

# 3 PROVEN WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR CONFIDENCE

Confidence has a hypnotic effect on people. “The first time I recognized it was at a flamenco show in Barcelona a few years back. I was mesmerized by the performance of a beautiful full-figured middle-aged woman. I couldn’t keep my eyes off her as she danced. My friends and I eventually dubbed her ‘the most confident woman in the world.’”

It was like she bathed in a tub full of confidence on a daily basis. I knew if I had just a piece of what she exuded while on that stage, I would be unstoppable.

There’s data to back that up. Studies show that confidence is closely correlated with success, and even more so than competence.

That’s why it feels like some of the people we most associate with being successful appear to have an abundance of the coveted trait.

But the reality is, confidence is something we all can develop and increase. Even better, science has shown us specifically how to do it.

In their book *The Confidence Code*, authors Katy Kay and Claire Shipman went on an extensive quest to find out how people could increase their confidence. Here’s how they summarized their findings:

“And so fortunately, a substantial part of the confidence code is what psychologists call volitional: our choice. With diligent effort, we can all choose to expand our confidence. But we will get there if we stop trying to be perfect and start being prepared to fail.”

Take imperfect action. Fail. Use what you learn to take action again. Repeat until you consistently get results you can feel proud and confident about.

Let’s take a closer look at how to start implementing

these methods:

## 1. Surround yourself with confident people.

In her best-selling book *Grit*, Angela Duckworth explained that one of the ways to develop grit, or any other trait you aspire to have, is to spend time with a group of people who are doing what you want to do or possess the skill you desire to develop.

“The drive to fit in—to conform to the group—is powerful indeed. Some of the most important psychology experiments in history have demonstrated how quickly, and usually without conscious awareness, the individual falls in line with a group that is acting or thinking a different way.”

Thus, if you struggle to be confident, start hanging around confident people. Not only will you start embodying the mindset that helps them be successful, but you’ll start to latch on to the activities that enabled them to get there, too.

When I started learning how to dance Argentine tango, everyone I knew danced better than me. My confidence level was at zero. But they kept encouraging me to dance, to go to classes and to try new things while on the dance floor. Their confidence in me fueled my own. And their commitment to practicing to get better made it easier for me to do the same.

## 2. Take consistent action.

I’ve spent a significant amount of time studying successful entrepreneurs, performers and leaders from many different walks of life. And one of the key markers that fueled their attainment of mastery, that gave them the confidence to perform at such a high level, was taking action. Consistently.

They showed up, day in, day out, over and over again, to do the work that would help them improve their skills.

Performers who sell out stadiums around the world, pro-athletes who dominate their sport, entrepreneurs who appear to have the magic touch—all of them invested significant time in the trenches taking the actions necessary that enabled them to get so good that they could not be ignored.

Confidence comes from knowing you are capable of completing a task to your level of satisfaction. You can’t think your way to that kind of confidence. Deliberate action (not merely busyness) produces the know-how you need.

Data proves this, as well. Dan Chambliss is a sociologist who spent years studying Olympic swimmers and what enabled them to perform at such a high level.

“Superlative performance is really a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities, each one learned or stumbled upon, which have been carefully drilled into habit and then are fitted together in a synthesized whole. There is nothing extraordinary or superhuman in any one of those actions; only the fact that they are done consistently and correctly, and all together, produce excellence.”

When excellence becomes your habit, confidence will be a natural byproduct. And the only way to develop a habit is to do the work over and over again.

## 3. Fail your way to mastery.

You don’t get to mastery without a string of failures that point you in the right direction to deliver predictable high-quality results.

Of course, nobody wants to fail. But if you want to succeed, that is exactly what you have to get more comfortable doing.

Failure leaves clues as to how to succeed. And success breeds confidence.

The more often you fail, the more knowledge you obtain about what works and what doesn’t. The more insight you have about how to produce a hit, the easier it becomes for you to be confident that the path you are moving along will bring you the results you desire. The more progress you make, the less likely you have your confidence destroyed when something doesn’t go your way.

Seth Godin is an 18-time best-selling author. Before he published any of his best-sellers, he spent 10 years as a book packager, producing a book a month. Producing 120 books, many of which sold very little, taught him many things about how to deliver work his audience wanted to buy.

James Dyson spent 15 years producing more than 5,000 prototypes before he developed the one that launched his billion dollar vacuum company. He wrote:

“There were tough times, but each failure brought me closer to solving the problem.”

You can become more confident no matter your starting point. It all starts with recognizing that you can develop the competence you need to be excellent. And then, of course, you’ve got to take the necessary actions that will help you get there.

In time, as your skills grow, so will your confidence, the mesmerizing effect you have on people and your level of success.

*Sonia Thompson is a marketing strategist, consultant and author. She covers how company culture, diversity and relationship-based marketing helps businesses create remarkable customer experiences that get them the customers they want and keep them coming back for more.*

