BOOST YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About this workbook</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1. Your confidence</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How assertive are you?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How high or low is your self-esteem?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what you do well</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you want to be perceived?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your value system</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do other people think?</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying areas of low confidence</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 2. Building your confidence</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get mentored</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge your thinking</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3. Communicating your confidence</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage your thinking</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage your attitude and behaviour</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal communication</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual image</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning skills</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 4. Keeping up the momentum</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn theory into reality</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your confidence plan</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five tips</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everywoman expert / further reading</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESTABLISHED IN 1999, everywoman works to advance all women in business.

Through our work with individuals and organisations, we know that being confident and assertive is a key element to paving a successful path in business. Fortunately, your levels of confidence can be built up over time, just like all other personal development areas. In this workbook, we will give you not only the theory behind confidence building, but also some practical exercises that will help you develop your confidence.

Over the past decade, we have met with thousands of businesswomen, and the subject of confidence comes up frequently. We are in no doubt that there are core differences between men and women in this area, especially when it comes to communicating with others and dealing with conflict.

This subject is therefore of special importance to women and it has made this particular workbook a big one. But don’t worry: we will guide you through it while boosting your confidence levels, regardless of your starting point.

In this workbook, we will help you to understand where you are starting from, the role that self-esteem plays in building confidence and tips on what to put into practice to help you become a confident and assertive businesswoman.

We will help you identify the personal strengths you already possess that you can tap into. Then, when reading through each chapter, make sure you spend time carrying out the actions and tasks that accompany each section – these are the parts that will really help you develop.

Our quarterly online seminars will support the key learning points in this workbook and give an opportunity to ask our experts any questions you may have. If you are unable to join us for any of the live events, you can listen to the seminars shortly afterwards when they are posted as videos to the everywoman site.

Good luck! We look forward to seeing you on the everywomanNetwork and hearing how you have benefited from this confidence-building workbook.

The everywoman team
**INTRODUCTION**

**CONFIDENCE IS NOT** something we are born with. It is shaped by experiences in childhood, early adolescence and adulthood.

Confidence is more than just a state of mind or a skill that can be enhanced over time. It is a barometer of how you perceive yourself. The good news is that you can build up this belief in yourself over time.

Confidence is a constantly evolving state of being. We can feel amazingly confident carrying out some tasks and have a crippling fear of others. Think of a neurosurgeon: no one can doubt her intelligence, dedication and skill, yet ask her to present to an audience of her peers and you may see the colour drain from her face.

The act of building your confidence can seem daunting. However, the freedom you will feel when you have deep-rooted self-assurance will be exhilarating. Having confidence doesn’t mean you will never feel fearful, but it allows you to work through your fears and enjoy the process of moving out of your comfort zone. This, in turn, builds even more confidence.

No one can build your confidence for you, so if you want to change, you must be willing to give it a go. There may be sections of this workbook that you feel you can act on immediately. There will be others that will challenge you and force you to think more deeply.

The most important foundation for building confidence is to remember that you don’t need to, and must not aspire to, change overnight. It takes time to become confident, both internally and to others. It is not about being outside of your comfort zone and entering the ‘panic zone’ as shown below. It is about working hard to make that comfort zone bigger.
Before we boost your confidence, let’s take a look at where you currently stand.
How assertive are you?

Assertive people come across as confident and in control. They express their views and opinions without appearing aggressive; they value the views and opinions of others and can influence outcomes.

**Assertiveness v self-confidence**

| Assertiveness cannot exist without there being interaction with another person | Self-confidence can exist in isolation |

That said, assertiveness and self-confidence are inextricably linked. Confidence gives you the inner strength to take control of a situation. Assertiveness is how we externally demonstrate self-confidence.

Complete the self-diagnostic below to analyse how assertive you are at work.

**EXERCISE**

**How assertive are you at work?**

1) HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL THAT THINGS ARE 'DUMPED' ON YOU?
   a) Quite a lot of the time, but that's how it is
   b) Not very often. I'm generally in control because I manage expectations
   c) No one would dare

2) WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO BE HEARD?
   a) Nothing. The other person generally knows more than me
   b) I indicate when I'm going to speak by maintaining eye contact and using my body language
   c) I speak louder and more forcefully. That way, they have to listen

3) HOW DO YOU HANDLE CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS?
   a) I tend to give in; I don't like conflict
   b) I listen to the other person, take stock of the situation and work towards a win/win solution
   c) I'll go to any lengths to get my own way

>
How assertive are you?

**1. YOUR CONFIDENCE**

**2. BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE**

**3. COMMUNICATING YOUR CONFIDENCE**

**4. KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM**

---

**EXERCISE continued**

4) HOW DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE VIEWED IN THE BUSINESS?

a) I don’t feel I am valued; I’m always overruled and ignored
b) I feel respected and feel that most people would say I do a good job
c) As long as I’m good at what I do, I don’t really care what they think. What does it matter?

5) HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PRESENTING TO YOUR PEERS?

a) I worry because I doubt my ability
b) It’s exciting to share the great things I’m involved in
c) It’s important that my peers understand how good I am

---

**SCORING**

a=1, b=2 and c=3

5–8. This score indicates that you may be at the passive end of the assertiveness scale. Potentially, you are being taken for granted - or at least perceive that you are. It might be a good idea to seek out the advice of a trusted colleague or mentor who may be able to help you be more assertive.

9–12. This score indicates that you are probably assertive. Remember, confidence and assertiveness are like muscles, so exercise them.

13–15. This score indicates that you may come across as aggressive, which can cause unnecessary conflict and tension at work. Being assertive rather than aggressive is a more balanced way to operate and will lead to greater results.

