

What I love about me?

Our brains tend to focus on negative thoughts, which can give us a bias that distorts our outlook on the world. Self-love can not only buffer against this negativity but also serves as a fundamental way to prime ourselves toward focussing on the great things that make us who we are.

The more we appreciate and note what we love about ourselves, the more maintainable this shift in our thought patterns will become. Priming in this way makes us appreciate ourselves more on a daily basis. We learn to pay more attention to the little moments that remind us why we're amazing.

Needless to say, self-love builds confidence. Changing your inner dialogue can shift your mindset over time so your brain will begin to recognise that you're more capable and competent than you give yourself credit for.

What are three things you love about yourself?

Concentrate on exploring these aspects for five minutes (or more if needed). And then remind yourself of them throughout the day."

"Changing your inner dialogue can shift your mindset over time so your brain will begin to recognise that you're more capable and competent than you give yourself credit for.

You should be proud of yourself

"When was the last time someone told you they were proud of you?

While the statement may come with good intentions, relying on this external source of validation is not sustainable for a positive self-image. You don't need to rely on someone else's validation to be worthy and confident. Instead, you should congratulate yourself, for things that you have achieved.

When you show genuine pride for an achievement the people around will view you positively too! Are you an optimist?

Achieve one positive thing today and tell yourself internally or out loud, "I'm proud of myself for..."

This can be engaging in something pleasurable, like baking a cake, or more related to self-improvement, such as watching a documentary. Are you an optimist?

Celebrating when things go wrong.

"Getting something wrong is perfectly normal – in fact, it's one of the amazing things about being human. We all do it, multiple times a day, in large and small ways.

However, we often subject ourselves to the so-called spotlight effect - a cognitive bias that causes people to overestimate the degree to which they are observed and noticed by others. It essentially means that we see ourselves as the center of our own little Universe, so we tend to look at our mistakes through a magnifying glass. Does that sound familiar? If so, you may enjoy this book on how to fail (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxHOiBJn1o>).

The spotlight effect can undermine our self-confidence and make us more self-conscious. But let's turn this around and be more realistic - do you feel the same way about the mistakes others make as you do when that same mistake is made by you? Today when you find yourself agonising over a mistake you've made or fearing the outcome of something, stop and ask yourself; what is the worst outcome of this event? The best? What steps can I realistically make to achieve the outcome I want this time or the next?

Take a minute to remind yourself that you are allowed to make mistakes and that you can only control for a limited amount of variables. Today when you find yourself agonising over a mistake you've made or fearing the outcome of something, stop and ask yourself; what is the worst outcome of this event? The best? What steps can I realistically make to achieve the outcome I want this time or the next?

Getting out of the spiral "Have you ever been in a negative thought spiral?"

When we enter negative spirals, our thoughts take on a life of their own and lead us to believe our actions are pointless and ineffective (read more about negative spirals).

Mindfulness disrupts negative spirals by focusing our attention on something else (e.g. our breathing). Our brains can only do one thing at a time – even when we believe we are multi-tasking, we are simply rapidly switching from one thing to the other. This means focusing on breathing requires our mind to stop focusing on negative thoughts.

Lack of confidence is often caused by a constant stream of negative thoughts and behind that stream is our identification with these thoughts. If an inner voice is telling us that we are somehow unworthy, we may assume that we are. Try this 3-minute mindfulness practice (or if you want, go for 10 minutes).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABK0SYFxyEY>

Maintain an upright posture without leaning against anything. Then, just follow the instructions in the video clip. You don't have to be in a negative spiral to do this - mindfulness is best practiced on a daily basis, as it involves developing a different and more positive relationship to your thoughts." "Try this 3-minute mindfulness practice (or if you want, go for 10 minutes).

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Getting Stressed? "Feeling stressed and overwhelmed?"

It's easy to give in to stress by working even harder, exercising even more, sleeping even less, etc.

However, this only perpetuates the situation and creates a vicious cycle where our stress holds us hostage. Instead, try breaking the cycle.

You may have heard the phrase ""take a walk"" regarding a stressful scenario – and the truth is that walking is a great stress reliever.

Next time you feel overwhelmed by studies, work, or an argument, take a break and go for a walk, get some fresh air. It will help to recentre you. Studies of stress reduction show a clear link to improved self-esteem. During a stressful moment today, choose a favourite spot, ideally in nature, and step outside.

Walk for at least 20 minutes if you can and make a conscious effort to notice things. For example, you may want to focus on all the small things you appreciated today, or on your breathing and body movements, or even on a small aspect of nature to recognise how your stressful event can be overcome. In this way, walking acts a bit like meditation." "During a stressful moment today, choose a favourite spot, ideally in nature, and step outside.

It's way more than physical exercise: yoga builds strength and agility, reduces pain, relaxes the mind, manages stress, and increases self-esteem, amongst other things.

It's a great way to boost your confidence :) Make some time today to mirror this 10 min yoga exercise.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sYAWZXL268&ab\\_channel=YogawithKassandra](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sYAWZXL268&ab_channel=YogawithKassandra) " "Make some time today to mirror this 10 min yoga exercise.

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The Wonders of Nature "Do you ever feel disconnected from nature?

As more and more of our daily activities take place indoors it's easy to give nature a low priority when we're cozied up with our favourite Netflix series.

However spending time in nature has a wide range of benefits; it improves your mood, reduces negative feelings, increases relaxation, and boosts confidence!

New research by the UCL Institute of Education has found that 79% of people felt more confident in themselves having spent time participating in outdoor activities. Try to spend at least 30 minutes today outside.

Walk around and use all your senses: consciously smell the air, take in the scene, touch plants or trees, and listen to the wind in the leaves and other sounds in order to reconnect with nature." "Try to spend at least 30 minutes today outside.

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The Power Pose "Have you heard of Amy Cuddy? She is a social psychologist who created the term "power pose".

The power pose was an experiment at Harvard University where participants sat in either a high-power pose (expansive posture) or low-power pose (leaning inward, legs crossed) position for two minutes.

Those in the first group felt more powerful and performed better with more confidence in subsequent interactions." "Before a meeting or a situation today where you could use that extra boost of confidence, adopt the power pose for 2 minutes.

<https://www.betterup.com/blog/power-poses> "

The Dangers of Perfectionism "Have you ever struggled with accepting anything less than being perfect in a relationship or your own performance?

Do you demonstrate the traits of perfectionism?

The reality, of course, is that nothing is perfect. Being too wedded to the notion of perfection may leave you chasing your own tail. If you believe that nothing will ever be good enough, be it in yourself or others, this can undermine your confidence and sense of self.

According to Flett and colleagues, successful people actually are less likely to be perfectionists, as the symptoms of perfectionism are more likely to thwart higher levels of success one might achieve."

"Where would you place yourself between these 2 extremes?

What would people who knew you well say?

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Small Goals = Big Rewards "Accomplishments and positive feedback build confidence. Achieving your goals – whether big or small – can make you feel better about yourself. However, big accomplishments don't happen overnight. The best way to reach your goals is to break them down into manageable smaller goals.

One way to do this is by using the "1-3-5 rule":

- achieve one big task,
- three medium tasks,
- five small tasks.

These tasks can vary, from going for a 30-minute walk to studying extensively for an exam, and should be tailored to each individual.

Completing all 9 elements can lead you to feel more productive and shows progress towards larger, overarching goals." "Sit down and write a 1-3-5 list for a major goal that you've been thinking about recently.

Break the work down into one big task, three medium tasks, and five small tasks. "

Take Care of Yourself – Sleep

"In order to feel good about yourself, you need to take care of your body and your mind. Prioritising self-care helps you to be more positive and optimistic about yourself, which leads you to naturally feel more confident.

There are many ways to do this, some of which you may already do, including getting a good night's sleep. How long and how deeply you sleep can have a significant impact on your everyday mental state and sense of well-being. There are many things that can interfere with good quality sleep. For instance, do you ever find yourself in bed scrolling endlessly on social media, watching something on Netflix, or reading the news just before going to sleep?

Research has shown that the 'blue light' emissions from our phones prevent the release of necessary sleep hormones, and using electronic devices before going to bed has been shown to significantly reduce sleep quality." Try this tonight: switch off the TV and put your phone away 30 minutes before you go to bed, and try something like reading or listening to relaxing music instead.

## Take Care of Yourself - Exercise

"Feeling good about yourself involves taking care of your body and mind.

Prioritising self-care helps you to be happier and more confident. This includes regular exercise.

Research has shown that physical activity can improve mood and increase confidence along with many other physical and mental health benefits. Not a fan of the gym or running marathons? Don't panic - any form of movement that raises the heart rate above its resting level counts!" "Think of one way you can move your body today, even if it's just for 5 minutes.

You could walk around the block, take a free YouTube exercise class, or dance to your favourite uplifting song."

Choose the right food "When it comes to mood and behaviour, research shows we are what we eat. A nutrient-packed diet may help to reduce anxiety, boost your mood, and in turn help you to feel more confident.

However, a diet loaded with sugar and caffeine can cause energy spikes and mood swings and lead to a dip in how you feel.

We tend to feel better physically and mentally when we eat the right foods, whereas reaching for ones like sugary snacks and high GI carbs will give us a momentary feel-good blip followed by a low.

Complex carbohydrates provide slow-release energy and greater metabolic stability which can improve our sense of wellbeing." "To help you maintain a positive disposition all day long, it's important to eat well, consume mood-boosting foods, and keep well hydrated. If your brain isn't working optimally, you'll be more prone to poor memory, mood swings, and making mistakes and this can all impact your confidence levels.

Be sure to include more of the following foods in your diet:

- Complex carbohydrates for slow-release energy (often referred to as low GI - 'glycaemic index'); porridge, muesli, granary bread, and chickpeas.
- Foods rich in vitamin D - such as eggs, oily fish and fortified cereals.
- Vitamin B - such as green leafy vegetables, low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese.

- Selenium - such as wholegrains, beans, nuts, seeds and shellfish.
- Foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids - such as oily fish, walnuts and soybeans."

## Building Self-Awareness through Meditation

"True self-confidence must be built on a foundation of self-awareness. This allows us to understand our strengths and weaknesses on a deeper level. Many of the thoughts and observations required to achieve this awareness are difficult to reach in our hectic day-to-day lives.

Research suggests that meditation provides an opportunity to sit down, be still, and observe ourselves in a non-judgmental manner that allows us to focus on who we are. The more we meditate, the deeper we can come to understand our strengths and limitations. Mayo Clinic research has shown that through the practice of neutral observation, we can train ourselves to be calmer, more centered, and more accepting.

A better understanding of our limitations and strengths then takes less effort and this will contribute to the development of powerful self-confidence." Try this 5- to 10-minute observation meditation exercise today. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBKhqDtIMdc>

Public Speaking - Reframing Anxiety as Excitement "Do you find yourself getting nervous before a presentation or event that involves speaking in front of people?

Sometimes, people may try to calm their nerves by pretending that they aren't anxious, but this may actually make things worse. Harvard Business School researchers have shown that it may be better to reframe pre-performance anxiety as excitement.

Strategies to do this include simple self-talk eg. saying 'I'm excited' out loud, using simple messages eg. getting excited, or adopting an opportunity mindset instead of a threat mindset. Study participants who announced that they felt excited instead of nervous were seen as more competent and persuasive when they gave public talks.

Reframing feelings of anxiety as a form of emotional reappraisal can improve your confidence in such settings." Next time you have to speak in front of people and you're feeling anxious, be it for a meeting or presentation, try saying "I feel excited to... ask this question/make this point/give this presentation" or write a message to yourself saying 'Get excited', and see how it makes you feel.

Public Speaking - Rehearse Under Pressure "When you consider making a presentation or speaking to an audience, do you ever find yourself getting anxious and lacking confidence?

High-performing sportsmen and professionals practice best under mild stress settings, according to studies on this topic published in the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology.

This phenomenon is frequently referred to as ""stress inoculation"". Instead of practising alone in front of a mirror, think about having a few people observe you practice, even if it's in your office or home room. You can learn to remain composed under pressure and project confidence in a genuine presentation by mimicking even low levels of tension." "Do you have a presentation coming up? If

so, try asking a couple of friends or colleagues for 5 minutes of their time and practise one aspect of the presentation in front of them.

Rehearse only after feeling mild stress to make things more realistic."

**Public Speaking - Drawing on Past Positive Experiences** "When we are worried about an upcoming event, we often dwell on all the things that might go wrong and that have gone wrong in the past. This undermines our confidence and creates a spiral of negative thinking.

Researchers found that most people tend to remember when things go wrong but often forget when things go well. Even if your past experience involved a different audience, number of people watching, or topic, focusing on the positive aspects of a past public speaking experience that went well, can significantly build your confidence for the next event. If you could do it then, you can do it again!"

"Take a moment to think of a time when you performed well (the size and importance of the event don't matter).

- Write down two things that went well and one thing about how you felt when you finished.

You can come back to these notes and read them when you're feeling low in confidence about your next presentation."

**Building Positive Relationships** "You may have heard of the saying that we reflect our 5 closest friendships. Positive relationships are formed by people who support, encourage, and help each other on a practical and emotional level.

Research has shown that having positive relationships influences our confidence. Thus, how people speak to you and interact with you affects how you feel about yourself.

If there is negativity in your close relationships either with a partner or a friend, this can be toxic. It can reduce your self-confidence in your relationships and impact other areas of your life." "It takes confidence to realise that certain people tend to bring you down, criticise you or have a negative influence on the way that you feel.

Today make a plan about how you might spend less time with them, or tell them how you feel about their behaviour and its impact on your wellbeing. ""Sometimes when you say XXX, I feel XXX"" for example."

**Don't give in to your negative inner voice** "Does a little voice inside your head constantly make you doubt yourself? That inner monologue can be extremely powerful, listening to this voice may lead you to doubt yourself.

Researchers from the University of Durham suggest that trying to challenge this critical inner voice consistently may lead to more positive outcomes (and can make it more likely that you can achieve your goals and increase your overall confidence)." "Positive affirmations make a big difference, so remind yourself today what you are capable of.

Whether it's ""I can do this presentation"", or ""I will pursue my goal of starting my own business"" or ""I'm looking forward to becoming more confident"", telling yourself that you can do something will help to quieten the inner voice and in turn allow you to confidently assert yourself."

**Rejection Therapy** "Do you feel like you're lacking in confidence when you interact with others? Are you uncomfortable asking for help or asking others difficult questions?

According to Laurent Gounelle in his autobiographical book called "The Man Who Wanted to Be Happy", we overthink how others view our actions when, in reality, people are more open-minded than we expect. He was tasked with asking strangers uncomfortable questions or favours and discovered that most of the time, to his surprise, they would be very responsive and respected his candour." "At some point today ask someone to do something or answer a question that you think that they may refuse.

Something that you think is difficult or uncomfortable to ask. For example, 'When was the last time you cried?' or 'What's the thing that you regret the most?'

- Document your original thoughts and your person's actual reaction.

This exercise will help you realise that people are more open-minded than you think."

Theory of Mind "Have you ever said 'Hello' to someone but failed to receive a response? Maybe you think you've done something wrong and feel less confident. As human beings, we sometimes assume that we can anticipate someone else's thoughts and needs. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case as people are complex and varied. A person who doesn't respond to you may simply be wearing headphones, be unaware of your presence, or be distracted. Why is this misinterpreted?

Researchers suggest that life events affect the way we act and our perception of others' behaviours. As a consequence, we will evaluate other people's behaviours as negative towards us when we encounter negative circumstances. Our brain's judgement cannot always be trusted.

Theory of mind is the branch of cognitive science that looks at how we ascribe mental states to other people and use this to predict their actions. The more we understand that context affects others' behaviour and that most of the time, it is not our fault or problem, the more confident we can become." "If you catch yourself assuming the worst – for example, that someone dislikes you because they didn't say Hi to you the same way that morning - think to yourself: What is the evidence that they don't like me? How do I actually know what they are thinking? What else is going on in their lives?

Check in with them to see how they're doing."

Favourite Look "When you think you look good, you feel good.

Researchers have found that people who consider themselves good-looking and attractive are more confident.

Dressing well on the outside can change the way that you feel on the inside." Wear your favourite outfit today - something that makes you feel good, comfortable, and most yourself. Then, take note of how you feel every few hours (set reminders).

Productivity "Think about what you've done today.

Even if you weren't able to get out of bed, you had thoughts. Did you have a creative idea? Did you wash the dishes? Did you finish some life admin or that big project you've been working on? Write down everything you can think of." "Think about what you've done today.

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**Your Needs** "Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' is a psychological model that shows what motivates us as human beings. It can help us improve our confidence by understanding our essential needs.

Before we can start thinking about self-esteem, our physiological, safety, and belonging needs must be met.

Research shows that self-esteem correlates positively with self-confidence. Therefore, once we have met our foundational needs, we can foster self-esteem to boost confidence levels. " "Take a moment to think about your needs and review Maslow's hierarchy / the pyramid of common needs.

Starting from the bottom of the pyramid, where do you first find needs that are not currently being fulfilled?"

**Managing your emotions** "We as humans have the capacity to experience at least 27 primary emotional subtypes. True self-confidence can only be developed and maintained through controlling one's emotions.

We can better comprehend self-awareness and emotion control by using Plutchik's wheel of emotions. By using the wheel, we can increase self-awareness by determining the main emotion that underlies our feelings." "Think back to a situation where your emotions impeded your ability to think clearly.

Identify the feeling and work out the primary emotion behind it using Plutchik's wheel.

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**Feel the bass** "Bass music can make you feel powerful.

Studies have shown that participants who listened to music with a heavy bass reported that they felt more powerful, dominant, and determined in themselves." To get you going today listen to some music with a deep bass (e.g. We Will Rock You by Queen, or The Chain by Fleetwood Mac) if you're beginning a difficult task. Try this playlist - <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2eRvjEvtYDjcb07xLig8Qx?si=8bcfdf0677b048e1>

**Change How You Think About Your Skills** "Do you believe that your abilities are fixed at birth, or that they can be trained like a muscle?

These beliefs matter when you are faced with setbacks: individuals with a fixed mindset are more prone to resignation when encountering challenges.

A growing body of literature supports the notion that a fixed intelligence mindset promotes the emergence of maladaptive emotional reactions. Individuals with a more flexible mindset (believing abilities can flourish through training) view challenges as an opportunity for growth. " "When tackling a challenge, do not view it as an insurmountable obstacle, but as a chance to develop and learn from a new situation.

Today think about a current challenge and recite the phrase, "The only real failure is not trying."""

**Smells Great** "A 2009 study by the University of Liverpool discovered that various scents affect both self-confidence and self-esteem.

Other studies have shown that people rated themselves as having higher self-esteem when wearing a pleasant fragrance.

External self-care such as, for example, adding a little perfume or cologne, can be an easy method to give yourself a quick confidence boost. ""Wear your favourite scent today.

It will give you an olfactory boost to your confidence whether you are meeting people or not."

**Increase Competence** "A direct way to increase self-confidence is to increase your competence. This can be through either improving a current skill or gaining a new one.

Figure out what it is you would like to develop. Ensure you take bite-sized steps and reward yourself along the way by setting milestones.

For example, if you'd like to learn a new musical instrument, don't try to learn all the chords at once. Instead, focus on a few key chords at a time. Often, we compare ourselves to others and may undermine our own achievements; ensure you recognise that progress is still progress. " "Starting from today, set aside 30 undisturbed minutes everyday to practice the skill that you want to improve.

- What is your goal?

- Write down some key milestones and celebrate achieving them."

**Change a Small Habit** "Positive habits, such as reading regularly, provide a sense of control.

Psychologist BJ Fogg describes how celebrating a habit, no matter how small, will deepen your personal connection to that habit, which in turn can increase a sense of control and greater confidence in your life." "Take any new habit you want to gain and scale it back so that it's realistic and manageable.

