



24 Tips for building self confidence

There are lots of practical tips you can use to raise your self-confidence. Here are some of them. As usual, with these tip-lists, don't try it all at once. Just try a few suggestions and see which ones work best for you. Some of them you'll need to practise a bit before they start to pay off. It's like playing the guitar or football, it might not work too well the first or second time you try it. And keep in mind that you have a choice. You can choose if you want to raise or lower your self confidence. Many of these suggestions can only boost your confidence temporarily. But this can allow you to do something you may not have been able to do before. And as you do it you build a deeper confidence in yourself. And collect concrete proof that you can actually do and achieve a lot of things.

- 1. Ask yourself: What's the worst that could happen?** It's easy to get lost in a vague fear – or very improbable scenarios – of what might happen if you go through with something. When you really ask yourself what the worst thing that could happen you get a clearer picture, a bit of fear vanishes and you discover that the potential consequences are seldom as frightening as you first thought. By doing this you define the potential consequences and also discover that whatever might happen you can manage and recover from it.
- 2. Use uplifting music.** A classic. Use inspiring and motivating music to pump yourself up before leaving for a night out, before a big test or meeting, before anything that might make your confidence unstable. This works pretty well as a temporary state-booster.
- 3. Try something new.** When you break out of your comfort zone and try something you haven't before you not only challenge yourself. You expand your own limitations and your confidence in your own abilities, in how many things you can actually do. By trying something new on a continual basis you can also lessen your fears and live a life with less barriers and limitations.
- 4. Make a plan to do something. Then follow through.** This is probably one of the most important and effective ways to building lasting confidence. When you decide to do something and don't back down but go through with it you get proof of your (often underestimated) – capabilities and your confidence in yourself soars.
- 5. Use Guided Meditation.** Have a look in the self help section of any book shop or speak to others about the benefits of guided imagery and the power of the mind over the body. Remember where the mind leads the body follows. There are many free apps to help with this.
- 6. Exercise.** This one has a huge impact on self confidence. Regular exercise improves your energy levels and produces various chemicals – for example endorphins – that put you in a more positive state. This seems to often almost automatically improve your confidence and outlook on life compared to if you spend your time on the couch, eating Pringles and watching TV. Plus, getting in shape and looking better can be a powerful confidence-booster.
- 7. Face a fear.** This is not an easy one. But the reward is big. If you face a fear then your confidence takes about ten steps up. And for every time you face a fear you can slowly start to discover that the classic quote "There is nothing to fear but fear itself" was not just another empty cliché. Remember everyone feels fear at times, you just Feel the Fear and do it anyway.....

8. Create something. Everyone is a creative person. But after childhood and the teenage years this is sometimes forgotten. Rediscovering your creativity is a good way to improve your confidence in yourself. Creating something is a wonderful but not always easy experience. But when you're done you not only feel good about yourself. Sometimes you discover new, previously unknown parts of yourself. Being creative is good a way to get to know yourself and your hidden capabilities.

9. Fake it until you make it. One way to break out of your own self-imposed limitations, take a step out of your comfort zone and build confidence is to play a part. This might sound like it couldn't work. Like you are just making things up and lying to yourself. Well, that might be the case. But it still works. If you don't feel confident, fake it and play the part of how you would think and behave if you were confident. Soon you'll really start to feel confident. The part becomes real.

10. Use your environment. One effective way to change yourself is to change your environment to match the person you want to become. If you want to become more confident read autobiographies/watch documentaries of confident people, change your music from depressing songs to confident and positive ones and try to find confident people to hang out with..

11. Use your imagination. Your mind is a great instrument. By learning to use your imagination in a positive way you can improve your confidence. One way is to use visualisation.

Let's say to you have an important meeting coming up. Visualise how great the events will unfold – see and hear it – and also how great will you feel at this meeting. See yourself smiling, being positive, open and having a great time. See the excellent outcome in your mind. Then release by visualising that it has already happened, that the meeting is over with the desired result. This is surprisingly effective and will get you into a great and relaxed mood before even stepping into the first, second or twentieth meeting.

If you are having trouble seeing yourself as confident then imitate someone else. Find a confident person – perhaps an athlete, perhaps a movie star, perhaps a relative – and copy him/her. See how/she walks, talks, moves and carries him/herself. Then just imitate that behaviour in your visualisation.

12. Use your body. If you start fidgeting with your leg you'll soon start to feel nervous or anxious. If you start to walk slower you'll soon start to feel more relaxed. To feel more confident, use your body in more confident way. Walk, sit, stand and move in a more confident way. If you don't know how, imitate as described in the previous tip. Copy how confident people in your surroundings, on the TV or at the movies use their bodies.

