

Self-Confidence

Gaining and maintaining self-confidence and self-esteem are typical challenges facing today's teenagers. Adolescence is a critical stage in a young person's development. Teenagers often find themselves having to cope with family issues and peer pressure on a daily basis. The goal is to reach a stage in your life where you feel good about the person you are.

Ways to Build Self-Confidence

Recognize your insecurities. What does that voice in the back of your mind say? What makes you ashamed of yourself? This could be anything from acne, to regrets, to emotional abuse (past or present) from a loved one or friends at school. Whatever is making you feel unworthy, ashamed, or inferior, identify it, give it a name, and write it down.

Talk about it with friends and loved ones. Wear it on your sleeve. Each day chip away at it; wear it down. There's no quick fix. Get to the root of the problem; focus on it and understand that you need to resolve each issue before you can move on.

Remember that no one is perfect. Even the most confident people have insecurities. At some point in any of our lives, we may feel we lack something. That is reality. Learn that life is full of bumps down the road.

Identify your successes. Everyone is good at something, so discover the things at which *you* excel, then focus on your talents. Give yourself permission to take pride in them. Give yourself credit for your successes. Inferiority is a state of mind in which you've declared yourself a victim. Do not allow yourself to be victimized.

Be Thankful for what you have. A lot of the times, at the root of insecurity and lack of confidence is a feeling of not having *enough* of something, whether it's emotional validation, good luck, money, etc. By acknowledging and appreciating what you **do** have, you can combat the feeling of being incomplete and unsatisfied. Finding that inner peace will do wonders for your confidence.

Be Positive. Even if you don't feel positive. Avoid self-pity, or the pity and sympathy of others. Never allow others to make you feel inferior--they can only do so if you let them. If you continue to loathe and belittle yourself, others are going to do and believe likewise. Instead, speak positively about yourself, about your future, and about your progress. Do not be afraid to project your strengths and qualities to others. By doing so, you reinforce those ideas in your mind and encourage your growth in a positive direction.

Look in the mirror and smile. Studies surrounding what's called the "facial feedback theory" suggest that the expressions on your face can actually encourage your brain to register certain emotions. So by looking in the mirror and smiling every day, you might feel happier with yourself and more confident in the long run.

Developing coping mechanism. Along the same lines of smiling to make yourself feel happy, acting confident might actually make you believe it. Pretend you're a completely confident version of you; go through the motions and see how you feel.