---

**PASSIVE**

A passive person will avoid expressing their opinions, generally believing that they are not worth taking care of. Passive people will usually not assert themselves or openly verbalise their feelings or needs, allowing others to ride roughshod over them. This can amount to a passive person often feeling anxious, depressed and sometimes resentful.

**ASSERTIVE**

An assertive person is very clear about their opinions, needs and feelings and is able to express these freely without fear of reprisal. They will also generally have high regard for others, actively listening to other viewpoints and communicating in a calm and respectful manner.

**AGGRESSIVE**

An aggressive individual is clear about their needs and opinions and will step over everyone to get it. They can be verbally and sometimes physically abusive, and this can be displayed in a variety of ways, from not respecting someone’s personal space to verbally attacking or ridiculing them.

Interestingly, this ego state is generally born out of a feeling of powerlessness and a lack of self-esteem.

**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE**

Passive-aggressive individuals appear passive on the surface but are affected by dramatic emotions underneath the surface. Rather than confront an issue, they will smile sweetly and carry out acts of sabotage on the focus of their resentment. This, again, is born from a feeling of powerlessness and a lack of self-esteem.

With the exception of assertiveness, the other three states, although wildly different in displayed behaviour, stem from a lack of power or a feeling of unworthiness and a need to be addressed.

Non-assertiveness may be seen as the use of inefficient communication skills, whereas assertiveness is considered a balanced response, being neither passive nor aggressive.

Being assertive involves taking into consideration not only your own rights, wishes, wants, needs and desires, but also those of the other person. Assertiveness means encouraging others to be open and honest about their views, wishes and feelings so that both parties act appropriately.
How high or low is your self-esteem?

SELF-ESTEEM IS THE FOUNDATION on which your confidence is built. It is your overall evaluation of your worth or value. If you don’t hold yourself in high regard, you won’t behave confidently around others.

Before you can develop high self-esteem, we need to understand where low self-esteem comes from.

What are some reasons for low self-esteem?

• Negative thinking
• Self-sabotage
• Low emotional intelligence
• Not upholding your value system

“Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent”

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
How high or low is your self-esteem?

EXERCISE

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was developed by Dr. Morris Rosenberg and is used widely in social science research. Because the concept of self-esteem is one that most people are familiar with, this test will probably not tell you anything you do not already know. You should have a pretty good grasp of your results just by asking yourself the question, "Do I have low self-esteem?" Where this scale is helpful is in giving you a numerical indication of your self-esteem health. The clearer you are about your self-esteem, the better you can learn to take care of yourself.

Don't take this as a precise measure, but use it as a guide. Learn what you need to work on and think more deeply about why you feel the way you do.

Respond to the items quickly, without over-thinking; tick your first inclination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I take a positive attitude towards myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I certainly feel useless at times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. At times I think I am no good at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How high or low is your self-esteem?

SCORING

For items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7:
Strongly agree = 3
Agree = 2
Disagree = 1
Strongly disagree = 0

For items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10:
Agree = 1
Disagree = 2
Strongly disagree = 3

Your score: ________________

The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

How can you use this number? It is important to remember that our frame of mind when we take a questionnaire like this will often slightly affect the results. That said, it will show where you sit compared with others – and reassure you that most people have average self-esteem. It is perfectly common to not feel 100% positive, useful and effective at all times.

If your score is low, don’t worry. The next steps in this workbook will help you become more confident in your day-to-day environment. If your score was medium to high, there are still many areas that you can focus on, such as goal setting, giving and receiving feedback and building on any areas you will identify where you are less confident.

EXERCISE

What does self-esteem mean to you?

Think about a time when you felt your self-esteem was high. If you truly can’t think of a time, think about someone else with high self-esteem and answer the questions from his or her point of view.

• Where were you?
• What were you doing?
• In what way did you behave differently?
• In what way did you think differently?

Compare this with a situation where you felt your self-esteem was low.

• Where were you?
• What were you doing?
• How were you behaving?
• Were there any particular patterns or themes to your thinking?

Action

Now that you understand what self-esteem is, it will be easier to work on developing it. The next time you feel your self-esteem has been knocked down, or it needs a boost, look at the areas highlighted in this section and reflect on what has happened, and then create some small steps to help yourself. If you have a mentor (see section 2), you could work through this area with them.
Know what you do well

Often, we are too focused on what we have not been able to accomplish or do perfectly. We forget to acknowledge our successes, let alone celebrate them. Being confident means knowing what you do well and continuing to do it more. It means identifying what is already working and focusing on your core strengths.

What have you done in the past week?

**EXERCISE**

**In which roles have you had success?**

Think about all the different roles you might have in life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Sister</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Cleaner</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>Chauffeur</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover</td>
<td>Confidante</td>
<td>Conductor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Godmother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down at least three things you have successfully accomplished in the past week within one or more of the roles above.

1.

2.

3.
Know what you do well

Take time to acknowledge the successes you have had in the many roles you play in life. We often fail to recognise the value we individually bring to our own and others’ lives.

Now try thinking even more broadly. What more far-reaching successes have you had in your life? It might help to categorise them using the areas below. Don’t worry about how big or small the accomplishment is; it is vital to understand that every achievement is significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other areas?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Your Confidence
2. Building Your Confidence
3. Communicating Your Confidence
4. Keeping Up the Momentum
Know what you do well

Now, take a few minutes to look through each area to appreciate what you have achieved so far. It may be that you see areas where you wish you could achieve more. Perhaps you have been sitting in your comfort zone too long and have lost sight of how to challenge yourself. Looking back tells us what we have achieved; now you need to look forward to see what else is on the horizon. Capture the positive feelings that materialise when you recall a success and think about how to relive those feelings. Being confident is about using positives from the past to help you be even more successful in the future.