For example, if you want to read more, set yourself the target of reading one page of a book each day. Find where this goal fits naturally within your existing routine. Ask yourself, ""What does this habit come after?"" For example, reading might come after you get ready for bed as a relaxation method.

Start today and celebrate every time you complete your set target - bonus points if you complete it 7 days in a row! It's important to recognise your own success in order to keep up your motivation."

**Focus on Solutions** "Do you often find yourself overthinking a problem without taking any action to try and solve it?

While it may be difficult to control and slow down your thoughts, overthinking rarely helps solve matters. Instead, it uses time and energy which could be diverted to more positive things.

Studies show that overthinking can have debilitating effects on your well-being – in fact, it is closely linked to anxiety and depression. Additionally, overthinking prevents us from acknowledging and managing our emotions effectively.

A general rule of thumb, as Anthony J. D'Angelo once said, is to "Focus 90% of your time on solutions and only 10% of your time on problems."" "Think of a problem that you are facing currently.

Take a couple of minutes today to dedicate to solving your problem in a practical way. Then, look at your options and come up with a plan on how to solve it. Maybe even begin to solve it right now."

**Clear Your Desk** "Research by Libby Sander has shown that our physical environment significantly influences our mindset, emotions, and behaviour.

The presence of clutter is linked to stress and procrastination. This damages our focus, productivity, decision-making, and relationships with others. " Tidy your desk today. If you don't have one choose another space in your home or workplace where you spend a lot of time. Take control.

**Lend a Helping Hand** "Volunteering provides a healthy boost to your self-confidence and self-esteem. Doing good for others and the community provides a natural sense of accomplishment and is a positive good.

Volunteering can also give you a sense of pride and identity. Research even shows that helping others in such a way can give you a longer, happier, and healthier life." Think of how you can help someone today, (a friend, a family member, an organisation) no matter how small the action.

**Complain bravely** "It's difficult for many people to state clearly what they want or to complain about poor service, even when they have every right to do so. It's often felt that it's impolite or uncomfortable to make a fuss and preferable to ""put up and shut up"".

It takes confidence to make your case. However, confident people don't mind complaining. Instead, they ask for help whenever they need it. Asking and possibly being rejected is better than keeping their grievances bottled up and losing out in the long run.

The Chelsea Psychology Clinic has a good article on the importance of standing up for yourself - <https://www.thechelseapsychologyclinic.com/blog/how-to-stand-up-for-yourself-and-why-you-find-it-so-difficult/> "When you feel like you're hesitant to ask for something because you're afraid of appearing difficult or provoking upset, ask yourself - What's the worst that could happen? Are you prepared? Ask anyway, regardless of your fears.

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**Log Your Achievements** "Keep the positive feedback you receive from other people (e.g. a thank you card from a friend, a job-well-done email from a manager, or the time your colleagues went the extra mile for you).

Writing them down helps you acknowledge them, and seeing your achievements recorded shows you all the good that you've done and the positive impact that you've made. Instead of your to-do list – it's your ""I did it!"" list." "Buy a physical notebook or create an online file today and log your achievements.

Log every success, especially the small ones, because they all add up."

**Resilience** "It can be tough to start a new habit or make a change.

When encountering failure, it's easy to just give up. For example, Muhammad Ali, when asked if he liked his training, replied, "I hated every minute of training, but I said to myself, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'"

He refused to quit when things got hard, which made him a legend in boxing.

Try not to get disheartened or demotivated when you get 90% through whatever you're working on. Push through, and you'll see that the last 10% is where the magic happens." "When you want to give up, instead persist for a little longer.

For example, if you feel like you can't concentrate, focus for five more minutes. If you feel tired while on a job, keep going until the next milestone."

**Hacking Self-Motivation** "It's easy to say you will be motivated, but it's harder to actually take the initiative to complete your goals and maintain the drive to keep going.

If you struggle with turning your motivation into action, try rewarding yourself with a little treat every time you complete a certain goal.

The reward should be something you enjoy, such as watching an episode of your favourite series on Netflix. By doing so, you are positively reinforcing the hard work you are doing, and with time, good habits will form. Not to mention you complete the tasks you set out to do!" Choose a task that you're doing today and treat yourself with a clear reward once you complete your set goal.

Teach Others "Everyone has a unique and valuable skill to offer, be it fibre arts, coding, writing, or baking.

Teaching other people new skills in activities you are good at, or simply offering your own experience and perspective, can help you recognise your own uniqueness and boosts your self-confidence. At the same time, it pushes you to appreciate your own value and the amazing things you can offer to others. " "Adopt a teaching mindset: today invite a friend to participate in an activity you enjoy and teach them how to be good at it!

Ways to be a teacher include writing your own blog or vlogs and creating articles on topics you find interesting.

If possible, collect feedback from your audience so you can build your skill set even more! "

Learn to Say No "Have you felt obliged to do something even though you wanted to say no?

You might have been worried that rejecting others would harm your relationship with them. However, it is important to learn to say no so you are not forcing yourself to do something you don't want to.

Become empowered to control your own life by learning to reject others. You will feel much better using your time to do something you enjoy rather than being forced to spend your precious time doing something you dread.

Saying 'No' is one of the habits of highly effective people and a way of saying 'Yes' to your true priorities." "Today, give yourself a few seconds to process your wants before agreeing to do something with others.

You may find yourself wanting to say no, and that is perfectly fine. Just be honest and remember that you don't need to give a reason for your rejection. "

Learn to Say Yes "New experiences are how you grow as a person and increase your confidence. However, you might find yourself struggling to accept new challenges or enter new situations because you're anxious about stepping out of your comfort zone. This could lead to a recurring cycle of regret and missed opportunities.

According to a new survey by Crodino, more than half of adults are dealing with "FOSY," or the "fear of saying yes."

Learning how to say yes to new experiences enables you to seize the opportunities to grow, expand your horizons, and increase your self-confidence! Saying yes to new challenges may take you out of your comfort zone, but it's the only way to keep growing and developing professionally." Today, say YES to a new experience and accept new challenges.

**Fake Smile** "Smiling is important in humans and is often associated with well-being. It's well known to reduce stress and can help enhance confidence. The smile does not even have to be real. Fake smiles trick the brain into thinking you're happy.

A recent study found that putting a pen between your lips activates the muscles used in a genuine smile and leads to feelings of happiness! This means when you feel down, fake smiling could boost your mood." "If you feel down at some point in your day today, try fake smiling.

Put that grin on your face and see if it changes your outlook.

You can put a pen between your lips if it helps. "

**Attitude for Gratitude** "A 2010 review found that gratitude is strongly linked to well-being.

One way of helping you to feel good about yourself is to think about all the positive things you already have in your life.

Thinking about achievements you already have can provide evidence of your accomplishments and boost your confidence regarding your own abilities." "Consider the following gratitude thought starters today;

I'm grateful for \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ didn't happen.

I'm grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ happened to me.

I'm grateful I accomplished these goals: \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm grateful to have \_\_\_\_\_ in my life.

I'm grateful that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm grateful that I am not \_\_\_\_\_."

**Thanking Others** "Being grateful for aspects of your life is important for your well-being, but gratitude towards others is just as important. As an article in Harvard Health states, 'thanking others can make you happier and improve your relationships'.

The well-being that results from this happiness is important for your confidence.

Ways to cultivate gratitude on a regular basis include writing a thank you note, thanking someone mentally, keeping a gratitude journal, counting your blessings, praying, and meditating. " "Think about people you are grateful to in your life and let them know how you feel today.

You can thank them in person, write a note, or even thank them mentally if you don't have time to tell them. "

**Posture** "Confidence comes from not only your thoughts but also your body language and how you hold yourself.

A 2009 study showed that good posture increases confidence levels. Sitting up straight in your chair can give you confidence in your positive thoughts, attitude, and well-being." "Today, sit up straight as much as you can.

Remind yourself to maintain good posture. Time yourself when you are sitting well and see how you progress throughout the day."

**Remove "filler" Vocabulary** "Former Google executive Ellen Petry Leanse noticed that less confident women frequently use the word "just" - e.g. "I just wanted to check...". This was found to be a way of putting yourself in the background.

Using this word can make you feel less important and as a result, reduce your self-esteem. Removing it from your vocabulary can counter this effect. ""Throughout your day today, count the number of times you use "just" and try to reduce that number.

Use the notes function on your phone or keep a tally on a piece of paper. You'll be surprised at the number of times you use this self-deprecating modifier."

**Nodding** "The act of nodding has been shown to increase confidence in your own thoughts.

A 2003 study by Briñol and Petty found that nodding increases confidence in thoughts while shaking your head decreases it. ""While thinking positive thoughts about yourself today and your actions, nod several times.

Act in supportive agreement with your internal dialogue.

You can also try shaking your head when you think negatively about yourself."

**Accept Compliments** "Do you feel uncomfortable accepting compliments?

Low self-confidence is reflected in the inability to accept compliments. Compliments are often regarded with suspicion by people lacking confidence, wondering whether the other person has an ulterior motive.

Be comfortable with compliments. Accept them. Giving and receiving compliments can build one's self-confidence and make you feel good.

Neuroscientists have even shown that the brain processes verbal affirmations similarly to financial rewards." "Compliment others

Pick the right moment today, keep it concise, and be sincere. Remember don't put yourself down (e.g., I couldn't have done it so well).

You can also have a 'compliment chat' with your friends regularly. Ask them to say some good, positive things about you and then you can return the favour.

Write down how you feel before and after these conversations. "

**Imposter Syndrome** "Impostor syndrome refers to the belief that you are not as competent as others perceive you to be.

You may have found yourself in a position that, on paper, you qualify for, but don't feel like you should be there. Perhaps you've landed yourself in a job or team that you feel is far better than you. Similar to the 'fake it til you make it' approach, you may simply need a mindset shift.

Think about what skills you bring to the table; ask yourself whether this feeling is logical - you wouldn't have got the job if the organisation didn't think you were the right fit.

Dr Kyle Elliot describes how there are 4 proven methods to overcome impostor syndrome - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2021/03/23/overcoming-imposter-syndrome-four-proven-methods-to-increase-your-confidence/?sh=5aecb730755c> "List down what specifically makes you feel like an imposter, and then list reasons for why this isn't the case (i.e. you learned this

skill at University, or developed the right experience in a previous role and put the hard work in over time).

Reflecting on Reactions "Like everyone at some point, we've reacted to situations in a way that could have been better.

Many of us have said no to opportunities that are outside of our comfort zone or responded awkwardly to new situations. For example, many people automatically say no to a new type of food, going to new places, or meeting new people.

This can have a big negative impact on our confidence." "Today take the time to reflect on past events when you wished you'd acted differently.

If you find that you cringe at your younger self, that's a sign that you've grown as a person! Think about how you would act differently in a previous experience that you'd want to improve so that if something similar happens again you'd know how to react."

Professional confidence "There are lots of ways to feel more confident in your place of work or study, such as improving your time management, awareness of the bigger picture, or showing mastery of your subject.

One evidence-based framework to consider is breaking things down into specific challenges:

Knowledge (what do you need to do?).

Belief (why can't it be you who does it?).

Action (how will you do it?).

Approaching issues in such a manner is a route to improving confidence." "List down something you would like to improve your confidence in, and a suitable action to work on it.

- What is the knowledge that you need?

- What steps do you need to take?

- Could you spend 5 minutes writing down a list of things you need to do — there's a myriad of apps and other tools out there to help you. "

"Develop your willpower

" "You may wonder about the strange paradox of that person who lacks confidence, yet somehow manages to fulfill their goals.

Willpower is the key. "Ultimately willpower trumps everything: if you want something badly, you will try to get it, regardless of how you rate your skills,"" says Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Professor of Business Psychology at UCL.

Instead of focusing on the lack of confidence, you should focus on how much you want something, why you want it, and what will happen once you get it.

Focusing on willpower will allow you to see what is blocking your progress.

Think about a scenario that you don't feel confident about, for example running, but you really want to run a marathon to raise money for a charity that has helped a loved one deal with a terrible illness.

Motivating yourself can boost confidence and is what gives you the drive to start running and get in shape to run the marathon." "Take a moment to write down a current goal today and connect it to your strongest motivation.

Then think about what steps you need to take to achieve the goal."

Ditch thinking for doing "Are there times when you lack confidence and motivation?

Do you have times when all your thoughts are critical and negative?

""The antidote for worrying and obsessing is DOING"" , says Niki Flacks, acting coach, psychologist, and therapist.

As soon as you become aware of overthinking, instead, just start doing something. Any positive activity can help reset your thoughts, be it yoga, walking around the block, or cleaning.

So next time you start to feel yourself worrying about something, get up, get out, get doing!"

Make a list of small things you can do right now, such as cleaning your room, walking round the block, 10 minutes of Yoga on YouTube etc. and just get them done.

Breathe slowly and deeply "Stress, feeling bad about ourselves, or rushing around trying to accomplish too much usually leads to rapid, shallow breathing. True confidence is about feeling calm.

When we're calm, our heart rate is steady and regular.

Slow, proper breathing is a good way to help lessen stress and anxiety.

Deep breathing supplies oxygen to the brain.

Purposeful, deep breathing takes practice but can yield many health benefits and is helpful for dealing with stress and psychosomatic conditions." "Here are some helpful breathing techniques to try today; take time to try them all and see which works best for you.

1) Try the rhythmic yoga technique known as a breath of fire - link to YouTube.

2) Try the Japanese Hara technique: stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, place your right hand around the navel, and breathe deeply so that the breath enters your entire abdomen, followed by a deep exhalation.

3) Diaphragmatic breathing: sit in a comfortable position or lie flat on a comfortable flat surface. Relax your shoulders. Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose for about two seconds. You should experience the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, making your stomach expand. Make sure your stomach is moving outward while your chest remains relatively still. Purse your lips (as if you're drinking through a straw), press gently on your stomach, and exhale slowly for about two seconds. Repeat these steps several times."

Be with confident people "If we equate confidence with being authentic, then we attract authentic people", says Annie Ashdown, confidence coach.



Be confident!

Surround yourself with confident people.

Spend time with people who are confident.

Negative people make you feel insecure. Avoiding them is the first step, and finding positive, confident people is a continuous process. This isn't about ditching anyone (unless they undermine you), but about attracting new people to you." Think about who are the confident people who make you feel secure? Try to work or study with them more and observe what they do and how they hold themselves.

Positive comparison "When do you consider yourself blessed compared to someone less successful than you?

It's all too common for us to compare our abilities, skills, personal qualities, or possessions with those of someone who we believe has more or is 'better'. In comparison with what we presume to be the best about others, we compare what we think is the worst about ourselves.

Researchers found negative comparisons only created resentment and feelings of unfairness, as well as lower confidence." "Try this today. There are two ways to create the right perspective:

1) Focus on you. Comparing yourself to others puts the focus on the wrong person. Instead of looking at what others have done and are doing, concentrate on what you have done and what you are doing. Think about what you've experienced, achieved, or overcome. How far have you come since last week, last year, two years ago, five years ago? Focus on how you can get back on track if you've faced a setback.

2) Rather than comparing yourself with others, be inspired by them. See them as role models you can learn from and be inspired by. By allowing yourself to feel inspired by others, you can become motivated to achieve your own goals according to your capabilities, skills, and resources."

Stepping out of your comfort zone "A feeling of comfort occurs when things feel good and are familiar. You know what to expect and know-how, when, and what to do. It's a feeling of ease and control. Most people understandably tend to prefer being in their comfort zone.

Leaving your comfort zone may make you feel stressed and lacking in confidence. However, there is another zone - the confidence-building or 'stretch' zone. You can actually achieve things more effectively and efficiently if you step just outside of your comfort zone into this new zone, and this will help to grow your confidence.

Despite feeling challenged, you won't feel too stressed and need to retreat. What will happen is that your comfort zone will grow and evolve over time with you." "There are 3 steps:

1) Identify your comfort zones. Think of all the things you usually do in the same old ways - what you eat, what you say automatically, what you do on the school run, or going to the supermarket, when you're visiting family and friends.

2) Find ways to step outside your comfort zone. Make a list of five things that you could do differently which would push you out of your comfort zone. Try to change the way you do things a bit or try to do more. Take a different route to work, for example. Exchange platitudes for meaningful conversation. Make it a habit to step outside of your comfort zone.

3) Make snap decisions. Every once in a while, don't overthink it, just do things differently whenever possible. Make actions based on impulse. Self-confidence comes from snap decisions. Take risks. Feel free to do something out of your usual routine that takes you out of your comfort zone. Variety is fun."

Learned optimism        "Life inflicts the same setbacks and tragedies on the optimist as on the pessimist, but the optimist weathers them better" Martin Seligman.

Self-confidence can be closely related to optimism. In Seligman's theory of learned optimism, three thinking styles are involved: persistence, pervasiveness, and personalisation. When good things happen, optimists think they're going to succeed in everything, and 'it's because of me.' Sometimes, when bad things happen, optimists think that the circumstances may not have anything to do with them, and 'I may not have had anything to do with it'.

Pessimists, on the other hand, believe the opposite. They assume that sometimes, in specific circumstances, they might succeed, but that it was probably a fluke. Pessimists generally believe that they will always fail in some way, no matter what they do in life and that everything is their fault.

Having seen how pessimists and optimists differ, you may realise that being optimistic can greatly boost your sense of confidence."        "Cultivate 'learned optimism'.

Think about a recent event in terms of persistence, pervasiveness, and personalisation.

1. Personal – were the consequences of the event related to internal or external factors?
2. Pervasiveness – do you use words such as 'always' and 'never'? Do you catastrophise and attribute something negative as affecting everything in your life?
3. Persistence – is a negative event fleeting and changeable or permanent and long-lasting for you?

Changing the way that you explain events helps to challenge the above cognitive distortions. Shifting from a pessimistic explanatory style by confronting the 3 P's can help you to replace them with more optimistic and open thoughts about the world. "

First impression "Do you think you give off a positive impression when you first meet new people?

Smiling, eye contact, a firm handshake, and relaxation are the ingredients of a good first impression. The way you present yourself when meeting others generates energy and shows your confidence. Studies prove your smile has a direct impact on your self-confidence.

"        "Make an effort each day to practice making a good first impression when you meet someone new - smiling, eye contact, a firm handshake, and relaxation.

The goal is to simply receive a positive response."

The Four Step Method "A negative mindset can limit your confidence and block you from achieving your goals. How is it possible to stop disempowering thoughts? Researchers have created the '4-step method' as a way of helping you acknowledge and then move on from negative thoughts. It's easy to apply with practice.

The 4 steps are;

1. Be mindful
2. Stop disempowering thoughts
3. Replace them with empowering thoughts
4. Keep going until it becomes automatic.

Being mindful means paying attention to what you are thinking and feeling in the moment, and being aware of how you respond to others and situations. Seeing things more clearly helps you develop a level of realisation where you won't speak and act so impulsively. This can help lead to greater confidence and self-esteem." "Starting today practice mindfulness for a few minutes each day for the next 7 days.

- Spend the time to stop and simply verbalise every movement that you make. This helps you to become focussed on describing and analysing.

- Then for the following 7 days, simply spend 5 minutes sitting still and listening to your thoughts. Identify any negative, uncomfortable, or disempowering thoughts and make a note of them. Substitute these thoughts with positive alternatives – create a better narrative.

- Repeat and repeat until you get into the habit of identifying and switching to more positive thought patterns."

Self affirmations "Self-affirmations are a form of self-suggestion - a type of soundbite or mantra that you give yourself.

Whether you realise it or not, you're using affirmations constantly. When you tell people, even yourself, something often enough, sooner or later they will believe you because of the power of reinforcement. The more skillfully and forcefully the message is framed, the better.

