

PART 1
THE FOUNDATION STONES
OF CONFIDENCE

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UNDERSTANDING CONFIDENCE

Success comes in cans, not can'ts. —Author unknown

Confidence is a belief that something can and will happen. You may be confident that your team will win. You could be confident the train will arrive on time. Whether the team does actually win or the train does arrive on time is another matter!

Self-confidence is believing that *you* can do things.

Self-confidence is not about what you can or can't do. It's what you think and *believe* you can or can't do. You might believe that you can sky-dive or pass an exam. Whether, when the time comes, you *can* jump out of the plane or pass the exam is also another matter!

When you're feeling confident, you have a positive attitude towards yourself and your abilities and you believe that events and experiences are likely to turn out well. But when you're not feeling confident, you're likely to believe that things will turn out badly. And because you *believe* things won't turn out well, you often feel that there's no point in even trying.

Furthermore, you only see or even look for evidence that confirms that you can't do something while avoiding or ignoring evidence that, actually, you *could* do something. So if you weren't feeling confident about passing your driving test, you'd focus on the weaker aspects of your driving abilities – reverse parking or three-point turns – as evidence that you weren't going to do well.

And, when setbacks do occur, if you lack confidence you're likely to feel discouraged and give up. Whereas if you're feeling confident, you're able to work at overcoming the difficulties, *believing* that things can get better.

In Practice

Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy. —Norman Vincent Peale

Be more aware of how you think and what you do. When you're lacking confidence in a particular situation, what are you thinking? Do you think things like, 'I can't do it' and 'This is going to be so difficult'? Do you tell yourself, 'It's not going to turn out well – it's going to go wrong'? Do you avoid taking part in or back out of events and situations because you think you're going to feel awkward or fail?

What about when you *are* feeling confident? What thoughts pass through your head? Do you think things like, 'I can do this', 'I'm looking forward to this' or 'Things will work out fine'? Do you tell yourself 'If things don't work out, I'll be able to deal with it'? Maybe, when you're feeling confident you don't even give it any thought – you just get on with doing it.

Identify the evidence. Think of something you would you like to do but don't have the confidence. For example, you might want to learn a new skill, start your own business or go to a social event. Don't believe you can do it? How do you *know* you can't do it? Write down the evidence – the reasons why you think you can't do it. Now write down the evidence – the reasons – that maybe you *could* do it. Which would be more helpful for you to believe – the evidence you could do it, or the evidence that you couldn't do it?

Remember: confidence is not what you can or can't do, it's what you *think* and *believe* you can or can't do.