“Being confident is giving yourself a pat on the back when no one else does”

Action

Before moving on to the next exercise, think about how the previous exercise helped you. Find a way to take a few minutes every week to think about what you have achieved and reflect on what you can learn from those successes.
How do you want to be perceived?

People gravitate to those with self-confidence, because when you have it, your ability to influence, inspire and guide flourishes. The best way to start building confidence is to truly understand your starting point. Everyone has strengths, but it is sometimes difficult to discover them.

**EXERCISE**

Who are your role models?

Think about those you would classify as successful. It can be people you work with, socialise with or even someone famous you “know of” but do not really know. List some of the qualities that you think make them successful.

- 
- 
- 
- 

Does confidence come into play? It might even be confidence disguised as strengths, such as being self-aware, finding it easy to speak to people or having high self-regard or an ability to set and meet goals.

Now, list some things you already have in common with them.

- 
- 
- 
- 

How you want to be perceived will to some degree be shaped by your values. Let’s look at those next.
Your value system

We have all been in a situation where we have to question whether what we are undertaking is what we truly feel is the right thing to do. Being asked to work in a way that contradicts our own value system can have a damaging effect. If we lack assertiveness to push back or stand up for what we believe in, it can wear down our confidence. Our value system is our internal compass, pointing us in the right direction.

Exercise

What are your core values?

Think back to when we asked you to consider examples in which you had success. Look again at each area and try to establish what you perceive as your values in these areas. See if there are any warning signs – areas in which your values aren’t matching your success. For example, you may have made new friends at work who you now go out with often, but in turn have opted out of some longstanding engagements related to charity work you are involved in. Is this really what you want to happen?

List your core values for the following:

- Family
- Friends
- Career
- Goodwill
- Education
- Extracurricular
- Spiritual
- Any other areas?
Your value system

What are the three values you want to work harder to align yourself with? How will you do it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“It’s not who you are that holds you back, it’s who you think you’re not”
ATTRIBUTED TO HANOCH MCCARTHY
What do other people think?

FOR SOME PEOPLE, THE AREAS in which they need to build their confidence are obvious. For others, it is hard to determine the starting point, or perhaps to find specific areas that they could build on. Try asking those you trust what they think are the areas in which you lack confidence or that need development.

Firstly, and most importantly, make sure you are seeking feedback in order to develop your confidence, rather than just looking for approval or aiming to be congratulated. When seeking feedback, make it easy for the person to give you useful and relevant feedback by being specific. Asking “How was my presentation?” will not normally get more than a “Great, well done”.

Keep the following in mind when you are seeking feedback:

Know what you want
What exactly do you need feedback on and how will you use it?

Ask specific questions
Don’t be vague: asking a specific question will get you a focused answer.

Seek from the right sources
Who will be most honest? Seek upward, peer and lower-level feedback.

What questions can you ask to get real and useful feedback?
Here are some examples:

- “What two things do you think I could focus on so that I would be perceived as more confident?”
- “In that presentation, did I make eye contact with the client?”
- “What else could I have done to engage the client more?”
- “In your opinion, what are two or three of my strengths? Could you please provide an example of when you have observed them?”
- “What could I do differently to be more effective?”
- “What should be the priorities for my personal development?”
- “What specifically am I doing well? What could be done even better?”
What about receiving the Feedback?
Receiving feedback is incredibly difficult at the best of times. Even when we know something is completely true, it is hard to hear it come out of someone else’s mouth. You know your desk is messy – it is obvious to everyone – but being told that by someone else somehow makes us defensive. However, if you want to develop your confidence, learning how to receive and use feedback is a vital skill. It takes time and practice and will get easier to do the more you do it. Showing you can handle both developmental and positive feedback is a sure sign that you are a confident person.

Try to remember the tips below next time you have a feedback discussion.

Listen
- Accept the impact of the feedback (you don’t have to agree with it, but at this point bite your tongue!)
- Evaluate feedback before responding
- Ask for specific examples

Don’t interrupt
- Focus on actions and next steps
- Don’t dwell on it
- Don’t justify your position

EXERCISE

Getting great feedback
Think about a few questions you could ask someone who is honest and trustworthy.

1. 
2. 
3. 

Who are you going to ask? Remember, people will be flattered that you have asked for their opinion.

1. 
2. 
3. 

Make a commitment to get the feedback in the next week.
Identifying areas of low confidence

THIS SELF-ANALYSIS TOOL WILL HELP you to identify tasks, areas or situations where you do not feel confident. By analysing the reasons behind your lack of confidence in these areas, you can begin to appreciate how internal and external factors influence how you feel in certain situations and when carrying out particular tasks.

EXERCISE

Set confidence goals

Make a list of the areas in which you don’t yet feel confident. Then, imagining that you are already supremely confident, decide on two goals you’d like to achieve in the coming month.

Here are two example lists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks, areas or situations where I do not feel confident</th>
<th>Common Factors: why I feel under-confident in this scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Standing up and presenting at monthly update meetings</td>
<td>e.g. Knowledge: because I worry that I won’t be able to answer all the questions I am asked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, focusing on the reasons you feel under-confident carrying out the tasks in the left-hand column, make a list of the common factors below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Factors: why I feel under-confident in this scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Lack of knowledge, lack of experience, lack of feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that you have identified your common reasons for under-confidence, write a list of the strategies you will use to make you feel more confident in these situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies you will use to make you feel more confident in these situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Research the subject matter in advance and try to anticipate questions. Make time to practice at least a day before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By identifying the common factors that make you feel under-confident in a situation (such as lack of knowledge), next time you are faced with a task or scenario where you do not feel confident, you can use the strategies above to help you deal with it.

