

TEN TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Eden Maxwell
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OVERVIEW

James Beard: “The only thing that will make a soufflé fall is if it knows you are afraid of it.”

Expressed as a realistic and unwavering belief in one’s abilities, self-confidence extinguishes fearfulness, conformity, and apathy. Self-confidence emanates from one’s inner being, not from the opinions of others. You can’t inherit, bequeath, buy, or put on self-confidence like makeup, nor can you in a hit or miss fashion meaningfully embody it by downing a pill or stiff drink. You can, however, begin to build an enduring sense of confidence by embracing, not memorizing, these field-tested tips.

TIP ONE: MISSION POSSIBLE

Self-confidence is an unmistakable feeling, like hunger. When you’re on a mission, as self-confident people are, self-confidence naturally evolves while fulfilling your purpose. Self-confident people push through resistance, especially their own, to transform their vision into existence. More than a job description, your mission, which only you can determine, answers the question: Have you come here to make others happy, to heal, to write, to paint, to feed people—to your reason for being?

TIP TWO: UNLEASHING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Which is smarter? Overturning every conceivable rock in a desperate attempt to thwart your self-doubt, or to cultivate that one unique ability that will

unleash the self-confidence you desire? Your intuitive quest begins with discovering your dharma, your purpose in life—in dharma, your posture glows with an immutable sense of self-worth. If there's a puppet master stage-managing your life, confidently snip the strings. Dharma will support your mission, as it fuels your inner strength through self-confidence.

TIP THREE: MIRROR OF TRUTH

Attempting to ignite a flicker of self-esteem by repeating aphorisms is akin to thinking about walking while walking—you soon become self-conscious and fall out of step. Gaze into the mirror of truth. Do you trust your emotional intelligence, are you open to new concepts and risks, and are you undeterred by setbacks? If you're secretly riddled with self-doubt, acknowledge it by losing the bravado—knowing that fulfilling your dharma will one day indelibly infuse self-confidence into your psyche.

TIP FOUR: SELF-DISCIPLINE—STEPPING UP

Reading advice in a book about a diet for improving your health only works when reinforced with self-discipline, which, in turn, progressively develops into self-confidence. Step up, move with purpose, as you confront each challenge—from facing a blank canvas to approaching a gallery. People who act bravely despite their fears set the agenda for what matters. There is an overarching proviso: if you don't have faith in your abilities, then it's time to reevaluate your mission. Lacking confidence is one thing; self-deception is much worse.

TIP FIVE: RULES FOR AWARENESS

Awareness is intuitive perception that allows you to see things uncluttered by illusion or preconceived notions. Acts of awareness promote confidence and self-preservation. While your attention is on reading a book, awareness informs you that your house is on fire. Awareness demands discernment between what is pertinent from what is irrelevant. If you can't, then you have lost single-mindedness of purpose—making self-confidence immaterial. To engage

awareness, master the first rule: don't believe your own bull. The second rule is that no 'thing' is obvious; and the third is that no 'thing' goes without saying.

TIP SIX: SELF-RELIANT—NO EXCUSES

When confronted by adversity, you are reminded that the problem is the teacher, which is this: you are resourceful, and can do what is necessary yourself. As a leader, you find a way, not an excuse, a response that separates doers from wannabes. You are sure because being unsure inspires no one. Your sense of mission also motivates others. Self-confident people avoid parroting clichés, and have a sense of humor, especially at their own expense.

TIP SEVEN: GENIUS IS DEDICATION

You don't identify with giving up on yourself, which is failure. You are capable of wonder, for you are in dharma, are you not? Knowing where your art stands in the universe translates into power, leverage, and self-confidence. Courting approval has consequences for which you are prepared. You remain steadfast in your abilities and gracious when others don't yet appreciate your work. Your confidence soars, as you've replaced 'disappointment' with 'that's revealing'. To be great you must do great things. While talent is the gift, genius is dedication.

TIP EIGHT: GRATITUDE, GRACE, AND OYSTERS

You feel gratitude, not necessarily about any single thing, but for the state of gratitude itself. You focus on your blessings, which bolsters self-worth. Arriving on the heels of adversity, grace is yet another test of restraint, or will power—a prerequisite for a self-confident person who lives in the present moment of fulfillment instead of future uncertainty, doubt, and hope. The world is your oyster because through will power you have cast out the irritants called greed, envy, and insecurity. Only the pearl of goodwill remains.

TIP NINE: INDEPENDENCE DAY REDUX

You think and feel for your own self. Committed to firsthand experience, you establish the merit of things. You don't relinquish your perception or power to experts. You don't rely on reviews, critics, and other secondhand sources to decide for you. Despite the unrelenting gravity that society exerts in controlling the rigid flow of the mainstream, you choose autonomy—not mindless dogma. Independence without considered discernment is a flaw.

TIP TEN: FLORAL ARRANGEMENT

While self-confidence takes time to blossom, you can still demonstrate laudable qualities on your journey, even if you're harboring insecurity; no special training is required for respectfulness, compassion, loyalty, and integrity. Knowing that character answers all questions has great liberating power. No one, including yourself, will deter you from your mission. Dedication to your dharma will eventually flower into fulfillment and self-confidence.

*A person who doubts himself is like a man who
would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear
arms against himself.*

*He makes his failure certain by himself being the
first person to be convinced of it.*

—Ambrose Bierce

RESOURCES

AN ARTIST EMPOWERED. Eden Maxwell

CONCRETE CONFIDENCE. Sam Horn

FEARLESS CREATING. Eric Maisel

ABOUT EDEN MAXWELL

Eden Maxwell is a painter and writer. He is the bestselling author of *The Magnificent Book of Kites*; and he has contributed to numerous publications, including: *Popular Science*, *Omni*, *MacUser*, *Art Calendar Magazine*, and the *Drachen Foundation Journal*. His paintings are in private collections worldwide—and his art has been exhibited on both coasts, including the World Trade Center and the Madison Square Garden Museum of Sport. The *Adobe Illustrator WoW Book* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* have featured Eden's work. Eden had embarked on a thirty-year long odyssey to discover that his dharma dwelt in the wellspring of art. He writes about the adventure of self-discovery in his most recent book—*An Artist Empowered*. Please visit www.edensart.com and email him at: artist@edensart.com.