Affirmations are extremely effective in changing thinking patterns and programming the subconscious mind. According to research by Cassio (2015) self-affirmation activates brain systems associated with self-related processing and reward. You can use them to build up your confidence with practice as you're telling yourself a very positive story.

" "Action: Start your affirmations today with the first person pronoun, 'I'.

Examples include; 'I am calm and centred', 'I wake up highly motivated each day' and 'I strive to become a better person'.

Put all personal weaknesses and limitations in the past tense.

Writing down your affirmations reinforces them in the subconscious. Copy them out every day in CAPITAL LETTERS. Say your affirmations aloud with strong emotion.

Repeat each affirmation at least ten times, three or more times a day. Update your current list of affirmations regularly and keep it with you at all times either in your phone or in a notebook."

**The 'As If' Principle** "Whenever you behave and speak confidently - even if just putting it on - you feel more confident. This in keeping with the 'self-perception' theory. Other people assume you're confident and treat you accordingly, which reinforces your behaviour and enhances your confidence.

The reverse is also true. Speaking and acting timidly makes others assume you are timid and treat you accordingly, thereby reinforcing your status.

Acting as if you are confident, no matter how uncomfortable you feel inside, will help to make you feel confident. Your feelings will adapt to the new behaviour and your confidence will grow over time."

"Make a list of people you admire today.

Learn as much as you can about two or three of the role models from your list and how they handle themselves when speaking and presenting. Put what you've learned into practice. Record and observe yourself if you have access to video recording equipment."

**Instant calmers** "Calmness and confidence are positively related. When you calm down, your mind is clearer, you are more in control of your emotions, and feel more confident.

Thus, it's worthwhile to practice entering a peaceful, deeply relaxed state, and actively try to become calmer on a regular basis.

Helen Dos Santos, a Wellbeing & Resilience Life Coach specialising in supporting emotional and mental resilience describes how being able to maintain an outward appearance of calm (even when we don't feel calm on the inside), can have an extremely powerful impact on those around us. Telling yourself you are calm and confident is also so much more effective than saying 'Don't be nervous'. Try it out. "

"Start practicing this 5 Deep Breaths Technique today, every day until it becomes a habit.

1) Get into a comfortable position, then stretch. Breathe deeply and take a moment to gaze at a spot on the ceiling. Close your eyes as soon as you get tired. Breathe deeply. Slowly let out the word 'one', relaxing the eye muscles, face and neck. Take a deep breath after a moment of pause.

2) Count to two slowly while relaxing your shoulders, arms and hands. Take a deep breath and hold it for a moment.

3) Relax your legs and feet by saying 'three' and letting it out slowly.

4) Breathe in deeply a fourth time. Count to four slowly, relaxing every muscle in your body.

5) Breathe slowly and say the word 'relax' under your breath as you get to five. "

Anchoring "Anchoring involves drawing on past experiences that made you feel confident in order to help you cope in the present.

Anthony Robbins defines anchoring as:

"The process by which any representation (internal or external) gets connected to and triggers a subsequent string of representations and responses. Anchors can be naturally occurring or set up deliberately"

This is an important tool in your arsenal of confidence. An anchor elicits a consistent positive emotion in you. Using anchors helps you to feel calm and confident." "Today try to remember a time when you felt 100% charged, full of confidence and at your best.

Visualise all the associated sights, sounds, smells, and physical sensations as vividly as you can.

Anchor those feelings. Use a gesture you wouldn't normally make, such as rubbing your left ear lobe. Say 'Yes!' as you make the gesture.

Keep practicing the process for a few weeks."

Take a risk "If you want to build your confidence, sometimes you will have to force yourself to do things you don't feel like doing and put yourself out there. Take risks to build confidence. Face your fears. Understand them, but don't be swayed by them.

Everything does not have to be perfect.

You can just be yourself and try." "Describe 3 things you would love to do, but have been afraid to try because you are unsure of the consequences.

Include the following for each:

- What would be the best possible outcome?
- What would be the worst possible outcome?
- What is your greatest fear?

Are your fears realistic? Think about taking action! Just do it. Are your fears unfounded? How do you feel?"

Stop approval-seeking behavior "The goal of approval-seeking behaviour is to conform to what others expect out of fear of not being liked. It involves excessive concern for others' opinions.

Adults still subconsciously strive to please their parents and teachers well into adulthood. In the short run, approval-seeking behavior is beneficial; it keeps others happy and keeps them off your back. However, it might be at the expense of your long-term self-confidence.

The feeling of freedom can be exhilarating when you stop doing things just because others expect you to. You don't have to pretend to be someone you aren't.

How you respond to others' expectations is always up to you." "Whenever you find yourself thinking 'What would so and so think?', 'What will people think about me if I say or do something?' or similar thoughts, alter your mindset.

Replacing them immediately with the statement: ""I am my own person.""."

Be a good listener "Good listening means you understand what others are saying to you, and tunes you in to their emotions. You'll be amazed at how much more confident you feel when you listen well. It's easier to deal with social and business situations when you listen attentively.

If you're a good listener, you'll earn a reputation of being a great communicator without having to say much." "Communicate in a way that shows that you are listening.

Make eye contact and nod your head, adopt a relaxed posture with uncrossed arms and legs, lean forward and face them squarely, smile.

All of this should be done in a non-threatening manner.

Practice this regularly with your close friends."

Laugh whenever you can "Being able to laugh freely and take things less seriously is a positive way of building confidence.

Take the opportunity to laugh whenever you can. If you know some good jokes or amusing stories then share them with friends and colleagues.

Self-confidence soars when you can make others laugh and laughing has been shown to have a stress-buffering effect in day to day life." "Have fun whenever you can.

Watch amusing movies and videos. Tune into comedy radio shows or podcasts today. Be playful when things don't turn out as you had hoped. Ask yourself: what's funny about this that I didn't notice before?"

Emotional intelligence "Self-confidence is rooted in emotional intelligence. It is considered one of the most influential motivators and regulators of behaviour in people's everyday lives (Bandura, 1986).

It comes from having great self-awareness as well as the ability to identify and respond appropriately to the needs of others. It's human nature to engage in emotional behaviour over logical behaviour.

Consider others' feelings, accept them, and empathise. This will boost your confidence in all personal interactions." "Improve your emotional intelligence by extending your empathy. Try to put yourself in others' shoes.

Next time you have a meaningful conversation with someone can you imagine how that would feel in their situation?

Adjust your interaction style with other people to take on board their feelings and perspectives rather than just thinking about things from your own point of view."

Identify the reason "Most people can get caught out when they are feeling low in confidence – they don't know exactly why it's happening.

Research suggests that when we see ourselves more clearly, we are more confident and more creative.

It may be helpful to put the work in and engage with self-reflection and self-examination so that you can more easily identify your triggers when your confidence dips - this can help you feel more confident

in the long run." "Commit to working with a therapist or career coach that can help you get more familiar with your emotional baggage while also identifying your triggers. Use this language when interviewing people to help you make sure that they offer that expertise.

An alternative could be becoming more aware of your thoughts and write down what you are thinking when you start to feel a certain emotion like sadness, depression etc.

Writing the thoughts down allows you to be more self-aware and realise that certain thinking may contribute to certain feelings. We can now question the feelings through methods such as 'thoughts on trial' (a CBT method) and see how accurate these thoughts actually are; more likely they are distortions. "

Make confidence building a habit "Successful people know that in order to achieve great things, you have to work hard.

This means making confidence-building a part of your routine.

Building confidence is about believing in yourself no matter what and constantly pushing your beliefs in your abilities, with that there is often nothing that you can't conquer.

Alex Malley, bestselling author of *The Naked CEO*, states "The only way to build self-confidence is to take a risk and take action despite your fear of failure, messing up or embarrassment. If things work out, then you now know you can do more than you think. If things don't work out, you now know that you can handle more than you think. Either way, you're better off." "Start a practice of believing in yourself right now. Identify the negative messages you're telling yourself.

Pick one or two and reverse them. Start saying these positive messages every day.

Once you do this, you will start to believe them with time.

THIS is the essence of building your confidence - ignoring the messages that are wrong and creating the messages to tell yourself that are right. Everyone has value, and if you begin to own yours, confidence will come."

"Stop worrying about what 'they' think

" "Whether it's society, social media, your family, friends or colleagues, 'They' are frequently people we perceive that are critical and don't approve of us.

They are not good people to have around or consider because of their negative vibes.

Instead, think about more positive people and role models who are generous with their thoughts and feedback.

Research from the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* found that even just looking at photographs of successful women leaders boosted the confidence of other women and increased the likelihood of girls choosing non-traditional female roles in life." Think about who inspires you today and who has stepped beyond the restrictions of convention to follow their own path. Think Ruth Bader-Ginsberg, Malala, Oprah Winfrey or Greta Thunberg and add a few role models of your own.

Avoid people who bring you down "Do you have a friend or colleague who makes you feel bad about yourself or feels like an emotional vampire?

The age-old analogy of people being like radiators or drains holds true.

Gretchen Rubin of the Happiness Project describes how 'Radiators' exude warmth, enthusiasm, and kindness whereas drains are negative and 'glass half-empty'. Radiators bring out the best in people and can help increase your confidence while drains can be demanding and lower your confidence."

"If your confidence is low, consider who you want to be around.

If your mobile rings today and the name that comes up makes your heart sing - answer. If your heart sinks, call them back when you feel stronger.

Plan your day to be with or near people who are radiators. Can't be with them? Call them, message them, or even just look at a picture of your favourite people. The power of a smile in a photograph is the same as the power of a smile in person.

A 2016 University of California study found that snapping selfies and sharing photos with your friends can make you a happier person, so both sharing and receiving a happy picture is good for well-being and positivity."

Learn that body language speaks volumes "You probably don't realise it, but your body language can reflect how you feel on the inside, so try to stand tall and project a confident persona.

If you're not feeling confident, you may be slouching, slumping, or standing in a stooped position. Research by Psychologists regularly backs the notion that body language affects how we feel, for example, the findings of a new study from Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and the Otto Friedrich University of Bamberg." Stand tall today and hold your head high to give your self-confidence a leg up. Imagine you are an oak tree with roots coming out from your feet into the ground – this gives a sense of strength, groundedness and confidence.

Don't chase other's visions "We often get told something along the lines of 'if you just did this....then you'd be happy', or 'if you just did this.....you'd be a success'.

If you align yourself with someone else's vision of happiness or success then you are veering away from your own personal goals. This can harm your confidence and belief in yourself as it suggests that the other person knows what's best for you." "Start to consider what works best for you.

It's not being selfish to focus on your own needs and motivations. It's authentic to pursue what you really want. Developing and following your own personal vision will help to build your confidence.

Today, do something purely for yourself and enjoy it!"

Ask for help - be brave "It's often felt that asking for help is a sign of weakness (fear of embarrassment and humiliation) or that people wouldn't respond.

However, research from Stanford, led by Professor Frank Flynn, shows that we tend to underestimate by up to 50% the likelihood that others will come to our aid.

Think of it the other way around, if you knew that someone was struggling or stressed and needed help, you'd actually be very willing to reach out and help them wouldn't you?

How can we get better at asking for help ourselves?" "One may feel that reaching out to others and asking for help is a sign of losing control.



The opposite is in fact the case. It's brave to be able to recognise that you are vulnerable and to ask for help. You are taking control of the situation and overcoming your ego to get support from others.

People won't think any less of you for asking for help, a study from Harvard Business School in 2015 shows that actually people think you are smarter.

Additionally, it's clear that people also feel valued when being asked for help. It goes to the heart of our compassion as naturally caring and social animals. If you ask for help today, you're not only likely to get help but it will make others feel better too. A confidence-boosting win-win."

**Practice mindfulness** "Mindfulness is a powerful way of centering yourself, building calmness, self-awareness and growing your confidence.

It is a technique you can learn which involves becoming more aware of things in the present moment, without judgement. It also helps you be kinder to yourself and manage your day-to-day well-being.

A report from the UK Government's All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Mindfulness found good evidence of the beneficial impacts of practicing mindfulness." "Practise mindfulness for a few minutes each day for 7 days. Spend the time to stop and simply verbalise every movement that you make. This is help you to become focussed on describing and analysing.

Then for the following 7 days, simply spend 5 minutes sitting still and listening to your thoughts. Identify any negative, uncomfortable or disempowering thoughts and make a note of them.

Substitute these thoughts with positive alternatives – create a better narrative.

Repeat and repeat until you get into the habit of identifying and switching to more positive thought patterns."

**Developing a robust emotional vocabulary** "Identifying emotions and putting a name to them can be hard. When we're not clear about how we or others are feeling it can lead to the wrong interpretations and reactions.

We may react impulsively or get the wrong idea in new or challenging situations and this may lead to negative outcomes which impact our confidence levels." "Make a big list of all the different feelings that you can think of. Keep this somewhere safe so that you can add to it later.

- For the next week keep a feelings journal, check off all of the emotions that you experience throughout the week, and make a note of the situations that these feelings occur in.

- Build up your list over time and see if you can observe a relationship with certain feelings and circumstances over time."

**Own your Actions** "There are some situations or experiences that really sit with us, both good and bad. It's healthy to reflect but we may tend to ruminate.

Potentially we can get anxious about the 'if onlys' and 'what ifs', but we can't turn back time. Reflecting in a productive and helpful manner is the key to building confidence. We all have setbacks but thinking about what went well and how to improve can increase confidence for the future.

Professor Francesca Gino of Harvard Business School describes how reflection builds one's confidence in the ability to achieve a goal (i.e., self-efficacy), which in turn translates into higher rates of learning."

"Structured reflection really helps develop healthy insights. Think about taking the following steps when contemplating a recent difficult situation in your life:

- Describe how you felt and thought about the experience.
- Articulate what you have learned from this scenario both good and bad.
- Can you make sense of things?
- Take ownership of any of your words, actions, and behaviours that could have affected the situation.
- What did you learn overall about yourself and what could you have done differently?
- What changes would you make to deal with similar situations in the future?"

Devote time to yourself "Work, family, housework, errands, life admin. We're all so busy in our lives that we frequently run out of time and energy to concentrate on ourselves.

This can affect our confidence if we're neglecting to do good things just for us.

Examples might be, taking a lunch break and not letting other responsibilities creep into it, not checking your email or social media straight away, or planning something special for yourself as a reward at the end of the week.

It's important to take some time just to do things for yourself once in a while." "Don't be afraid to be a bit selfish.

Set a reminder for me-time on a regular basis.

Take a walk, plan an outing, indulge in some ice-cream.

Don't forget to do good things for yourself.

Start today, you deserve it."

Goal setting "A famous quote from Reinhold Niebuhr says, 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference'.

When setting goals, it's important to recognise that you believe that you have control over achieving your outcomes and that you're capable of getting there.

Studies have shown that when athletes were primed with goal setting, they performed much better than those who hadn't." "Setting 'SMART' goals is a very good way help planning for success — the elements here are that they are;

Specific,

Measurable,

Attainable,

Relevant,

and Time-related

This format helps set concrete endpoints by identifying actionable steps. Identify an important goal in your life and write it out in the SMART structure."

Healthy body and healthy mind "It's well recognised that there is a strong relationship between good physical health and self-esteem.

The greater your health, the more confident you will feel, and having high self-esteem will have a positive impact on your health.

Looking after your body will help your mental well-being – it's a double win!" "What physical activities do you like doing and when do you think that you have time in your schedule to fit them in?

Could this be getting up 15 minutes earlier each morning to go for a walk, booking a swimming session on a Friday evening?

Is there something that you think you need to take out of your diet?

Start planning today."

Dress for the occasion "Your clothes and the way you dress may seem like one of the last things that you need to worry about when it comes to working on internal self-improvement.

However, studies have shown that people have more faith and confidence in others when they dress in a smart and professional manner.

Dressing well can affect both the way we feel and the impression that we give to other people. " "Confidence is linked to the way we present ourselves to the world.

A way of developing respect and confidence is to dress smartly to exude professionalism. Today start wearing outfits that are a 'level higher' than you would normally wear and identify clothes that make you feel really good when you're out and about."

Practice compassion to others "To reach your full confidence potential you must be sensitive to both your own feelings and the feelings and struggles of others.

Compassion is the desire to care for others and relieve their suffering. In the literature acting compassionately has been shown to improve self-esteem and increase happiness both in the short and the long term.

Today, take the time to actively demonstrate compassion for someone." "Act compassionately towards someone today, by actively helping or interacting with someone in a supportive and considerate way.

Identify someone who needs your help and reach out to them."

Oral hygiene and confidence "It may seem obvious, but that fresh, clean breath and mouth feel has a big impact on self-confidence.

Studies have shown that when people had brushed their teeth they have higher verbal confidence (e.g. talking louder) and fidgeted and stammered less than those who hadn't brushed their teeth.

Interestingly they were also perceived by others to be more relatable." "Ensure you make time to consciously take care of your teeth.

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The key to job interview confidence "Job interviews can be a nerve-racking experience and you need high levels of confidence to be able to demonstrate the best possible version of yourself.

Priming yourself with powerful thoughts beforehand has been shown to increase success rates for both in person interviews and written job applications." Before your next interview or job application try this task: write a short description of a time when you felt powerful and confident and then reflect on the situation.

Performing under pressure "Professional athletes perform at a high level under intense pressure. We can look to them to learn about building confidence.

Interviews with athletes reveal that they have a variety of techniques to reduce the stress of performance, these include positive self-talk, mental rehearsal, cognitive thought stopping + restructuring and obtaining external support. " 1). Positive self-talk: use your inner voice to tell yourself about your positive qualities today and that you will be successful. This helps to direct attention and thoughts to positive aspects and 'psych's you up' in order to boost confidence.

2). Mental rehearsal: picture yourself achieving your goals and incorporate plenty of detail about how things might look and feel.

3). Cognitive thought stopping + restructuring: block negative thoughts when they pop up and shift them into positive ones. Transform nervousness into excitement! Switch nerves into energy! 'Putting your thoughts on trial' is a CBT restructuring method that allows us to evaluate the positive and negative evidence against a specific thought, helping us have a more balanced and rational view. (<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/putting-thoughts-on-trial>)

4). External support: Athletes have coaches who use support and encouragement in order to help maintain their focus and keep their confidence up. Turn to a friend or family member today and they will be able to remind you of your positive characteristics even when you might not be able to see them."

The importance of self praise "Our hearts and minds love self praise but we generally tend to praise other people more than ourselves.

It's vital to praise yourself for all the good things that you are doing each day, no matter how small, in order to embed positive self regard.

Don't save self-praise for something big, get into a regular habit of congratulating yourself for a variety of things that you've done well worthy of praise." "Praise yourself at least three times today.

A little pat on the back goes a long way."

Self Love Journal "We're more used to being self-critical than being nice to ourselves. Criticism breaks down your confidence.

Regularly treating yourself with positive vibes and self-praise helps to build your confidence levels.

Vanbuskirk emphasizes that you should believe in yourself, value yourself and be your own cheerleader!" "Buy yourself a nice notebook or journal today.

Every day, write down 2 things you like about yourself or something that you've done well."

Negative Consequences "Failure to change means that you run the risk of repeating the same negative behaviour patterns and getting the same outcomes.

The definition of insanity is 'doing the same things every day and expecting a different result'."

"Are you stuck?

- Write down 5 consequences of not changing.

- What would your life look like in 5 years if you don't change? "

Positive Consequences "Even small changes can make a big difference, for example, smiling at new people or being more thankful to others.

Every little change we make for the better in our lives can reap big rewards.

For an overview of small changes that you can make to boost your confidence, check out - <https://millenniummagazine.com/health-and-fitness/small-changes-you-can-make-to-help-boost-your-confidence/> " "What are your big picture goals?