Now, fill out the worksheets on the next page with your own scenarios.
Identifying areas of low confidence

EXERCISE

Analysing your under-confidence

Tasks, areas or situations where I do not feel confident

Why do you feel under-confident in these scenarios? (If you find this difficult to understand now, wait until you have worked through this workbook)

Now, focusing on the reasons you feel under-confident carrying out the tasks above, make a list of the common Factors below

Having identified your common reasons for under-confidence, write a list of strategies that will make you more confident in these situations (DON’T fill this section in now. This will be part of your action planning at the end of this workbook)
SECTION 2.
BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE

Having laid the groundwork, let’s look at specific techniques for confidence-boosting.
Get mentored

MENTORING IS A CONTINUOUS process of enabling people to reach ever-higher levels of performance and achievement. If you don’t already have a mentor, now is the time to get one.

Perhaps it’s someone who you asked for feedback in the previous exercise, or you may have found another person who was particularly easy to relate to and who offered valuable advice.

Your mentor will be an impartial sounding board and will also provide support should you encounter any challenges. He or she can be from within your organisation or from outside.

When choosing one, remember that a mentor is:

Supportive
Encourages you to take risks that are reasonable and that will result in your professional and personal development.

Nurturing
Creates a ‘risk free’ environment where you can share the issues that are most critical to you, knowing that it will be used to aid your development.

Protective
Makes sure that you have all the information needed to make informed decisions and provides you with the critical knowledge and understanding of situations so that you get the ‘complete picture’ before taking any action.

A good mentor also:

- Provides the necessary critique that allows you to know what you are doing well and what areas can be further developed. This is especially important for boosting your confidence levels
- Can set limits with you and understands that his or her job is not to create a clone, but to share knowledge and information

Your mentor will devote the necessary time to the relationship, will be available based on what is agreed at the beginning of the relationship and will be credible – someone you can trust.

Ideally, as a mentee, you will:

- Listen and take advice
- Be open to other viewpoints
- Be courageous and share viewpoints
- Take responsibility for learning
- Be motivated to stay engaged and work to achieve results
- Commit to and honour the time your mentor spends with you
- Commit to undertake an agreed course of action during the process
Challenge your thinking

Banish negative thinking

It is not rocket science, but we may not realise that people react to us because of our behaviour. And our behaviour is a result of what we believe. If we believe we can’t do something, we won’t. Saying to yourself that you will never remember your whole presentation means you probably won’t. Saying to yourself that nobody listens to you in meetings probably means you won’t speak up for yourself.

We have all heard it before: “You are your own worst enemy.” This is what we call self-sabotage – when we stop ourselves from achieving what we want, whether it’s a small goal or a huge dream.

Useful thinking is the ability to modify our thinking to allow us to react more effectively and appropriately to events in our lives.

Positive thinking means we use inner dialogue to move us purposefully towards solutions to our problems.

Here are some examples of the range from negative to useful thinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative thinking</th>
<th>Less-effective thinking</th>
<th>Positive thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m so nervous I’ve blown it!</td>
<td>Don’t get anxious! You’ll blow it!</td>
<td>I am usually calm and confident – I will cope with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a total failure. Everyone will think I’m an idiot.</td>
<td>I wasn’t a total failure. Maybe next time.</td>
<td>Most of it was OK. I’ll know what to do next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t get anything I wanted. I’ll never do any better.</td>
<td>I didn’t get all I wanted. I should have done it better.</td>
<td>I didn’t get everything I wanted, but I did it and that’s really positive. I’m making progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenge your thinking

EXERCISE

Monitor your negative thinking

1. For a day or two, keep track of all the negative thoughts you have. This will train your mind to recognise when you are thinking negatively.
2. Think about some positive thoughts that you can call on when you catch yourself thinking negatively.
3. For a week, pick an hour every day that you will refuse to have negative thoughts. When they creep into your head, push them away with your positive thoughts.
4. Once you have managed to do an hour a day for at least three days running, move on to half a day. Pick morning or afternoon and stick to it, no matter what comes up.
5. By now, it should be getting a bit easier and you are hopefully noticing fewer negative thoughts creeping in. When they do, you should be able to push them out faster.

What did you notice? What do you still need to work on? What is still causing you to think negatively? Were there any patterns in your thinking? If they are about a specific area such as your appearance or your leadership style, you have a ready-made goal to focus on.

If the negative thoughts focus on a wide range of areas, you may need to work on your overall self-esteem.

By picking a timeframe, you are helping to keep the issue in your conscious mind. When we let it slide to our subconscious, it is easy to slip back into old habits. So keep going until you find that you are satisfied at the end of the day with how your inner dialogue is focused.

How can you sustain this positive inner dialogue? Believe that you can do it, and reflect on the results. How do you feel when you have been able to push away negative thoughts? Do you feel more in control? More confident? Make sure you realise the positive effects of monitoring your negative thinking.
Challenge your thinking

Six rules for positive thinking

1. Deal in specifics, not generalities
2. Nothing is ever all bad. Look for the positives
3. How have you coped in the past?
4. What can you do to make things better?
5. Focus on outcomes
6. Relax. Worrying makes you negative

Action

Being put on the spot

Use this thinking when you are out of your comfort zone. Being put on the spot requires you to take a deep breath and think, rather than react, first.

When was the last time you were put on the spot? Go through the steps above and think what you could have done differently to remain calm and deal with the situation.
Affirmations

Picture yourself doing things right. Any successful athlete will tell you, “In my head, I had already won gold.” When we look at confidence-building, we need to look both internally and externally. We often feel less confident because someone around us oozes confidence. We hold ourselves to that same standard and anything else feels like a letdown. Understanding that every thought we have has an effect that either limits us or expands our potential is vital to building self-esteem. In turn, this builds confidence.

