
52 Powerful Strategies for Boosting Your Confidence

The Manual and Workbook for a happier, more successful
and fulfilling life from a Confidence Expert.

by Ruth Hegarty, M.Ed



“You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage—pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically—to say ‘no’ to other things. And the way to do that is by having a bigger ‘yes’ burning inside. The enemy of the ‘best’ is often the good.” Unknown

Introduction:

Self confidence means having a positive and realistic opinion of yourself and being able to accurately measure your abilities. Confidence is an important part of feeling good about being you. It’s that little voice inside of you that tells you that you are okay, that you are a good person and that you know how to deal with things in good times and in bad. Feeling good about yourself helps you through tough times as well as help you to better enjoy the good times. Everyone is vulnerable to the self-confidence ups and downs encountered while navigating life’s challenges. From the most outgoing people to the most timid wallflower, everyone needs a boost of confidence from time to time. Increase your confidence and self-esteem using the tips in this book.

You weren’t born confident – confidence is learned. As a baby, you start to learn self-confidence from knowing your family loves you. As you learn to walk, play and talk you also learned confidence. As you grow older and venture out into the world (and sometimes even before that) there are many people and events that will challenge your confidence. Sensitive people are especially vulnerable to such social pressures. Sometimes you lose sight of your confidence and find yourself with too little self-confidence to live the life you want. That’s where this book comes in. These tips have worked with very shy people as well as those who want more confidence to take on a new challenge. I use them with clients,

students, family and myself and they all work! Pick a couple to try first and get the confidence to live life on your terms.

About the Author:

Ruth Hegarty has been helping people build confidence in their personal and professional lives for over ten years after having spent the previous 20 years transforming herself from an incredibly shy and definitely un-confident person to a sought after speaker and international empowerment educator/life coach.

Ruth has taught/coached hundreds of individuals and groups, published numerous articles and served as a confidence expert in radio appearances. She started her company, Leap of Confidence, to help others benefit from her research, experience and expertise in the area of personal and professional confidence. She is committed to helping people discover their unique gifts and talents and build confidence that results in amazing success and delight in their lives.

Every month Ruth publishes the Leap of Confidence free email newsletter.

Check it out and subscribe at www.coachruth.com.

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Get Started!

Every time you make choices that bring you closer to who you want to be, you gain confidence. After each activity you will find space to jot down ideas for expanding on or implementing that action. Read through the whole list making notes on all the activities that feel good to you and get started building your confidence. Some strategies suggest seeking out certain resources that can be found on an internet search, at your local library or community center or through the resources at the end of this book. If you have trouble locating a resource appropriate for a strategy you wish to try, get in touch with me at the contact information listed in the “About the Author” section and I will help you do the research.

As you work your way through this book, your confidence will increase. Remember to tell yourself every day that you are a loveable and capable person!



- 1) Look in a mirror and tell yourself you're confident 100 times (remember to look yourself in the eye). I know this sounds silly, but it works. Repeat the process every day until you truly believe it. If you can't do 100 times in a row at first, work your way up by starting with ten or 20 then adding five to ten repetitions every day until you are at 100.

- 2) Write "I am confident" or a similar phrase 100 times daily until it becomes a new belief for you. This is especially helpful if you are reluctant to try the mirror exercise above. Write "I am confident" until you work your way up to being able to say it to your face. Try writing in your best penmanship and keep all the pages in a folder or notebook.

- 3) Realize that, like everyone, you are better at some things than others and focus on your strengths. Avoid comparing yourself with others – remember, you're a unique and wonderful person even if you don't fully believe that yet. By focusing on what you can already do – even as you work toward increasing your strengths - you get to applaud yourself for efforts rather than only emphasizing end products. For example, if you have a talent for drawing, do more of it. Your skill and pride in the activity will grow and you will be more likely to try new mediums or attend an art exhibit related to your talent when you feel good.

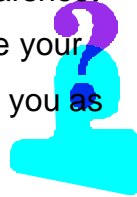


- 4) Think of a time when you felt confident. Remember the situation and feelings in as much detail as you can. Write down your memory as if you are telling a story. Now, practice conjuring that feeling as often as possible. This is especially helpful just before doing something you want to feel confident about. It also helps to write one sentence that represents this experience to use as a mantra when you need a confidence boost. As your confidence grows you will have tons of these stories to draw on when challenging yourself.

