



Cultivate Confidence
Be Yourself. Be Confident.



10 WAYS TO BE MORE CONFIDENT

By Jacey Tramutt MA, LPC

One of the most common questions I get asked is, *"How can I be more confident?"*

Of course there is no one size fits all answer. A lack of confidence stems from familial and cultural conditioning, not from any truth about who you are.

However, that is how the ego likes to spin things: *"Here are all your flaws and shortcomings, and my opinion is the absolute truth of the Universe."* As if we could ever really understand the absolute truth of the Universe?

To become more confident, you have to be willing to examine your belief systems and how they are impacting everything. This takes courage. To quote Pema Chodron,

"Courage is the opposite of cozy."

To become more confident, you are going to have to get out of your comfort zone. I've compiled a list of 10 confidence-building strategies. Some can be implemented right away and others are going to require some deeper inquiry, soul searching, and commitment.

Live better

Take ahold of your life

10 WAYS TO BE MORE CONFIDENT

1 Arrive to appointments 5 minutes early.

I recently attended a Zen inspired meditation retreat and the leader said, "If you're not early, you're late." By doing this one simple thing, you are eliminating a lot of stress from your life. Being in a rush creates anxiety.

2 Accept that you have emotions.

Having emotions does not make you unconfident, it makes you human. Feeling a wide range of emotions and learning how to communicate them in a skillful way without blaming others (see number 10) is a key component of confidence.

3 Use people's names in conversation.

This one I learned from my Grandfather, and it can be especially helpful if you have social anxiety when meeting new people. Not only does it help you remember the person's name, it also sends the message that you care about that person and what is being shared. This creates some ease in the conversation and will help you relax.

4 Take deep breaths and feel your feet on the ground.

When anxiety does creep in, a simple thing to do is to breathe, and to place your attention on your feet. This will help you feel grounded and get your attention out of your mind, which is what is creating your anxiety in the first place.

5 Practice self-compassion.

Often when I suggest this I get a blank look. Most of us are experts at beating ourselves up, but struggle when it comes to offering ourselves the smallest amount of compassion. One key to becoming more compassionate with yourself is to become aware of your inner-critic; the voice inside your head that is constantly telling you how you don't measure up. Don't believe everything you think!

6 Stand up straight.

I have to admit my mom was right about this one. The way we hold ourselves does impact how we feel. Try sitting hunched over, and then sit up straight, starting with raising the torso from the diaphragm, with your shoulders back, head held high. Feel the difference?

7**Notice when you are comparing yourself to others.**

Everyone is different. No two people have the same set of life circumstances, purpose, challenges, or spiritual path. When you find yourself comparing yourself to others, simply stop, and put your awareness somewhere else, preferably in the present moment.

8**Movement.**

Moving your body will help your body feel better, and having a body that feels good makes life easier on all levels. It can be as simple as a daily walk, gardening, riding a bike, or some gentle stretching. The key is to do what makes your body feel good.

9**Ask questions and really listen to the answers.**

This one I learned from my dad, who asks a ton of questions before he offers an opinion or thought on anything. When you don't know what to say, ask a question! People love to talk about themselves and their opinions, and really listening to others will allow you to understand them and to have an authentic interaction.

10**Become aware of the ways you communicate that lead you to not feeling good about yourself.**

Examples:

- Losing your temper, and then regretting what you said
- Suppressing yourself, and then regretting what you didn't say
- Judging others, and then feeling shameful
- Judging yourself, and then feeling shameful

I know I said 10, but here's a bonus, and it might actually be the most important one because it impacts your ability to do the first 10:

Practice Mindfulness Meditation.

Meditation is a solid way to improve your self-confidence as it:

- Increases your ability to be present with yourself and others
- Increase your tolerance of strong emotional states
- Creates awareness of the cultural conditioning that erodes self-confidence

- Cultivates self-compassion
- Increases body awareness
- Helps create a gap between your thoughts and your words/behaviors

Confidence is our birthright. Of course we have a right to be here- to stand up and express our feelings and desires, and to live a life that is congruent with our talents and passions. The hardest part is believing that is true and then getting out of our own way.

Confidence

CHECKLIST

- Arrive to appointments 5 minutes early.
- Accept that you have emotions.
- Use people's names in conversation.
- Take deep breaths and feel your feet on the ground.
- Practice self-compassion.
- Stand up straight.
- Notice when you are comparing yourself to others.
- Move your body.
- Ask questions and really listen to the answers.
- Become aware of the ways you communicate that lead you to not feeling good about yourself
- Practice Mindfulness Meditation.



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