There are many things we can do to focus on positive thinking and increase our self-worth.

Affirmations are an effective way to keep yourself on track, boost confidence and help you feel great about yourself and your future success. It can also replace some of your negative internal dialogue.

Affirmations are instructions to yourself that focus on the positive end result and reaffirm your worth.

They are always ‘I’ statements that are based in the present and focus on the positive:

- I know I can do anything I put my mind to
- I recognise the power of my own thoughts
- I have the power to make my own choices
- I can face any challenge put to me

You can build confidence by using affirmations to support your goals and keep you positive and focused. Use them to change the way you think and behave.

Affirmations can be used in any area you wish to support with positive thinking.

Let’s focus on confidence-building. Try writing an affirmation about confidence-boosting: describe things like the qualities you exhibit, the attitude you hold or the actions you take.

Be careful about the wording; make sure you write it in the positive. Not “I don’t fear asking for help”, but “I know when I need help and will ask for it”. Not “I am not a slow learner”, but “I learn things quickly”.

One way to start writing affirmations is to use sentences starting with “I am”. For example: “I am strong and brave” or “I am caring and creative”.

1. Your Confidence

2. Building Your Confidence

3. Communicating Your Confidence

4. Keeping Up the Momentum

www.everywoman.com
Think positively

Take a few minutes to think about some affirmations that are important to you. You could tap into some of the areas you came up with in the previous section on negative self-talk.

I am...

I am a person who is...

And who...

And who...

I know...

I choose...

I welcome...

I am...

What can you do with your affirmations? As we know, just writing something down doesn’t make it true. However, the first step to achieving something is to make sure you believe it. Nike’s motto, “Just do it!” comes to mind. Believe that you can do it and you are halfway there.

Repeat your affirmations several times a day, preferably out loud. Share them with people you trust and say it like you mean it! This process helps to instil a useful mindset to build your confidence. Say it until you truly believe it.

Of course, you need to support your affirmations with action. Repeating “I am able to learn a new language” will make little difference if you don’t have a clue what language that is, and then don’t develop steps to actually learn it! We will look more closely at this in the goal-setting section.
Setting goals

Why set goals?

A confident person knows what direction she is taking and works hard to get there. Think back to emotional intelligence and self-motivation; if you are not motivated to achieve your goal, no one else will be.

Imagine you are a pilot. In very simple terms, you get into your plane and know your destination – let’s say you are going from London Heathrow to Toronto. With air traffic control, you decide what route you will take and the rough amount of time it should take. Along the way, you will inevitably need to change your path, either slightly or drastically due to weather, traffic or even a volcanic eruption. But if you didn’t know where you were going in the first place, you certainly wouldn’t be able to re-evaluate along the way.

YOU ARE THE BEST PERSON TO BE YOUR PRIVATE PILOT!

Ask yourself…

• What is going on?
• What do I want instead?
• How can I get there?

There is a simple reason you need a goal: you need a direction to work towards, no matter what gets in the way. Use goals to find a way to build your confidence and show how confident you are.

Goal setting helps separate what’s important from what’s irrelevant or a distraction.

Goal setting is a vital part of self-confidence and building self-esteem. It’s easy to have an idea about an objective, but it’s also easy to dismiss that idea.

For example – “I would love to become a teacher, write a book or be able to look someone in the eye without turning red.” But… “It’s too late to become a teacher at my age, I don’t have the time to write a book and I have always turned red, so nothing will ever change” are the thought gremlins that creep in so easily.

We have discussed positive and useful thinking and now it is time to make concrete goals that incorporate those ideas. A confident person knows in which direction she is heading and makes a plan to get there. An idea is just an idea until there is a plan behind it.

Goals come in all shapes and sizes. You can have lifetime goals and dreams, such as retiring at age 60, or five-year goals, such as learning to speak sign language fluently, or perhaps even a short, sharp goal, such as cleaning out your inbox. Before embarking on this workbook, you may have had the goal of becoming more confident. This workbook is one of the ways to help you succeed.
How to set goals

Before you set a goal, think about what needs to happen before that goal can be met. This may help you set long-, medium- and short-term goals. You should have a mixture of these at any point in time – both personal and work-related.

Here are the four steps to achieving a goal:
- Identify what is important to you at work or on a personal note and articulate those goals in real terms
- Write down your goals and follow them. Once they are down on paper, you will feel more accountable to yourself
- Create a timeline and assess your progress regularly
- Celebrate success along the way; congratulate yourself, even if no one else does

It can help to share your goals with others. This may be in terms of business objectives and your personal development plan. Find time to discuss the challenges and positive things you are learning along the way. This is an ideal way to start a mentoring relationship: sharing your goals with your mentor will help them direct their advice and guidance.

Another useful way of making goals more powerful is to make sure they are SMART.

SMART stands for:
- S – Specific (or Significant)
- M – Measurable (or Meaningful)
- A – Attainable (or Action-Oriented or Achievable)
- R – Relevant (or Realistic or Rewarding)
- T – Time-bound (or Trackable)

For example, instead of saying, “Increase client contact”, you might say, “Ensure each week I contact, by phone or face to face, one client from my key account plan.” Instead of saying, “I want to lose weight”, you should say “I want to lose 10 pounds in the next three months”. 

“To make sure a goal is motivating and worth achieving, make sure you know why it is important to you!”
Setting goals

Be aware, though, that this is just the first step. Once the goal is created, you need to back it up with action.

• How will you ensure you contact the client?
• How will you lose weight?

Goals get waylaid when there is a lack of ‘how to’ associated.