How would you live, look and feel like in 5 years time?

Think about the changes that you'd need to make to get there and write them down."

Love your body "Everyone is different and has a different relationship with their body. Avoid being critical of the way you were made.

Why not thank your legs for allowing you to run and your eyes for being able to connect with others?

The body loves a bit of self-praise." "Love yourself!

When taking a bath or a shower, pick out two things that you can appreciate your body for. "

Finding what motivates you "People who have more authentic motivations behind a task or role have enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity; heightened vitality, self-esteem, and general well-being.

Mark Manson describes that the best way to be confident is to act on the things that really matter to you - <https://markmanson.net/how-to-be-confident> " "Think of a time when you felt like you accomplished something meaningful.

What made you want to take on this experience?"

Living up to your own values "Authenticity can be defined in terms of a commitment to ones' self-values. This idea has important implications for identity theory and self-confidence.

Research shows that often our most important self-values are only fulfilled if you make a commitment to yourself to achieve them." "Think about a time when you found yourself doing something really important and meaningful that was authentic to just you.

- How did that make you feel?

- How would you describe your top 4 values?

- List them out."

Reflecting on your self improvement journey "Building your social influence can boost your perception of the usefulness and effectiveness of this app.

By being able to show others in your life the steps and accomplishments you have made to work on yourself, you can help build more self-confidence while encouraging confidence growth in others. "

Talk to a friend about something this app has helped you with or a recent lifestyle change you've made that has made you feel more confident.

Maintaining positive interpersonal connections "Improving connectedness to others can provide a massive boost to your confidence and well-being.

All of the following can help;

- practice acts of kindness,
- saying 'Yes' to things more often,
- make time for others,
- expressing appreciation and affection,
- reducing conflict,
- communicate honestly,
- being supportive and loyal,
- being present

- being friendly." "Think about the last time you went out of your way to spend time with someone. Is there an acquaintance you have lost touch with, or someone new in your life that you want to get to know better?

Think about the people you're close to in your life and focus on how you can give them some more time and attention this week. Reach out to them today."

Reflecting on your support system "Connectedness includes engaging with others, mutual support, and a sense of belonging.

When feeling unconfident or unmotivated, practicing connectedness with others can make a difference. Even when we don't feel like it, a simple act of authentic kindness or choosing to spend devoted time with a loved one can make us feel more connected and confident.

Research shows that connection and belonging are associated with lower rates of anxiety, depression and improved self-confidence." "Do you feel like you are being supported in your life, whether that is at school, work, home, or among friends?

Think of some of the things that others could do to make you feel supported in your day-to-day life and communicate this with them."

Try something you're scared of "Real world experience is the most powerful builder of self-confidence. ""If I've done it before, then I can do it again.""

The best experiences offer a challenge and force a person to grow, learn, and face new challenges. "

"Understand that feeling nervous and low in confidence in your abilities the first time you try something is normal.

We build confidence after acquiring experience or relating new experiences to something we have done before.

Challenge yourself to try something new this week, no matter how small a task."

Learn from someone you admire "Modeling is a good source of inspiration and can be a very effective way to learn new skills, especially interpersonal ones. Confident people learn from the successes and mistakes of others.

" "Think of someone that you admire who is good at something that you want to improve on.

- Do they appear naturally confident?

- How do they convey this?

Make a list of the skills that you admire and can borrow from this individual, it might be that they come across as fun, they make good eye contact, they are warm, they speak clearly and slowly and are engaging.

Think about what it is they do and learn from them."

Self-esteem is merely a perception "Self-esteem can simply be defined as the way that people feel about themselves. It is affected by your environment and the people you encounter.

Therefore, self-esteem is merely a perception and can change! For example, a person's belief about whether he or she is intelligent does not necessarily say anything about whether the person actually is intelligent." "Sometimes, we can use the idea that self-esteem is a perception to our advantage.

In your moments of low self-esteem, try thinking about why you feel that way.

Did someone say anything to you that triggered these thoughts? Or are there people around you that you have compared yourself to? "

Be proud of your positives "Studies show that basing self-esteem on more external sources such as others approval is more strongly correlated lower with self-esteem.

On the other hand, basing your self-esteem on internal sources such as your own values are correlated with higher levels of self-esteem." "Let's try to redefine our self-esteem into what we actually value. Think of a couple character traits today that you value such as honesty and kindness.

How do you incorporate these values into your life everyday? "

Recognise your strengths "When a person bases positive feelings of self-worth on specific achievements or constant validation, it is known as being contingent, which means that such feelings can be subject to change or fragile.

True self-esteem involves feelings of self-worth that do not require continual validation, leading to a more stable self-image. " "Think of a time when you felt good about yourself; is it when you received a compliment, or had a positive interaction with someone?

On the other hand, did you ever feel bad about yourself after someone gave you a negative comment?"

Set realistic goals for yourself to conquer "People with higher levels of self-efficacy exhibit higher levels of self-regulation (goal-setting and self-monitoring).

Research findings are in line with the core idea that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to implement effective strategies in adopting and maintaining enhanced physical activity behaviours."

"Increasing your belief in yourself can help you better regulate your choices and behaviours. For example, when you feel capable of starting a new exercise routine you are more likely to set realistic goals and monitor your progress.

Write down 3 big changes that you'd like to make in your life and put the note somewhere prominent that you'll see on a regular basis or at the front of a notebook. "

Control the response rather than the event "Having a greater feeling of control over life events and a greater ability to rely on personal efforts to cope with challenges and adversities is a protective factor against a whole range of mental health issues.

Confidence levels have been shown to be associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression symptoms and provides people with greater coping strategies." "Sometimes we feel we have very little control of our lives, and the reality is we don't always have control of every situation. What we can control are our responses to stressful situations.

Today, think of a time you felt out of control and try to reframe it by thinking out how it could have gone better if you controlled your response to the event.

What was the experience and what would you like to have done differently?"

Introducing emotional granularity "Emotional granularity (sometimes called emotional differentiation) is the ability to make fine distinctions between emotional states; the specificity with which people describe the types of emotions they experience.

An example is knowing the difference between feeling ""frustrated"" and ""irritated"". " "Emotion words and descriptions of emotional states allow us to direct our future actions (by providing the person with information about how to act within a specific instance/context).

Increasing your emotional differentiation or granularity improves your ability to regulate your emotions and can help you cope with a variety of situations.

Today try to name the various emotions you experience and call them out as they appear."

Resist the urge to be impulsive "Understanding why you feel negative is key to becoming a fully-rounded individual, who is more able to deal with negative issues in the future.

Reflecting on negative feelings is just as important as reflecting on the positive. Understanding why you feel negative is key to developing self-awareness and confidence." "Learn to recognise negative feelings and where they are coming from.

These negative feelings do not need to dictate your actions. It's sometimes okay to experience negative feelings.

Sometimes ""sitting"" with your emotions is what is needed rather than a ""knee-jerk"" reaction. For example, maybe the next time your boss or colleague makes you angry, rather than firing off a



response or making a frustrated quip, sit with and tolerate that anger while you consider how best to respond, rather than impulsively acting on the anger.

Or maybe you are feeling anxious: You might consider what the source is, why this is bothersome to you and what your options are for changing the situation."

Take a hike! "Focused meditation improves emotional regulation by improving impulse control and increasing the clarity of your emotions. Meditation can also reduce stress and anxiety, which helps you face the world in a calmer, stronger way.

There is a growing body of research from around the world that has highlighted the power of mindfulness and outdoor activities on self-esteem and wellbeing." "When your brain is busy scrolling through social media or you're binge-watching Netflix, you aren't engaging in ""present"" thinking.

You need to allow time to quietly be with yourself. One way to eliminate distractions and get some head space is to take a walk.

Get outside for a bit today and don't take your phone."

The 3 C's "Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a popular form of psychological treatment that works to change the way a person thinks about their problems. It is effective in improving day to day functioning and quality of life.

A popular way to understand how CBT works is through the three Cs:

- 1) 'Catch it', which aims to help you identify your thoughts and thinking styles associated with a particular mood;
- 2) 'Check it', which aims to help you reflect on and identify whether the thought processes are helpful to your current goals; and
- 3) 'Change it', which encourages you to generate other ways of thinking if the current state is not helpful, fully considered or proportionate." "Use the 3 C's next time you're in a thinking ""loop"" or a ""rut"".

For example, you're about to take a test and you're anxious that you'll perform poorly.

- First, notice this feeling!

- Next, think about what thought patterns are you displaying? Maybe you think ""I always fail tests"" or ""I never succeed"".

- Finally, change it!

This type of all-or-nothing thinking is fairly common.

Rather remember the times you did pass a test to help undo those cognitive distortions and think about what you've done well in the past to perform well."

I like to talk to myself... "One the biggest factors in your ability to cope with stress and negative emotions is mindset, and mindset is related to your 'self-talk'.

What we tell ourselves is one of the biggest influencers of our mindset, which affects our ability to be successful, regulate our emotions, and be more confident.

Brené Brown, professor and motivational speaker, refers to the negative voices in her head as her gremlins. By giving her negative thoughts a name, she's both stepping away from them and poking fun at them.

Positive self-talk is supportive and affirming. Although it may come naturally to some, most people need to learn how to cultivate positive thoughts and dispel the negative ones. With practice, it can become more natural to think good thoughts rather than bad ones." "Start developing an internal dialogue today that will help you perform in a difficult situation.

For example, if it's a big test, you might want to create the dialogue that ""I studied for this, I know the information, and I am able to do well on this test"".

This internal dialogue can be a form of mantra that will not only build confidence but help to keep your focus on the present moment."

Inner saboteur "The inner saboteur can be defined as the voice of self-doubt inside you, which tries to undermine your successes and disincentivise you from trying new things. Think of it as 'the judge' or the 'critical voice'.

An essential part of life is learning how to combat this.

You need to draw a clear line between doing new things and acting recklessly.

For example, skiing down a steep slope may seem dangerous, but without challenging yourself, your skiing skills cannot improve and you might lose out on a fun experience. " "One way to combat your inner saboteur is to challenge the critical voice.

This can be done by questioning it, with facts, logic and examples.

Prove that it is wrong about you and that you can rise above it. Think of times when you have succeeded and proved that voice wrong. You know that you can succeed and move forward. Treat this voice not as an extension of yourself, but as someone talking negatively about you. It doesn't know you and you can prove that you are better than what they claim.

An easy example might be breaking a personal limit or record, like running. Ignoring your inner voice and beating your personal best running time can make you feel better and prove your inner saboteur wrong."

What is this moment trying to teach you? "As you gain self-awareness, you'll also gain the ability to see the bigger picture. You'll realise where you fit in the puzzle of life, and start to see every problem as a gift.

Being able to recognise how things are playing out for you in a given moment is a powerful skill in our relationships. " Next time you find yourself in uncomfortable feelings or high tension with another person, take a second either during, or after to try to reframe the situation by asking yourself "What is this moment trying to teach me?"

Confidence and the Settings of Oral Presentation "Talking in front of an audience can be a scary moment. Many people believe that they are not capable or confident enough to share ideas through oral presentations.

Studies show how crucial self-confidence is when performing a presentation. It is evident that the more confident a person is, the more ready they are to speak in front of others and have higher achievements in oral tasks (Tahir 2023).

Additionally they are more capable of sharing insights and are more receptive in receiving feedback. But how can self-confidence be improved when preparing or delivering a presentation?

One key factor is about the environment you are presenting in and how comfortable you are in it. This is a nudge to help in the preparation of a presentation." "Choose a place where you are the most comfortable talking with others and presenting ideas (in school, in your home, etc.).

- Ask 1-3 people you feel comfortable with to be your test audience.
- Create a 5–7-minute presentation about one of your interests (e.g., movie genre, sport, etc.) - feel free to pull together some slides - it's not a must.
- Prepare your key takeaways - what are the 1-3 messages you want your audience to retain?
- Present.

Practice makes gooder."

Confidence generated by Student-Made Exam Questions"Exams are stressful and challenging times.

Self-doubt and lack of confidence in knowing the answers to the most difficult questions on an exam paper can be very daunting.

However, research showed a technique that helps improve long-term understanding of complex topics and the confidence of students' responses.

What you have to do is to answer exam questions that YOU make yourself. By creating, you are activating a group of cells called the reticular activating system (RAS), which filters information that your brain collects from all the senses, and helps you focus on the information that you need the most. These cells help your attention during revision." "Choose a topic from a subject that you find challenging (or start small: do a topic you know well first, just to get into the rhythm of drafting your own exam).

- Read through the topic in your textbook/revision guide or listen to the lecture, then write 3-5 multiple choice questions with four possible answers (only one can be the correct answer).
- To challenge yourself even further, you can create open questions as well.
- Try to answer the questions in 5 minutes to see how much you remember about the topic.

You can re-use these questions in future revisions or do this activity with a study group and swap questions with each other. This exercise should take about 15 minutes.

It helps you to focus on what specifically can be asked about the topic at hand and puts you in the mindset of an examiner."

How to get better at anything! "Have you ever said something like ""I'm terrible at \_\_\_\_"" or ""I've never been good at \_\_\_\_""?

These phrases fit into a mindset of all-or-nothing thinking, a type of cognitive distortion that can play a big role in our confidence and abilities.

Research shows that people who start off as average or below average at certain tasks, with practice, were able to improve tremendously, even if they had no intrinsic advantage. The way we can accomplish anything we want is to first change your story about your abilities. Next, identify the skill you want to improve on and set a stretch goal that is just outside your comfort zone. Make sure to schedule some practice time and don't be afraid to fail a couple of times!" "Identify something today that you want to improve on that you have thought was impossible in the past, for example learning to play a particular song on the guitar, or swimming 50 lengths of the pool.

Tell yourself that you are capable of accomplishing it and think about how you can reach this goal with practice. "

Feeling FOMO? "When our social needs aren't being met, we can sometimes feel something popularly known FOMO, or the 'fear of missing out'. This is the belief that others may be having rewarding experiences while you are not. FOMO may lead to lower life satisfaction, potentially linked to lower self-confidence.

This can lead to not participating in future activities and maintaining social connections and the cycle continues. Studies on the relationship of FOMO to self-efficacy and life satisfaction show that having a high sense of self-efficacy can decrease levels of FOMO (Denniz 2021). " "One way to try and reduce your level of dependence on external sources of social connections like FOMO is to develop your sense of self-efficacy.

Realise that other people's experiences don't take away from your own, and you have the power to meet your own social needs.

Next time you experience FOMO, try participating in something you want to do with someone you have a genuine connection with. "

Be assertive and say no!"Research shows that having a higher level of assertiveness and being able to say ""NO"" confidently is correlated with better mental health and higher self-esteem.

This is well recognised to be one of the habits of highly effective people!" Next time you find yourself in a situation where you want to say no but are hesitant, try pausing, reflecting, being assertive and firmly say 'No'.

Not being positive all the time "While positive thinking is a tool that can be used to increase feelings of well-being, being positive all the time is not always possible or healthy.

Research conducted on ""Toxic Positivity"", the overgeneralisation of optimism and happiness across all situations, suggests it can backfire, especially if someone feels stuck in life. So, it is important to recognise that experiencing our negative emotions is healthy.

Catharsis, the act of talking out and releasing pent-up negative emotions, prevents a more intense detonation and lashing out which can occur when emotions are allowed to simmer over time. "

"Carl Jung once said ""I'd rather be whole than good.""

This quote embodies the idea that we are encouraged to feel our full spectrum of emotions.

Positivity does not need to be our only means of dealing with difficult times.

Today reflect on the last time you experienced Toxic Positivity, either from yourself or from others, when you probably should have just accepted the negative emotion and worked through it. "

Lean back "Tara Brach, a psychologist, created an easy-to-remember tool for practicing mindfulness and compassion during times of stress called 'RAIN'.

Her approach reminds us that leaning back from a stress can provide us with the space to fully take in a situation. " "Dr. Brach's acronym RAIN is as follows:

R-Recognise what's going on: consciously acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

A-Allow the experience to be there, just as It is: let your thoughts, feelings and behaviors simply be there, without trying to fix or avoid anything.

I-Investigate with interest and care: call on your natural curiosity and direct focused attention to your present experience. Ask yourself ""What most wants attention?"" ""What am I believing?""

N-Nurture with self-compassion: try to sense what the wounded or frightened place inside you most needs and then offer some gesture of active care that might address this need. Does it need a message of reassurance? Of forgiveness? Of companionship? Of love?

Experiment and see what feels best and opens your mind. After completing these steps it's important to notice the quality of your own presence and rest in that space of awareness."

"Talk slowly and deliberately

" "When we speak too quickly we tend to get off track or undercut our presentation or conversation in a way that makes us look more disorganised, rushed and out-of-control.

Speaking slowly can have many benefits.

You can feel more relaxed and in control, your words carry more weight and gravitas, your audience can follow your statements better, you can manage pacing more effectively and you can come across as more relaxed, steady, and confident.

" "Some key steps for speaking slowly are ensuring you have proper breathing and breath control - breathe deeply.

When presenting ensure you have planned out your presentation so you don't feel rushed or disorganised. When you find yourself talking too fast, don't get flustered, just recognise the issue and slow yourself back down.

Another tip is to embrace silence, use it strategically to build anticipation or draw attention and emphasis to a particular idea. Finally, be concise.

With less to say, you have the luxury of speaking slowly. Try a few of these tips the next time you are presenting in class, at work, or even just in your day-to-day conversations. "

Empathy and eye contact        "Empathy exists when we are in sync with another person's emotional experience.

Research on empathy suggests that our use of eye contact enables us to experience more empathy when interacting. Similarly, eye-to-eye encounters have been found to be critical to successful social engagement.

Anchoring our gaze on someone's eyes may help increase our engagement and understanding of others." "While eye-contact can be difficult for some people, this exercise encourages you to increase your eye-to-eye encounters in order to increase your empathy towards others.

Try to attend to others eyes while you are interacting with them for at least the whole day today.

Try to look at one eye for a bit, and then the other.

See if you feel more connected and understanding of them."

Having meaningful friends        "Who we have around us can have a significant effect on our self-esteem. Our social relationships are important parts of our lives.

Research has shown that self-esteem has an impact on social relationships and vice-versa.

Creating strong bonds can be beneficial for our well-being and confidence. "        "Consider        your relationships and your friends, partners, or families self-esteem.

Do you feel that when your friends are down on themselves you have a harder time as well?

Do you know friends who have high self-esteem and feel they rub off on you?

Make note of these patterns and consider them as you take a look at who you keep around you. Is there anything you would like to change about the people you keep around?

Would it be possible for you to find friends who can help increase your self-esteem through meaningful connections?"

Confidence not arrogance        "Recognising the differences between confidence and arrogance is critical to our interpersonal relationships and how others view us.

Confidence is a trait involving positive expression of abilities and using them to help others, whereas arrogance is a trait that involves boasting about your skills and keeping them to yourself, or focusing on negative aspects of a situation rather than encouraging others to grow and succeed. " "Tips to help you display confidence over arrogance:

Accept constructive feedback and consider what you can do to improve yourself.

Provide encouragement and positivity to coworkers. You can also ask others if they need help with their duties to help release any stressful responsibilities.

Share praise with team members when you collaborate on a project and receive any praise from your supervisor; similarly, if a coworker receives negative feedback on a project you helped with share the blame by taking accountability.

Learn from your mistakes and work to fix them.

Allow others to help you and use your strengths to help or teach team members. With these items in mind, try to take two with you for the week ahead and implement them into your work life."

The barriers to doing the first step - the power of "denial" "Let's say there's something you need to change. The contemplation stage is where you're able to recognise that something needs changing. This is the hardest step because actively choosing to change is uncomfortable!

