



CONFIDENCE



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Let's build your
confidence

WHAT IS CONFIDENCE?

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Confidence means feeling good about yourself and the things you can do. This doesn't mean you have to do more than you are able to, it is simply about believing in yourself as you are.

Confident people:

- Feel secure and able
- Know they can rely on their skills and abilities to handle things as they come up
- Are not afraid of challenges or learning new things
- Think 'I can' or 'I could' and not 'I can't'
- Feel they can be more open about what they feel or what they want

Why does it matter?

Confidence can help you feel more ready for anything that can happen in life. When you feel confident, you are more able to deal with challenges and ask for help when you need it. If you don't feel confident, you may not say what you really feel.

People who have no confidence, may be less likely to try new things or speak up for themselves. Sometimes, self advocacy can be just about building enough confidence to say what you want. **Everyone** has the ability to feel confident.

Has anyone ever told you that you're funny? Clever? Kind? Artistic? Friendly?

When your skills or abilities are recognised by someone, it can boost your confidence – so why not try this yourself? Sometimes, we are our own worst critics. Building confidence has to start with you and changing your own thoughts on how you view yourself.

If you often doubt someone when they give you a compliment, this can be a sign that you are lacking confidence. To really feel confident, you need to believe you are capable of whatever you put your mind to. The best way to do this is to think about all the things you are good at and your own abilities and skills. Start recognising the things you do well and write them down.

Most importantly don't give up, don't think of failing to do something as being negative, but as an opportunity to learn something new. This means success is more likely next time.

➤ **Summary:**

Confidence is about believing in yourself and your abilities.

I believe in me



Confidence can take time to develop, but just like most things, it is something that can be learned. Remember to be patient with yourself. Don't get frustrated if you don't instantly feel confident. Read on for tips on how you can become more confident.

Confidence is like a muscle, the more you use it, the stronger it gets.