Ask yourself:
• What can I do?
• What else can I do?
• Who can help me?
• What might stop me?
• Is there a goal within the goal?

- Perhaps you need to boost your confidence to feel comfortable making a cold-call in the first place. Maybe the goal should be learning assertiveness techniques and building self-esteem.
- Rather than simply losing weight, perhaps you should redefine your goal as changing your eating habits and learning about nutrition. Start by cutting out junk food and ready meals.

Where can you start?
• Use your personal affirmations. It might help to look back at your personal affirmations to help clarify or develop goals
• Identify areas from the feedback you sought. What are some priority areas to work to achieve?
• Think about your emotional intelligence. What can you do to increase your self-motivation? Are you aware of what is holding you back?

“In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN
## Setting goals

### EXERCISE

**Articulate your goals**

Take some time to think about where you are now and where you want to be in 12 months’ time. Then work through the questions below to build an action plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TODAY</th>
<th>12 MONTHS’ TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How am I going to get there?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do I need help/support from?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else do I need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Or what might stop me?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions – what will I do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will I know when I am successful?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 3.
COMMUNICATING YOUR CONFIDENCE

Confidence should ooze out of every pore
When we are in the middle of a difficult situation, it can seem impossible to remain calm and see a positive way out. This testing time can make or break our confidence.

Here are some ways to help you do this. We will go into more detail later in this section.

**Label the situation, not the person**
Try to avoid labelling the person you’re dealing with as ‘difficult’. It makes a negative connection in our brain that is hard to dispel. Instead, think: “The decisions we need to make in this meeting will be tough and there will be some challenging discussions.”

**Know what you want from the other person**
Decide what you want to get from the situation. Focus on the outcome and refocus if things get hairy. Remember, you want to influence the other person’s behaviour – not completely rebuild their personality (however much you think they may need it!). Remember goal setting, emotional intelligence, rapport and empathy.

**Banish negative self-talk**
It is amazing how our self-talk can lead us into or out of a situation. Visualise the discussion or situation going really well, rather than thinking of the things that may go wrong. Remember positive and useful thinking!

**Make sure your message matches what you are saying**
We often get defensive because we think people should be able to ‘see’ what we really mean, which they often do. However, you’re then forcing them to make the decision about whether to act on this information or not. Don’t make the other party work hard to understand you.

**Listen, listen, and listen**
We all know how great it feels to be listened to. Listen to what other people are saying and let them get all their words out. Don’t cut them off. Don’t finish their sentences. Don’t say “I know, but…” Breathe deeply and listen. Remember active and supportive listening.

**Question without accusing**
Use open questions as much as possible to get a dialogue going. Try to avoid using ‘Why’ unless it is absolutely the right one. When we ask ‘Why’, we can be seen as attacking the other person’s values and beliefs. Think about what is behind your question before you say it out loud. For more on this, see the question triangle on page 41.
Manage your attitude and behaviour

WE HAVE ALL HEARD ABOUT THE POWER of positive thinking, whether it is to get well after an illness, to win that game or get to that new client. We will look at a positive mental attitude later, but first let’s look at how attitude affects everything else. We need to understand the influence a positive or negative attitude can have.

Think about how you feel when someone near you at work is in a bad mood or shows a regular negative attitude. Does this affect you? Do you need to make any additional efforts to be positive? Does it change your attitude or empathy towards that person?

Your attitudes and behaviours: it’s simple
(...and it is a classic theory called Betani’s Box)

“Confidence is contagious. So is lack of confidence”
VINCE LOMBARDI
How does this work in practice?

My attitude
I am not confident about speaking up in the meeting about how I feel about the proposed changes to the office layout.

My behaviour
I clam up in the meeting and don’t say anything. I try not to make eye contact but end up with a scowl on my face.

Others’ attitude
They think, “She doesn’t really care about the change or she would say something.” Or perhaps they think, “She doesn’t add anything to the meeting. She just sits there with a sour expression on her face.”

Others’ behaviour
They don’t ask for your opinion, or perhaps go ahead with the changes, thinking that you won’t mind.

My attitude
Some people on my team are against me and don’t even care what I think about the big changes that are happening.

And so it goes on…

EXERCISE

Your attitude and behaviour

Take a few minutes to think about...

• How your attitude to yourself reflects in your behaviour
• How your behaviour affects others’ attitudes towards you
• The last time you let something bad affect you for the whole day
• The last time you cheered someone up by helping them to smile or laugh

What next?
To change the behaviour of others, first watch your own attitude and how it affects your behaviour. Then notice how your behaviour affects other people. Try to do this once a day - take a few minutes to reflect how important this is, and what it means to your confidence.
Non-verbal communication

**Effective verbal and non-verbal communication** is vital to maintaining healthy and assertive relationships with others.

Non-verbal communication is a natural, unconscious language that transmits our true feelings and intentions in any given moment and clues us in to the feelings and intentions of those around us. Think about how many different ways you could communicate with a single word: “OK.” “OK” with a smile means I am fine, happy, doing well etc. “OK” with a sigh and shoulder shrug means I am doing not so well. And “OK” without eye contact means something different again.

In all our relationships, we continuously give and receive wordless signals. All of our non-verbal behaviours send messages. And the real issue is that we read more into the non-verbal messages than the verbal ones.

Here are some examples of non-verbal communication:

- The degree of eye contact we make
- How we sit
- How we stand
- How quickly we speak
- The tone we use
- How we use hand gestures
- How much personal space we need

So what can you do? Make sure your message matches what you are saying. Answer, “How are you doing?” truthfully without sending mixed signals or, worse, hoping the other party will get your meaning without you having to articulate it. We often get defensive because we think people should be able to ‘see’ what we really mean, which they often do. However, if it’s not clear, you’re then forcing them to decide whether to act on it or not. Don’t make the other party work hard to understand you.