13. Awash yourself in positive memories. It's a common habit to let previous failures and bad experiences wash through your mind before you do something important. Replace that habit by actively letting positive memories, accomplishments and experiences wash through your mind for a minute or two instead. We often forget these positive things and our minds become focused on the negative memories. But this, is up to you, you have a choice. And the product of your choice is a factor in your level of self-confidence.

14. Take it into the future. One great way of putting things into perspective and choose how much you let everyday happenings affect your confidence is to take a look to the future. Ask yourself: Will this be a big deal in 5 years or something I'll even remember? This takes you out of being wrapped up in what just happened. And the answer to the question is almost always a no. By using this question it gets easier to handle your day to day troubles and realise that in a larger context most stuff is small stuff you don't really need to sweat it.

15. Realise that the past does not equal the present. What happened last year, last month or yesterday does not equal tomorrow, next month or next year. You create your future in the present and you can to a large degree decide for yourself how much you let the past affect you and your future.

Even if your confidence has been low for the last 10 years does not mean that it has to stay that way. You can choose to change your future and life. You can let go of previous thoughts that have not been useful for you. You can choose new thoughts to think. This realization untangles your mind from a self-made prison, creates a sense of possibility and makes it easier to change negative thought patterns.

16. Be good to yourself. You might treat yourself badly. (Perhaps its because others treated you badly) Realize that there is no need for doing that. Even if you have done up until today, you can choose to stop it. Be good to yourself instead. Be your own best friend and speak to yourself accordingly.

An important part of being good to yourself is recognising your strengths and developing them. This will not only help to improve your skills but also your confidence in your own abilities. Another and smaller – but important – part is simply learning to accept a compliment. It's ok to say "thank you!" and feel good about yourself.

17. Learn about how your mind actually works. If you haven't already started read about personal development and psychology. Everybody is different but what is more important, people share a lot of similarities in how our minds work. What has worked for others may work very well for you too. It can be quite enlightening to learn about different common patterns of thought.

18. Improve your social skills. Relationships are one of the most important areas of life and improving your social skills is one of the top things people want to learn. Improving your results in this area and finding a larger confidence in your social skill-set can be a really big boost for your overall sense of confidence. Start making conversation today, and watch how others interact.

19. Focus outward instead of inward. When you interact with others and sometimes when you are by yourself it's good to try to keep the focus of your mind outward instead of inward. The problem with a focus inward is – in many situations – that it makes you focus on how you look, what you just said and what the other person – or a whole group of people – think of you right now. This can reduce anyone to a bumbling, second-guessing, fidgeting shadow of their former self as the self-consciousness becomes almost paralysing. Focusing outward is, a good tip for keeping your self-confidence up.

20. Keep a positive crowd. The people you hang out with can either drag you down or lift you up. Since we spend so much of our time with other people it's important to keep positive – or at least reasonably neutral – people around you as much as you can. One or a few negative people can affect you in a big way – perhaps through nagging – and pull you down day after day.

21. Keep a positive intake of information, influence and emotions. Much of the news and society brings a bleak and negative picture of both the world and yourself to your doorstep each day. Just like the people that surround you the information that surrounds you can affect you in big way. Don't just stay passive and take it all in. Choose what you want to watch, hear and read. Choose what's useful and beneficial for you.

22. Positive thinking Learning to see the world and your life through a more positive lens can be a bit difficult and takes some time, especially if you've spent several years with a negative view on things. Have a look at books or the internet, for pointers on how to change your outlook to a more positive one.

23. Compare yourself to yourself. Not to others. This will eliminate a lot of unnecessary pain in your life. The thing is if you pass one person then you'll just find another person more successful than you. And your brief sense of being a winner will once again transform into anxiety and fear. Focus on yourself, not the other people around you, no matter if they are more or less successful. Compare yourself to yourself. Improve yourself and see how you grow and become a more successful, more confident and happier person.

24. Redefine failure. How you view failure controls how much your confidence drops before or after a setback. The definition of failure we are brought up with in society might not be the best and most useful to have. If you look at the most successful people you quickly notice that they have a different response to setbacks than others. They don't take setbacks or rejection that seriously. They know it's not the end of the world if they fail. Instead they look at each setback and see the good part: what they can learn from it and improve next time.

They have an abundance-mentality. They know that if their first business-venture fails it feels draining for a while but it's ok in the long run. They learn from it and then they try again. If they are rejected, do they give up? Definitely not. They know that next week or the week after they might find someone else that's interesting and ask them out. They know that there are a lot of good people out there. That there are a lot of good business opportunities out there. But they have also learned that to become successful at anything you have to fail perhaps 5, 10, 20 times or more.

You have to work on your skills to sharpen them. See setbacks or rejection not as something totally negative that might end your life if it strikes. Redefine it in your mind to lessen the negative emotional impact and the fear. See setbacks simply as feedback on what you need to improve on. Listen to the advice the setback gives you and you will improve. And, by redefining failure this way your level of confidence will not take a drastic drop every time you don't succeed or fear failure.