

Believe in Yourself

“Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.” – e.e. cummings

I drive past a high school every day on my way to work. It gives me an opportunity to see a diverse group of young people and observe how they interact with their peers. I can't help but notice the ones who are full of confidence, they seem to shine a little brighter than others and stand out. It is like they are glowing for all the world to see. One day, in particular, I noticed one young lady who seemed to have it all together. Right after seeing her, I saw an adult, probably on their way to work, walking like any beam of confidence had been eradicated by a life that had worn her down.

I started to pay attention. Most of the young people had a spring in their step, walking heads held high, chatting with their friends or with purpose even if they were alone. They were excited by some prospect of the day ahead, and you can see it in their body language. Most of the adults I see have their heads down and seem internalized on thoughts and troubles.

I think about this for a few days. I come to the understanding that all of us are born without confidence, we are blank slates ready to be written upon, erased and written upon again. Throughout our life, we are shaped by the beliefs of our parents, teachers, peers, politicians, religious leaders, and especially all forms of media, and these all get mixed into a concoction which forms our beliefs. We take the voices of all those people with us throughout life, and we will have our confidence built up, and we will have it torn down, over and over.

Another thought floated in, that as adults, we tend to hold onto those moments of being torn down and very rarely hold onto the ones that build us up. When something does not go according to our plans, our memories of past failures come up first. It would be nice if that soft voice from our favorite teacher floated in with her kind words of how wonderful we were doing, but alas this is not what comes forward.

Self-confident people are admired and inspire confidence in others. They take risks and face their fears head-on. They know that no matter what comes their way, they have the ability to get past it. Confident people respect themselves and usually are satisfied with the life they have. Sure, everyone has down moments, but if you have self-confidence, they are few and far between.

True self-confidence is not the surface smile and brave face you put on when with your peers and don't want to admit you can't do something. It is rooted deep within your being and comes from having a solid foundation. A foundation that is built layer upon layer from one core belief – the belief in yourself. If you don't believe in yourself, don't expect others to believe in you either.

The foundation of self-confidence has layers of self-efficacy – you believe in your ability to accomplish tasks and succeed and self-esteem – confidence in one's worth and abilities. Seems pretty simple when broken down like this, yet depending on our “slate”, it could be a difficult task to re-write. But, re-write you can!

If you have less self-confidence than you would like, don't worry, there are ways to build it up. First off you don't even have to go out seeking it from some outside force or person. You have the ability. It

might not happen overnight, but slowly and surely with time and practice, you too can be a self-confident person. Inside and out!

Rules to build your self-confidence are

- 1) Stay away from negativity. Especially the negativity you create in your own mind.
- 2) Change your body language and image. Stand tall, maintain eye contact, walk with your head up, smile, walk with purpose – don't shuffle along. Even if you are not going out – brush your hair - wash your face- brush your teeth and get dressed – might seem like a no-brainer but looking your best is a real boost to how you feel about yourself.
- 3) Get to know yourself. Act positive, notice when you slip into negative and switch it up!
- 4) Know your principals and morals and live by them.
- 5) Speak slowly – this is key when you slow down you say what you want and mean rather than rambling in a big rush. People listen when you speak at a normal rate. When you are saying things quickly, they only get part of it to register and they stop listening.
- 6) Learn new things. If you are not sure of something, google it, learn all you can. Knowledge is power, and if you are going into something new and don't understand it, you are one step behind the rest of the group. You don't even need to share your knowledge, just knowing that you know what others are talking about is a boost in confidence.
- 7) Don't procrastinate. If you feel yourself putting something off, do it. Preferably first thing in the morning. Get it out of your way. You will feel great about yourself for accomplishing it.
- 8) Clean your home environment. Amazing how the energy shifts when you clean. Having a clean place to return to at the end of the day is a great way to boost your feelings of safety. Consider it a sacred sanctuary that no matter what goes on in the outside world, here you are king or queen.

Self-confidence is extremely important in our day to day successes. It is worth taking the time to work on it. Another thought to ponder, build upon others self-confidence whenever you can. For there is no can't really and truly when we come right down to it. Each of us can accomplish anything we want.

*“Somehow I can't believe that there are any heights that can't be scaled by a man who knows the secrets of making dreams come true. This special secret, it seems to me, can be summarized in four C s. They are curiosity, confidence, courage, and constancy, and the greatest of all is confidence. When you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionable.” – **Walt Disney***

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June 2016

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