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Confidence is all about knowing your true worth and accepting yourself. Charmaine Yabsley asks our holistic health experts how to strengthen your self-esteem muscle.
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Believe in yourself!

1. Accept yourself

“To be truly confident, you need a deep level of self-acceptance where you completely, 100 percent, embrace yourself - physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually,” says naturopath Danni Archer. “Being OK with yourself in every possible way provides you with confidence that is unshakeable.”

2. Love your body

“That little negative voice in your head can get pretty nasty and zap your confidence in nanoseconds,” says personal trainer Lizzie Williamson. “Start a daily practice of reciting positive mantras instead, and flip self-talk to reflect that: so, instead of 'I hate my body', say (preferably out loud), 'My body is a miracle; I love my body; I've got this.' Consider how many minutes every day you spend telling yourself what's wrong with you. Now - how much better would you feel if you spent just two minutes telling yourself everything that's great about you?”

3. Change your focus

“Lack of confidence is based on one of three things: fear of failure, self-doubt, or poor self-worth,” says author Pam Brossman. “One solution is to turn the focus away from how you feel and towards who you can help instead. For example, if public speaking makes you nervous, say to yourself, 'Today is not about me; it is about all those people who I can help with my message. They need me.' When it's no longer about you, fear subsides.”

4. Don't judge

“In evolutionary terms, our brains have a keen sensitivity to threats and a desire to fit in – put

simply, being accepted by a group meant you survived,” says psychologist Danielle Maloney. “Today, however, we're conditioned to focus on our perceived flaws, which puts us under constant pressure to 'fix' these flaws so we can fit in. In this respect, the mind is a con-artist, because it tricks us into thinking that in order to be worthy, accepted, and safe, we must be slimmer, smarter, more successful ... Remember: thoughts are not facts, they are interpretations. The next time your inner critic speaks, ask yourself, is there actually any truth in what my mind is telling me? How helpful is it for me to make these lies part of my personal narrative?”

The more gratitude you have in your life, the less room you have for judgement and self-criticism. What are you grateful for right now?

5. Treat yourself

“It's important to have treats, because nurturing yourself tells your subconscious that you're worth it,” says nutritionist Lola Berry. “My top tips for treats are: Yin yoga, a great low-intensity option that calms the mind and soothes the body; a 30-minute walk in nature, to strengthen muscles and improve circulation and mood; and a social media detox – switching off from Instagram and Facebook will lessen the likelihood of comparative regret and FOMO.”

Meet our experts



Danni Archer is a naturopath; www.divinenaturalhealth.com



Lizzy Williamson is a personal trainer and author; www.twominutemoves.com



Pam Brossman is the author of *Confident Chicks*; www.pambrossman.com



Danielle Maloney is a psychologist; www.daniellemaloney.com



Lola Berry is a nutritionist and Grill'd ambassador; www.lolaberry.com



Sarah Korzeba is a physiotherapist and yoga teacher



Suzanne Williams is a holistic executive at Grace & Grind; www.graceandgrind.com.au



Lillian Nejad is a clinical psychologist; www.omnipsych.com



Naomi Elizabeth is a life coach; www.iamnaomielizabeth.com



Angela Barrett is a relationship coach; www.relationshipinsight.com.au



Blair Norfolk is managing director of Activated Nutrients; www.activatednutrients.com.au

6. Recharge your health

Physiotherapist and yoga teacher Sarah Korzeba says, "Get fit and move just that little bit more. Prepare healthy, nutritious meals for yourself – put as much effort into them as you would if you were preparing food for a special guest! Get enough rest and relaxation. Clear out your cupboards, and get organised at home and in your daily life. And be clear with yourself: do an honest self-appraisal regularly, and create goals so you know exactly what you need to do and the time frame you wish to get there."

7. Train your brain

"The internal and external dialogues we engage in have a huge impact on confidence and self-worth," says coach Suzanne Williams. "The language we use creates and reinforces pathways in our brains. For example, if you tell yourself every day that you're smart, confident, good enough, and beautiful, this actually creates synaptic connections in your brain that become your truth. It's the same if we tell ourselves negative things. Creating positive-themed pathways not only increases self-confidence; it also stimulates the creation of the brain chemicals serotonin and dopamine that increase our overall feelings of gratitude, contentment, and pleasure in the world around us."

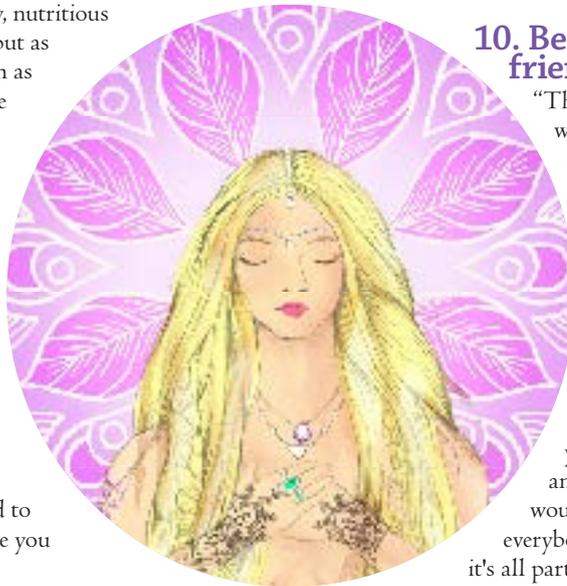
8. Build mastery

"As kids, learning to write, climb trees, ride a bike, and play cricket gave us opportunities to build a sense of competence coming from achieving something that is challenging," says clinical psychologist Lillian Nejad. "To boost confidence, reconnect to your childhood sense of curiosity, adventure and determination by trying to build mastery every day."

