

How to Increase Our Inner Confidence

A number of people I've worked with have told me that they struggle with confidence. That is natural, and a lot more common than they probably realize. Yet, many of them are givers — they truly care about others and go out of their way to help people. They are all about the team, not themselves.

Being a giver is a very special quality. It can be the support of our success and our happiness – and our inner confidence.

In business, as well as in life, it is so important to have a sense of inner confidence. I believe that inner confidence coupled with humility allows us to say to ourselves and to another, "Hey, I'm glad I am the way I am. Could I be better? Sure. Let's face it, we all could be better — and let's all try to be our best selves."

Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable in this way with another person is a gateway to developing trust in the relationship. If we can be ourselves, we invite others to be genuine, as well. This is when meaningful conversations occur, which inspire reflection and commitment to improvement. Inner confidence and humility also allow us to encourage and root for the other person, to want to see others succeed, and to help them.

So, how do we gain inner confidence? How do we feel good about ourselves and our abilities, and not constantly compete or compare ourselves with others?

As with so much in life, our attitude means so much, a positive attitude, positive energy.

Let's not listen to our inner voice that says we're not smart enough, or successful enough, or we're not attractive and so on. We all have that inner voice, and it does not serve us well. Focusing on gratitude and appreciation is a strategy to ignore it. As a book title suggests, focus on the good stuff!

And know that a smile goes a long way.

Our positive energy includes the way we carry ourselves. Dress neatly. Walk like an athlete —purposefully, stand tall, head high, shoulders back, make comfortable eye contact, firm handshake, and a sense of "I own a share of the room".

At a reception or other event, look for the person who is by her or himself, go up to that person and have a conversation. She or he will appreciate your initiative and you will have a new friend.

Different scenario: imagine you're in an important meeting. There's a problem being discussed and you've got some ideas but you're reluctant to speak up. Concentrate on the solution and that fact that you're helping the company. Now take a deep breath and go ahead and offer to fix it.

Or ask a powerful question, a question that gets people thinking.

Make things happen. Contribute your ideas. Don't complain. Help your company grow by identifying potential new clients and services or products.

Find out what needs to be done and just do it.

My friend and former colleague, Christine LaSala, recently shared with me that early in her career, her strategy for feeling secure (at the time, in a male dominated environment) was to be the most prepared and most knowledgeable person in the room. That works, male or female, all the time!

Certainly, gaining confidence is a process. It's our positive attitude coupled with our actions, taking small, simple steps that are the right things to think, say and do.

The path to feeling secure about ourselves can begin with little things, like holding a door open for others, letting in a car in front of you, folding your napkin in a restaurant, returning a shopping cart in a parking lot and being kind to strangers.

Yes, these are little things, yet they are the right things to do. It's how we contribute to civility, how we show appreciation and respect for others.

Be truthful, kind, encouraging and unifying – this Zen principle is worth following.

Our qualities and actions are our essence and when we act with honesty and integrity, this helps us to be comfortable with ourselves and in our relationships.

Relationships are so important, and relationships are best established with conversations, not simply emails, when we listen to understand and learn. This leads to trust, and when we sense that people respect and trust us, our confidence is boosted.

Let's remember to ask questions about the other person, be curious, and be a good and patient listener. What is the person saying, not saying, and feeling? Ask questions to show you genuinely care. These actions convey respect and humility, much more so than talking about ourselves.

Follow the principle of listening a lot more than speaking. Try listening 80% of the time. You'll be respected and you will likely sense that and strengthen your inner confidence.

Remember that people with quiet confidence are focused on others.

There are good books, quick helpful reads with insight and wisdom. I'd be happy to give recommendations. Just email me.

The bottom line is to maintain a positive attitude, respect others, do the little and right things, carry yourself well, be there for others, and focus on appreciation and gratitude.

As a quote I read on the internet, Tumblr, says "Be-YOU-tiful!"

About The Author



John Keyser is the founder and principal of Common Sense Leadership, www.commonsenseleadership.com. He works with executives helping them develop organizational cultures that will produce outstanding financial results year after year, and a striving for continuous improvement, theirs and their team's. His contact information is john@johnkeysercoach.com and 202-236-2800.