

365 Steps to Self Confidence

A Programme for Personal Transformation in Just a Few Minutes a Day

By David Lawrence Preston; How To Books Ltd, 2001

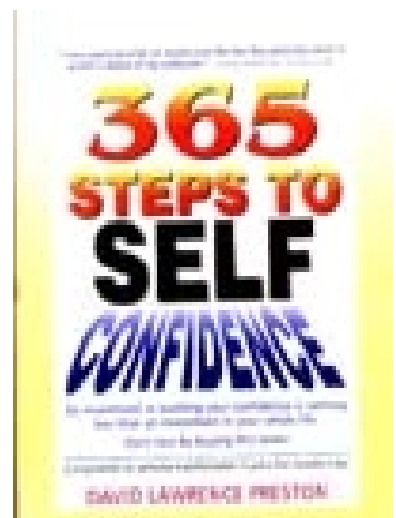
This book tackles self-confidence and self-esteem. It discusses how you can develop yourself to be more aware of your behavior, responses and how to be more confident. It also talks about how to know when you are low on confidence and self-esteem and what you should do to remedy it.

There are many examples, exercises and advices given to further evaluate your confidence level and what you should do for your confidence and self-esteem to grow. The

book makes you realize that many factors influence who you are today. Furthermore, it helps you transform yourself to be a better person.

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BOOK OF THE WEEK:



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How to build self confidence

Bear in mind that you have the capability to attain whatever goals you set for yourself but you have to believe first that you can do it. Make the decision to be confident. Imitate the famous people and act as if you are confident even if you're not. The reality is that many of these famous people are shy but they act as if they are not and succeed. Do not put yourself down. Choose to love and respect yourself and allow only the best to happen to you.

How confident are you?

When we talk about self-confidence, self-image and self-esteem is not far behind. They are related to self-confidence. Self-image is how you perceive yourself to be. It consists of three core feelings:

- Self-worth or the value you put in yourself.
- Competence or your capability to succeed, work out hardships, and the ability to think for yourself.
- Belonging or others' acceptance and respect.

The result of the evaluation of your self-worth and belonging serves as a basis for your self-esteem. Your ultimate objective is to be confident, not only in your outward appearance but deep inside you. This can be attained with the help of ITIA formula Intention, Thinking, Imagination and Action. You must have the intention to be confident, then change your way of thinking. Next, you must

imagine yourself as a confident person. Lastly, do not stop with imagination but act confidently. You should be happy and satisfied with your physical characteristics, your emotional state, your intellect and your social skills. Keep in mind that your capabilities are far more than what you give yourself credit for.

Some people gain confidence by accumulating wealth. This is not the true indicator of confidence. If a person is confident, he or she doesn't need to flaunt what he or she gained and accomplished over time. These people impose high expectations on themselves but they are still aware that they are not perfect.

Sow the seeds of confidence and watch them grow

No matter what your past is, if you intentionally sow confidence within you, you will reap confidence. Everyone has been influenced by situations and conditions that happened in the past. The person you become is a result of:

- Your genetic inheritance and biochemistry (hormones)
- The environment in which you were raised, including people
- Your unique way of trying to make sense of it all, both at the time and now

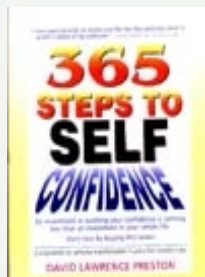
Confidence is not hereditary. Although genes and hormones affect you, these are not part of the root of confidence. Confidence is learned over time. It starts when you are a child and develops more as you grow older. It starts when you are weak and vulnerable and blossoms over time.

Whose responsibility?

Only you can foster your self-confidence. Accept full responsibility for yourself. You'll discover how revitalizing it is. It's your life, think and act for yourself. Never put the blame on other people for:

- your lack of self-confidence
- how others treat you

ABOUT THE BOOK:



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- your thoughts, words and actions
- failures, misfortunes and setbacks
- or anything else

To better help you in gaining confidence, build a 'Wall of Confidence'. Post encouraging words that will motivate you in gaining confidence. Also, settle problems. Do not procrastinate when faced with difficulties. You will deal with it sooner or later. Better do it sooner to save your self from additional pain, suffering and discomfort. Besides, hiding from your problems does not help your confidence a bit.

You have the power. You can alter your way of thinking, imaginations, actions, behaviors and habits. Use the power to slowly gain confidence. It will grow and develop step by step.

Getting motivated

Human beings are motivated by a want or need, perceptions of 'pleasure and pain,' and hopes and expectations. The best technique is to establish a worthy aspiration and look for the rationale in accomplishing that aspiration and compel yourself to act in order to achieve your aim.