- 5) Act *as if* you are already confident. Behaving confidently even if you don't feel that way inside creates an experience of confidence that will eventually become real. This *fake it till you make it* practice really works. While you are pretending to be confident you are actually building your confidence. For example, look people in the eye, stand straight and tall and smile. Take deep breaths so you appear calm and collected. When people see you as confident, they will treat you as if you are confident. When that happens, you will actually feel more confident.

It is the Law that any difficulties that can come to you at any time, no matter what they are, must be exactly what you need most at the moment, to enable you to take the next step forward by overcoming them. The only real misfortune, the only real tragedy, comes when we suffer without learning the lesson. (Emmett Fox)

- 6) Ask family and friends what skills, personality traits, habits, etc., that you have to be confident about. Believe them! You are likely your own harshest critic. The people in your life who know you best can more easily see your strengths and accomplishments. You'd be surprised how others see you as being much more confident than you feel.



- 7) Create a confidence collage or scrapbook. Cut out pictures, words, colors and anything else you associate with confidence or confident people from magazines. Paste them into a scrapbook or onto poster board. Take a minute or two to look at these images every day. The confidence will rub off on you in no time.



8) Start a confidence journal. Keeping a record of all the times you feel confident reinforces the feeling and becomes a powerful tool for days when you need a boost. If you are uncertain how to

start, try the following:

- ➔ Describe ten times when you were proud of yourself. It doesn't matter how far back you have to go or how big or small the event.
- ➔ What are you afraid of right now? Is there something you want to do that you have doubts about? List some concerns that you can work through in this book.
- ➔ Describe your perfect life: What would it look/feel like? Who would be in it? What possessions would you have? Where would you live? What work would you do? What kind of vacations would you take? What personal qualities would you have? What would your experiences be? Include things you already have in your life that you want to keep as well as things you don't yet have but want.
- ➔ Identify 10 life adventures or experiences that excite you – where would you want to go? What do you want to learn, feel or be able to do?
- ➔ How attached are you to what other people think? Can you let go of the constant need for the approval of others? Ask yourself: What have I missed out on simply because I was too afraid of what others would think if I stepped out ahead of them?

9) Find a special talisman that makes you feel confident. This could be a piece of jewelry that reminds you of a loved one or a time when you felt happy and confident that you can wear on days when you need an extra boost of confidence. A talisman is great because it's something tangible that you can

hold or touch. For years I used a necklace I bought on my first solo trip. If you don't have a ready made talisman at hand, find a small seashell or coin that can easily fit in a pocket or purse and designate it as your confidence talisman. This works just as well.

10) Spend time with confident people. This is helpful for two reasons: you learn about being confident from someone who is already there and you see that even very confident people have fears and doubts at times. Demystifying the confident will help close the gap for you. Don't be shy about asking questions either. Most people will be happy to help you.

“When you see a worthy person, endeavor to emulate him, when you see an unworthy person, then examine your inner self.” ~ Confucius

11) Have a compelling reason for being confident. Knowing why you want something motivates you to action and keeps you focused if you hit a rough patch. Ask yourself why you want to be more confident and write down your

answer. If you want to give a speech to enhance your career, be more comfortable at social gatherings or feel better about yourself in relationships, just knowing your compelling reason will keep you on track to greater confidence.

12) See how not having confidence harms you. Realizing what you are missing out on in life by remaining un-confident is a great motivator for taking the actions that lead to greater confidence. Where are you holding yourself back? Do you feel stuck in an unfulfilling job, an unempowering relationship or a daily routine that leaves you feeling flat? Having confidence will help you changes all the things in your life that you are not satisfied with.

13) Start building confidence with the things you enjoy. Building confidence in areas that already give you pleasure keeps you motivated and on track. If you like to knit, try a more challenging pattern. If you like movies, make the first move and invite a friend or be bold and go by yourself to your local theater.



14) Get support. Have people you can get a pep talk from before and debrief with after doing something challenging. Ask friends and family for help with this or record a pep talk message to yourself to play back whenever you need the boost. When I first started out as a speaker I called my mother before and after each speech for a pep talk.

