t" on the negative self-talk. Write down something negative you've been telling yourself that's hurting your self-confidence, and then write down the factual evidence (no opinions!) that this is true.

### Leave Your Comfort Zone Regularly

A great way to become more confident is to spend more time doing the things you're feeling hesitant or insecure about. It sounds counterintuitive, but embracing our fears is how we work through them. When you do things you're scared of, those things lose their power over you. So if you're afraid of public speaking, for instance, volunteer to read at an open mic night or take the lead on that next work meeting. And remember, that feeling of discomfort *isn't* forever. The more you step out of your comfort zone, the easier it'll get. Write down one action you will commit to taking to move outside of your comfort zone.

### Change a (Small) Habit

There's nothing like making positive changes in your life to give you a newfound sense of confidence. So think of a habit you'd like to change and tackle it. Make it *small* and *specific* so you set yourself up for the best possible success. For example, instead of saying something like, "I will go to bed earlier," say, "I will be in

bed by 10 p.m. every night so I can get a full eight hours of sleep." Once you've mastered it and feel the high of the accomplishment, you can move on to something larger.

### Write Down One Small Habit You Want to Change and Tackle It

Smile! It may sound silly, but practice flashing that winning grin of yours the next time you're struggling in the belief department. The power behind the human smile has been the subject of many studies, and it's been shown to make us feel better and seem more competent, among other things. (Google "The Hidden Power of Smiling" by Ron Gutman and see what pops up.) You'll be surprised at the internal shift you can create through this simple act. Next time you're feeling insecure, try smiling. Notice how the act of smiling changes your feelings about the situation?

There are countless additional tools, teachings and tips to boost self-confidence and improve self-esteem. Start small and build on your practice daily to fortify your confidence so when it vacillates (and it will), your time there is short and you are quickly back in the positive flow of your own value, worth, talent, and uniqueness. Without confidence, we can do little ... but with it, we can soar!



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