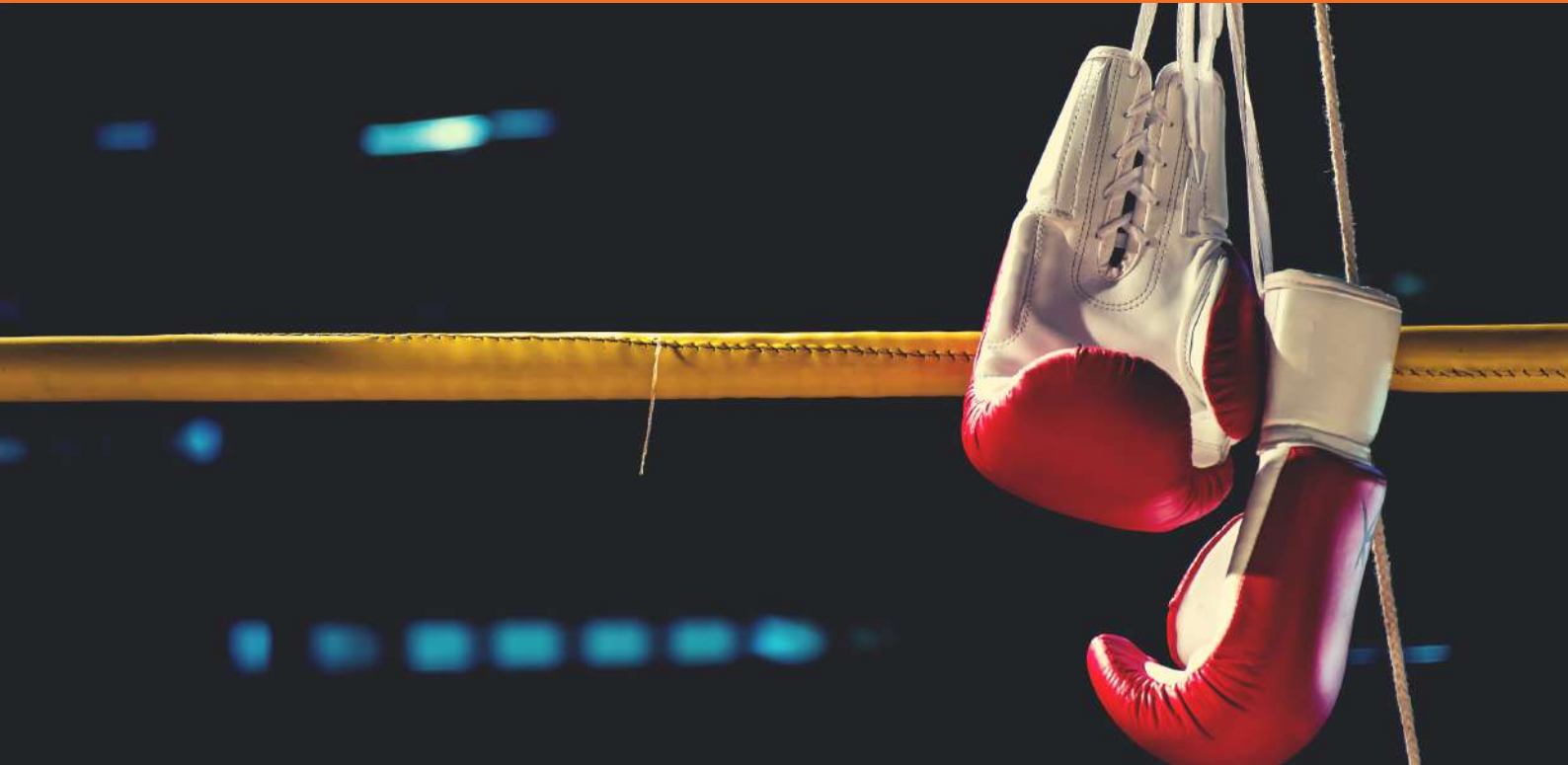
HOW IT CHANGES AND GROWS

There are times we may feel more confident than others; confidence changes and grows, especially as we get older or learn new things.

Keep a note of where you are now. This will help you see how your confidence changes over time. We are always quick to remember the bad things, so let's make sure we make a note of the good things too.

- 1. CREATE CONFIDENT THINKING** - Instead of 'I can't' think about changing this to 'I can' or 'I know I could learn how to do this' – This takes practice and time, it won't happen overnight.
- 2. HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF** - People are different and have all sorts of experiences and abilities. Be kind to yourself, you are on your own journey and everyone learns differently.
- 3. SHAKE OFF THAT SELF-DOUBT** - You may feel like you have things to learn, but if you doubt yourself, it will take even longer. Believe that you can, and you will!
- 4. TAKE SAFE RISKS** - Small steps build confidence. Your confidence will grow as you push yourself to try new things. Don't be afraid of taking risks, but make sure that you feel able and that it isn't too far out of your comfort zone.
- 5. TAKE A CHALLENGE** - If it doesn't go well, do something else and learn from your experience. Don't expect to rush things, but do experiment with different things and take it slowly.
- 6. KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS** - Be prepared and practise the things you're good at and continue to improve on them.
- 7. KEEP A SCHEDULE AND PRACTISE** - Practise makes perfect, as the saying goes. Sometimes just acting confident can make you feel more confident.
- 8. ASK FOR HELP** - It is important that you don't feel alone and know that there are people who can help. Don't be afraid to ask for help, once you reach out it will be easier next time.
- 9. DARE TO BE YOURSELF** - Be you. We are all different, we all look different and we have different ways of doing things. Appreciate the things that make you, you.

TAKING THE KNOCKS



One of the most important things to remember throughout this whole process is to be kind to yourself. It's so much easier to help someone else and ignore the most important person – you.

You can't grow in confidence without making mistakes and learning from them. Confidence requires experience. The thing that will make the difference, is your ability to take those knocks and use them to learn how to do it better next time.

Ask anyone who has learned a new skill how hard it was at the time. What no one tells you is that once you have done something for the first time, or learnt something new, it is much easier the next time round.

You may experience some frustration along the way but this happens to everyone. Feeling upset or angry at yourself is natural, but remember to look back on how far you have come.

Use your friends and family to talk about your journey. Or you can even speak to professionals to find out how they do things, they have all been where you are.

➤ Summary:

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, mistakes are how we grow and learn.

Turn over
for some
top tips

Here are some tips that will help you to take those knocks and turn them into a positive experience:

1 Make a note of what went well and what didn't go so well. It doesn't matter if it was down to you or someone else, this will help you for next time.

2 When you have done something new, take some time afterwards to reflect and look back on it.

3 Reward yourself. When you do something new or difficult. Whether you succeed or not, reward yourself for doing it. The success is in trying, not the finished result.

4 Learn. Find out what went wrong and practise to avoid it happening again. You are always learning and even people who do this all the time have to work at it.

5 Think about what you could do differently next time. Don't fall into the trap of doing the same thing again and again.

6 Remember what a knock is – it is just a knock. It is rarely ever a disaster and sometimes is worse in our own mind than in real life. Knocks are part and parcel of learning.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



Being able to keep going and take the knocks is easier if we are looking after ourselves. Make sure you take care of the person at the centre of this whole process - you. Think about your mental and physical wellbeing and take a note of the following steps:

TIME

Giving yourself time to get things done is really important. If you have a lot of things to do, you may need to think about how you are going to do them without feeling rushed or overwhelmed. Write a list, make a schedule, think about what time of the day you work best and even where you work best.