15) Start with baby steps. You don't have to take on the world all at once. Pick a small area where you would like to build your confidence and get started, giving yourself credit for everything you try along the way. For example, if your goal is to be comfortable eating alone in a restaurant, baby steps could be ordering a dish you've never tried, trying a new restaurant, experimenting with meal times so you can eat out alone when the restaurant isn't busy, etc. You will build momentum with each "baby step" until you are ready for that giant leap.

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly." Richard Bach

16) Create a confidence ritual. Have an activity that you engage in every day for that extra boost of confidence. Journal writing, walking, watching a funny show, praying, meditating and talking to someone special all work well.

17) Practice! Building confidence is like building a muscle. Consistently do things (even tiny things) that give you a feeling of confidence. The more often you feel confident, the more confident you will feel. Choose several strategies to work with and do them every day until the confidence sticks. For example, if you choose taking baby steps take one or two every day rather than just once in a while.

18) Get a confidence buddy. As with dieting and exercise, working together to build confidence maintains motivation, provides additional insight and is just plain more fun. Find someone else who wants to build confidence either in a particular area of interest to you both or overall and make specific plans to work together and support each other.



19) Go for something big. If you want something badly enough, you will do what it takes to get there. If you have always dreamed of a solo trip around the world, what can you do today to build the confidence that will make your dream a reality?

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.
Let us move forward with strong and active faith. ~ Franklin D.
Roosevelt

20) Give yourself permission to be scared. Being confident doesn't mean that you are never afraid. It means create a solid plan, try your best, get help when you need it and not give up. A reasonable amount of fear just means you are moving outside your comfort zone and that builds confidence.



21) Celebrate your newfound confidence! At every step along the way give yourself credit for being where you are and praise yourself when you have done well. Even getting a tiny bit more confident is reason to celebrate. Acknowledging your progress and embracing yourself where you are along the path builds confidence.

22) Spend time with little kids. Three to six year olds aren't afraid to say how great they are. They have not yet responded to social cues that discourage bold self-confidence. They happily tell you they run fast, know a lot, can climb very high and are quite cute to boot. Be honest with yourself about your own abilities. If you have great penmanship, shout about it.



23) Take Risks. Approach new experiences as opportunities to learn rather than occasions to win or lose. Risks do not need to be huge to count as confidence builders. Anything that challenges you becomes a risk. For example, drive a different route to work, talk to someone you

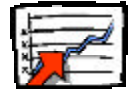
don't know in another department or in your neighborhood. Sign up for a class you know nothing about. Take an acting class. Volunteer to speak at your child's school or at work.

24) Use positive self talk. When you catch yourself thinking negatively, tell yourself to "stop" and then substitute more reasonable assumptions. For example, when you catch yourself expecting perfection, remind yourself that you can't do everything perfectly – no one can. It's only possible to take the risk and do our best. Positive self talk reminds you to accept yourself as you are now even as you work to improve. Rather than reminding yourself you aren't good at something or aren't as confident yet as you want to be, tell yourself that you are working toward your goals of mastery and confidence. Talk to yourself the way you would talk to someone you loved and respected dearly. Also, if someone compliments you on a job well done, just say thanks. Don't minimize the compliment by claiming the work wasn't difficult or didn't take much time. If you say it, others will believe it.

Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement. ~ Golda Meir

25) Learn to evaluate yourself independently. This allows you to avoid the constant sense of turmoil that comes from relying exclusively on the opinions of others for your sense of well being. Focusing internally on how you feel about your own behavior, work, etc. gives you a stronger sense of self and prevents you from giving your personal power away to others. If you like the way you dress, don't worry about what others are wearing.

26) Track your progress. Reread your journal and note the times you exhibited greater confidence. Just seeing how much your confidence muscle has grown is confidence inducing. Look for how your thoughts about confidence and yourself have changed in addition to how your behavior has changed.



27) Visualize yourself acting and feeling confident. Picture something you would like to do that you aren't sure you are confident enough for yet. Picture the scene in your mind exactly how you want it to be. What are you wearing? Who else is there? What will you say? Be very specific. Positive visualization builds confidence because it accesses your subconscious mind's ability to make fantasy appear real (think about how easy it is to be scared during a movie even though you KNOW you are sitting on your couch). Use this technique in general as well as in specific situations.

28) Treat yourself. Being good to yourself builds self-esteem which is necessary to confidence. Take time to pamper yourself and remind yourself how special you are. Get a massage, buy your favorite ice cream, take a day off, light scented candles, etc.

