

## **BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE**

**Remember:** Mindset drives your confidence and your confidence drives your destiny

Lack of confidence impacts every aspect of any career. Let me walk you through why I say that.

**Here is what lack of confidence looks like (and sounds like) when it comes to career activities:**

Networking – "They won't want to talk to me." "They can't help me." "I don't even know how to describe myself."

Introductions – "How will I introduce myself?" "Who am I?"

Resume – "Oh, but wait, it's been 90 days since the last time I updated my resume. I better get started." **But, your lack of confidence makes it difficult for you to pull out those key accomplishments and you end up describing what you were hired to do rather than what impact you made. Or you downplay/minimize your accomplishments.**

LinkedIn – "Should I post this? Will anyone think it is valuable?" "Who wants to see my posts anyway?" **Lack of confidence leads to you not keeping up with your weekly posting.**

Target List – "Now I need to have that target list that Pat talks about, and then I need to reach out to alumni from college and prior jobs – but they won't want to help me". **Note: THIS WHOLE RESISTANCE TO REACHING OUT IS A CONFIDENCE ISSUE, NOT AN INTROVERT or TIME MANAGEMENT ISSUE!**

Interviewing – "A recruiter called with an opportunity inside of my top target. I am not looking, but Pat said I should still talk to them just in case. He worked really hard on preparing, but I didn't work on my confidence and mindset prior to the interview. I didn't have time!" **Your lack of confidence in an interview shows up as hesitancy and that is a red flag for interviewers.**

And Speaking of Time – Lack of confidence means that you might not be setting the boundaries needed to allow you to focus on your priorities.

Thank You Notes – “Now I need to send thank-you notes for those interviews – but what do I say?” **Confidence virtually writes the notes for you, but a lack of confidence makes you overthink every word.**

Starting a new role – “I have to introduce myself to my peers tomorrow. I have no idea what to say.” “One week in and I am so overwhelmed. I just knew I wasn’t ready for this role. I hope they don’t find out.” “I have so many questions, but I don’t want to ask them. They will think I don’t know what I am doing.”

## WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING ON INSIDE MY MIND?

- **The average human has 50,000 plus thoughts a day** — 98% are repeat thoughts from yesterday and 80% are negative — and this applies to all humans, not just someone in transition.
  - When you don’t pay close attention to your self-talk (like all of the self-talk illustrated in the opening example above), it will work against you. It will do its best to keep you in your comfort zone and make it difficult for you to stay focused on your goals.
  - Every thought you have ever had such as, “this shouldn’t be this hard,” “I am not good at networking.” “I don’t like to network,” “I’m frustrated because I don’t speak up when I should.”— will only serve to take you off course.
  - Monitor your self-talk—flip the dialog. You won’t stop the thoughts but if **you have a strategy** for what to do when negative thoughts or thoughts about something that is out of your control show up, you can change the direction of your thinking and that will create energy and energy creates momentum

**“Deciding in advance when and where you will take specific actions to reach your goal can double or triple your chances for success.”**

Dr. Heidi Grant Halverson, Author, and Speaker

- A critical reminder when it comes to confidence and mindset — no two career situations are the same, so please stop comparing yourself to anyone else.  
**Remember: Compare and despair.**

**TIP: Jim Kwik’s podcast and his book, “Limitless,” (The link is in the resource center. Both are great resources for gaining a better understanding of how your mind works.**

# CONFIDENCE IS A SKILL

Confidence is a skill that can be developed at any age, just like any other skill that you have acquired, from riding a bike to playing a sport or any of the myriad of skills you use every day in your work. This is really an important principle to grasp because when you understand it is a skill, you can work on improving it.

