

Strengthening Your Feelings of Confidence

Exercise 12. Building Confidence Through Rational 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.

Confidence is also developed by practice - doing something over and over until you get good at it. As you attempt various actions and get better at them, you begin to develop more confidence in your ability to complete these actions in the future. It is not only true that "practice makes perfect," it also makes confidence.

But sometimes, we find ourselves in such a dark, doubting place that we cannot seem to do anything to recover our confidence. At moments like this, we can fall back on the basic survival tool of human beings: rationality. Rationality is our ability to figure things out and make a plan for executing what needs to be done. Often, when we engage in rational thinking and work on a problem with it, our anxiety and self-doubts are radically reduced..

Engaging rationality to build confidence means that you will evaluate your proposed actions, one at a time, both before and after you take them. Then you will construct contingency plans in case anything goes wrong.

Reflect. Choose an action you have already taken or one you would like to take. Make notes in your learning journal or use the form provided.

Write down the first action you wish to evaluate.

Underneath that, make three columns, one headed "LOSE", the second headed "GAIN," and the third headed "BACKUP."

Now make a few brief notes about that action.

- What did you (or do you) have at risk?
- What might you lose?
- What damage will be done?
- What might you gain?
- What do you stand to learn if you take the risk and go ahead with the action?

Now look at the loss side of your evaluation. Try to imagine what you would do if those losses look like they might happen. In other words, figure out strategies that will minimize your risk of loss. Make brief notes in the third column.

Act. Take action and then be sure to complete the most important step of this exercise: Stop and evaluate what you actually gained or lost. This way, you will maximize your learning from every action, and you will more rapidly build your confidence.

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Procedure

1. **Relax.** (see the exercise entitled "Creating a Container for the Work" above).
2. **Choose an action** you would like to take.
3. **Make a few brief notes** about that action. What might you gain? What might you lose?
4. **Create strategies** that will minimize your losses.
5. **Take the action.**
6. **Evaluate** what you actually gained or lost.

Example: Risk Analysis

RISK: ask boss for raise		WORDS OF PRAISE: good idea	
Gain	Lose	Backup	
Raise self respect	Embarrassment if rejected	Use as opportunity to evaluate. Do I need to change myself or do I need to find a job where I'm appreciated?	
	Have to listen to boss tell me why shouldn't give		
Make spouse happy	Spouse disappointed		
Now able to buy new car	can't buy new car		

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Example: Risk Assessment

Actual Gain	Actual Loss
all of above plus, boss actually likes my work. I was surprised since he never says anything.	none

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RISK:	WORDS OF PRAISE:

Gain	Lose	Backup

Actual Gain	Actual Loss

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