

What is self-confidence and why is it important?

Self-confidence is understanding that you trust your own judgment and abilities, and that you value yourself and feel worthy, regardless of any imperfections or of what others may believe about you.

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are sometimes used interchangeably with self-confidence, but they are subtly different.

We gain a sense of self-efficacy when we see ourselves (and others like us) mastering skills and achieving goals. This encourages us to believe that, if we learn and work hard in a particular area, we'll succeed. It's this type of confidence that leads people to accept difficult challenges and to keep going in the face of setbacks.

Take a look at the examples in the table below, which compares confident behavior with behavior that's associated with low self-confidence. Which thoughts or actions do you recognize in yourself and in the people around you?

Confident Behavior:

- *Doing what you believe to be right even if others mock or criticize you for it*
- Being willing to take risks and to go the extra mile to achieve better things
- Admitting your mistakes, and learning from them
- Waiting for others to congratulate you on your accomplishments
- Accepting compliments graciously. "Thanks, I really worked hard on that prospectus. I'm pleased you recognize my efforts."

Behavior associated with low self-confidence:

- Governing your behavior based on what others think
 - Staying in your comfort zone, fearing failure, avoiding risk
 - Working hard to fix mistakes, and hoping you can fix the problem before anyone notices
 - Extolling your own virtues as often as possible to as many people as possible
 - Dismissing compliments offhandedly. "Oh that project was nothing really, anyone could have done it."
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