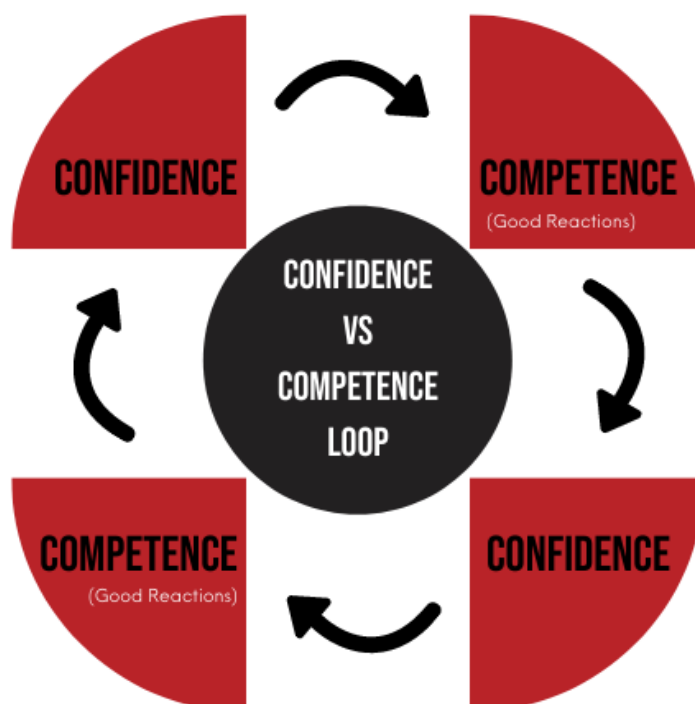
## THE CONFIDENCE COMPETENCE LOOP

Psychologists have defined the learning model for gaining a skill as the confidence/competence loop.

HERE IS A SIMPLE EXPLANATION:

**CONFIDENCE= OUR BELIEF WE CAN DO SOMETHING** and **COMPETENCE = THE ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING**

THE **CONFIDENCE COMPETENCE LOOP** = IF WE **BELIEVE** WE CAN DO SOMETHING (**CONFIDENCE**), WE WILL TAKE ACTION TO DO IT WHICH INCREASES OUR **COMPETENCE** AND INCREASED **COMPETENCE** LEADS TO INCREASED **CONFIDENCE** WHICH ALLOWS US TO TAKE MORE ACTION---AND THE LOOP CONTINUES!



In a nutshell, what this means is simply that when we become better at something, we gain confidence and when we gain confidence, we become even better at doing that thing.

The foundation of this principle is that **you must first take one action, no matter how small**, (just like James Clear talks about in his book, **Atomic Habits**, which can also be found in the resource center) to move forward in the “loop.” Fear is what stops us from acting, but once we move even one step forward, fear starts to dissipate, and the momentum of the confidence/competence loop takes over.

Once you identify where you are least confident (for example when networking, or making a presentation), and then create a plan to increase your competency in that area, one step at a time, you will begin to build your confidence.

## THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Lack of confidence often emanates from a belief that is described as “the imposter syndrome.” The simple definition of this syndrome is: **“A psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments or talents and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud.”**

“You may have had a tinge of this during your job search or when you started your new role or gave your first presentation or speech. In essence, whenever you were faced with a “first time” for something. But once you started to get good results or good feedback, your confidence began to build (the confidence/competence loop was activated) and you knew you were not the “fraud” you had imagined.

**So, what is so different now?** Let’s face it, during your job search, was very little outside positive feedback. Who wouldn’t doubt themselves when calls go unreturned, and interviews don’t yield a successful outcome, and most often also didn’t yield any helpful feedback? All that lack of positive reinforcement builds up and leads to the thoughts that cause the Imposter Syndrome to take over.

But you are not alone. In fact, many of those you would least expect have been victims of the Imposter Syndrome including celebrities like Glenn Close and Mike Myers, best-selling author Maya Angelou, astronaut Neil Armstrong, and even Einstein.

# WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

The events/situations that led up to your being in transition, and then the job search itself, can make you question yourself, no matter how much confidence you had when you were in prior roles. It throws you off. So, when you are networking with your new peers or colleagues and you begin to introduce yourself, there is this nanosecond of a hesitation — which then activates the part of your brain that associates hesitation with danger, and the next thing you know, you find yourself unable to give a succinct powerful response. Most often, what happens next is that you find yourself going into a long elaborate explanation that misses the mark.