Of course, this doesn’t mean you can say whatever you want as long as your body language gives the right message. We need to understand how vital useful questioning and listening skills are to sending out an assertive and confident message.

**Action**

Note down a few examples of when you have ‘hidden’ your message in your body language.

Was the end result smooth, open communication? If not, jot down some ways you can challenge yourself to match your verbal and non-verbal communication better.

The key things to remember are:

- Listen to understand and clarify, not to judge
- Question to understand and clarify, not to judge
Visual image

WE HAVE ALL HEARD THAT A PICTURE is worth a thousand words. Now, picture yourself approaching your partner, a client or anyone you work with. How do you look? Understanding what your visual image says about you is essential. What message do you communicate without saying a word?

Think about the last time you were in a meeting with people you didn’t know or were introduced to a new client. What did your instincts and subconscious say to you about them before they even opened their mouths? Our body language is a great source of information to those around us and is a projection of confidence levels. No eye contact and a limp handshake instantly sends a signal that the person is not self-assured.

A CONFIDENT WOMAN...

• Smiles
• Stands tall and upright, with feet planted firmly on the ground
• Maintains eye contact
• Uses arms and hands effectively
• Will be confident in her space
• Has a voice and tone that attracts attention

Let’s look at specifics.

Facial expression
Smiling: you will be surprised at how much better you will feel for it, and it will project a positive image to others – one that will attract opportunities and people.

Be genuine: if you smile when you’re angry, serious or upset, you’ll give confusing messages or appear to be cynical.

Eye contact
The ability to look someone in the face and maintain eye contact shows openness and sincerity. It also shows that you believe in what you are saying.

Looking away will make you seem nervous or lacking in confidence.

Posture
Standing square on, facing the other person with head held high, is direct and open. Plant your feet and move with purpose.

Turning away, slouching or standing in an unbalanced stance shows lack of interest or commitment.

Hand and arm movements
Use your hands to emphasise what you say. Gesture with your hands as you talk; it will create motion, which leads to emotion. This helps build rapport (taking care not to appear aggressive).

Avoid fidgeting; this distracts attention from your message.
Tone of voice
Speak clearly, confidently and at an even pace. Fluctuate your tone.

Speaking quietly, quickly or mumbling all suggest that you don’t have confidence in what you’re saying.

Final tip
If you are ever feeling down, have a look at your body language and change it immediately. Even if it feels uncomfortable and false, you will start to feel better and more confident immediately. Remember, sometimes we have to ‘fake it ’til we can make it’.

Think about some common social settings. For example, how do you hold your drinking glass at a function? If you hold it up near your face or close to your chest, you will look guarded and feel insecure. Hold it at stomach level and you will look more open and confident and people will be more apt to approach you to chat.

Action
Over the next few weeks, practise smiling more. Smile as you walk down the street; smile at others on the tube, train or bus.

Check your posture – are you standing as tall as you can?

Watch other people. When you see someone who appears to be confident, look at their body language and note one thing you could do differently about yours.

We all have clothing in our wardrobe that makes us feel great. We also have clothing that doesn’t. Work on your wardrobe so you can easily pull outfits together that make you look and feel more confident. Think ahead of time about the meetings and social situations you have that week and plan your outfits to ensure you always feel comfortable and confident.
Listening skills

Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding. We know how easy it is to speak to another person without listening attentively. We are often distracted, half listening and half thinking about something or someone else. Often we are busy formulating a response to what is being said.

Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speaker.

Active listening involves:

• Showing the speaker that you are interested and paying attention
• Asking appropriate questions that clarify and reflect what the speaker has said - in other words, reflecting or mirroring questions
• Encouraging the speaker to expand on an issue

Here are some tips to help you with active listening:

• Look for interesting points made by the speaker
• Respond to what they say, not how they say it
• Pay attention
• Look interested - speakers react well to an interested audience
• Don’t let outside movement and noises distract you
• Keep pace with the speaker - don’t dwell on previous points
• Move slightly if your attention is wandering
• Jot down key points if necessary
• Be prepared to receive new ideas
• Pay attention to the non-verbal cues

When you feel you are truly being listened to, you feel empowered to continue with the conversation. If you work on actively listening, you will help build empathy and rapport, which in turn will make you feel more in control and confident about a situation or relationship.

Sometimes people with low confidence or self-esteem can self-sabotage by using critical listening rather than supportive listening. What does this look like?
Listening skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical listening</th>
<th>Supportive listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of…</td>
<td>To defend or resist or oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be able to highlight flaws in a proposal, to catch people out or dominate a discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical statements we might use…</td>
<td>“I have to watch my back around them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s me against you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How this listening behaviour is perceived by others</td>
<td>Judging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrupting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspicion</td>
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<tr>
<td>This results in…</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resentment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creative ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individual development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relationship building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action

Think about your communication style. What is working well? What would be even better? Give three examples of ways you could improve your communication to better support building your confidence.

1. 
2. 
3. 

Now make a plan to incorporate these examples into your daily conversations and meetings.

What next?

Periodically run a communication check on yourself. Are you getting the most out of your conversations? If not, reflect on your style of communication and look back at the examples above and see if you are truly making a change in the right direction. If not, make an effort and plan to get it right.
Questioning skills

QUESTIONS ARE CATEGORISED as sentences that seek an answer. This answer can be very short or a long, full, explanatory answer. Some questions starting with the same words are more open than others.

For example:

“What did you have for breakfast?” will tend to have a very factual short answer, whereas “What did you make of the training sessions the other day?” could have a fuller, more open explanation.