Some ways to move from thinking to doing are to start with consciousness raising and continued self-evaluation. Consciousness raising means to become more aware and mindful of the current situation. This leads to re-evaluation of the self which is looking for patterns and evaluating what you would like to change in order to feel more fulfilled." "One way to become more conscious is to keep a diary or a tracker covering whichever aspect of life you may want to change.

For example, if you're trying to change your diet, keeping a food diary or log can help you see patterns and lead to evaluating how you can sustainably begin to make the changes that you desire.

Start today by making a diary for a week on something you're thinking about changing. It could even be a pro's and con's list for how a change would impact you positively or negatively."

Focus on why, not how "As Friedrich Nietzsche once said: "He who has a 'why' to live can bear almost any 'how.'"

Author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek has a theory that leaders should focus on the ""why"" rather than the ""how"" or ""what"".

The why is the reason we do the things that we do. If we shift our focus to why we are doing something, especially when working as a team, the motivation to figure out what and how to accomplish something becomes easier!" "Think of something significant you have wanted to start.

Today write down why you want to start this and get into as much detail as possible. Then write down what and how you will accomplish it. "

Complete a task that's been your list "Has there been something on your to-do list that you've been putting off?

Sometimes just completing one task out of many can help you feel motivated, productive, and confident. Try following these exercise steps to get that task done!" "1. Select what you want to focus on today

2. Make a plan on how you want to complete it

3. Make the time, and be intentional about that time

4. Decide to commit

5. Set a deadline for yourself

6. Track your progress

7. Get help if you get stuck, don't be afraid to realise that sometimes things don't go perfectly

8. Celebrate once you accomplish your goal!"

Open up your sense of space     "Your space bubble may be too small. What does that mean? Well, as technology has advanced, we confine our sense of space to 10 inches from our faces on our smartphones or laptops.

We become comfortable in our limited social space, taking in only the amount we want because the control is right at our fingertips. This, however, does not mimic the real world and actual social situations so when we get placed in situations we are not used to in real life, we tend to feel uncomfortable.

The way to get better at thriving in social situations is to open up your space."     "There are 4 steps to claiming your space that you can try the next time you face a situation socially that you may need some confidence for:

1. Acknowledge it: try to increase your awareness of your surroundings, who are you with, where you are, what you're there for. It's easy to ignore the world when you're focused on your phone but if you put it down, you'll notice a lot of things that you wouldn't otherwise see.

2. Expand it: think bigger! Try and imagine the whole room, and then the whole building, and then the whole area.

3. Engage it: try releasing the tension in your body, uncross your arms, and move from the corner of a room. This sends a message saying that you are open to talk to and are present in the moment.

4. Hold it: continue these behaviours in settings where you want to be a leader. Open your space to your whole group whether that's verbally or non-verbally."

Give yourself the advice you would give others     "Do you often find yourself not taking your own advice that you give to others? This is pretty common and could be a sign of low self-esteem or trust in yourself.

Many times, we push our friends forward with our advice but are too scared to take those leaps ourselves.

One way to fix this is to treat your advice like it's coming from a friend. This has been shown in multiple research studies to improve the quality of your judgments and give you better solutions while also improving your confidence and self-esteem."     "Next time you are struggling with something, consider what you would say to someone else struggling with something similar.

Then think about how this could apply to your own life. Substitute yourself into the narrative of the other person and think about how you could implement your own advice."

Is confidence a trait or an ability?     "Is confidence a skill or ability that you can develop or is it just an inherent personality trait?



Experts say that confidence is in fact a skill and can therefore be learned. This is crucial to know because many times, we are labeled as "shy" or "timid" as a personality trait, which seems unchangeable.

If you have been labeled as one of these things in the past, it can be hard to believe that you can have confidence. Know that confidence is learned and changes depending on what situations we are in."

"Now that you know that confidence is something you can get better at, practice makes perfect!

The more familiar you are with a situation, the more confident you will be.

Put yourself in unfamiliar situations over and over again, knowing that you're practising your confidence. "

Language we use about ourselves "According to experts on self-compassion, "most people believe that they need to criticise themselves to find the motivation to reach their goals. We tend to be much more compassionate to friends than we are to ourselves".

Being compassionate with your emotions means treating yourself and your difficult emotions like you would treat a friend struggling with the same things—with support and understanding, not judgment and criticism and direct those supportive comments to yourself.

Doing so will avoid damaging your self-esteem with critical thoughts, and help build it up instead. When you constantly criticise yourself, you may become depressed and lack motivation. Using positive encouragement towards oneself is vital." "Change your own self-talk today. What is something you regularly say to yourself that is not positive?

The next time you say or think this, rephrase to use the language you'd use in motivating a friend."

How we deal with ruminating thoughts "Do you know that acceptance is one of the most effective emotion regulation techniques? Emotion regulation is needed in everyday life to regulate changes in the quality, intensity, and duration of emotional responses.

When negative emotions are left undealt with, they can lead to a variety of mood disorders. Whilst there are many ways to manage negative emotions, acceptance, and reappraisal are among the strategies. Psychological research highlights that acceptance aids emotional regulation and can help control reactions that can arouse feelings of discomfort.

Overcoming and moving on from negative emotions is a key confidence builder." "Write down the last time you tried to "push away" or deny your feelings. What if instead you had accepted that feeling for what it was, and allowed yourself to experience it?

Doing so will help you to "move past" this feeling, not being stuck with it and filling up your mind.

Try not to judge them, evaluate them, or push them aside. "

Perceptions of self confidence "Self-confidence (unlike self-esteem) is likely to reflect and change depending on the situation. For instance, you can feel very confident in some areas, such as science, but lack confidence in others, like romantic relationships.

Having high or low self-confidence is rarely related to your actual abilities, but is mostly based on your perceptions.

Perceptions are the way you think about yourself and these thoughts can be flawed. The good point is that you can work on your perceptions. "The next time you are feeling low in self-confidence, you need to work on the perception, try this approach;

1. Ask where the perception is coming from. Is it from your environment? From your childhood? Is there a way that you can look at the situation differently?

2. Stop the negative self-talk, challenge any negative views that your brain is telling you. What would you tell yourself if you were your best friend?

3. Think about your expectations. How realistic and achievable are your goals?

4. Make a list of your strengths. What do you value about yourself?

5. Consider what might be limiting your self-confidence and then consider what could be done to improve this area."

Language matters: failures vs. experiences "Be mindful of the thoughts you have and if there are any negative patterns you tend to fall into. Your thoughts are the first step to getting out of your way and truly growing.

Think about how you would tell your story in the third person. This will allow you to think about how unfair we are to ourselves and how it is easy to focus on our failures but minimise our successes (or pass them off as being "normal" or something "everyone can do"). We have different standards for ourselves vs. others. " "Write down the last thing that made you feel like "a failure".

Now swap the "I" statements for a friend or colleague's name. Note how your perception and/or advice changes when you do this. "

Five minute superfocus "If productivity has been hard for you, this exercise will help you kick-start your next To-Do action.

Breaking down tasks into a limited time frame can allow you to accomplish more. Instead of trying to block out hours to work on a project, or organise your planner, try giving yourself 5-10 minutes of strict focus.

This short burst has a time limit that gives you a higher sense of urgency and you might find yourself to be more productive!" "Set up your space today to complete quick tasks (update your planner, schedule that appointment, start that assignment, do the dishes) and set a timer on your phone for 5 or 10 minutes.

- Then focus on that one task until the time is up.

- Don't allow your attention to wander elsewhere.

- Hide distractions and work on as much as you can in your allotted time.
- Afterwards, report how you feel."

How to be more assertive, just a little bit "Do you think you are assertive? Arnold Lazarus defined assertiveness as ""expressing personal rights and feelings"", and this skill can be highly beneficial to us on a day-to-day basis.

When we conduct ourselves in an assertive way we focus on specific issues and problems, neither belittling ourselves nor attacking others in the process of problem-solving.

Being assertive means we are recognising our personal rights and standing up for them. It's important to consider ways you can be more assertive and not let others take advantage of you. This will significantly help build confidence as you stand up for yourself." "Try to use at least 2 of these skills in the next week to improve your assertiveness skills.

1) Learn to say no. Avoid saying yes just because you feel guilty or want to please others. It is important to put yourself first and establish boundaries.

2) Learn to use ""I"" statements. Get comfortable expressing yourself by using ""I"" statements such as ""I feel angry about..." or ""I perceive what you said to me as incorrect"". This teaches us take ownership of our thoughts, feelings, opinions, and perceptions.

3) Practice peaceful disagreement. Disagreements can be considered healthy when opinions and facts are voiced peacefully so all perspectives can be viewed. This shows others you are comfortable with peaceful confrontation.

4) Avoid manipulation. Sometimes, when we are being assertive others may try to intentionally or unintentionally try to block our efforts to a resolution. Sometimes that might happen when we are being assertive are other people's reactions and emotions. When we are being assertive others might begin to get frustrated and raise their voice and display their tempers. When you see this gently tell them you want to hold off discussion until they are calm. Likewise, someone might derail the subject, in which you can shift the focus back to the original topic until your issue has been put to rest. Furthermore, people might become avoidant towards a conflict or a specific issue. Here you can confront this by a bold and direct question such as ""Is there something I did to make you angry?"".

5) Respond rather than react. Responding to a situation means acknowledging your initial reaction, then thinking of a reasonable response. Not every response may seem adequate, but as you practice you will find that it will help you deal with your perceptions of stress. Pause, reflect. Then respond."

Breaking down tasks into smaller components "Often we are faced with things that require multiple steps to reach an end goal. We see this in school with final projects or papers, with looking for a new house and then having to move out of your old house, with applying to jobs, or fixing a hole in your floor. Frequently the sheer size of the task can be so daunting that we don't even want to start.

Breaking down a task into smaller, more manageable pieces can help you stay on track, accomplish more, and feel less overwhelmed by the process. " "With paper and pencil prepare to break down your next project.

- Place the project title at the top of the page and then come up with all the minor tasks you feel need to be completed in order to finish this project.
- Even if they are out of order just write them down.
- Next, organise those tasks into the order you feel they need to be done in.
- Make subtasks within these if needed.

Once you have all this laid out determine the time each task will take and come up with a plan to accomplish these smaller tasks to take you to your bigger goal of completing the project. "

How many times do you apologise "Over-apologising is a bad practice many of us, especially women, find ourselves doing.

While apologising can be beneficial to your relationships, apologising too often or for things that do not truly warrant an apology can be damaging to your self-esteem and your undermine your authority.

Women specifically, may frequently apologise for taking up space, saying sorry for just existing in the same place as someone else is unnecessary and places unconscious ideas of the self as being a burden. " "Excessive apologising diminishes you.

This exercise asks you to count how many times you apologise today.

As you count, also take into consideration what you were apologizing for. If the situation can be better handled without saying ""Sorry"", give that a shot.

For example, if someone is in the way of where you need to go, instead of saying ""Sorry"" as you walk around them, say ""Excuse me"", it is still polite but it changes the way we perceive ourselves, as someone who is allowed to take up space rather than being a nuisance to others. "

Stand your ground today "Often when we are struggling with our self-esteem and confidence we allow others to push our boundaries a bit further than we should.

It can be hard to say no to others and stand up for ourselves. Failing to set boundaries within our relationships can lead to various difficulties, often leaving us feeling burned out and tired.

Standing your ground is a skill that often needs to be learned and developed. " "This week challenge yourself to reflect on your boundaries.

Do you find yourself putting others first, regardless of your own feelings or needs? Are you allowing yourself space and alone time?

Can you say no to others without feeling guilty?

Can you stand your ground or do you find yourself shifting to others' preferences?"

The link between confidence and humour "Witty jokes and fun banter can be a skill useful in increasing confidence.

Researchers have found that a greater sense of humour can increase a person's confidence and has been found to correlate positively with self-esteem. However, there is an importance in recognising the type of humour you engage in.

Self-defeating or aggressive humour can be maladaptive and harm your self-esteem and your relationships with other people while self-enhancing or affiliative humour styles can be more adaptive and bring others closer to you. "Consider your own humour style today.

Do you feel you use humour against yourself, in a self-defeating way?

Do you notice a difference between humour styles that are uplifting versus self-deprecating?

Next time you engage in a funny interaction take note of the way you're using humour. If the joke does not feel uplifting to a situation reconsider why you felt the need to use a joke that was harmful or down-putting. "

**Reaction to Your Feedback** "When was the last time you received negative feedback? It could be about something small like a report or something big like an upsetting comment from a friend.

Interestingly, research shows that women are far more likely to internalise negative feedback than men, meaning that they are more sensitive to social cues, but the downside is that this can damage your confidence.

People generally go through several different psychological stages when they hear negative feedback. If you take a moment and step back, you may be able to look at the situation from a more neutral perspective. " Briefly recall a situation where you received negative feedback. The SARA acronym is a model that helps us better understand our responses to challenges.

S = Shock or surprise. Remember it's okay to have an emotional response to bad news.

A = Anger. You may feel frustration or discomfort about what such information might mean.

R = Rejection. People may try to explain away negative feedback and look for excuses.

A = Acceptance. Over time, you'll reach a state of acceptance, when you're ready you'll take action and move on.

Refer to the SARA model and try and relate your thoughts and feelings to each stage. Those who work through the SARA model often end up with a higher commitment to self-improvement."

**Empathy** "Some people have more ""empathic accuracy"" than others. Empathic accuracy is a person's ability to experience and feel the same emotions as another person and is sometimes referred to as ""emotional state-matching"".

While being able to understand another's emotional state is incredibly important for social relationships, some people are very high in their empathetic accuracy, which for negative emotions

expressed by others, can mean emotional burnout or feeling overwhelmed for that individual. "

"Have you ever heard the flight attendant on an airline say: ""If you are flying with a small child, in the case of an emergency and oxygen is needed, please put your mask on before the child's"".

This might sound self-serving, but you can't help another person if you're not alive first to do so!

Empathy can come at an emotional cost, so rather than taking care of other people, you have to look after yourself first.

Are you one of those people who has a great deal of empathy for others? Do you find yourself reaching out to others constantly? Whilst this is honourable it's crucial that you also take care of yourself."

Ways to tackle things that are challenging "Self-regulation is the ability to control one's thoughts, emotions and behaviours. It's a process that can be used to disrupt negative impulses, beliefs and actions. It can also be useful to guide goal-directed activities by helping with goal setting, increasing effort, and minimising factors that may interfere with achieving your goals.

Self-regulation involves taking a pause between a feeling and an action—taking the time to think things through, make a plan, and wait patiently.

People often struggle with these behaviours. The analogy of eating an elephant is often useful to consider, it's going to take time and you are going to have to do it one mouthful at a time."

"Write down one goal that you would like to accomplish this month.

- Where are you currently in achieving this goal (e.g., almost there, haven't started, halfway)?
- Now write down three things within your control to get you to achieve the goal.
- Break down your goals.
- Write down the objective that you would like to achieve and then write down 3 things that you can do right now to work towards your goal."

Mind Reading & assumptions "Have you ever assumed that someone is thinking about you or judging you in a negative way?

The truth is that we're not mind readers and sometimes, making these assumptions generates anxiety that could be avoided." "Think back to a situation where you assumed that someone was talking about you or judging you or discussing you in a negative light and then question the evidence / assumptions.

What evidence do you have that they were thinking such things? "

Growth/fixed mindset "Have you ever heard of the growth vs. the fixed mindset? A fixed mindset would be the idea that you're either good at something or you're not.

The idea was conceived by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck and colleagues, essentially it's the belief that a person's capacities and talents can be improved with time and practice. It's about moving forward despite your fears and reservations." "Write down 3 things that you'd like to be better at?

If you applied a growth mindset, what would you do, what steps would you take?"

Effective writing exercises for mental wellbeing "Writing about a difficult life event has been suggested by researchers in psychology and trauma to improve the way that you feel.

Getting it out of the darkness of your brain onto the light of paper really helps and can limit the overwhelming feelings. Writing expressively allows for a type of catharsis, understanding and letting go of difficult feelings. " "Think of a difficult life experience.

Write it out down.

Could you see it with eyes of compassion and realise that you did the best that you could at the time with the resources that you had available?

Where do you need to let go of blaming yourself?"

Identity and decisions "Every single person is different and has their own identity, likes and dislikes.

Consider putting boundaries in place to protect your identity. Honour your own choices. Do the things that you like. This helps to build confidence." "Who are you?

What do you like?

What do you enjoy?

What puts a smile on your face.

What makes you happy?

Write a list of things of things that you like and what you don't like."

Don't suppress your feelings in the name of positivity "Research indicates that suppressing our thoughts towards negative experiences may actually cause us to become more obsessive or fixated on the negative experience.

Allow yourself to feel what you feel. Don't think that you have to feel positive all the time. It's more beneficial to accept emotions rather than stress that everything's okay eg. people saying they're fine when they are clearly upset.

It's healthier to accept how you feel and that's okay. If things go wrong, rather than dwelling on them, accept how you feel about the situation. When you accept an emotion it's more likely to integrate within you. Don't pretend to be positive. " "When things go wrong and we dwell on them, or the thoughts we have about them, we are more likely to hold onto that feeling for longer.

Imagine a recent experience where you felt you were unable to get that event out of your head. Maybe this was a conversation that you felt did not go well or an experience where you felt a lot of lingering embarrassment. To deactivate those thoughts write them down, rip them up, let them go, does it really matter in the grand scheme of things?

Give yourself forgiveness. Reflect that everyone makes mistakes or feels embarrassed. A million people today did the same thing."

Check yourself with this State of Mind Barometer "Being aware of our own state of mind is helpful to understand and address our emotions.

Check in with yourself everyday - where is your thinking? What could you do to change?

Do something you enjoy, say an affirmation, have a nap.

Self-awareness (followed by doing something about it) is really important to improve your own mental state and confidence." "How do you feel?

Checking in with the way that you feel is a good way to build emotional intelligence.

Use this state-of-mind barometer to check the statements that you relate to the most at this moment:

Lower brain states: tired, stressed, abrupt, rude, judgemental, depressed, lethargic, upset, anxious, fearful, worried, stuck, frozen, grim, heavy.

Higher brain states: energised, alert, sensitive, understanding, forgiving, proactive, calm, thoughtful, deliberate, light-hearted.

If you're in a low-brain state right now, what are you going to do to get out of it?"

Identity and grounding "Every single person is different and has their own identity, likes and dislikes. Consider putting boundaries in place to protect your identity. Honour your own choices. Do the things that you like.

- Setting boundaries is key to creating loving relationships in which your needs are met, and you feel respected and valued.
- Boundaries inform others what you're OK with, what you're not OK with, and what you need.
- Compromising your boundaries is one of the most disempowering, self-defeating things you can do.

" "Who are you?

What do you like?

What do you enjoy?

What puts a smile on your face?

What makes you happy?

Write a list of things today that you like and what you don't like."

Understanding your strengths and weaknesses "Character strengths are the positive qualities we have.

They play a role in boosting well-being and handling adversity. It's really important to identify what you're good at and work to these strengths.

One of the key contributions positive psychology has made is supporting individuals to reflect on, consider, and identify their core strengths to utilise them to lead a flourishing life (Boniwell, 2006)."

"What are your strengths, what are your weaknesses?

Make a list of the top 5.

Can you think of a way to accept your weaknesses, as they are part of your identity?



Self-acceptance or adopt a growth mindset.

Are there any weaknesses that you would like to grow and change?"

Positive intention "Do you know that if you have a positive intention about something, you are more likely to succeed.

Intention is a commitment to do something in a certain way.

A study in the British Journal of Health Psychology found that 91% people who planned their intention to exercise by writing down when and where they would exercise each week ended up following through. Meanwhile, people who read motivational material about exercise, but did not plan when and where they would exercise, showed no increase compared to the control group." "Setting an intention for a positive result.

