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info@clapa.com



Confidence and Self-Esteem

One of the most important and valuable qualities a person can have is confidence

If a person is confident, it means they are happy with who they are, they have faith in their abilities and beliefs. They recognise their positive qualities and are proud of them. Another term for confidence is self-esteem. Again, if a person has high self-esteem it means they like who they are and are sure of themselves.

However, some people lack confidence in themselves and this is known as low self-esteem. If a person has low self-esteem they usually think badly of themselves and focus on aspects of their appearance, personality and achievements that they consider negative.

Self-esteem can really affect the way you behave in day to day life

People with a healthy level of self-esteem tend to be outgoing, willing to try new things and be generally happy. It is widely believed that people who have a healthy level of self-esteem will achieve more as they have more confidence in their abilities and are comfortable enough with themselves to try new things and take chances.

A person who suffers from lack of confidence, or low self-esteem, may avoid trying new things or meeting new people because they feel too awkward or too afraid of failure or rejection. Because they have negative thoughts about themselves their attitude to other things can also be negative. Everyone has many reasons to feel good about themselves, but sometimes it can be difficult. Everyone has something they feel insecure about. Some people are insecure about their appearance, some people worry that they aren't clever enough, others worry that they aren't good at sports. While it is OK and normal to feel insecure sometimes, it is important that these insecurities don't get you down or stop you doing, or trying, the things you want to.

Confidence is something that tends to change from day to day, it is normal to feel confident one day and the next day not feel so great about yourself!

While confidence is something that generally develops as we grow up, there are ways to boost your confidence. Try some of the tips below and maybe you'll feel your confidence grow!

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List your positive qualities

Make a list of all the things you like about yourself, no matter how small. Maybe you make people laugh, maybe you're good at football, maybe you have nice hair, whatever you like about yourself, add it to the list! When you feel down about yourself read the list and remind yourself of all your good qualities, or even stick it up next to your bedroom mirror where you might need it the most. It will help you focus on your positive qualities and stop you focusing on your insecurities.

If you have trouble with listing good things about yourself, ask some friends to help you. In friendship groups it's important to support and care for one another, and this includes boosting each other's self-esteem. If you tell your friends you're struggling with self-confidence, they'll probably be more than happy to tell you what makes you special.

Find a positive role model

There are many successful people in the world who seem confident, but the chances are they weren't always that way. Many celebrities have had to overcome adversity of some sort. Mariah Carey was bullied at school, but she didn't let this knock her confidence in her own ability and now she is one of the world's biggest-selling solo singers. Joaquin Phoenix started acting at a young age. In Hollywood, there is a huge amount of focus on physical perfection and Joaquin was reportedly told that he would never become a lead actor because of the scar on his lip. He didn't let other people's negative attitudes stop him from pursuing his dream, or knock his confidence, and now he is one of the most successful and talented actors ofhis generation! He has made a succession of highly acclaimed films, including Gladiator, recently won a Golden Globe award for his role in Walk the Line.

Look at people like this for inspiration, people who achieved what they want despite obstacles. If they can do it, so can you!

Be yourself

It's no good changing for other people – what's the point in making them happy if you can't be who you are? Don't be afraid to like what you like and to do what you want to do, even if it's not what everyone else is doing. If you can dress and act in a way that makes you happy, you'll find it much easier to like the person you are inside.

Make your own definition of 'confidence'

There isn't a single definition of what makes you confident – to some people this is being able to sing in front of a huge crowd, to others it can be as simple as putting your hand up in class to ask a question. Making small steps and congratulating yourself for overcoming challenges (however small!) is the key to building up your self-esteem. It won't happen overnight, but by setting yourself small but achievable goals to boost your confidence in your own abilities you'll soon start to notice that you're holding your head up high.

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Try new things!

Everyone has a talent, and nurturing this talent will help you to feel good about yourself and your skills. Even if you don't play an instrument or a sport, it's never too late to start! Find out what you like and do it as much as you can. Having a part of yourself that you can be proud of will help you to develop confidence in everything else.

If there is something at school you struggle with like reading aloud, practice at home to develop the confidence to do it in front of other people. Actress Rosamund Hanson was born with a cleft palate, and says she used to insist on reading aloud in English just to prove that she could articulate words as well as anyone else!

Don't let other people get you down

People who try to make you feel bad about yourself often have low self-esteem themselves. People who try to knock your confidence are usually just bullies or they are jealous of you. Bullies normally lack confidence or have problems of their own, the only way they can feel better about themselves is to make others feel bad. If you are being bullied you should report it to someone. But ignore the hurtful things they say, don't let them make you feel bad about yourself, otherwise they've won. It's important to remember that the mean things bullies say are not true, they just want to upset you and will say anything to do so! Only you can control how you feel about yourself, don't let bullies get to you!

An important thing to remember is that you are allowed to cut people out of your life who only make you feel bad. Maybe you have a friend who isn't always very friendly and makes themselves feel better by putting you down, but you don't have to put up with it! If you can't convince them to change how they act towards you, then you're better off without them. The world is full of people who will love you just as you are, so don't waste your time and energy on nasty people who aren't worth it.

Don't be critical of yourself



Often our harshest critic is ourselves! People tend to think bad things about themselves that other people don't even notice, and to focus on the things they dislike about themselves, but by focusing on them we blow them out of proportion in our own mind.

Don't focus on what you are bad at, focus on what you are good at. You may not be very good at maths, but you might be really good at art, so instead of thinking you're stupid because you find maths hard, think of yourself as talented because you are good at art!

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Everyone is different which is why everyone is good at different things, it would be very boring if we were all the same! Finally, it is important to remember you are not alone. If something is upsetting you, talk to your friends or family. They care for you and can help you to see all your good qualities. Talking to someone nearly always makes you feel better, and remember – if you wouldn't say those nasty things to your best friend, don't say them to yourself!

As our Patron and singer/songwriter **Richard Hawley** says, "*It's important not to want to be something or someone else. You are different from everyone else, that's good, it gives you a perspective they never had. Encourage the empathy and understanding, look in the mirror and love yourself – you are beautiful.*"

If you feel insecure sometimes, remember that you are not the only person to feel like this. Everyone has insecurities, it's how you deal with them that matters!