**You know who you are** – you took a department or an entire company and turned it around – you grew a team of future leaders who trusted you – you grew businesses – you made an impact. That’s why you got hired for your new role. But you also left your ego outside the door. You didn’t look for the spotlight. You didn’t take credit. You just did your job.

**It is highly likely that your self-confidence took a hit during your job search, and now you need to take steps to regain it.**

## STEPS TO TAKE TO BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE

#HaveAPlan

It is important to remember that this is a building process, not a “one and done.” You can’t spray paint on confidence, but you can focus on building the skill. You need a plan!

### STEP 1:

**Ask yourself this simple question:** “Is it really possible that I have progressed through my career and been hired for this role as an imposter?” Then, go back to your career story and resume and look for the evidence to the contrary. It is everywhere. **Accept the fact that you most certainly have played a part in your own success — you didn’t fool everyone!**

## STEP 2:

**Everything begins with awareness.** Notice when you are stuck in your head (remember my observation, “when we are inside our heads, we are behind enemy lines”). Once you have awareness, you can look for ways to quickly access some better self-talk. Get into the habit of listening to and questioning your thoughts and flipping any negative questions. When you ask yourself a question like, “Why does it always take me so long to write a simple email?” Ironically, your brain goes to work overthinking the answer to that question. Studies show that overthinking interferes with problem-solving, so you stay stuck in the problem. What you want to do is to ask yourself a question that will put your brain to work on a solution. **In short, ask questions that will put your focus on what you do want the outcome to be, not on what you don’t want the outcome to be.** For example, a better question is, “What are 5 ways I can start this email?” Doing something small is key. That will move you forward at a pace where you can succeed a little — then a little more — and you will start to gain the momentum needed to finish.

## STEP 3

Here is a great first question to ask yourself whenever doubt rears its head, **“What would you say to someone else who was doubting their worth?”** I am pretty certain you would not talk to others the way you sometimes talk to yourself.

## STEP 4

**Make a list of your strengths** – skills you have used that have made you successful throughout your life. Those are your superpowers. Those are areas you are confident in and that is a good place to begin to build on those strengths.

## STEP 5

**Learn to let go of perfectionism.** Here’s the truth: Perfection is not possible. **FULL STOP!** So, don’t set a standard that is impossible to meet. You can’t achieve confidence if you never experience a “win.” **You need to go from #nevergoodenough to #alwayslearningandgrowing**

## STEP 6

**Get into the habit of journaling.** Allowing your self-doubt to bounce around inside your head is guaranteed to get you stuck. Getting your thoughts out on paper where you can examine them with a more rational eye is another key to building confidence.

These two articles (with some embedded videos) are in the resource center. This first one will help you understand the power of writing: <https://psychonephrology.com/10-powerful-benefits-of-journaling/>

This article is helpful as well: <https://thrive.kaiserpermanente.org/thrive-together/live-well/everyone-keep-journal-7-surprising-benefits>

## Getting Started with Journaling

Journal entries with just the following two simple prompts will be a great way to start:

Prompt 1: **"This is what I thought at the time."**

Prompt 2: **"This is evidence to the contrary."**

Prompt 3: **"What I did best this week was. . ."**

Prompts can be a great help if you, like so many, find the thought of a blank page intimidating. If you search on Amazon for "journals with prompts" you will find a large selection to choose from. But whether you select a leather-bound journal or a sheet of copy paper, just get started. It is a habit that will pay dividends over and over.

And you can start with 5-minutes a day with this gratitude journal:

<http://bit.ly/5MinuteGratitudeJournalbySophiaGodkin>

## STEP 7

**Continually build a case against your doubt.** Keep a "success file" where you capture your achievements and collect copies of "thank you" notes, performance reviews, testimonials/recommendations. This file will serve you in many ways as you continue your career journey

If you are having a "day of doubt," reach back to a former colleague or mentor and let them know you are just seeking to gain their perspective about what they saw as your strengths, or where you made an impact. Then be prepared to take notes because they will tell you things you need to tell yourself regularly

And if you are thinking "what good does that do them to help me with this"— think again. First, during the call, you can let them know what you appreciated about them and how they impacted you or your work. In addition, they may hang up having learned an important lesson about recognizing their own value.