When you are next planning to do something, why not have a positive intention to have a good day rather than a bad day?

Articulate that you have a positive intention to succeed rather than to fail - keep reinforcing this feeling and lean in."

How would you talk to a friend about their problems? "When we're stuck, we often have difficulty seeing the way out for ourselves.

However, we can have perfect vision for how somebody else needs to deal with their problems and we're often able to give people better advice than we're able to give to ourselves.

In our self-talk, we are often much harder on ourselves than we are on others. Maybe we have repeatedly been told that we should always be on top of things; we should always have control of our moods; nothing less than perfect will do. But we don't demand perfection from others, so we shouldn't demand it from ourselves. We are human. " "Think about a problematic situation that you're currently experiencing.

Something that is causing you stress or upset.

Ask yourself what you would say to a dear friend if they were in your situation (we tend to be much more compassionate to friends than we are to ourselves) and direct those comments to yourself. "

You're so Emo (Emotionally Intelligent)! "Do you know what Emotional Intelligence is?

Emotional intelligence is how much we're able to recognise our feelings and then how we express those feelings. It also includes the capacity to understand how others are feeling. People with high emotional intelligence can use that information to adapt their speech and behaviour to the environment and create better outcomes in social interactions.

Building your emotional intelligence could improve your confidence, happiness, and likeability." "To reconnect with your emotions, try setting a timer for various points during the day.

When the timer goes off, take a few deep breaths and notice how you're feeling emotionally.

Pay attention to where that emotion is showing up as a physical feeling in your body and what the sensation feels like. Try to put it into words: "I'm feeling stressed, and I can feel tension in my shoulders." "

How you view yourself "How you view yourself has a big impact on your confidence and self-esteem.

Cognitive scientist Juan Yang offers a useful insight into how self-perception impacts our goals and behaviour. "People strive to feel good about themselves or seek to maintain their self-esteem, and this is fundamental to human nature."

Self-esteem is a judgment or self-evaluation of our work or goodness and how well we feel we are doing in areas of our life that we rate as important (Yang, Xu, Chen, Shi, & Han, 2016).

- Do you hold yourself in high regard or low regard.

- Do you ever view yourself through the eyes of others?" "If you want to develop emotional mastery, there are several things you can work on improving. Some of them include improving our self-image and self-acceptance, determination, and optimism.

How can you view yourself in a more positive way?

- Reflect on your positive characteristics and achievements.

- Write down 3 things about yourself that you like and three things you've done that you're proud of.

"

How your bodily sensations affect your emotions "Emotions are just our brain's way of trying to construct meaning out of what is happening around us.

Having more awareness of your emotions and understanding the sensations differently can help you change the way that you think and feel about a situation. What is your body trying to tell you? If your body's tired, do you listen to it or do you just push ahead? Learn to listen to your body. " "Listen to your body.

Your emotions can be very good guide and motivator.

Watch out today to see if you have a strong emotional reaction in your body, ask yourself what your body is trying to tell you and be mindful of it.

Learning to listen to your body is a good skill to have."

Find a Confidence Role Model "Surrounding yourself with confident people improves your own confidence levels.

Learning from others who are successful in fulfilling their tasks and goals is inspiring. Is there someone that you see regularly - for example, a colleague, family member, or friend - with lots of self-confidence that you'd like to mirror?" Identify 5 key characteristics that your role model exhibits that demonstrate confidence.

If at first you don't succeed, try again "Research shows that high self-esteem helps us to persist and bounce back after failure.

Often if we fail or think that we haven't done well, we tend to give up. It's natural to make mistakes. Don't give up on yourself. Practice your resilience. " "We need to normalise 'mistake-making'.

'It's from our mistakes that we grow'.

Research shows that confidence and resilience go hand in hand. Instead of beating yourself up when you make a mistake or fail, see it as part of the journey.

- Think about a recent error that you made.
- How did you feel after it?
- How do you feel now?
- Recognise that the feelings have likely lessened over time – reflecting the fact that it was not as bad as you initially thought.

Remind yourself that you're not perfect."

Predict the future "Emotional clarity is the ability to understand the differences between the different emotions that we feel.

How would you like to feel after doing something new, different or challenging?

How do you currently feel after doing something new, different or challenging?

Plan your emotional intentions and act accordingly." "Think about a potentially emotional situation you're going into today: it could be a meeting, making a difficult phone call, or talking to your boss about something important.

Predict how you will feel after it's done. Then, once you've done the task, reflect on how you actually feel.

Compare that to your prediction. "

Find a mentor "Being encouraged by other people and boosted by coaching are effective ways to boost confidence.

This is best when not just being told how good you are, but when someone helps guide you towards good judgments and allows us to see our progress.

The Institute of Coaching reports the many personal benefits of coaching;

- Taking action towards achieving goals
- Becoming more self-reliant
- Gaining more job and life satisfaction
- Contributing more effectively to teams and organisations
- Taking greater responsibility and accountability for actions and commitments
- Working more easily and productively with others
- Communicating more effectively

" "Do you think that you would benefit from having a mentor in your life?

Today take a look at your workplace or University to see if there are any mentor or mentee opportunities.

If there is nothing clearly available, think about someone you respect or admire and ask them if they would consider taking on this role for you, or look online to see if there are mentorship schemes available to you."

Stop living in fear "It's not uncommon for people to be so blocked by fear of potential negative outcomes that it inadvertently prevents them from achieving their goals.

Fear can create negative illusory realities because your mind can generate false perspectives and this can blow you off course. Researchers at UCLA have even confirmed this association through brainwave studies. This may include thoughts such as, 'No-one is ever going to take me seriously', 'What if I can't do it?' and 'What if they say no?'

" "Our brain can trick us into making us think that our fears are real.

Ask yourself where this fear came from....write a list of the 5 things that you fear the most - and then provide evidence of how real this may be and how likely that these things will happen to you?"

Identify stressors to overcome them "Stress can trigger our inherent fight-flight mechanism. This stimulates the release of cortisol and adrenaline which can put us on edge and exacerbate worry.

Work, family and money issues are all examples of stressors that can activate the stress response.

How well do you know your triggers?" "What stresses you out / what is your self-talk saying / what are the triggers?

Think about what sets you off today.

Once you've identified the trigger - what 3 things can you do to overcome or minimise the trigger eg. relook at your diary, do you need to have a courageous conversation with somebody, do you need to stop worrying about what other people think?

Be assertive."

Building meaningful relationships "Erik Erikson's theoretical writings on identity have provided a rich foundation upon which decades of research on identity development and connectedness have been built.

A sense of belonging and connectedness is a basic psychological need. When it's satisfied it brings about positive outcomes, including confidence and self-esteem.

Connectedness can be defined as a drive to form and maintain lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships.

Connectedness is often linked to four different contexts: family, school, peers, and community.

A feeling of belonging really helps our well-being." "Reflect on the meaningful relationships in your life currently and which context they fit into e.g. school/work, friends, family, community. Make a list of who you feel connected with in each of these situations.

Now what?

Identify the key people - write a list (as above).

Would you like to build more connections?

Why not make an effort to call an old friend or join a club, reach out to someone new and interesting."

Forgive yourself "Are you sometimes really hard on yourself when thinking about a past mistake?

Breaking the psychological ties that bind you to the past, and giving up the quest to change what has already happened is a really clear way of moving forwards with your life." "Give yourself a break and don't beat yourself up with hindsight. Make a list of the things that you still can't let go of.

- What are you still beating yourself up about?

- What are you giving yourself a hard time for?

- What are some of the things you can't let go of?

Can you give yourself compassion rather than judgement today?"

Finding your voice "When you become someone you're not, in order to fit in, you can lose yourself.

Successful people are able to resist conformity. We all know that familiar feeling: a failure means you can't be part of a team or organisation, and as a result the desire to be someone you're not is fierce.

The more you know who you are and take a stand for that, the more confidently you can walk away from groups or situations where who you are is not valued.

Chinese researchers such as Zheng and Hou at the Neuromanagement Laboratory in Hangzhou have demonstrated that the more you are able to resist social influence the more confident you are."

"Reflect on a time when you found have your voice and stood up for yourself.

Make a note each time you express yourself or defend your own opinions in conversations today."

Speaking to Strangers "Are you afraid of speaking to or in front of people you don't know?

In many surveys and research studies, speaking in front of a crowd is cited as people's number one fear.

Confidence is critical to interacting with strangers." "Try this iterative process which trains you to show confidence when speaking in front of a crowd.

1). Explain a topic that interests you to yourself in front of a mirror.

2). Explain this topic to a couple of close friends individually.

3). Ask your friends to listen to you explain the topic as a group.

4). Talk about this topic to some strangers you interact with today, such as a barista or waiter."

Skills "Have you ever finished a paper or essay that was incredibly difficult to write but made you feel on top of the world once it was done?"

Have you ever cleaned your house to such perfection that you felt like a whole new person?

This is because when you complete a task well and enjoy doing it, you get a rush of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine makes you feel rewarded and positive.

Knowing that you can absolutely smash a task is the first step to being confident in yourself, your future, and your long-term goals!" "Make a list of everything you're good at today with related skills. It doesn't have to be anything fancy or overly complicated.

If you find it difficult, try thinking of the last time you felt super confident in your skills. What were you doing?

Examples include drawing, writing, dancing, brainstorming ideas for your next life/work project, cooking, helping someone, tidying and cleaning."

Getting ready for presentations "Having to talk in front of an audience at work or school can be daunting.

Because of this fear, it can make us believe that we are not capable or confident enough to share ideas through oral presentations. Research has shown how crucial self-confidence is when presenting. It suggested that the more confident a person is, the easier it is for them to speak in front of others. Confident people were also more capable of sharing insights and more open-minded, making the presentation even better. So how could we improve confidence during presenting? It's all about being comfortable in the environment that you're presenting in! " "Choose a place where you are the most comfortable talking with others and presenting ideas (in school, at a friend's house, in your home, etc.).

- Ask 2-3 people you feel comfortable presenting to (e.g., family, friend).

- Create a 5–7-minute presentation about one of your interests (e.g., a favourite book, movie genre, sport, etc.).

To create a visual presentation, create a PowerPoint (or other apps) presentation that includes 4-5 slides. It does not need to include too much information and use images. The whole exercise should not take longer than 10-15 minutes. "

Create questions, build confidence "Exam season is one of the school year's most stressful and challenging times.

Self-doubt and lack of confidence in knowing the answers to the most challenging questions on an exam paper can be very daunting.

Many teachers say students should not leave revision until the last minute, but sometimes, students do not know how to get started.

Research shows that a technique that helps improve long-term understanding of complex topics involves creating your own exam questions. This builds familiarity and confidence with your material.

" "Build your confidence with effective study tips;

- Choose a topic from a subject that you find challenging.
- Read through the topic in your textbook/revision guide or listen to the lecture.
- After you are finished, write 3-5 multiple-choice questions with four possible answers (only one can be the correct answer).

Try to answer the questions in 5 minutes to see how much you remember about the topic. You can re-use these questions in future revisions or do this activity with a study group and swap questions with each other. This exercise should take about 15 minutes."

Check your answers! "You are in the exam room. You have a big maths question in front of you. You solve the maths question and get started on the next one. However, you feel weird, and you go back to that question. Then a question goes through your head: Did I answer this correctly? I am sure this situation sounds similar to every student worldwide.

When this occurs, you question everything you have done in the paper so far, and your confidence decreases rapidly. Therefore, you make a big decision to change your initial answer. Most people believe that it is a bad thing and that it is more likely that you will change it to the wrong answer.

Although that can happen, research showed that those who had revised answers after finishing a mock exam had a better overall score. This is because 62 % of the revised answers had wrong-to-right answer changes. This research showed the importance of reviewing the exam paper after you finish. By doing the following exercise, you have a better chance to score better in your exam and improve your response confidence." "Practise finishing mock exams or practise papers at home with at least 10 minutes to spare.

Set your phone timer 10 minutes earlier than the paper instructed (e.g., on a 2-hour paper, set the timer at 1 hour 50 minutes).

Use this 10 minutes to review the paper, especially the questions you are less confident with."

School + belonging "According to Tajfel and Turner, the feeling of belonging to a group is an important part of our social identity. We desire to belong and increase our self-esteem and confidence by the idea that we are part of a social group, in which we are accepted.

People often change behaviour to maintain a positive sense of self as a member of the social group.

This theory is called 'Social Identity Theory' (SIT). SIT has three stages:

- social categorisation (when you are identified in a social group),
- social identification (when you are adopting the social group's attitudes, ideas, and behaviour),
- social comparison (when you are comparing your group to other social groups)

Going through each stage will help you become more confident in making new friends." "The first thing you should do is sit down and write down 5 hobbies/ interests that you might be interested in and rank them from 1 to 5.

- Write down at least 2 interests that you never tried before, so you can be more open to other hobbies and meet more people.
- When you are done, search online whether there is a society or club, which is based on those hobbies/interests.

This exercise should take you 10-12 minutes.

After this exercise, make sure to make notes on when and where the club/society is held and attend them."

This is my recovery, and I don't feel that it is okay for them to ask this. They told me it is policy due to the fact that I may run into a peer there. I am a peer counselor in the small community that I grew up in. I am in recovery myself. I was asked to come work for this organization after I was two years sober (I was in treatment in this organization). I work with mental health peers and run life skill groups. I don't work with substance peers. Hello, and thank you for your question. I know that workplaces have some latitude when it comes to requiring certain behaviors from their employees. For example, they may require you to tell them if you get into some kind of legal trouble. But this situation seems completely different. For one thing, 12 step meetings are supposed to be anonymous. I am not sure how they would know that you attended unless you or someone else told them. I agree that it seems like to cross a line. Usually each state has an office that manages complaints related to employment, such as the Department of Labor or EEOC. You may want to see which entity is in your state and contact them. It would be worth asking them to see if this is a legal practice. If it is but you still want/need to stay at this job, then you may want to look for alternate sources of support for your sobriety. There are active online support groups that would allow you to do things from the privacy of your home. SMART Recovery <http://www.smartrecovery.org/> is a website that many people like. There are also online groups that specifically discuss the 12 steps. No matter what, I give you a lot of credit for doing your best to keep your sobriety and continuing to see the value in having support

I easily recognize this but have no control over it and need suggestions for managing my anger. I suggest that you work on emotional awareness. Emotional awareness basically means knowing what you are feeling and why. Emotional awareness also means that you can identify the link between the way you are feeling and your actions. In other words knowing that your feelings dictate what you do. Often feelings of hurt or insecurity can come out as anger if we cannot properly identify and express the feelings. Being emotionally aware also means that you are able to express your feelings to others. Being unable to do so leads to feelings of frustration and being misunderstood. Many people for many different reasons are not in touch with their emotions. For example, men traditionally have been brought up taught to not express sadness or weakness. Therefore, many men learned to turn feelings of sadness, insecurities, or fears into anger and express these feelings as anger. Being taught not to feel a certain emotion does not make that emotion disappear. Instead it makes us learn how to express it in other, incorrect, ways. If a man never learns to say "I am sad" or "that really hurt my feelings" and instead lashes out in anger, then the response they get from those around them will be to the anger and not a response to the underlying true feeling, which will leave the man feeling alone and misunderstood. You can control yourself and not explode. Walk away, remove yourself from the



situation, do whatever you have to do to not lash out. Instead of reacting the way you normally would, go somewhere by yourself and think about what just happened and try to understand why such a simple thing upset you. What is the real feeling driving these outbursts? Maybe you can begin to recognize an underlying pattern. It might help to keep an anger journal. Write down everything that gets you upset. That might help you see a pattern and pinpoint what may be setting you off. Talking with a therapist about this would be beneficial in helping pinpoint the underlying cause of the outbursts you are experiencing.

I'm a teenager. I get random spurts of anger, like complete, pure rage. I figured it was hormones, but others notice it too. I get self-destructive. I used to cut but stopped. Now when I get mad, I bite my arms and fingers, pull my hair, scratch my face, or punch my thighs. Basically, I do things I can hide instead of breaking anything in my room and having to explain it to my mom. I don't live in a bad household. I have a great family, a great relationship with my boyfriend, and a good job. I have no idea what this is and I don't know how to control it. It's over any little thing. Tonight, it was because I couldn't get my earrings out. This happens maybe two to three times on a good week, and it's always over stupid, petty things.

Hi. I'm glad you wrote. In general, when a small thing bothers us (and this happens to all of us), it's because the small thing triggers an emotion in us that we have felt "too much" or "too intensely" in the past, and we don't know how to manage that emotion effectively...we just want to avoid it as quickly as possible. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with a qualified therapist can help you to understand what is being triggered in you and learn how to manage emotions productively. You say that your behaviours are self-destructive, and I agree. It sounds like you have developed a habit of channelling your distress towards self-harm, and this is a separate and potentially more serious problem. This is a choice you make that points to shame being an issue for you. Again, a good therapist can help you learn what's behind your shame and self-harm. Your feelings are normal, and you can learn more healthy ways to deal with them with qualified help.

When I see something I don't like, I go off like a ticking time bomb. I go from 80 to 100 really quickly.

Sometimes we react to situations immediately, without thinking of the consequences of our actions. Typically by not reacting right away, we are better able to gather our thoughts, see the situation more clearly and from other perspectives, and respond more calmly. One of the strategies that almost always helps is deep breathing. When faced with a stressful situation, you can give yourself a time out by removing yourself from the stress and spend 5 minutes taking deep breaths (breathe in slowly counting to 4 and breathe out even slower counting to 6), while focusing and thinking only about your breathing. After doing so, think of the various ways you can respond to the situation and choose the one most appropriate. Good luck!

I don't know what's with me. I'm almost constantly angry. Even when I'm happy, I still feel anger inside me. When I acknowledge it, it ruins my mood and takes over. I get angry at the littlest things. Even if I think someone said something they didn't, it infuriates me. Something perfectly normal can make me go off. When my anger flares up, I get a terrible pain in my chest that lasts for a while. It's like there is a fire constantly burning in my body, and anger is gasoline.

I'm glad you want this to be different. It doesn't feel good to be angry all the time, and it's stealing your energy as well as affecting relationships, I'm sure. Working with a therapist, you can learn to recognise the deep emotions that lie underneath the anger. It's likely to be either powerlessness or worthlessness, and what happens is this... a small moment in the present touches on an old, tender, bruised emotion that we've simply felt too much of or too strongly in the past. We develop ways of avoiding these vulnerable emotions, and anger is one way of doing that. So, when someone looks at you in a certain way, or says something, you'd rather be angry than feel powerless, or unimportant (or whatever your kryptonite feeling is). In that moment, your instinct is to blame whatever happened, no matter how small, because that's the

thing that happened just before you got mad. You fail to recognise that the problem is not the look on that person's face, or the shoe that someone left in front of the door...it's that you can't stand feeling something and you want to avoid it like you want to stamp your foot out if it's on fire. I suggest finding a therapist to work with. You can learn to take responsibility for your old emotions and find new ways to manage them.

