

Lacking Confidence? Three Tools to Build it Right Now!

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Have you ever felt on top of the world one minute and had the wind knocked out of you the next? Elated when a program or project goes as planned and then a boss or manager implies that their contribution is why your program was a success? All of a sudden you begin to question whether the program went well because of your skill or the added value from your senior leader.

Confidence and value are two themes that come up quite often in coaching.

My clients include high level executives who deal with imposter syndrome*, stay at home parents ready to make a change in life after raising families and teens who are beginning their journey after years of having it set for them.

When I think about confidence, I often picture that precocious little girl on the playground who comes bounding over asking to play with someone she doesn't know. Sometimes I picture the performer on stage who is willing to do anything- sing loud and proud. Oftentimes I imagine the incredible speaker giving a Ted Talk*, who presents with such certainty, the room is nodding in agreement simultaneously.

Sadly, however, when confidence comes up in conversation, most often it appears as a yearning to have it as opposed to having too much.

So where does confidence come from?

The bottom line is confidence comes from within. Unfortunately it's not something that can be bought from a store or handed to you from others. Perhaps you have something important to say, you have talents or skills to share, you may have insights others lack. Confidence is a feeling that you are worth something, that your voice has a message, that you matter.

And the even **BIGGER** question is how can you get some more?

When I work with my clients on building confidence (yes, it is possible to do), I have three exercises that are most effective - the rainy day list, post it notes and Alphabet-accolades.

These three exercises apply the idea of positive psychology and positive self talk to build up an abundance of value. This abundance of value is a currency that you can dip into when you need a boost of confidence!

The Rainy Day List

This exercise can be done on your own or with a partner. The benefit of doing it with a trusted friend, coach or parent is they can help remind you of your value to begin with if you are feeling stuck.

Take out a piece of paper and list all the great things about who you are, who cares about you, what you have achieved. This is the time to be cocky- to remember things from any time in your life that you're proud of. It could be when you were six years old and sang a solo in front of school, or maybe scored a point on the soccer field or basketball court. Maybe it was when you came up with a project idea at work and everyone loved it. To make a really powerful rainy day list, you must dig into yourself and speak to yourself like you are the best thing since sliced bread. When I am coaching my clients, I have them just list things and speak their truth. Then I email them their list post-session. If you do this with a partner, you can try the same thing.

This list is just as its name sounds...it's for your rainy days. When you are having a rough one, it's to remind you of your value when you need it most. This list is a support structure - you build confidence by making it and it helps you keep your confidence when life throws you a curveball.

Post it Notes

I believe in post-it notes. Little reminders of powerful messages. Imagine waking up each day to a post-it-note on your mirror that says "You are enough." What about "You are loved." How about one on your computer that says "You can do it!" We give ourselves so much negative self talk. According to the National Science Foundation, an average person has about **12,000 to 60,000** thoughts per day. Of those, 80% are negative.

Imagine exchanging those negative ones for positive ones? My clients have a lot of amazing things to say...and they will often hear me say "get out your post-it and write that one down!" Post-its can be a very important tool in surrounding yourself with positive messages. Over time, these reminders will seep into your soul and build your confidence!

Alphabet-accolades

We all know someone who tries to steal our thunder. What we don't know is why. The answer is a lack of confidence.

I worked with a client who was incredible at her job. She was a high level executive who created important programs for c-suite* customers. She always got praise for the work she did and from the outside, one would think she was a power house. When she began working with me, I

discovered that her confidence in the past few months had really been taking a hit. When we got into it, we realized it was because she recently got a new boss. This new boss appeared appreciative, supportive and encouraging on the surface but when we looked into the language the boss used, she offered a lot of back-handed compliments. For example, if a program went well, the boss would praise my client and then subtly suggest that it went well because of the contribution the boss made and not because of the impressive work by my client. My client was beginning to doubt herself and her value.

In order to take her power back, she chose to name these moments “B-accolades.” The first letter was the first letter in her boss’ name. By naming these moments, she was able to clarify what was happening and decide that the problems were about her boss and not about herself. In fact her quote post session in a text to me was “I just had a B-accolades moment and I was able to recognize she needs it and I am not taking it personally!”

This was clearly a win for her.

Understanding that no one can take your value unless you let them is fundamental to building confidence.

Many people think there is a mystery surrounding confidence. The truth is, there’s not. While some are born with a little more to begin with, building and keeping confidence is something that takes practice for everyone. Using the techniques above will help you create your abundance of value so that you can develop more confidence. And, with these tools, you’ll notice positive changes in your professional life and in your personal life as well.

BUILD and KEEP your confidence, once you do, you will also be the kind of person who can help others build and keep theirs...because remember, when it comes to confidence, there is more than enough to go around!

* Imposter Syndrome - a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments or talents and has a persistent internalized fear that they will be exposed as a fraud

*C-suite executives are those who are CEO’s, COO’s, CFO’s or any title beginning with a “C.”

* Ted talks or conferences (Technology, Entertainment, Design) that focus on addressing a wide range of topics in speeches that last up to 18 minutes. Presenters are entertaining and engaging and many speeches can be found on YouTube for frequent viewing.

Internet Tags and keywords

Confidence, Imposter syndrome, Value, Self Esteem, How to Build Confidence