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Self-Confidence: Learning to Have Faith and Trust in Yourself

Do you have faith and trust in yourself? Confidence is trust or faith that a person or thing is capable. Self-confidence is having faith and trust in yourself. I am astonished at the number of people I meet who struggle with self-confidence. There are many factors that can lead to a lack of confidence such as gender, birth order, and parent's attitudes.

Did you know that boys are called on to answer teacher's questions more often than girls? Do you know why? More boys raise their hands than girls. So naturally when the teacher sees 10 boys with hands up and only 2 girls, the teacher will pick a boy. Boys raise their hands even when they don't know the answer. Girls raise their hands only when they know the answer and sometimes not even then.

First born children are usually more confident, particularly if they are male. Parents pay lots of attention to everything a first-born does, therefore creating more confidence.

If one or both of your parents were excessively critical, demanding or overprotective you may not have developed self-confidence.

So what if you are a woman, who was not the first born, with parents who were overly critical or protective? What if you don't have faith and trust in yourself? How can you build your confidence?

First recognize what self-confidence looks like. When you are self-confident you will:

Do what you believe is right, even if others mock or criticize you.

Be willing to take risks and go the extra mile to achieve better things.

Admit your mistakes and vow to learn from them.

Accept compliments graciously.

If you lack confidence you may:

Base your behavior on what other people think.

Stay in your comfort zone because you fear failure.

Cover up mistakes.

Dismiss compliments.

To build your confidence you must understand that it is like a muscle. There is no quick fix. Confidence must be warmed up, worked out, and stretched on a consistent basis to reach maximum potential and peak performance. Here are some steps to get you started:

1. Mentally prepare. Take stock of where you are, where you want to go, and commit yourself to starting and staying with it.
2. Look at what you have already achieved by writing out your 5 greatest accomplishments or finest moments. You may want to post this somewhere you can see it often.
3. Give yourself credit for everything you try. By applauding yourself for trying you will build confidence.
4. Approach new experiences as opportunities to learn regardless of the outcome.
5. Listen to self talk. Eliminate negative self-talk. If you have self-doubts, write them down and challenge them with rational solutions.
6. Build your knowledge and/or skills by taking a class or course. Go get the degree or certificate that will prove your abilities to the world and yourself.
7. Understand that you will make mistakes and you will not be perfect. Perfection is the antagonist of confidence.
8. Set small goals (as steps to your bigger goals) and when you achieve them celebrate.
9. Continue to stretch yourself by setting even bigger goals.
10. Hire a coach if you can't do it on your own.

Self-confidence is about balance. You know that negative outcomes are possible, but rather than exaggerating or minimizing it, you give it the due attention necessary (what can I do if this happens ...). Perhaps a better definition of confidence is; the state of balanced perceptions and preparation.

And what will be the result of this new found confidence? Those around you will notice your confidence and you will inspire confidence in others. Perhaps Jack Welch said it best, "Confidence gives you courage and extends your reach. It lets you take greater risks and achieve far more than you ever thought possible!"