

5 Steps to Feeling More Confident- by Jacey Tramutt, MA, LPC
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Finding your purpose in life and feeling confident are intimately connected- it is hard to have one without the other. When you are living the life you love, confidence flows from you naturally, and is not forced or contrived because you are being you. You can relax. In order to find your purpose in life and develop self-confidence, you have to make a commitment to yourself and your process of evolution. Although transformation may not occur overnight, here are 5 integral steps that anyone can begin to practice immediately that will help cultivate confidence and bring clarity to one's purpose.

1) Practice Being Present:

Paying attention to where you are and what you are doing is key to feeling confident. Do you often find yourself re-hashing the past or worrying about the future? Being lost in negative thoughts is a distraction from the actual present moment you are living. Try choosing an everyday activity such as driving, eating, getting the mail, petting your dog, etc... and put your attention fully on your experience. See what you notice.

2) Be able to feel a wide range of emotions:

Many people are uncomfortable feeling emotions, and will do just about anything to avoid them, including: shutting down, blaming others, and/or engaging in addictive behaviors such as over-eating or drinking too much alcohol. These behaviors often lead to feeling shame, which is the opposite of feeling confident. By learning to be comfortable feeling a wide range of emotions you will have more options about your behavior. When you feel good about your behavior, you will feel more confident. The next time you are feeling an emotion, see if you can bring precision to the experience. What are the sensations in your body? What are your thoughts? Take a few deep breaths and let yourself experience the emotion instead of trying to escape it.

3) Learn how to set boundaries:

Many people who lack self-confidence feel like they are not respected. If you want to be respected by others, you have to start by respecting yourself. Learn how to say no. Listen to your body and take care of your basic needs, such as eating healthy, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Make taking care of yourself your number one priority. Once you are able to respect your own boundaries, look at relationships that leave you feeling depleted, angry, or confused. Think about what boundaries you would like to set. It may be helpful to begin by setting boundaries with someone that feels safe to you.

4) Set small, achievable goals:

The problem with goals is that often people set them too big- and then feel frustrated and disappointed in them-selves when they don't achieve them. It is best to start small. For example, let's say you want to run a marathon, but you

haven't exercised for over a year. Rather than setting your goal to be to run a marathon, set the goal that you are going to run 5 days a week for 5 minutes each day. When that becomes easy, go up to 10 minutes. By breaking down your goal of running a marathon into achievable steps, you will see your success, stay focused on your goal, and feel confident in your ability to achieve your goal.

5) Celebrate your successes:

When you are able to do any of the steps listed above, let yourself feel the impact of your achievement. Celebrate! Find ways to honor your progress that feel right to you. Some ideas are: take the day off and spend it doing exactly what you want to do, share your success with a friend, journal about your experience, or buy yourself a small gift that reminds you of what you accomplished. Whatever you do, let yourself begin to bring awareness to how you feel when you are successful. When you allow yourself to receive, you affirm your own worthiness.