



What Is Confidence and How Do We Get It?

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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There are different definitions of the word "confidence" and different ways of viewing the concept.

1. Keeping a secret - When you have a close friend or co-worker who will take the information you give them and keep it quiet; you are blessed. Not everyone will respect or honour you enough to keep your words private. When someone asks you to keep a confidence, however, you will need to discern whether it is appropriate to do so. Situations including things like abuse or illegal activities do not make good secrets.
2. Belief in something or someone - It is easy to be scammed when you are an honest person of integrity because you expect everyone else to have the same values. The term "confidence man" describes a person who is good at convincing you that their scheme is for your benefit. It is important to discern where to put your trust so that you will not be deceived.
3. Trusting in yourself - I am amazed by how many people lack confidence in their own abilities. Often, they have taken the judgmental words of another person as truth, despite their skills and good character. Sometimes they have used one example of failure from their past as a general summation of their worth (or lack of it). Frequently, they focus only on the areas where they are weak.

If you are concerned about where to put your confidence, there are several things you can do:

1. Assess - Take your time in gathering information before you make long-term decisions.
2. Consult - Ask others for their opinions and experience.
3. Focus - Think about the things that are true - both negative and positive.
4. Improve - Set goals to enhance the things that you want to change.
5. Accept - Acknowledge that there are things from the past that you cannot alter.
6. Trust - Build a group of trustworthy individuals to support you.
7. Believe - Know that you can improve your situation so that the past will not "haunt" you.

When others fail you, either in word or deed, that doesn't mean that you are a failure. It just means that you have had an experience that will help you to learn and grow.

Last year, I attended my grandson's university convocation ceremony in California. The guest speaker, who is a professional golfer told us about how she trains others to golf. She tells them that the word FAIL is just First Attempt At Learning.

Build confidence in yourself and take your time when it comes to where you place your confidence when it comes to others. Like anything else, this just takes practice!