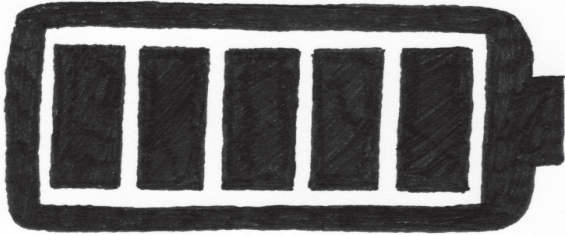


21. Attitude Activity: The Battery

Dr Steve Bull was the England Cricket Team's psychologist for seventeen years, working with players who experienced huge pressure to perform day in, day out. As a result, he has developed a series of interesting tools for boosting people's confidence in their own ability. In his book, *The Game Plan* (2006, p. 33), Bull says, 'It seems to be a human frailty that we are programmed to focus on failure and disappointment far more than on success and accomplishment. We find it very easy to recall those disastrous days when everything went wrong.' He goes on to say that 'When we are faced with a similar challenge, our brains are quick to recall the previous catastrophe.' He then concludes that 'the cycle must be broken, and the most effective way of doing this is to actively reconnect your mind with previous accomplishments'. Dr Bull worked with cricketers asking them to record their previous successes, and saw their confidence rocket and their performances improve as a result.

Bull uses mountain peaks as his confidence metaphor, but we prefer the image of a phone battery. We like the idea of a battery because confidence in your ability gives you energy. It charges you up and fills you with strength and belief. You can keep your battery topped up by recalling those times when things went brilliantly and you really achieved what you were capable of.



SLOT 1

SLOT 2

SLOT 3

SLOT 4

SLOT 5

You have five energy slots to fill. Your job is to fill each slot above with a brief description of a time when you performed really well and achieved something you are pleased with or proud of. When you're feeling low, you can return to your battery, read the information there and feel yourself recharge with positivity and purpose.

But what do you write in the five slots? Try using the following as guidelines:

- » Times when you supported or helped someone perform better or taught them something.
- » Times when your family members valued you for doing the right thing, making a good decision or doing a good turn.
- » Times when you worked in a team, adding value to that team.
- » Times when you did something you felt scared about, facing down your fear.
- » Times when you performed well in a test or a homework and got a grade/score you were pleased with.
- » Times when you made a difficult decision.
- » Times when your strengths, skills and talents meant you did a good job.

- » Times you've been rewarded – either verbally through someone saying thank you, or via a letter home, a certificate or an award.

Go back as far as you can. A well-charged confidence battery draws on achievements from all areas of your life and from all times of your life, so don't limit yourself to school or this academic year. You've been doing good work for a long time now – think hard to recall it all!

Final Thoughts

If you're feeling low, a natural response to a task like this might be – "I can't think of anything." We've worked with lots of pupils who've responded this way. We've also responded this way ourselves when we've felt down about our situation or circumstances.

Here's some advice for when your inner critic – that negative voice we all sometimes have inside us – gets too noisy and confident:

Kill all comparisons. Let your negative voice say what it wants for a few minutes, but all comparisons are banned. If it tries telling you, "*You're not as good as...*" – shut it down. It's called 'impostor syndrome', where you feel you are a fraud. "*I don't deserve to be here*" or "*Others are cleverer than me*" are common feelings and messages. Refuse to accept the voice if it tries any comparisons like these.

Use the space below to design a response to your inner critic when it gets like this. A quick, two or three sentence answer which stops it in its tracks:

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Challenge your inner critic with data. Your SATS scores. Your reports from Year 7, 8 or 9. The last decent grade you got on a piece of work. Or challenge your negative voice with a demand. "*Well if you think that, what should I do about it? Got any ideas?*"

Use this space to plan a response that covers these two bases – drawing on data, and challenging the negative voice directly:

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