

# Strengthening Your Feelings of Confidence

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## Exercise 11. Building Confidence Through Physical & Emotional Action

Lack of self-confidence is the single most frequently reported reason why people believe they are unable to get what they want. Think about it. How often have you heard yourself or others say, "I just don't have enough confidence that it will work."

The real key to changing your life and creating a good business is to know how to take action in a way that builds confidence. But if you're like a lot of people, you'll have to start by taking the confidence you already have, no matter how small that may be, and building on it in a way that gets you to go out and take actions you've been resisting.

**The first step** to building confidence through physical and emotional action is to realize:

***"Confidence is not something that you "have." It's something you create."***

If you simply take things as they come, your level of confidence will be highest for those actions that you have practiced over and over again. Maybe you're good at a particular sport or you like to cook. And when you think about playing that sport or cooking you are immediately filled with a sense of assurance that you can do it well.

Take a lesson from that observation -- the feeling of confidence came from a memory of success in the past. Here's a simple, basic truth:

***You can experience confidence any time you want, whether or not you ever succeeded at that action before.***

You can use memory of something you did well to create a feeling of confidence right before you attempt something new.

Memory and imagination are so closely related that they are sometimes difficult to tell apart. That's why it's so easy to get into arguments with your relatives about old family events. Everyone remembers those events in their own way and that differs for each person. So, the memories of the events differ too; sometimes only subtly, sometimes radically. (Think of classic Thanksgiving dinner dramas.)

**The second step** to building confidence through physical and emotional action is to realize that feelings, which arise from both memories and imagination, have both a body and a brain component. They are not simply thoughts. They are a combination of bodily sensation and the cascading effect of emotions as they fill your body.

One of the classic laws of psychology is "feelings follow behavior." Another is that "feelings encourage behavior." While these two laws seem contradictory, they are simultaneously true. If something in you or in your environment triggers a certain emotion, you will usually engage in the behaviors that are associated with that emotion -- behaviors that you learned from long practice over time.

For example, for many people it is a common experience to associate food with love. If they feel lonely, they find themselves eating even if they're not hungry. And it is equally true, that if they were to vacuum instead of eating, the feelings of loneliness would wane and the

# Strengthening Your Feelings of Confidence

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feelings they associate with cleaning the house would arise, such as accomplishment and satisfaction or the a feeling of well being from having a clean house.

I think you can see where I'm going with this. It is clearly possible to "reprogram" the way that you act in response to feelings, by behaving in the way you would rather feel. So, if you want to feel confident about something you've never done before, remember how you behaved when you felt confident in the past and behave that way now.

## Procedure

**Step 1. Relax.** (see the exercise entitled "Creating a Container for the Work" above).

### **Step 2. Reflect.**

- Remember an action you took in the past that you feel led to a successful outcome.
- Create a sensory-rich image of that action. Where did it take place? Who was there?
- What did you do? How did you feel? How were you sitting or standing? How were you breathing? What did your voice sound like? And so on.
- Remember as much detail as you can and really feel the feelings and see the behaviors that you experienced.

### **Step 3. Act.**

Once you have created the sensory rich image of an action that gave you a feeling of confidence, choose an action you would like to take now that you have been putting off because you lack the confidence that you'll be successful.

### **Step 4. Take notes.**

- Make a few brief notes about that action.
- What will it look like? Who will be involved? When might you do it?

### **Step 5. Practice.**

- Now, elicit the feelings you recalled in step number 1.
- Stand or sit in the way that you were standing or sitting in that moment of success.
- Breathe the way you were breathing then.
- Speak with the pitch, tone, and pace that you used then.
- Bring these memories back into your mind by recalling them and back into your body by imitating them.
- Let your body fill up with the emotions of confidence and success that you felt in that past event.

### **Step 6. Embody.**

- Now, anticipate positive, successful outcomes.
- Imagine you are completing the action you picked in steps number 2 & 3. In your mind's eye, speak and act in the same confident way that you recall acting from step number 1, but this time you are doing the action from step number 2.
- See yourself acting with confidence.
- Feel the strength of your good will and willingness to serve.

## Strengthening Your Feelings of Confidence

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- Imagine the positive reactions from those who might be present in this future event.
- Imagine positive, successful outcomes from taking this risk.

### **Step 7. Commit.**

- Coming back to the present moment, make a commitment to take at least one action step that will start you on the path of completing the action you named in step number 2.

### **Step 8. Execute.**

- Take that action step.

### **Step 9. Monitor.**

- Monitor the outcome. More often than not, you'll succeed. In those cases where you don't, look closely at what happened and learn as much as you can about the reasons your outcomes weren't as favorable as you'd hoped.

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