EAT, DRINK AND BE CONTENT

Make sure that you have enough to eat and drink and make plenty of time for breaks. A full stomach ensures you have the fuel and energy you need to get things done. If it helps, aim to do a bit of work and treat yourself when you get there. For example - once I get this letter done, I'm going to have a cup of tea and a biscuit.

LEARN TO SAY NO!

You can't do everything - no one can. Only take on what you can manage and don't be afraid to say no. You have to put yourself first. Taking on too much can cause you to become stressed and rush things. Sometimes when we say no, it can feel like we are letting people down, but it is often necessary to let people down to look after our own wellbeing. We are not superhuman and can only do what we can. Taking on too much can negatively affect everything else you do. Most of the time, people will understand!

BE IN THE MOMENT

Do something that isn't active. For example, make a hot drink, sit at your window, watch the world go by in a café or switch your phone off and be in the moment. You can do this for a few minutes or longer if you like. Switch off and appreciate the things around you.

SLOW IT DOWN

Do the important task, take a break, take a deep breath and get ready for the next thing. Don't rush, you will find that you will actually get more done and do it better when you haven't tried to cram too many things in. Work at a pace that makes you feel productive but doesn't tire you out. Look back at your progress – remember the story of the Tortoise and the Hare? Who won in the end?

IT'S OK TO FEEL

Acknowledge your feelings, let them come, but try not to dwell on them or overthink them. Don't fight feelings or try to hold on to them. By doing this, we accept how we feel about something now or in the past. We allow the feeling to happen and we allow it to go away. By not dwelling on the feeling, we aren't becoming stuck. We are just letting our feelings come and go.

BE POSITIVE - EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL IT

Try to find the positive in your life and in the world around you. Whatever that is, your food, your house, your day, your kids, being in the countryside, reading a lovely story. There are amazing things happening in the world, look at one small part of that and see the good in it. This isn't about ignoring the bad or hard things, it is about finding one small part that is good and then perhaps looking for one or two more. Humans are wired to look for danger, it's how we survived thousands of years ago, we forget the nice things because they aren't a matter of life or death. We are lucky not to live like that anymore, so finding and remembering the good things makes us feel more positive.

DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF

Find something to do just for you. This could be anything that brings you that little bit of pleasure and makes you feel happy. It could be a walk, or a bit of time outside. You could read a paper or watch a comedy. Go for a drive in the country, take a bath or bake a cake etc. Take time to pamper the person that matters, you.

HAVE SOME FUN

Remember that feeling when you were a child, the zest for life and awe you had for new and exciting things? It's important to remember that life is meant to be enjoyed. That's up to us, and only us. Make the best of the life you've been given. Do things that put a smile on your face. Laugh with friends, play games or do something active; try and get back that childlike feeling that life is for living and having fun.

GO OUTSIDE

Walk, sit or just watch the world go by. Being outside connects us with nature and people. Whatever keeps you in contact with the world. Whether it's the countryside, your local village or town centre, just be part of it all. Speak to people, listen to the environment, hear the birds. For many people, being outside with nature brings a sense of peace.

MEDITATE

Give yourself five minutes, to just sit, no TV, no phone or internet. Clear your mind of any thoughts. Five minutes is quite a long time to sit and do nothing. This can help some people relax and focus. The distractions that we have in our lives can be tiring and exhausting, time out can help us recharge our batteries.



REWARD YOURSELF

The reward can be anything you would look forward to, your favourite meal, visiting a friend, going for a picnic or a day out. Anything you find special.