29) Get to know yourself better. Self-reflection helps you access your true feelings, notice progress, consider the sources of your beliefs and revise what doesn't work for you any more. Journaling is one of the most valuable

tools for gaining insight into who you truly are at your core and growing confidence. Whatever major change you seek – whether it's in your career, relationships, athletic performance or any other area that matters to you – you simply can not move forward with purpose and intention until you begin to understand the inner workings of your own personality. Greatness is about attitude, positive thinking and creating environments that best serve your own ends. We all have greatness within us and it's up to us to draw it out. Do you consistently see yourself as a follower or as a leader? Do you have optimistic or pessimistic attitudes and/or behaviors? How do you answer the question: Is the glass ½ empty or ½ full? What inner thoughts occupy your mind? Do you consider yourself to have a positive or negative outlook? Do you believe people can change their attitude? Do you need or want to change any of your habits or attitudes? How do these questions relate to your current state of confidence as well as where you want to go? Writing down what you want and who you want to be will help make it happen.

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget that errand.” - Woodrow Wilson

30) Learn a new (or pick up an old) sport. This provides physical activity and commraderie with team members or other enthusiasts both of which increase feelings of confidence. Confidence caused by an accomplishment in one area often blends into other areas.



31) Get a pet. Being the sole caregiver for a pet builds confidence because you are able to provide for another's well-being. Many pets also give us companionship and unconditional love which boosts confidence (goldfish and ant farms don't really work well for this aspect but can provide the responsibility confidence). It feels great to be the center of another's world. If a dog or cat is too much work or not allowed in your building, small birds and rodents can provide a similar level of feedback.



32) Try something daring. You can safely take a big risk such as sky diving or a ride in a glider plane (that's the one with no engine – I've tried it and it's lots of fun). Get great instruction and follow all the rules and you will feel the adrenaline rush that keeps people coming back to these kinds of activities. A

mere business presentation will pale in comparison to jumping out of a plane which will help your confidence soar. These types of activities tend to attract a fun-loving crowd as well which will give you more opportunities to meet new people and have fun.

33) Get physical. There are many ways to get physical even if sports don't interest you (or are too intimidating just yet). Take a walk, yoga class, swim, etc. Anything that gets your endorphin levels up and reconnects you with your body has a grounding effect that enhances confidence. Check out your local YMCA or YWCA for inexpensive classes.

34) Learn to meditate. Meditation helps you stay present and acknowledge your thoughts (even negative ones) without judgement. The deep breathing is calming and taking the time for yourself to meditate is a great treat. Once you learn how, you can take a few minutes to quiet your mind before a big meeting or long drive which will help you feel relaxed and confident. To get started, sit quietly with your eyes



closed for five to ten minutes. As thoughts cross your mind, observe them without judgement. Try picturing a pure white light behind your eyes. Breathe deeply and steadily. Put on a relaxing CD of music or nature sounds. Notice how relaxed you feel after you are finished.

“Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What’s a sundial in the shade.” Benjamin Franklin

35) Develop a spiritual practice or return to the prayers of your childhood. A connection with a higher power is a comforting reminder that we are not alone and connects us with a deeper reason for wanting confidence. Participating in a religious or spiritual community also provides friendship and support.

36) Read about the daring exploits of others and take to heart the insights they learned on the way. One woman’s solo trip around the world in a small boat

can show you the way to a confident job change. You don't have to be the daring one to benefit from such stories.

37) Study people you admire. Whether or not they did something daring think about what it is you admire. Were they uncompromisingly honest, creative or devoted to family? There are many lessons to be learned in the lives of others whether they are famous or stories told to you about your grandmother.

38) Volunteer your time to help those less fortunate than you, serve your community or support a cause. Spend time at a homeless shelter, animal rescue organization or clean up a local park. Making a difference in the lives of others makes us feel good about ourselves. You can also learn new skills to be confident about and meet new people.



39) Develop a confident vocabulary. The language we use when talking to ourselves or communicating with others creates our reality. It is extremely powerful. Negative self-talk or self-deprecating language diminishes us as well as others. Using confident, compassionate and consistent language builds confidence and creates a better world. Learn to be assertive by expressing your thoughts, opinions, needs and feelings openly. Upgrading your speech habits takes time. Be patient and persistent until you get your language the way you want it.