When we decide which question we need, it will depend on whether we want to elicit more information or close down a conversation.

Have a look at this question triangle:

Reference: Originally developed by Robert Dilts (see www.nlpu.com) and then redefined in *The Effective Delivery of Training Using NLP* by Ted Garratt
The level of intensity of the questions increases as you go up the pyramid. In other words, the responses to the questions will require more thought and possibly emotional content when being answered. This is because the WHY question is challenging the values and beliefs or reasoning or understanding of a situation. To soften this, the question can be rephrased as a WHAT question or can be generally softened with voice tone and preliminary words. For example:

“Why did you do that?” can be rephrased as “What made you do that?” or “Tell me why you did that, please?”

How can this help build confidence? Making sure you think about the best way to phrase a question will help build trust and rapport. When you feel trusted, it is easier to use confidence-building techniques. On the other hand, if you are asked a ‘Why’ question, try not to go into defence mode. Think about what is behind the question. What information is the other person looking for? Then try to answer it without a hidden agenda.

What type of question might be helpful or hindering? Remember that using questions effectively can establish a relationship and, for those who lack confidence, finding ways to more easily build rapport and trust is an instant win.

**OPEN QUESTION**: These questions allow the listener to give a broad answer. There is no ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer; the listener has complete freedom of response. This is useful as it allows the other party to expand and talk freely in their answers.

**CLOSED QUESTION**: This allows a factual or ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answer. This is useful for clarifying facts or understanding, but not useful for uncovering feelings. This type of questioning can also feel a bit like an interrogation.

**LEADING QUESTION**: As it suggests, this question type implies that there is a specific answer required. This is rarely appropriate; it is often used to set someone up, such as, “Did anything happen while I was away that I need to know about?”, knowing full well that a major client was lost.

**PROBING QUESTION**: This is often used for clarification of detail and is particularly useful after an open question to delve deeper into the listener’s response. This can be used to get a fuller picture of a situation. For example, “Can you talk me through how you prepared for your last presentation?”

**REFLECTIVE OR MIRROR QUESTION**: These are used to clarify understanding by repeating information back to the listener to check that you have understood their response. This is a very useful question style, as it shows that you have been listening and have understood the response. It also encourages the other person to continue the conversation. It is a response such as, “So am I right in thinking you are happy with your team, but slightly frustrated by the lack of engagement from your own manager?”

**MULTIPLE QUESTION**: This takes the form of several questions asked in a row. They can be useful to help think through a process, but can also be confusing, as the listener does not know which question to answer first. For example, “When is the meeting, who is going, and why did we have to organise it?”
Confidence is hard won - so make sure you top it up regularly.
Turn theory into reality

TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT on the actions you said you were going to work on, and then think through a few situations past or present and see what knowledge and skills you can tap into. It is amazing how much more confident you will feel in the future when you can think through the issues in this way.

1. CHANGING A NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENT
   - What is the situation?
   - What are you doing to help or hinder the situation now?
   - What do you need to do more or less of to make a difference?

2. MANAGING COMPROMISE AND COLLABORATION
   - Remind yourself what an assertive response would look and sound like.
   - What do you need to do or say to ensure you are getting what you need without damaging yourself or anyone else?

3. STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF AND WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN
   - Remind yourself of your values.
   - Where have they been compromised in this situation?
   - What will happen if you don’t stand up for yourself?
   - What can you do now?

4. INFLUENCING SOMEONE
   - You need to start and end with your behaviour and attitude. They are the only tools you have. You can’t change the other person, but you now know how to rethink your position and shift your perspective.
   - What is your starting point?
   - What do you want to achieve?
   - What might they be thinking?
   - So… what do you need to do now?

5. DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE OR SITUATIONS
   - When have you come across this?
   - What specifically can you do to make the issue/person more positive?
ON PAGE 20, YOU filled in the first three parts of the table below. You may want to add some more at this point. It’s also time to write a list of strategies you will employ to make you feel more confident in these situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks, areas or situations where I do not feel confident</th>
<th>Common Factors: why I feel under-confident in this scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Now, focusing on the reasons you feel under-confident carrying out the tasks in the left-hand column, make a list of the common factors below.

Now that you have identified your common reasons for under-confidence, write a list of strategies you will employ to make you feel more confident in these situations. These will relate to the goals you set in section 2.
Your confidence plan

The table below is yours to use as your action plan. As you formulate your goals and work out your strategies to combat low confidence and self-esteem, write them into your confidence plan to give yourself clear goals to work towards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Action/responsibility</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five tips

There is a huge amount to think about, so we have pulled together the essentials for you and built a framework around the different aspects of building confidence.

1. You are your best asset - trust in your abilities

2. Focus on what you’ve done right, not on what is wrong

3. Set realistic goals and then celebrate success

4. Pay attention to your communication

5. Find a mentor - you are not alone

1. Your confidence
2. Building your confidence
3. Communicating your confidence
4. Keeping up the momentum
Sara Parsons has been an everywoman Associate for 10 years and has worked in the field of Personal Development globally for 16, with clients such as; Paramount Pictures, The RSA, Ipsos MORI, RNLI, Oxford University Press. She holds an honours business degree and is a qualified expert in many professional assessments including Belbin and MBTI – the Myers-Briggs profile. Sara is passionate about inspiring and supporting women to reach into the potential they often don’t know they possess.

Further reading

- Ros Taylor, Confidence at Work (Kogan Page, 2011)
- Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ (Bloomsbury, 1996)
- Sue Hadfield and Gill Hasson, How to be Assertive in Any Situation (Pearson LiFe, 2010)

Go to everywoman.com/development for more personal development workbooks, tools and a schedule of our online seminars.