

“By succeeding at something hard, we gain the courage to try again and again.”

The Confidence Factor



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hen it comes to confidence, we all have it in some areas. Typically, we have the confidence to do things that are easy for us. And a fascinating aspect of the human condition is that what's easy for one person—such as speaking in public, analyzing finances, or making fast decisions—may not be easy for another. However, we

don't need confidence to do things that are familiar to us. Rather, we need it to do what scares and challenges us. This is the domain of real confidence, an unconditional belief in ourselves, a mindset that makes all the difference between a good outcome and a great one. But this kind of confidence takes work to attain, and few of us succeed.

As a society, we're used to gaining confidence from how other people see us and from what we

accomplish. We may be afraid to do unfamiliar things because we fear failure, disappointment, and criticism. We worry about losing our confidence. Often we get trapped into being confident only in what we're good at—using this as a crutch—and ignoring the areas where we need to grow. So how do we work continually to develop real confidence?

1. Understand how confidence has been imprinted on you—where it works and where it doesn't.

The foundation of our confidence is developed in our formative years by our parents or caregivers. As they show us their love and approval, we start to gain confidence. But this can be complicated, as our parents unintentionally strengthen and weaken our confidence in different ways. While they are building it in one way, they may be undermining it in another.

From overcompetitiveness to conflict avoidance, there are many ways these imprinting years show up in adulthood. We want to believe they are working in our favor, even when they are holding us back.

2. Accomplish something hard.

Starting in our childhood and progressing throughout our adult life, we gain significant doses of confidence from accomplishing feats that are hard—“hard” being defined as requiring many attempts to succeed. We may fail a lot while trying. We may

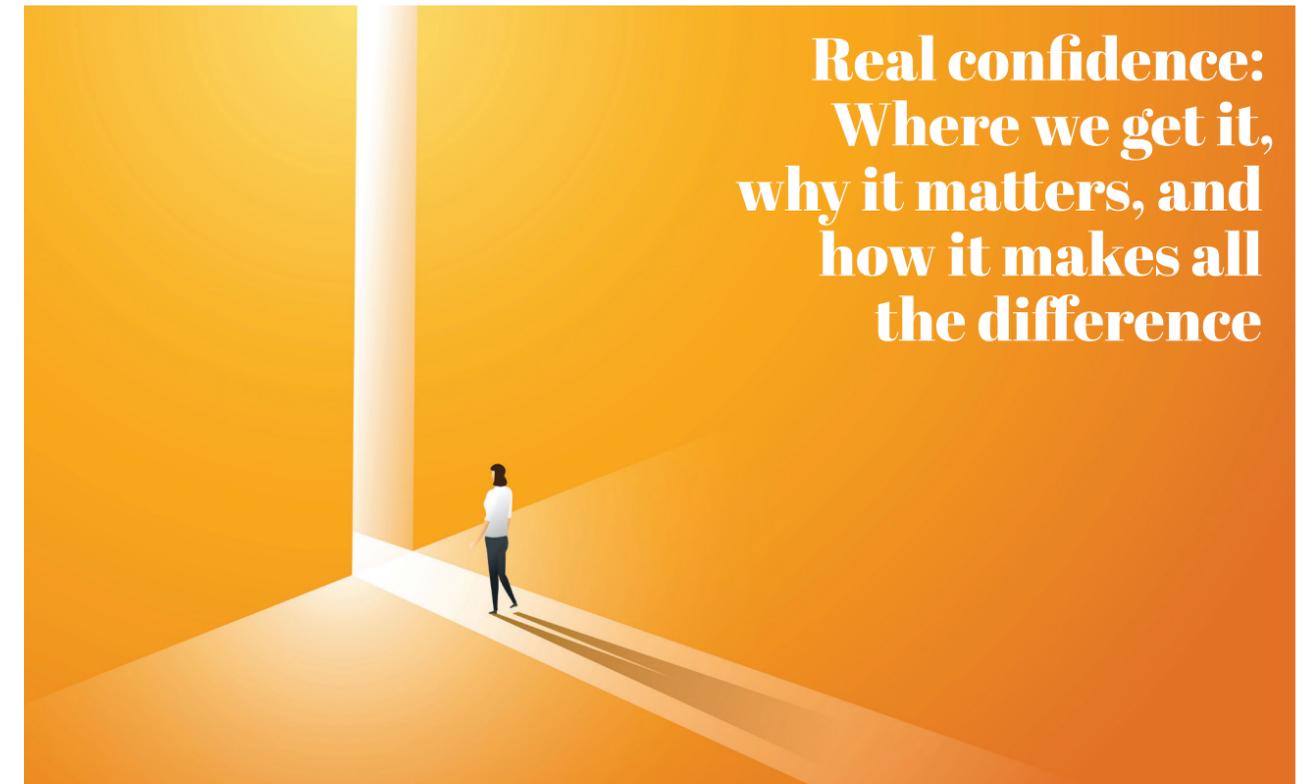
each time and realizing that our boundaries can be limitless if we have the courage to keep at it.

3. Don't be afraid to fail.

Failure can be a huge part of learning. The key is to understand the failure, so it doesn't happen again, and correct it—and if it does happen again, to keep trying until you finally do correct it. But don't let fear of failure get in the way of doing something hard that can lead to personal growth.

Anyone can build confidence, but first you must

Real confidence: Where we get it, why it matters, and how it makes all the difference



receive difficult feedback that requires us to make adjustments, or discover we need to build new skills, or want to give up multiple times, or have no support from others. But by persisting, we can break through our limits and realize that no matter how hard the process is, we can grow.

By succeeding at something hard, we gain the courage to try again and again, building confidence

be honest with yourself about where you lack it. Real confidence doesn't rise or fall with public opinion, because the public is not your only critic; in fact, it's not even your most important critic—you are. Real confidence comes from inside us. It's something we're always working toward by doing things that push us and, when we finally accomplish them, prove our worthiness to ourselves. //