“We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.” Joseph Campbell

40) Go solo. Eat out, see a movie, visit a museum or attend a course by yourself. These activities deepen our relationship with ourselves and build confidence. If this seems too scary right now, you may want to start by “faking” the solo aspect. Do this by agreeing with a friend that you will arrive and leave together but pretend not to know each other at the movie or restaurant and sit separately. Work up to being able to enjoy attending these events alone.

41) Join a group of like-minded people. There are many groups focused around a particular television show, pet ownership, physical attribute (like tall clubs and little people groups), motorcycles, etc. Find one in your area that meets periodically and attend a meeting. You already know what to talk about because you all have at least one thing in common. It's also easier to talk animatedly about a topic you are passionate about. If you can't find one you like, hang a flyer and start your own group.

42) Attend a retreat. There are so many different retreats available that you can find something perfect for your needs. Get physical with a wilderness program or quite with a silent meditation retreat. Retreats are often organized around personal growth, creativity, etc. and exclusive to women, people of a certain age, etc.



43) Practice Mindfulness. Learn to live in the present. Past mistakes and possible future flubs don't matter. Make peace with the fact that you can only live in the here and now. Forgive yourself and others for not being perfect, take a deep breath and look around at the life you have in this very instant. This is the only moment guaranteed to you. Embrace it and feel the confidence of doing so.

44) Take up a hobby. Like sports and pet ownership, mastering the how's and why's of a hobby is fun, often useful and builds confidence. Craft and home improvement stores often offer free or low cost classes to help get you started.



“It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up.”
Vince Lombardi

45) Master a new professional skill. Learn a new computer program or take a tax preparation course and feel confident that your taxes are correct and even make extra money doing taxes for others.

46) Face your fears. What are you afraid of? Not even the bravest among us is fearless. Consider overcoming irrational fears that hold you back (like public speaking) and accept fears (rational or otherwise) that are simply part of who you are without limiting you. For example, once I was afraid to drive which was very inconvenient so I overcame it. I'm still afraid of lightning but, as I'm not a meteorologist or professional storm chaser, it's no big deal and simply makes me human.



47) Experience failure and overcome your fear of failure. We all fail at some things some of the time. In one sense, all the silver medallists at the Olympics are “failures” because they aren’t taking home the gold. Failure is a great teacher and a mere stepping stone on the road to success. Your worth as a human being remains constant. Not getting a job offer after an interview doesn’t change that.

48) Get comfortable with discomfort. When we grow there are growing pains. That’s natural. Just as the occasional potty training “accident” is uncomfortable and inevitable, so true we will have sweaty palmed moments as we move outside our comfort zone and experience growth. We lived through the potty training and we will live through occasional professional and personal gaffs and awkward moments.



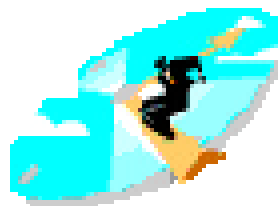
49) Learn to laugh at yourself (kindly, of course). Life is a lot more fun with a sense of humor. One of the greatest things about a faux pas is that it usually makes for a great dinner story later. My sister tends to fall down often and has decided to write a book about all the different ways you can trip and fall. Now, every time she slips or falls she simply says it will add another chapter to her book. Whether she ever writes the book or not, this idea makes her laugh and helps her get past the bruises and embarrassment of falling down.

“Grant that I may become beautiful in my soul within, and that all my external possessions may be in harmony with my inner self.”
Plato

50) Look your best. If we feel good in our own skin (and clothes), we automatically feel more confident. You don't have to wear designer clothes or the latest styles. Look for what looks good on you and makes you feel good. Look your best in your body language, too. Use positive body language like walking straight and tall and looking others in the eyes. When you look confident, others will treat you like a confident person.

51) Take great care of yourself. Treat yourself like you're special and you will feel special. Treat yourself like you are your own best friend. Eat well, sleep well and take time for fun and relaxation. Physically feeling good helps build confidence.

52) Be patient with yourself. Change takes time. Take the time to make the best choices for yourself about how you want to feel and what you want your life to be and you will find that it will be well worth it. Remember, patience is a virtue.



It is my pleasure to create this material for your benefit. I welcome your comments and suggestions. The creation of positive, lasting change within your life is the core focus of my work as a teacher, speaker and coach.

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