



## CONFIDENCE - SELF HELP GUIDE

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Our confidence, or rather the lack of it, can affect our lives in many ways. From stopping us going for that dream job we really want, to not asking that person we'd like to get to know out on a date.

While everyone's confidence varies day to day, at its very worst, lack of confidence can even lead to depression, lack of motivation and anxiety.

But there are things you can do to build your confidence and self-esteem.

This guide will take you through what confidence is, what effect the lack of it can have on your life, and give you some simple steps to build your self-esteem.

### What is confidence?

There's a difference between confidence and self-esteem. Confidence is how we feel about our practical abilities; and self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, from our body to how we think. It is possible to be confident in your abilities, but still have low self-esteem, and vice versa, so there is a separation between the two, but they are linked, and you do need to work on both aspects.

There are many causes of low confidence and self-esteem. Big life events such as the end of a relationship or a death in the family can knock confidence, but so can receiving harsh criticism, spending time with negative people and a plethora of messages from the media that we're just not thin enough or beautiful enough, or good enough at all.

Everyone is different. What affects you may not affect someone else at all, but if low confidence continues to dog your life, rather than being an occasional visitor, you may need some help.

### How can low self-confidence affect you?

Having low confidence or self-esteem can prevent you from living your life to the full. If you're not feeling your best, it can be all too tempting to stay hidden at home where it's perceived as safe, but isolating yourself can make things worse. If you don't have anyone else to talk to, all those negative thoughts that are running around in your head can be blown way out of proportion.

That negative self-talk can be very damaging to you, causing you to genuinely feel that it's true and you really can't do anything, or that you are a bad person, and the more you believe it, the more you behave as if it's true. The more you lessen yourself and what you are capable of.

You might stop doing the things you like, stop giving yourself the chance to experience new things and avoid challenges, and you can develop depression and anxiety long term.

## Treatment methods

If you are suffering from low confidence and self-esteem, do seek professional medical help.

Your doctor could refer you to talking treatments such as counselling, psychotherapy or cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). Working through your fears and doubts with someone who understands can help you understand yourself more and build practical tools to deal with your confidence issues.

If you are suffering from depression or anxiety, your doctor may also prescribe medication such as antidepressants to lift your mood.

One further therapy your doctor might recommend that can work wonders for confidence issues, is solution-based clinical hypnotherapy. You'll see a therapist who takes the time to listen to you and your concerns, to get to know you and where you need help; and who will use hypnotherapy to relax you and gently suggest ways to increase your confidence and boost your self-esteem. You'll come out of the session completely relaxed and could find that the effects last far longer than the session and leave you feeling calmer overall.

## Self-help

While your doctor can help, there are also many things you can do yourself to lift your confidence levels:

### 1. Stop running those negative thoughts through your head

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While you'll never totally get rid of negative thoughts – everyone has them, even the most confident of people – you can help yourself a great deal if you make yourself aware of your own negative self-talk. Write it down, think about it logically, and you'll soon see that it's false. Then write down the positive talk you'd like to replace those damaging thoughts with and make a conscious effort to do that when you notice your brain is on its familiar negative track. It will take time, but you can do it.

### 2. Learn to understand yourself

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Learn what triggers those negative thoughts for you. Starting a journal can help. If you write down your negative thoughts, you might be able to analyse them and discover where they came from. Are they from things people in your life have said to you, repeatedly? Are they a result of a bad experience such as a redundancy? Once you recognise what they are and where they came from, you can learn to replace them with positive thoughts.

List your achievements, your strengths and all those talents you have in your journal, even the very smallest things, and when you have a bad day, read them through to help you realise that you have every reason to be confident.

### 3. Act positive

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The more action you take, the more confident you feel, and if you act very positive, talk with a lot of energy and positivity, it will soon become second nature.

In addition to this, look at your posture and stand tall. It will naturally make you feel more confident if you don't slouch.

### 4. Baby steps

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If you're not feeling confident, you may not feel able to reach for large goals yet, so why not take small steps? Complete a small task that you know for certain you can achieve. Finish one small thing on your to-do list. Then another, and then another.

You'll feel better and more confident for finishing or achieved something and it won't be long before you'll be aiming for larger goals and achieving those, too.

Use your journal and write down your achievements every day, and you'll be able to look back on how far you've come.

You will make mistakes, but then everyone does. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't try. It means it's an opportunity for you to learn, rather than let the negative self-talk in.

## 5. Stop comparing yourself to others

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If you constantly compare yourself to others, you'll exhaust yourself and get nowhere fast trying to match what they can do, instead of concentrating on the things that you are good at. That's a really quick way to knock your self-confidence.

Instead, focus on your own achievements and abilities.

### Conclusion

All is not lost if you are currently suffering from low self-confidence or low self-esteem.

Your doctor can help with referrals to suitable therapies or with medication if necessary, and you can help yourself in many ways by following what works for you from the self-help section.

If you'd like to know more about my solution based clinical hypnotherapy services or book an appointment, you can give me a call or, if you'd prefer, you can book on the website.

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