Determination

Determination is behind all successes. You can achieve whatever goals you place in front of you with determination. When faced with difficulties, the advantages you will obtain from deciding to gain confidence will empower your determination to keep you going. You will encounter apprehension and fear but you will keep moving forward.

Think like a confident person

People who think like a confident person believe that they are confident and therefore, act confidently. For this reason, positive thinkers are the most successful and contented. We are the

product of our thinking. Think positively and you'll have a more positive outlook on life.

The four step method

There is a four step method in combating negative thoughts. With constant application, it becomes natural for people to observe and follow them. They are:

- Be mindful. Be aware to your thoughts, feelings and reactions to circumstances and people around you.
- Stop disempowering thoughts.
- Replace them with empowering thoughts.
- Keep going until it becomes automatic.

Silencing the inner critic

Inner critic is that voice inside you that plants reservation in yourself. Challenge it and make it shut up. Compel yourself not to listen to that voice but instead, to think positively. Changing how you think may take a while but you must be patient and persevere with your goal. Don't let another negative thought enter your mind.

Affirmations

Affirmation is a self-suggestion. When you repeat the suggestion over and over again, you will eventually believe what you keep on saying. It helps to accentuate your good qualities, transform your weaknesses into strengths, alter your behavior and concentrate on what you want for yourself. With constant application, it can become an effective way to build self-confidence.

Who do you imagine yourself to be?

Our imagination is very powerful. It can make us see any situation we think. If you always think negative thoughts, your subconscious will eventually accept what you feed to your mind and make it your reality. That is why it is important that a person imagine positive thoughts to gain confidence with the help of the subconscious mind.

Getting the most from creative imagery

Creative imagery is a conscious effort of having a mental image that will affect your subconscious mind. There are various techniques in going about creative imagery. One is fantasizing. Let your mind fantasize on what you want to be or where you want to go. This will assist you in having creative imagery and eventually will help you achieve whatever your goals are.

The 'As If' principle

When you pretend to feel, speak and act confidently, you will be more confident. That confidence will radiate that others will see the confidence in you and they will treat you appropriately. Then, little by little, your confidence will develop and eventually, the pretense will become a reality. In the beginning it may be intimidating, but with determination and constant practice, it will change your thought process.

Eat an elephant

Take small steps until your apprehensions become controllable. Don't let them eat you. Take control of your feelings and be brave in facing your fears. Program your subconscious and continue moving forward. Challenge your fears and win them.

Self-awareness 1: Your past

Who you become is influenced by past experiences and situations. Your genes (nature) make up 25-35% of your character while your understanding of past experiences (nurture) composes the remaining 65-75%. Bear in mind that confidence is learned especially during childhood. It molds you to become the person that you are. Confidence starts blossoming

when you are weak and as you grow older, it imposes itself to you.

Self-awareness 2: What are you like?

Confidence and self-esteem varies depending on the situation and place. One can be confident with his or her career but be unsuccessful with relationships. You have to be more observant. Know the kind of person you are and from there, you can manage how you will run your life. You can make changes in your life and make them last.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

David L. Preston is life coach, teacher, speaker and author, and one of the UK's leading authorities on personal and spiritual development.

His books have been translated into fifteen languages and his Life Enrichment Programmes sold in twenty-seven countries on every major continent. His 2005 book, *365 Ways to be Your Own Life Coach*, is a worldwide best seller, and his latest, *365 Steps to Practical Spirituality* is already climbing the best-sellers lists.

Based in Bournemouth, David offers one-to-one and group coaching, and gives courses in spiritual enrichment, personal success, confidence building, communication skills and self-management. His inspirational talks, including after dinner speeches, are popular with many audiences.

David has a strong reputation as a caring, knowledgeable and inspiring instructor. He believes that health, happiness and prosperity are within the reach of all and everyone, including you, can quickly make real improvements to their quality of life.

Childhood

Your self-image started to develop as a baby and is fully established when you reach maturity. The sad part is that children do not have the capability to differentiate fair and unfair. The rebukes they get as children influence them and the effect of the accumulated negative influences can be damaging. Most people experience the denting of their confidence during childhood. This is a result of what is called 'conditioning' or a combination of rewards and punishments. This affects them until maturity. Once you gain understanding of these conditioning, you can fight and overcome them. It is not your experiences as a child that molds your confidence but it is how you respond to it that builds your confidence.