9. Know your worth

"Confidence isn't about your appearance, your job, or your bank balance," says life coach Naomi Elizabeth. "The fastest and easiest way to boost self-worth, and therefore confidence, is to take time every day to recognise all the amazing

things you have in your life, especially the things that make you uniquely 'you' – your humour, your achievements, your experiences."



10. Be your own best friend

"The place to begin is within," says relationship coach Angela Barrett. "Listen to how you speak to yourself when something goes wrong. Now, imagine speaking to a child in the same way - how discouraged would they feel! Instead of berating yourself, speak to yourself as the most loving and encouraging friend would. Reassure yourself that everybody messes up sometimes, it's all part of learning. Confidence comes from knowing you have a safe place to fall if things go wrong."

11. Nourish yourself

"Confidence comes from feeling nourished and strong," says wellness expert Blair Norfolk. "Nutrition is a cornerstone of mental as well as physical health. A well-balanced, wholefood diet lays the foundation for long term wellbeing and fuels your best performance in the day-to-day. Optimal health leads to longevity, positivity, energy, and confidence. Start meeting your body's basic nutritional needs with a healthy diet, and micro-nutritional needs with a wholefood supplement."

12. Set realistic goals

"Expectations and objectives should be aligned with your highest values," says Dr John Demartini. "Break large projects down into smaller, more manageable steps, then tackle them one at a time. Small, consistent actions lead to big dreams! And, rather than drag emotional baggage around, look instead at the loving balance and opportunities around you. When you see every event, whether challenging or supportive, as being part of your journey towards your goals, you'll feel more inspired and confident."

13. Be grateful

"Gratitude can't co-exist with judgement," says author Dr Dain Heer. "To become more confident, develop an attitude of gratitude in your life. Keep a notebook, and every day

write down three things you are grateful for. The more gratitude you have in your life, the more the judgement and self-criticism goes away. What can you be grateful for right now? What is great about your life that you haven't acknowledged because you've been too busy being critical?"

14. Break the pattern

"Be aware of the old 'tapes' you run unconsciously in your mind," says executive coach Catherine Plano. "When you think about where you've picked up certain low self-esteem issues, things from your past may come up. For example, it may be that you were teased in class. Identifying root causes like this helps you to forgive your past and to know that those around you did the best they could with the information they had at the time."

15. Set a release date

"Make the decision that you are going to be free from self-doubt," adds Plano. "Imagine what it's like to have self-esteem in two weeks' time, and then in one month's time, and then stretch it out to three months. Voila! You have created a habit of great awareness and empowered the way you think and feel about yourself."

16. Use the power of nature

"The only thing that makes us lack confidence is the mind," says author Dr Mahdi Mason. "If we give all our power to our minds, we become unbalanced and weak. Spending time in nature grounds us and gets us out of our heads, which in turn creates a strong foundation within ourselves from which we can face the world in a calm, confident manner. Spend 20 minutes daily barefoot or sitting on the earth in nature, and watch how your confidence grows."

17. Remember successes

"Need a quick confidence booster? Think about your successes," says life enhancement mentor River Thomson. "With practice, more memories will come to mind and the evoked feeling will get stronger. Feel the confidence that arises, and inhale it deeply. Then, visualise that what you want to succeed in next will also go well: alternating between recalling a previous success and visualising a future one will imbue the future goal with the power of past successes."

18. Fake it till you make it

"As we grow and evolve, our egos try to get in the way; most of the time this shows up as fear," says sexologist Vanessa Muradian. "Your mind will try to tell you that you don't deserve to feel good. We need to practise loving ourselves until it becomes our usual state of being. Notice everything that gets in the way of love is fear, and learn to meet these fears with love."

19. Stop pleasing others

"Instead of trying to please others, focus on pleasing yourself," says life coach Lisa Phillips. "Why is another person's approval so important to you? Put yourself first and approve of yourself. We find it easy to say something negative about ourselves, but rarely do we praise ourselves. Self praise increases confidence, but criticism breaks it down. And stop comparing yourself! Just because someone is different from you, it doesn't mean they are better than you. Be proud of who you are; you were born to be different, so don't try to be like everyone else."

If you tell yourself that you're smart and confident, this creates synaptic connections in your brain that become your truth. It's the same if you tell yourself negative things.

20. Have fun

"Don't let anyone distract you from your way of thinking," says broadcaster Chloe James. "Being true to yourself, your values and beliefs, brings self-confidence. And I don't take myself too seriously: I make sure I have fun, smile, enjoy whatever I'm doing. You only get one shot at life, you might as well make it a great one!"

21. Work at it

"Does lack of confidence hold you back from going for new career opportunities?" asks career consultant Elise Stevens. "These four things will help you 'fake' confidence until it comes naturally. One, recognise that everyone suffers from a lack of confidence at some time; two, stop the negative self-talk; three, grow your professional network; and four, invest in yourself through new skills. ✨"



Dr John Demartini is the founder of The Demartini Institute; www.drdemartini.com



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