I am so angry. I feel like the arguments with my parents have caused me so much anxiety and stress, and I don't know what to do. I want to sit down with a psychologist, but I cannot afford one, nor do I have my own health insurance. I can feel myself starting to get violent. I throw things of value when I start to get mad. I have punched holes in my wall. I can feel my aggression getting worse. First off, it is great that you recognize that some changes need to be made. It is also really good that you understand where the source of your anxiety and stress comes from. Fortunately there are many self help books and internet sources that provide free tools to help you cope with life's obstacles, including anger management. There are several strategies that you can try to help control your anger, but the ones that I would recommend first are the following: 1. Try a different way of communicating with your parents. Since arguing with them is a great source of anger for you, learning more effective ways of communicating with them will likely be of great benefit. Choose a time to talk with them about "heated issues" when everyone is calm and emotions are not heightened. Use "I phrases" by telling them how the arguments effect you, as opposed to placing blame on them. Validate what you hear your parents say in order to allow them to know that you understand their point of view. 2. When you feel yourself becoming angry, take a break. Simply excuse yourself from the situation, find a quiet place to be by yourself, and do some deep breathing. Close your eyes, slowly count to four as you inhale, and exhale even slower, counting to 6. Focus on nothing except for your breathing and do this for 5 minutes. 3. Stop any negative thoughts in their tracks. Often times when we get upset, we catastrophize and do not see things clearly. When you catch yourself thinking negatively stop the thoughts and ask yourself if your thinking is logical and rational. If you cannot find much or any evidence that your thoughts are valid, then let them go and replace them with realistic, logical thoughts. 4. Finally, find a friend or someone to talk to and/or keep a journal. Keeping your emotions to yourself will not help you. Being able to express your feelings and problem solve will allow for some relief when feeling sad or angry. I wish you all the best!

I am so angry. I feel like the arguments with my parents have caused me so much anxiety and stress, and I don't know what to do. I want to sit down with a psychologist, but I cannot afford one, nor do I have my own health insurance. I can feel myself starting to get violent. I throw things of value when I start to get mad. I have punched holes in my wall. I can feel my aggression getting worse. I'm sorry you have so many arguments with your parents. Ideally parents are people who tolerate that their kids are people with their own unique characteristics. Everyone likes feeling loved by their parent. Do you feel loved even though you and them have clashes? Anger is a symptom of a problem. The real question is knowing what feels like its being hurt inside of you. I agree with your idea of talking with a psychologist or some other type of licensed professional therapist. See if your area has a family service agency in it. Generally the non-profit sectors offer sliding scale fees, and if you qualify, your cost per session would be financially comfortable for you. One possibility is to tell your parents that you'd like starting therapy because of feeling so much stress from the family arguing. They may very well be surprised to learn of your maturity in assessing your level of stress and be willing to make a positive contribution to this by offering to authorize therapy through their health insurance. They may even decide on family counseling so all of you work together to relate in more loving ways. Last, if you aren't ready to speak with your parents about wanting counseling, think about speaking to your school guidance counselor. This person may have some recommendations for your specific geographic location.

I have a really bad temper. I get mad very easily then stay like that the whole day. I don't mean to be that way, but I can't help it. A lot of times the anger someone expresses is from feeling a deep level hurt within themselves. A surface situation, like, a store told you they'd have delivery of a certain item by Tuesday, and when that particular Tuesday comes, the store doesn't have what they told you they would, and you are furious. The fury may have more with many times before in your life, having been deeply let down by someone who mattered to your life at the time, who similarly promised something and failed to deliver whatever it. If at the time of feeling let down by someone important in your life, the relationship didn't allow for honest expression of all your emotions, you'd have learned to hold in what you realized would not be tolerated if you expressed it clearly. Without practice of being heard when feeling hurt by someone, eventually the person, possibly you, learned to contain and contain your emotions. It is possible that the anger you feel at a variety of situations lately, are muting hurt feelings that you've understood from relating to meaningful people in your personal history, to not talk about. As a way to find out if you feel other emotions in addition to anger, take some time to reflect on what triggered your anger and whether its possible that hurt emotions which nobody whom you know wants to hear, are really the underlying source of your upset. I hope you will enjoy some new discoveries about yourself and your emotions!

The sounds of eating and breathing gives me headaches €”mostly mouth breathing and snoring. It makes me angry, and I want to solve it myself. Probably good to know in what type of situations you are, in which you are hearing mouth breathing and snoring. If you're sleeping beside your partner who does these actions, would have a different response than if you overhear mouth breathing and snoring from a family member who is napping on the couch and you are walking past them on your way to take a snack in the kitchen. Basically, if the person who does these actions which bother you, start by telling them. Depending on whether they are empathetic to how distressed you are from their sounds, or not, willing to change, or not, has a good deal to do with next steps. I don't really see any step you're able to take to solve that you are sensitive to human sounds from the head. One path I don't recommend is expecting yourself to ignore the fact of being feeling bothered, or dismissing your own sensitivity someone. Your needs matter.

My issue isn't resisting angry urges; it's the anger itself. My rage is extreme and vastly disproportionate to the direct stressor. It causes violent thoughts, but I never act. I stay lucid enough to know the rage is violent, not me. I don't want to drown myself in anger and resentment. Knowing how you feel and also being able to stabilize yourself to act upon the tremendous anger you feel, are fine qualities. Anger, whatever the magnitude, generally reflects emotional pain that has not yet been placed into words. Try thinking over your growing up years because maybe you will discover certain repeated dynamics which upset you and that no one helped you feel secure through such times. Also, if either of your parents drank too much and raged when they were drunk, you may be repeating their patterns of how to respond to situations. Even without drinking, the response patterns of yelling and throwing things are frightening enough to leave a permanent memory. If this describes part of your childhood, then it is possible you are becoming angry because it was the only emotion that either of your parents was able to express.

I have not been able to really sleep. I stay up all times of the night not even knowing why. Every day, I feel like I have anger inside of me. I have a little family, but I can't open up to them like I want to. I have a son, and I feel that I take my anger out on him by screaming at him. Best question is....what are you so angry about? You can't stop being so angry until you figure out what is the root of your anger. If you feel like you have anger inside, while I am sure you do. Taking it out on your son is only passing on the hurt and anger. This will be inside him too. Get some professional help so that you can be happy and have a happy child.

Everything just makes me upset. Anger often comes with a lot of other emotions. Consider what else you may be feeling at the same time and keep track of your different mood changes. You may be able to notice patterns, such as being more frustrated when you don't sleep well. If you do feel as though you are mad all the time, can you think of any exceptions so you can see what is different in those times?

Sometime when small thing happen, like losing a comb, I get furious. I even start throwing things. Do I have a problem? Anyone who asks whether or not they have a problem, usually feels at least partly, that they do have a problem. Your answer to the question is what matters. Since you already understand that your reaction is overstated to the events which trigger them, the reactions you're having are more than likely anger that is leftover from past events, either in the near or distant past. Be aware, consider, reflect on how you usually handle feeling angry. Based on your description here, it is quite likely that the anger you show toward what you call "little things" reflect anger at much bigger matters that are uncomfortable and not easy to understand. Knowing more about the more significant matters causing frustration for you, may very likely decrease reacting angrily toward smaller matters.

I don't know how to notice or express my feelings besides anger. That's really the only one i feel. Well, then give yourself some credit for noticing that you recognize at least one feeling that you have! What is your own theory as to what is difficult to know your feelings? Your answer will give you clues as to unearthing your willingness to be aware of the way you feel. Sometimes the family in which someone grew up, did all they could to stop the kids from knowing who they were. In some families there were very severe consequences if a child spoke up with an independent mind. By knowing where your difficulties started, you may very well be able to release the situation in which you learned to suppress your feelings. Also, spend some time with yourself just enjoying who you are. Often, people who have difficulty in expressing themselves, suffered shame and humiliation as a child. They have a chronic sense of worthlessness, and feeling worthless certainly works against self-expression. By having a good time being with yourself, you may increase your self-appreciation and this will go a long way to believing that your feelings are worth knowing and stating.

I been having anger problems a lot lately. It only takes one word wrongly said to set me off. I use to not be like this until I got with my soon-to-be husband. I think his mood and rage/anger problems have rubbed off on me a lot. I don't get nearly as bad as he does, but I yell almost constantly and I can't seem to just stop. I have two young babies that have to hear this, and I don't want my girls growing up with a mommy like I have been lately. I just don't know how to get back to my old self. My gut says that your own rage is being triggered partly because you feel trapped or shutdown by your fiance's moody/angry/rage responses and powerless to stop it. You can start by accepting that this is who he is and you won't change him. You can only change your own behaviours, and I see you taking responsibility for those, which is great. You want to protect your girls, and that's appropriate; children are greatly affected by this type of home environment. I urge you to see a therapist so you can understand your own emotions and sort out the choices you have to make, knowing that your fiance has to make his own choices about his behaviours.

Whenever I run into a situation that makes me upset or angry, I tend to start cursing and badly offending the person I am confronting. I say mean things to let my anger out. Whenever people tell me stuff about my relationship (like starting rumors or saying negative things about me or my relationship) I lash out not just them but at my boyfriend. I feel like I keep causing drama due to my personality. I want to be a better person and learn to let things not get to me and be happy and graceful. I hurt the ones I love with my words. I want to be better for myself and them. "

Taking accountability for your actions and seeking help is an excellent first step. I wonder where the anger is coming from. Learning what is at

the root of it can shed some light on what the problem is and can provide some

relief in itself. I would also suggest doing some self-exploration and see a

therapist for individual sessions in order to gain a clearer insight as to what

the cause is. There are also several actions you can take on your own to help

control your anger and communicate more effectively. Here is what I would recommend

you try:

**Take time outs:** When you feel yourself becoming upset, excuse yourself and take a time out to either think about the most appropriate course of action or redirect your thoughts all together. Often when we become angry, it is difficult to see the issue clearly, as our emotions get in the way.

**Do deep breathing exercises:** Close your eyes. Breathe in slowly to the

count of 4. Breathe out even slower to the count of 6. Practice this for about

5 minutes, 3 times a day and focus on nothing except your breathing during this

time. Once it becomes routine for you, it will be easier to apply during

situations in which you are angry or upset.

**Change negative thought patterns:** Try and recall or be aware of your

thoughts, particularly when you are feeling angry. What are these thoughts

telling you? Are they valid or logical? Is there factual evidence to support

the negative thoughts? Often the answer is ""no."" Learn to stop the

negative thoughts and replace them with logical and more positive

ones.

**Communicate effectively:** As a speaker, you want to use ""I""

statements by telling the other person how you feel instead of blaming him/her

by using ""you"" statements. For example, you might say something such

as, ""I feel sad when you don't come home at a decent hour and I don't get

to spend time with you"" versus ""You always stay out late and don't

even care about me."" The speaker should also avoid using black and white

language such as always, never, etc. As the listener, you want to validate what

you hear so that the other person knows that you are listening. You will also want

to be responsive and offer fair solutions. "" I wish you luck in using these tools and learning about where your anger comes from."

"I need answers to my anger, possessiveness, and urges.

I am angry all the time. I push people away so much that I actually blow up on people now because they ask me how my day is or was. I have a possessiveness to someone who is not even mine. I have these urges to hurt someone really bad. I want to see them beg for me to stop hurting. I want to hear their agonizing pained-filled voices. What is wrong with me?" What result are you hoping to get from the behaviors you describe? Maybe start by comparing the results you see yourself receiving from your current interactions, with how you would wish to feel from relating to others. Since you ask, "what is wrong with me?", there is a disconnect between what you are doing and what you'd like in return. This is true even with imagining doing harm to others. What are you really trying to accomplish for yourself by hurting others? Besides the unethicalness and criminality of this and legal consequences of arrest for such behaviors, what gain which is not evil, do you expect from overpowering and imagining you control another human being?

I'm a teenager, and I struggle with going out and talking to people. I feel awful about leaving home. I know I can't afford a therapist so I don't know what my problem is, but I think I might have social anxiety. If you are noticing that anxiety tends to be triggered around interactions with others, then you may have social anxiety. Working with a therapist, you may be able to gain insight into the nature of the anxiety, develop tools for coping with it, and take steps that may alleviate it over time, so that you can enjoy your interactions with others. If you are short on money, there still may be options for you to be able to see a therapist. Check with your insurance provider about your behavioral health coverage. If you have Medicaid/apple care, there are some private practice therapists who accept this form of insurance, as well as community clinics which do. If you are not insured, some therapists and clinics will work on a sliding fee scale and accept either low fee or may even work with you pro-bono (for free).

I have not had a friend since I was 19. I don't go anywhere, and I have no job, all because I'm afraid of people. Individual and/or group therapy can be a powerful antidote for social anxiety. Often in therapy, the things that tend to get in the way of our securing satisfying and lasting personal relationships will appear in some way in the therapy relationship and a competent therapist will be able to help you work through this anxiety, in a sensitive way, and eventually encourage you to seek out the personal relationships that you want. In group therapy, you have an opportunity to have a relationship not only with the therapist, but several other people who are all in the group in order to give and receive mutual support to one another.<br>

Whenever I have to speak in public or be in big crowds, I freak out. I get light-headed, sweaty, and I have trouble breathing. As you do it more, it should get better or at least with less anxiety. Anxiety is normal for most when speaking in public. I hear this from even the best of facilitators who have been doing it for years. I even experienced that when I first became a counsellor and had to lead classes. I asked myself why were I so anxious? I admit at that time I didn't have confidence in myself. The more I prepared and practiced, the more my confidence level increased. Yours will too...

I feel too scared to meet people I don't know - even relatives. I don't ever raise my hand or talk in school. I feel like no one understands. How can I handle this? Congratulations on your courage to ask this question! This shows you are willing to engage with other people, just not in all situations, especially the in-person ones. Start by "meeting" yourself. Reflect as thoroughly as possible as to what

you imagine will be the outcome of meeting others or of speaking up during a class. Some people are afraid of being criticized or judged by other people or do this to themselves inwardly. If you are judging or criticizing yourself to be less worthy of having opinions or views or of being who you are, than others, then the thought of actually placing yourself in this situation, would feel intolerable. One way to move out from this position of feeling less than others, is to recognize that these feelings are inside of you. Then it is possible to know at least on an intellectual level that it is not true that any one person is superior to another. All the people whom you are afraid to meet, also have their own insecurities. We are all equal in worth and in having blind spots about ourselves. Also, it is possible that you are naturally shy and may be expecting more from yourself than is reasonable, in terms of a standard about meeting others. You may have a few fears of being judged unfairly, you may also simply not enjoy being around people very much. Be aware to not push yourself beyond your natural limits. Overcoming fears of being judged is different than forcing yourself to do what is against your basic nature.

Sometimes, I'm fine and can go out or meet people, but other days, my heart races and words physically cannot come out of my mouth. I've always thought it was normal and I was just nervous, but the other day, it took me almost 30 minutes of sitting in my car to find the courage to enter Target by myself. Though I don't know for sure, it sounds like anxiety to me. I think it would be helpful if you work with a therapist who specializes in anxiety disorders.

I have a lot of issues going on right now. First of all, I have a lot of trouble sleeping at times, while other nights I sleep too much and still feel quite tired. I'm also noticing increased irritability and experiencing anxiety attacks that last for hours. Is there something wrong with me and if so what should I do? It sounds as if you may be experiencing a bout of anxiety and/or depression. Sleeping difficulties, irritability and anxiety attacks all are correlated with these mood disorders. And it's actually quite common for someone to deal encounter this during their lifetime. Also, keep in mind that just because you are experiencing this now does not mean that you will be dealing with it the rest of your life. Many times, it can be a single episode and if treatment is received, you can help prevent any recurrent episodes. However, you may want to first talk with your primary physician to rule out any medical issues that could be causing these problems. There may be a reason for the sudden onset of these symptoms that can be addressed quickly. On the other hand, if it is determined that you are experiencing anxiety and/or depression without a medical reason, there are two methods that are very helpful in your treatment: #1 Talk therapy with a certified therapist. He/She will be able to address the concerns you're experiencing and discovering if there is an underlying issue that may be causing it. #2 Medication There are many medications that can assist you with the feelings that you are experiencing. Your doctor will be able to help you find the right one that works for you. If one doesn't work, keep trying. There are many different options to address your specific needs. Also, a combination of these two options is extremely beneficial! Thank you for your question. I sincerely hope that you feel better soon!

I have a fear of something, and I want to face that fear to overcome it, but I don't know how. What can I do? Biologically, fear is designed to protect us from harm. Fear is not always a bad thing, and in fact can be quite healthy and appropriate depending on the situation. A phobia, however, is different. You used the term "fear" rather than "phobia". A phobia is an irrational fear - meaning it is not rational for you to fear that thing. If your situation is a phobia, exposure therapy can help. This consists of gradually exposing yourself a little at a time to the thing you are afraid of. Some people with phobias find that the irrational fear interferes with their life, and they do need to overcome it. Someone who is afraid to drive over bridges may go to great lengths to avoid routes that have bridges. People who are afraid of elevators may always use the stairs instead, which may not always be feasible. If overcoming a phobia will improve the quality of your life, then by all means, seek professional help to

overcome it. Everyone has fears, or things that make them nervous. Public speaking, asking a person out, fear of failure. Examine what your fear is and try to determine the reason for the fear. When you can get to the root cause of the fear, you can deal with that issue. A lot of times, it is a self-esteem issue. You may be able to peel back the layers of the fear and find out what's causing it and deal with the real issue. Some fears are caused by trauma. Someone with PTSD is going to have an exaggerated fear response and will find themselves being kicked into "fight or flight" mode over things that someone without the trauma experience wouldn't notice or react to. In cases like this, exposure therapy would be the wrong approach and could actually make things worse. If there is a possibility that a past trauma is the cause of your fear, I strongly urge you to seek a therapist - not just any therapist, but one who is trained to work with trauma and abuse victims.

I've been like this ever since I was in school; back then I transferred to another school. Now I'm thinking about changing my job. There's a quote I love that says, "Wherever you go, there you are" and the book by the same name by Jon Kabat-Zinn may be very helpful for you. The thing about changing things up when they get tough is that they often aren't the things that need changing. The awesome (and challenging) thing about it is that when you work on the internal aspects that may need attention, you can learn to find a sense of centeredness that comes with practicing mindfulness and asking yourself who you really are and want to be. Through this deeper work, you can actually be in the midst of chaos and still feel that calm and peace within yourself. If you look for support in this journey from a counsellor or therapist, I'd recommend looking for someone offering Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (MCBT). Also helpful may be the online program of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) found [here](#). There are in-person programs across the country, but this online self-guided version is free and a great resource!

"I just took a job that requires me to travel far away from home. My family and I really need this job.

People keep telling me I have ""anxiety"" and I'm terrified of having an anxiety attack on the road. This is all new to me. What can I do?" Anxiety often occurs when big or unexpected changes come to our lives, like having new jobs, relocating, or assuming new roles. Notice if your anxiety feels like excitement, concerns, or fear. It seems like you are excited about your new job, but worried because OTHERS are telling you that you have anxiety. Let's notice how other input is affecting your thoughts and maybe causing more anxiety that you may really have. If you are indeed experiencing anxiety, that does not mean that you will have panic attacks. But if you are experiencing panic attacks, or suffer them at some point, you could learn how to reduce them either with therapy or medication. You can learn how to process it depending what triggers it and channel it, in a useful way. For example, you could plan a schedule around your new job and be meticulous about it because you are worried about how your new job may affect your routine, or, you could feel overwhelmed with your schedule, focus on the feeling, but not do anything about it. Notice the difference? The key is in recognizing if you are anxious about something that you can change or have control over it, and take action if you do, and recognizing when you cannot control things and be OK with not being in control.

I started having anxiety three months ago. I'm new to having anxiety, and it's making me depressed.