Control dramas

There are four kinds of control dramas, namely: intimidator, interrogator, aloof and poor me. Intimidators are those who tried to control you. Interrogators are those who regularly probe you and find fault in you. Aloof people are often reserved and create an appearance of mystery that makes them unapproachable. Lastly, the "poor me" people feels that they are powerless and thus, constantly looks for sympathy.

We learn how to draw attention by continually playing dramas since we have observed that these are effective tools in getting the attention we seek when we were still children. Knowing control dramas is very useful. Once you gain knowledge on what, who and how these dramas affect you, you can use them to better develop your personality.

Take care of your inner child

The inner child is that characteristic that lives in you which resembles your personality which is playful and spontaneous, likes having fun, is imaginative, loves the world of 'let's pretend', is sensitive, needs to be cared and understood and likes to please, seeking love and approval in return. You must

acknowledge your inner child as vital part of you.

Forgive, forget and be free

One should stop pointing the finger at somebody else and start forgiving to attain inner peace and confidence. Forgiveness does not mean overlooking what the other person did but it means that you are willing to move on regardless of what happened. This is for your sake, not for the perpetrators. Forgiveness is important for your growth, maturity, self-esteem and confidence for when you forgive, you free yourself with all the hostility and anger inside you. Start forgiving yourself for all your mistakes and failures.

Let go of the past

Let go of the past for you to be able to develop your confidence. The past can only influence you if you permit it to. Always affirm yourself and let go of the past and live in the present. Focus on what you attained and what you aim for in the future, not what your failures and mistakes are.

Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is recognizing who you are and being happy with it. It doesn't necessarily mean that you like all the aspects of yourself. You can look for ways to make yourself better. You can find a way to be better informed, acquire new skills, change unwanted habits and handle relationships and problems more effectively. In doing this, accept that there are some aspects in your life that you cannot change no matter what you do. These will simply require your acceptance. When you have accepted this fact, you will be happier and more content.

Body image

Most people are not happy with their bodies. There is always something wrong with it. Those people are in grave danger to have low self-esteem. You must accept who you are, along with your defects.

Besides, you can focus on those defects that can be improved. Stop comparing yourself to other people. Be grateful with what you have and stop focusing on what you dislike.

Get in shape

Being physically fit is a great technique in developing your confidence and self-image. You be more confident from recognizing that you look good and can physically handle life's many needs. Make a commitment to exercise daily with something that interests you like jogging, walking and aerobics.

Calmness and confidence

Both calmness and confidence begins with physical relaxation. When you have a stress-free body, it will follow that your mind will be calmer and you have more power to manage your feelings. Breathing is the answer to have instantaneous calmness and relaxation. It assists you to become more sensitive to your body's responses. The breathing helps to make your muscles more relaxed and it makes the tension leave your body.

Anchoring

Anchor is a motivation to constantly activate an emotion. It is a method in copying from your past experiences those that can aid you to better deal with the present. You must establish an anchor that will motivate you to be more confident and calm. After a while, you'll feel energetic physically and emotionally.

Find a purpose

Knowing your life's purpose stimulates and encourages you and creates meaning and direction to your life. When you establish the things that you want to do, and you pour out all you can give in fulfilling it, everything changes. Identifying your purposes and knowing where you want to go and what you want to accomplish to build up your confidence and self-esteem.

Goals revisited

Realistic goals create confidence and make you handle and manage your life better. Clear and realistic goals are important because they explain your purpose, confirm you're serious about achieving, encourage excitement, anticipation, energy and enthusiasm, and they help you remember what you want. It also prompts you to obtain new knowledge and skills and discover reservoirs of imagination and creativity you never knew you have.

The thinkers think and the prover proves

The conscious mind is the thinker while the prover is the subconscious. Bear in mind that the subconscious is a powerful tool. Whatever we think will finally be a reality. Oftentimes, we go back to our subconscious for direction. This becomes a cycle and whatever the subconscious feeds to us will eventually strengthen our experience.

Confident self-talk

Confident self-talk contains any language that assists in making you feel more confident. Change 'should' and 'shouldn't' into 'I want to...' and 'I don't want to...' for the first one poses a limitation while the latter gives you choices and options. Also, stop generalizing. Keep a balance on things. Do not always think that everything is in black and white. You have to discontinue exaggerating and over-dramatizing.

Beliefs

A belief is a compilation of thoughts that we acknowledge as correct. Most of them start when you are still a child and some are due to your surroundings. These have an impact on your personality. It is very important to abandon those which are causing damage to your confidence.

Confident attitudes

A positive attitude manifests in all your activities. It fosters confidence in all aspects of your life. When you learn how to overcome negative attitudes, your confidence, self-esteem, happiness and peace of mind will bloom. Keep in mind that all the things that happen do not build or destroy your self-confidence but it's your attitude towards that situation.