BE PROUD

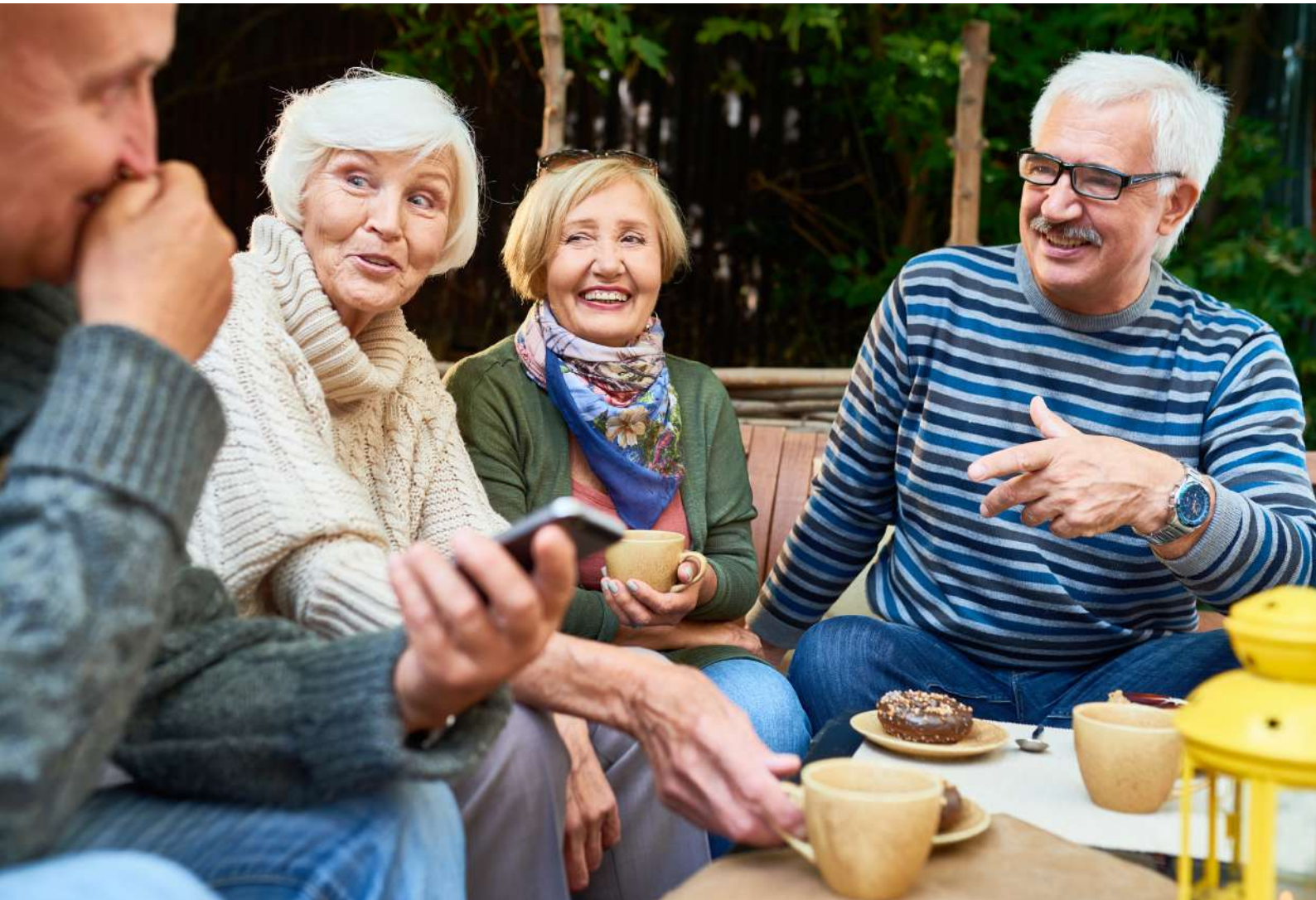
Keep a record of what you have done and your successes. Write a list of what you are grateful for and what you have going for you. It might be your health, your family, your friends, how good you are at art or how funny you are. We forget the good things and don't celebrate our success, so remind yourself of all the wonderful things you have.

CONTACT PEOPLE YOU MISS

Did you lose contact with a childhood friend or someone you got on with because life got busy? Talking about the past really helps us connect with who we are. Other people can bring up happy memories and also remind us of how far we've come. Reach out and start a conversation. If you have lost touch, there are many ways we can find people, such as using social media.

MAKE IT A LITTLE MORE SIMPLE

Don't try to have too many things on the go. When we have too many plates spinning at one time, we will often drop one of them. If we give ourselves less things to do, we are able to focus on getting them done before tackling the next thing. This is called prioritising. Focus on the most important thing or the things that need to be done now and leave the rest until later. Trying to do too many things at once might mean nothing gets done or that you're likely to make mistakes. Keep it simple, do one thing at a time and you'll find you actually get more done.



KEEPING AT IT

It is natural for everyone's confidence levels to go up and down as we go through life. Some days we will feel more confident than others.

It's important to keep going. Even if it gets hard, or if you feel like you're not getting anywhere. Keeping at it is the best way to achieve it.

Don't be overly critical on yourself. There is nothing wrong with looking at what went wrong, but being hard on yourself won't help.

Remember why you are doing these things. You are doing it to get more confidence, try new things and get your voice heard. You are most likely doing something new, something scary that you never would have thought about doing before. That in itself is something to celebrate and feel proud of.

Always remind yourself of how far you have come, every little thing counts. Don't take your new skills for granted. No matter what knocks you get, get back in the game, think about how things could have been different; this mindset will set you up for success.