As a past sufferer of anxiety myself, I have learned that it is a natural part of life, it is a natural part of us, the longer we try to run from it the more it entangles us in its clutches, if we deny certain parts of ourselves we will become depressed or even oppressed, the only way to deal with anxiety is to embrace it and accept it, and in fighting the fight without fighting we will eventually win, I would encourage you to look into Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, your answer I think lies in that area of research. Hope this helps, C



I've have lived for sometime with depression but things have gotten a lot better, but why is it so hard to get over anxiety and social isolation? The best way to handle depression and anxiety is with a combination of appropriate medication given to you by a medical doctor, and therapy to help you understand the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are causing the depression and anxiety in the first place and then to replace these with more positive thoughts and behaviors. This is not something that anyone should just white knuckle and try to get through on their own with no help. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a technique that has been proven helpful for depression and anxiety. This takes a therapist trained in CBT. There are some things in life that you cannot change and must learn to accept. A lot of people spend time trying to change things that they have no control over. This may be the behavior of someone else in your life or it could be a situation that you cannot change, such as the recent death of a loved one, a lost relationship, or an accident or illness which has left you handicapped. In cases like this, what can change is your attitude and thoughts about the situation that you now find yourself in. One thing that is inevitable about life is that stuff happens and it is not always pleasant. Some people take these unpleasant occurrences very hard and it throws them into a deep depression. Other people seem to be able to handle life's ups and downs and bounce back. They do this with having positive coping skills in their life. Learning new coping skills is something your therapist can help you with. A lot of people are so focused on trying to change the things in their life that they cannot change and are ignoring the things that they can change. There are things that you can do. Here is a quote for you to consider. You are getting almost everything that you are getting based on the choices that you have made. You will continue to get the same thing out of life until you make some changes. Another quote I like is You will find a way or you will find an excuse. Don't ever say that you have no choice. Everyone has a choice. You might not particularly like any of the choices that you are facing, but you do have choices. Not happy in a relationship? You can leave it. Hate your job? Get a new one. If it matters to you, you will find a way. Don't sit there complaining about everything but not doing anything different or better. Take care of yourself. Exercise is very important not only for your physical health, but for your mental health as well. Eating right and exercising will help you feel better about yourself. Also, find a meditation that works for you. There are progressive muscle relaxation exercises, visual and mental meditations, and many many more. Start making some positive changes in your life today! You can do it!

I don't have time to live or take care of myself at times. It's causing depression, stress, and anxiety. I don't know what to do. I'm not sure whether you are referring to having a lot of activities after school or that homework is overwhelming. Can you set aside a couple hours a week for yourself as a place to start?

I just wanted to get to know one so I can hear about their college experience and the courses they took. I also wanted to know if they enjoy their job and how long they were in school. It's a great idea for you to reach out to find a psychologist to talk to if this is a field you might be interested in pursuing. Regarding the length of schooling, it generally takes 4 years of college and an additional 4 to 7 years of graduate school to earn a doctorate degree to become a psychologist. There are also other similar professions, including counselling that don't require a doctorate degree. Licensed counsellors generally completed 4 years of college and an additional 2 years of graduate school. If you are thinking about a career in psychology, the local APA chapter would be a good place to start to find a local psychologist to talk to. Here's a link to the NJ APA chapter: <https://www.psychologynj.org/>

I hardly eat. But I gain weight instead of lose weight. Why? First step always is to have a medical evaluation so you are aware of any physiological conditions which may explain an answer to your question. If medically, there is no condition to explain why you gain weight instead of losing weight, even though you "hardly eat", then start noticing the types of food you eat. Almost all packaged foods

sold in supermarkets and cooked by fast food places and shopping mall restaurants, are processed to have a long shelf life and are artificially colored and have flavors added to them. With the natural taste and texture gone, it is very easy to eat a lot more calories than your body needs, before feeling full. The extra calories become extra weight eventually. Also, it is possible that even with the most natural food choices, if there is a psychological reason for eating, such as stress or anxiety, then someone may not notice they are eating more food than their body needs. Sending good wishes on playing around with these ideas and finding an answer with which you're happy!

What can I do to stop grieving my mother's death? When I am awake I just cry every day. I don't have anyone to talk to. I need help; I am still cry over her. Will I ever stop crying? it is been 3 years. I am sorry that you lost your mother. That is a really hard thing for someone to go through. There is really no set time for grief to be over, but I agree that if it has been three years and you are still crying every day then this is past the time for normal grief. I do not know how old you are and if you are in school or have a job, but I would imagine that if by now you literally were doing nothing but crying every day all day, someone would have noticed and would have gotten you some help. For one thing, bills have to be paid. There are typically five stages of grief and they can come in any order. You can go back to another stage that you previously experienced. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance are the stages. At first, people are usually in denial over the fact that they lose someone or are losing someone. This may mean that you deny they are ill or deny that they have actually died. Then comes bargaining, in which you may beg God that if you can only have this person back then you will do whatever. Depression is when the reality has settled in and when we cry and really feel the loss. It sounds like you are stuck in this phase. Finally, acceptance is when we accept that it has happened and we pick up the pieces of our life and move on. When we lose someone we never forget them. We may always have certain days that are tough, such as holidays or any special remembrance of your loved one. But we do get to the place where we accept that death is part of life and that it is inevitable, and that life goes on. A therapist can help you explore the reasons for your extended grief and can help you with coping skills to better deal with it. One suggestion I have is not to try to run from the sad feelings, don't try to not feel them. Embrace the feelings. Let the feelings wash over you and accept them. Trying not to feel something is not going to help. Sadness is a part of life and needs to be felt just like happiness does. Unpleasant feelings are not to be avoided. I am sincerely sorry that you lost your mother and that you have had such a hard time of it for three years now. You deserve to be happy and to live a full life. I am sure your mother would not want you being sad for so long. I wish you all the best as you continue to try to heal from this loss and deal with your grief.

How do I deal with the pain of losing my baby? First, I'm very sorry that this has happened. With just the information that you mentioned, I'm not sure whether you mean that you lost your baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, very young after being born, or several years into your child's life. While the process of working through your loss would certainly have similar components no matter how old your baby was, there are some differences as well. In general, I would suggest that you find more than one person in your life who you can trust to talk with about your feelings. If you have no one or would prefer to talk to someone who was not as close to you in that sense, consider speaking with a mental health professional. There is quite a process to grieving and it certainly takes time. It's different for everyone and the timetable is different for everyone. Here's a link to some information about some tasks of grieving. This is very general information and it would likely be helpful to work through it with someone: <http://therapychanges.com/blog/2015/05/review-wordens-four-tasks-of-grieving/> I don't know how long ago you lost your baby, but it may also be helpful to look at what remains that you do have control over. For example, I imagine that you choose what you want to eat, how you want to dress, whether or not to go to school or work, etc. While I'm sure your routine is quite different than it was before your loss, consider establishing a basic routine for daily activities. Also, depending upon

the age of your child, you could probably find a local support group. Having pain after losing your baby is quite typical and is a reflection of how important your baby was, and still is, to you. If you feel as though you are going through this alone or without the type of support that you want (it is possible to be surrounded by people and still feel alone), consider finding some effective support as an important beginning step. Reaching out here is certainly the beginning of that.

How do you cope with the death of your child, while surrounded with your parents who aren't supportive and disregard your feelings? First, I'm very sorry that this has happened. With just the information that you mentioned, I'm not sure whether you mean that you lost your baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, very young after being born, or several years into your child's life. While the process of working through your loss would certainly have similar components no matter how old your baby was, there are some differences as well. In general, I would suggest that you find more than one person in your life who you can trust to talk with about your feelings. If you have no one or would prefer to talk to someone who was not as close to you in that sense, consider speaking with a mental health professional. There is quite a process to grieving and it certainly takes time. It's different for everyone and the timetable is different for everyone. Here's a link to some information about some tasks of grieving. This is very general information and it would likely be helpful to work through it with someone: <http://therapychanges.com/blog/2015/05/review-wordens-four-tasks-of-grieving/> I don't know how long ago you lost your baby, but it may also be helpful to look at what remains that you do have control over. For example, I imagine that you choose what you want to eat, how you want to dress, whether or not to go to school or work, etc. While I'm sure your routine is quite different than it was before your loss, consider establishing a basic routine for daily activities. Also, depending upon the age of your child, you could probably find a local support group. Having pain after losing your baby is quite typical and is a reflection of how important your baby was, and still is, to you. If you feel as though you are going through this alone or without the type of support that you want (it is possible to be surrounded by people and still feel alone), consider finding some effective support as an important beginning step. Reaching out here is certainly the beginning of that.

"About 3 years ago or so I was skinny, but I was still ugly. I really do want to change that but I've tried 3 times. Now can I try but don't stop. At school I get bullied about my weight and my ugliness and I have been bullied my whole life that I believe them.

How can I stop thinking about them and don't let it get in my head? My parents said I don't weight that much but, they do think I am fat but, they tell me I am not. I told my parents that I need to go to a therapist, but they think I am fine and I think they don't want to deal with it." Hey! I am so impressed with your efforts to ask questions, to figure out how to change the messages that you hear (and say to yourself), and to get support! And it sounds like you want to make some changes in your life! Take a walk over to the counseling office at school, the school nurse or consider reaching out to your Pediatrician's office. You don't have to have your parent's permission to seek support for yourself! And maybe taking control of your support network will give you the strength to make even bigger decisions about your health! I am rooting for you! Be Wise!

I feel like I'm trying to convince myself that I'm okay when I'm not. I'm always blocking out the bad things and forgetting. I also feel like nobody cares for me and they never will. I feel truly alone.

I can relate! When things are going badly, I feel like my life has

always been and will always be that way. (But I also do this when things are

going well. That is, I forget how good things can turn bad. Personally, to

avoid this emotional roller-coaster, I try and heed the famous advice by author and feminist Rita Mae Brown: "One of the keys to happiness is a bad memory."

So maybe this weakness of yours for forgetting is really a strength! It sounds a lot like living in the moment to me. And while it's hard to manage my past and my future, the moment seems like a small enough piece of temporal real estate to sort out. So that's the *what* of my answer. The *how* goes like this: Choose one from column A, two from column B, and three from column C in the following chart. Then try doing them for as long as you can. Then see what happens.

Gratitude	Forgiveness	Appreciation
Expectations	Meditation	Exercise
Bitterness	Distraction	Volunteering
Resentment	Substances	Worry
Regret	Possessions	Pessimism
Shame	Desire	Superstition
Rage	Isolation	Wishing
Self-loathing	Criticism	Withholding

If you feel as though what you think and believe are out of your control, or that your values were imposed on you, or that nothing good will ever happen again, then we will have to respectfully disagree. You've asked a very deep and insightful question, proving that your hope has gotten you this far. Hang onto that hope because I'm an example of things working out despite my previous way of looking at my life. Instead of *convincing* yourself that you're okay when you're not, how about calling it *accepting* yourself as okay just the way you are, without judging your okayness. You probably have high standards (perfectionism?) and that's a thing to talk with a counselor about. The opposite of perfect is not horrible. It's called *good enough*.

Blocking out the bad things and

forgetting is as natural as eating and sleeping. All the other mammals do it (except when it comes to life-threatening bad things) so why shouldn't we? This might be called optimism.

Feeling alone and uncared for is a worse feeling than being despised. This is good! This means (I suppose) that you don't despise yourself as much as you just don't care for you (because we can often project our own self-beliefs onto others). This is an abstract concept that will take some time to get used to. But I have a suspicion that, with just a little more self-care, and a little more caring for others, you might be better off very soon.

I always feel the need to impress people, whether it's my family, the people at school, or just random people. I know that no matter what I do or how I change, there will always be some people who hate me. Why do I feel this way? It is normal to seek other's attention and noticing that some people would not be interested. We belong to a social environment where we constantly receive other's feedback, which at times validates us, makes feel important and useful, like we belong; but also, at times makes us feel isolated, different, and neglected, which we could interpret as hate what you think about what people think of you. Got it? This part can be tricky at times, because what others think about us does not really affect us, what really affects us is what we decide to believe, internalize, and make our reality. For example, I could choose to ignore a person's comment about me, or I could decide to focus on it all day, analyse why they said that and what have I done to them to get to that conclusion. Eventually since we became so focused on that thought, we may end up believing that what the other person said about us was true, even if we did not agree to begin with. So how can we fix this? Awareness is the key! It is important that you understand the way you internalize external inputs, like comments, and to go through a process of discarding negative ones. It is also helpful to talk to your counsellor about how you process feedback and validation so you learn to balance your positive traits from negatives and how that affects your relationships and self-esteem

I feel like I hate myself physically and emotionally sometimes. How can I start accepting myself and be more confident?

The answer would require a more in-depth knowledge of you and your situation. A lot of times, these feelings are the result of the people in your life treating you a certain way. You internalize it and accept it as your reality. The first step is to evaluate the people close to you, especially your parents. Even if you are an adult, think back to your childhood. Children who grow up in an unstable home often grow up to be adults with insecurities and emotional problems. The obvious, such as being abused, can certainly lead to a person having little to no confidence and self esteem, but there are other situations that might surprise you to hear they can be damaging to a person. You may have never been physically or sexually abused, but what about emotionally? Were you yelled at, berated, put down? Were you told you'd never amount to anything? Were you compared to siblings and felt like you always fell short, couldn't live up to expectations? When you hear something over and over again, you start to believe it. Maybe you weren't yelled at. Maybe it was the opposite. Studies show that children who grow up with a parent who is depressed show signs of emotional neglect. A chronically depressed mother, for example, may have seemed cold, detached, emotionless. She may have been less likely to show interest in a child's life, not give praise for accomplishments or show support by going to ballgames or performances. If one of your family members were chronically ill while you were growing up, chances are, a lot of the attention went to them, which could have led to your needs not being met. Any of

these situations could cause a person to grow up feeling unimportant, unheard, unloved, or like they don't matter. Maybe nothing I've described here fits your situation. If you can't pinpoint what has caused you to feel this way on your own, a counselor can help. I am not saying "blame it on your parents" or telling you there's nothing you can do to change it! Quite the opposite! Understanding WHY you feel that way is a first step towards making the changes needed to feel better. Cognitive behavior therapy focuses on cognition - figure out the WHY. Then behavior - the HOW.

I am in my mid 30s. I feel I have used only 5% of my potential. I am in film making, but everything is stuck. I've never had a serious relationship. I had worthless jobs. I do a lot of meditation to try to fix it.

Being stuck in life is difficult, especially when you are feeling it in many different areas of your life. So you if you are ready for a change... time to make one! Make a list of the resources in your area- community colleges, friends, free classes, volunteer opportunities etc. Make a list of your passions and absolute "no way" things in life. Make a 5 year plan... where do you want to be in 5 years... then start breaking it down ... what do I need to do this year to make it to next year. Break that down into months... check in with friends/families/co workers etc to see what they see in you both good and bad. Take a deep breath and choose 1 thing to work on to get better in life according to them. Seek out any free training/counseling on career changes and life changes. You already began this by asking this forum for help Awesome! Use the peace and calm you find in meditation to spring board you to make some changes in your behavior--try new things, change poor choices etc. Use the meditation to give you peace while you make the changes. Good Luck!

My grandma had a stroke and passed away recently. I lost my home and job. I'm looking but haven't found a job. I've been binge watching television and binge eating. Hello! I write to respond to your recent inquiry for possible increase in self-esteem and positive behavioral change regarding motivation for a new job. First of all, please try to allow yourself some time for grief of the loss of your dear grandmother. It appears you were close to her in many ways and she had a great influence in your life. The grief process of anger, denial, despair and acceptance may be a part of what is keeping you feeling "stuck" in a cycle of not feeling motivated to find work at this time. Perhaps your mind is constantly fighting this grief? Death can be a "traumatic" experience for some people and is considered a great loss, thus the grief process may continue to be a part of your world for a time but hopefully not keep you "stuck" on a long-term basis. I would try to reach out to a counselor to discuss this grief process at a deeper level to discern whether her death is part of why you feel this way. Grief and loss can also have an effect on your self-esteem. Can you begin to see how this cycle is what you may be experiencing? One positive I see is that you are continuing to look for a new job! Take time to give yourself some credit for the time you are spending looking for work. Also, I would recommend you set some short-term goals first for example, make a list of 5-10 potential new employers and send them each your resume. Then followup the next week with an email or phone call to make sure the hiring manager or human resources received your resume and have any questions. It is also a good idea to ask for "informational interviews" in order to get your foot in the door, so to speak. I hope that this information is helpful to you! Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Warmly, Denise

I keep feeling paralyzed and unsure during interviews. Previous jobs have fired me for lack of performance, and five employers have rejected me after extensive personality tests and interviews. I'm afraid of continuing because my depression is getting worse. I'm already humiliated working for temp agencies and doubt my self-worth as a provider for my family.

It sounds like you are feeling overwhelmed and stuck between wanting to improve your work situation and worrying that you won't be able to. It is possible that the paralysis, uncertainty, and self-doubt that you describe are contributing to your difficulty in getting and maintaining a satisfying job

as employers generally like to see that a potential employee is confident and can think on his or her feet. With a competent therapist, you may be able to get more understanding of the roots of these feelings and learn how to move forward in your search for a better work life in a way that leaves you feeling confident and capable.

Over the years, I have slowly lost everything: my jobs, my cars, my freedom, and my money. I am a stay-at-home mom who doesn't make any money, doesn't have a car, never goes out, and cleans all day long every day. There are an infinite number of possibilities here. You included a lot of things that you don't have. Is there any way that you can have some freedom for a few hours a week, at least? A lot of times stay at home moms have groups when they meet at different public places where their children can play together, and they can talk together. I don't know how old your child or children is/are, but perhaps going back to work is something that can happen in the future. I wonder if you may consider who you have in your life who can support you. I don't know whether you have a spouse or parents or siblings who could help out with some different things. I wonder if you could consider where you would like to go if you had two or three hours that you could do whatever you wanted? If you can sort out some possible answers to that, maybe you can work together with friends or family to make it happen. Also, again depending on the age of your children, some parents can do things while the children are sleeping, even if you are in the same room. For example, if your children are sleeping for about two hours, maybe 30 minutes of that could be reserved for you and the rest could be for cleaning or other things you need to do.

I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments. Thank you for sharing! It can be very disorienting not to know what you want and where you are headed. Sometimes we are so focused on something we haven't achieved yet or on comparing ourselves to others that we lose touch with what we actually want and need. At times like this, it's important to go back to basics. Try out this simple exercise, take a few minutes to write down all your present responsibilities. For example: make meals, complete homework...etc. Then in the column next to it, write down the things that you do for yourself to recharge yourself and to enjoy your time. Is your list of responsibilities way longer than your list of stuff you do for yourself? It is easy to get lost in the sea of responsibilities and disconnect from what you want and need. To fix that, write another list of things that you enjoyed doing in the past for yourself and start incorporating them into your schedule on a regular basis. This will help you re-connect with yourself and bring focus and clarity to your life.

I feel so irritated and frustrated because of it. I get so angry to the point that I feel like I'm going to explode. I feel pathetic, stupid, and worthless. I just can't take this anymore. Yeah, I get the same problem... Look I'm not a professional but I've heard a few things. a power nap can help. just a half hour of sleep can clear your mind and let you refocus. Also, brain activity increases with physical exertion. Just walk around for a minute and get your brain working and that'll help you reach the task at hand. Taking breaks, it totally okay. Try to have something to do in between that you enjoy.

I don't know what to say. I have never really known who I am?

Therapy may be an effective way for you to get a stronger sense of who you are. A competent therapist will work to create a safe and curious therapeutic relationship in which you can explore your identity. There are also many different exercises which you can do in and out of therapy which you may find helpful in this area as well.

It's especially bad at nighttime. I am scared of sleeping alone.?

Being able to know you feel anxiety and write about it, is the first step to addressing and handling it! Generally, anxiety is deep fear of not being able to handle what comes up in life. Somehow the person was insufficiently nurtured and so felt insecure when very young. Usually, the person had to fend on at least a psychological and emotional level for themselves before reaching an age when doing so would have been reasonable. Their inner feeling of overwhelmed from when very young, hasn't faced the reality that the grown person is now capable, even if this takes some practice. Try asking yourself what you are afraid of and theorize how you would handle these situations as a grown person. Also, sometimes anxiety comes from feeling lonely. This loneliness is reminiscent of the loneliness that the grown person now, felt when being left to take care of situations as a child which were too difficult and complex for any child to address.