Self-love

You must first love yourself in order for you to know your self-worth. Loving yourself is essential to love others. It will be impossible to love another person if you don't love yourself. How can you possibly give what you don't have? When you begin to love yourself, changes for the better will happen.

Concentrate on what you do well and overcome weaknesses

Concentrate on your potential and capabilities, not your weaknesses and limitations. Make the most of your strengths and talents. You'll find out that you have plenty to nurture and cultivate.

Your weaknesses can be important traits which can be worked on, or those which can make a little difference to your life or those impossible to change. You have to have knowledge about your weaknesses so you can accept, overcome or transform them completely. Take into consideration that patience and persistence are the two vital qualities in building confidence. You can achieve many things, and even turn weaknesses into strengths if you are patient and persistent enough to consciously make an effort to do it.

Take a risk

In order to gain confidence, you will need to face obstacles and take risks that attract failure. Take the risk and confront your fears. You are not perfect and you will eventually make mistakes but just to be yourself and brave your fear is sufficient.

Confidence building activities

When armed with high self-esteem, we don't fret about

making mistakes and being a failure. If we don't succeed this time, there's always a next time. This positive self-image means that you can fail but still be happy and confident.

Confident body language

When you act confidently, you will not only feel confident but others will have the impression that you are. Your body language conveys ten times more information than verbal language. No matter how you try to hide it, your confidence, or lack of it, will show in your body language.

Conditions of worth and give up approval-seeking behavior

Confidence, self-esteem and relationships work two-ways: one is that your relationships describe your self-confidence and the development of your confidence and self-esteem develops your relationship. People yearns acceptance and recognition from others even if it means compromising their personalities. This is what we call conditions of worth.

What you should seek is your acceptance of yourself and not the approval of the people around you. It's impossible to please everyone anyway. It's normal for people to want to be liked. It is a problem though when you permit how other people see you influence how you see yourself. In the long run, you wouldn't be happy trying to please everyone.

First impressions, be a good listener, stand up for yourself, and be assertive

We instantly judge the people we see. That is also true with us. People get an impression of us very fast. You must exude confidence when you meet people especially those you meet for the first time. Listening, conversational skills and assertiveness can help you gain confidence.

The ability to communicate well entails you to be a good listener. Value what the other person is

saying. Say something, express yourself well and appeal to the emotions. You'll be surprised at how confident you'll become when you are a good listener.

Be assertive and stand up for yourself. It doesn't follow that when you are assertive, you are egotistical and impolite. You just have to make other people understand you more. This way, you will gain their admiration and they will start dealing with you with respect. To be assertive, you can apply the ITIA formula. Decide to be assertive, think like an assertive person, imagine yourself behaving assertively and lastly, act assertively.

Say no when you mean no

Assertive people find it easy to say no when they mean no while passive people, on the other hand, have difficulty refusing a request. Giving it to a request you don't want to do will lower your self-confidence and self-respect. Don't feel obligated to do what others' want you to do and don't feel that you have to defend yourself. But be clear that what you are refusing is the request, not the requestor.

Compliments and criticisms

Your behavior towards criticism is affected by your childhood experiences. Those with very low self-confidence easily get hurt. Also, there are people who have difficulty believing in compliments. They get suspicious why a person is giving her or him a compliment. If you have confidence, whether people criticize or compliment you won't affect how you see yourself.

How to ask for what you want

Many people find it difficult to complain about something. It may mainly be caused by low self-esteem or not knowing how to ask or complain well. If you have confidence, you won't have a problem with

saying aloud the services you don't like. Just be clear on what you are complaining about, talk to the appropriate person, stay relaxed and composed and know the names of the people you are complaining to.

Lighten up

Lighten up! Explore the fun side of life. It will help you gain self-esteem. Confident people joyfully acknowledge that others may have a different perspective. They don't have to show they are always correct.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence has two aspects: self-awareness and the skill to know what others are feeling and react accordingly. Be aware of another person's sensitivity and acknowledge them and identify with them. This will aid you in being more confident when dealing with other people.

Take an interest in others

Less self-centeredness produces confidence and self-esteem. Centering your interest in another person develops their self-esteem and consequently, develops your self-esteem too. Helping others to be their best somehow brings out the best in you too. As the saying goes, 'it is better to give than to receive.'

Choose peace

Our spiritual self is the peace inside us which can convey deep happiness. When we realize that we are spiritual beings in human form, we can see everything clearly and have peace. We can face a

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