## STEP 8

Take credit where credit is due. I spoke about this in my TEDx talk. Many have been conditioned to never take credit for their own accomplishments or the accomplishments of their team. But the fact is, you need to honor your contributions and know that in so doing, you are not diminishing anyone else.

## THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE POEMS ON THE TOPIC

(Keep it handy)

### OUR DEEPEST FEAR

By Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves  
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?  
You are a child of God.

You are playing small  
Does not serve the world.  
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking  
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,  
As children do.  
We were born to make manifest  
The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;  
It's in everyone.

**And as we let our own light shine,  
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we're liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.**

**Note:** This poem is taken from Marianne Williamson's book [A Return to Love](#). Though often quoted as part of Nelson Mandela's [moving inaugural speech](#), "Our Deepest Fear" does not appear in the speech.

### STEP 9

**Come from a place of worthiness.** You are not worthy because of something you did — because of an accomplishment — or because someone else said so. You are worthy because **it is your birthright. You have worth. You have value. Period.** Better yet, let me have Brené Brown explain it:



**“You either walk inside your story and own it or you stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness.”**

## **STEP 10**

**The final step is to choose the thoughts that serve you.** If it isn't a law, like gravity, then it is just a thought that you have chosen to think.

You can think something that gives you anxiety and impacts your confidence, such as, “I can't believe how I introduced myself on that Zoom call with the ELT today. I am sure they are wondering why I am even here.” **or you can choose to think,** “That was a good beginning intro. I would like to have said more about my work on the transformation project I led. I'll schedule one-on-ones next week and fill in the blanks.”

If you think the first thought in the above paragraph and then try to tackle that priority list your new manager gave you, it will be very difficult to focus and difficult to do any of that work with confidence. However, if you choose to think the second thoughts in the above paragraph, you will be able to move on and focus on things that are in your control, and you will be able to do so with greater confidence.

I urge you to create a sign or screen saver or in some way keep **“choose the thoughts that serve you”** visible as a constant reminder. And get used to flipping the switch from a thought that doesn't serve you to one that does.

## **BONUS STEP**

There is a reason companies repeat commercial messages over and over again! And it is the same reason I want to encourage you to read and listen to the books and YouTube videos recommended in the Resource Center under Confidence/Imposter Syndrome.

You can't listen to something one time and expect that you will be able to change. Our subconscious mind needs to hear the same message more than once for it to realize “This is important.” Each day, you are bombarded by messages that negatively impact your confidence. You need to offset that by listening to messages that add to your confidence skill. In addition, each time you go back to the material, you will pick up something that you missed. The more you revisit the books or videos, the more the impact will last.

**THERE YOU HAVE IT, (10 STEPS PLUS A BONUS) TOWARD YOUR PLAN. THE NEXT STEPS ARE TO EXECUTE THE PLAN AND OWN YOUR GREATNESS!**

**FREE COURSE BY YALE PROFESSOR DR. LAURIE SANTOS  
(PODCAST LINK BELOW)**

[Try the Free Course](#)

## **COURSERA COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course, you will engage in a series of challenges designed to increase your own happiness and build more productive habits. As preparation for these tasks, Professor Laurie Santos reveals misconceptions about happiness, annoying features of the mind that lead us to think the way we do, and the research that can help us change. You will ultimately be prepared to successfully incorporate a specific wellness activity into your life.

## **PODCAST BY DR. SANTOS**

You might think more money, a better job, or Instagram-worthy vacations would make you happy. You're dead wrong. In "The Happiness Lab" podcast, Yale professor Dr. Laurie Santos will take you through the latest scientific research and share some surprising and inspiring stories that will forever alter the way you think about happiness. She's changed the lives of thousands of people through her class "Psychology and the Good Life," and she'll change yours, too.

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