

# Building Self Confidence and Competence

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14

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## What is confidence and self-confidence?

Confidence is a feeling of trust in someone or something. To be self-confident is to have confidence in yourself. Self-confident people don't doubt themselves. This is usually a positive word: you can be self-confident without being cocky, arrogant, or overconfident. If you know what you're doing, you have every reason to be self-confident. To be precise being self-confident means "A feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgment:

Self-confidence has direct correlation with self-esteem. People with low self-esteem have low self-confidence. Self-esteem is your own rating about yourself. If that does not change, self-confidence will not improve. Self-esteem is affected by physical ill-health, negative life events such as losing your job or getting divorced, deficient or frustrating relationships, and a general sense of lack of control. This sense of lack of control is often particularly marked in people who are the victims of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or of discrimination on the grounds of religion, culture, race, sex, or sexual orientation.

Sometimes poor self-esteem can be deeply rooted and have its origins in traumatic childhood experiences such as prolonged separation from parent figures, neglect, or emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. If you think this is a particular problem for you, speak to a mental healthcare professional. Therapy or counseling may enable you to talk about such experiences and to try to come to terms with them. Unfortunately, therapy or counseling may be difficult to obtain, and may not be suitable for everyone.

Low self-esteem can predispose you to developing a mental disorder, and developing a mental disorder can in turn deliver a huge knock to your self-esteem. In some cases, low self-esteem is in itself a cardinal feature of mental disorder, for example, in depression or in borderline personality disorder. The relationship between low self-esteem and mental disorder is complex, and a person with a mental disorder is more likely than most to suffer from long-term low self-esteem.

People with long-term low self-esteem generally see the world as a hostile place and themselves as its victim. As a result, they feel reluctant to express and assert themselves, miss out on experiences and opportunities, and feel helpless about changing things. All this merely lowers their self-esteem even further, and they end up getting caught in a downward spiral.

Thankfully, there are a number of simple things that anyone can do to boost his or her self-esteem and, hopefully, break out of this vicious circle. You may already be doing some of these things, and you certainly don't need to do them all. Just do those that you feel most comfortable with.

## Difference between a self-confident person and a person with low self confidence

Self-confident	Low self-confident
Doing what you believe to be right, even if others mock or criticize you for it	Governing your behavior based on what other people think
Being willing to take risks and go for the extra mileage to achieve better things	Staying in your comfort zone, fearing failure, and so avoid taking risks
Admitting your mistakes and learning from them	Working hard to cover up mistakes and hoping that you can fix the problem before anyone notices it.
Waiting for others to congratulate on your achievement	Extolling your own virtues to as many people as possible
Accepting compliments graciously “Thanks, I really worked hard on that prospectus. I am grateful, you acknowledge it”	Dismissing compliments offhandedly “Oh that prospectus was nothing really, anyone could have done it “

### Things you can do to improve your self confidence levels

1. Make three lists: one of your strengths, one of your achievements, and one of the things that you admire about yourself. Try to get a friend or relative to help you with these lists. Keep the lists in a safe place and read through them regularly.
2. Think positively about yourself. Remind yourself that, despite your problems, you are a unique, special, and valuable person, and that you deserve to feel good about yourself. Identify and challenge any negative thoughts that you may have about yourself, such as ‘I am a loser’, ‘I never do anything right’, or ‘No one really likes me’.
3. Pay special attention to your personal hygiene: for example, style your hair, trim your nails, floss your teeth.
4. Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself.
5. Eat good food as part of a healthy, balanced diet. Make meal times a special time, even if you are eating alone. Turn off the TV or radio, set the table, and arrange your food so that it looks attractive on your plate.
6. Exercise regularly: go out for a brisk walk every day, and take more vigorous exercise (exercise that makes you break into a sweat) three times a week.
7. Ensure that you are getting enough sleep.
8. Manage your stress levels. If possible, agree with a close friend or relative that you will take turns to massage each other on a regular basis.
9. Make your living space clean, comfortable, and attractive. Display items that remind you of your achievements or of the special times and people in your life.
10. Do more of the things that you enjoy doing. Do at least one thing that you enjoy every day, and remind yourself that you deserve it.
11. Get involved in activities such as painting, music, poetry, and dance. Such artistic activities enable you to express yourself, acquire a sense of mastery, and interact positively with others. Find a class through your local adult education service or community centre.

12. Set yourself a challenge that you can realistically achieve, and then go for it! For example, take up yoga, learn to sing, or cook for a small dinner party at your apartment or house.
13. Do some of the things that you have been putting off, such as clearing out the garden, washing the windows, or filing the paperwork.
14. Do something nice for others. For example, strike up a conversation with the person at the till, visit a friend who is sick, or get involved with a local charity.
15. Get others involved: tell your friends and relatives what you are going through and enlist their advice and support. Perhaps they have similar problems too, in which case you might be able to band up and form a support group.
16. Try to spend more time with those you hold near and dear. At the same time, try to enlarge your social circle by making an effort to meet people.
17. On the other hand, avoid people, places, and institutions that treat you badly or that make you feel bad about yourself. This could mean being more assertive. If assertiveness is a problem for you, ask a healthcare professional about assertiveness training.

### **Some quotations about self-esteem and Self-Confidence**

- Adversity and perseverance and all these things can shape you. They can give you a value and a self-esteem that is priceless. —Scott Hamilton
- Giving people self-confidence is by far the most important thing that I can do. Because then they will act. —Jack Welch
- Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence. —Helen Keller
- Health is the greatest possession. Contentment is the greatest treasure. Confidence is the greatest friend. —Lao Tzu