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# Special Report

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## **Secrets to Creating a Confident You!**

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## **Confident You!** *Secrets to Creating Unlimited Confidence*

Do you remember the last time you felt on top of the world? You felt invincible—ready to take on whatever life would throw your way. Perhaps it was the perfect spring day, sun shining, breeze softly blowing, and flowers bursting into bloom. Or maybe you just landed a new client, got a call from a “certain someone” you did not expect, or received unexpected praise for a job well done. Just remembering those moments can cause lift in your spirit, bring a grin to your face, and a bounce in your step. Your mood matched the moment. You felt capable, positive, sexy, and alive.

That’s mojo. You know what it is. Once, it literally meant “magic.” You’ve heard the phrases, “He’s got his mojo back.” “My mojo’s working!” “Watch out, she’s got mojo!” We know exactly what those feeling and words are all about. According to the Urban Dictionary, mojo is a slang term used to describe self-confidence or a belief in oneself. Mojo is also the belief in your ability to bounce back after life throws you a curve ball—and we all know that life does throw the occasional curve ball.

This special report is designed to help you get more mojo in your life—or recapture it if yours has gone missing. We will take a look at confidence: what it is and what it isn’t. We will explore the difference between natural confidence and situational confidence, and how to gauge your confidence level and improve it. And finally, we will talk about how to make deposits in your confidence bank account.

### **Confidence—What Is It Really?**

Do you remember 1966? A new television series aired and was an instant success. Marlo Thomas starred as Anne Marie in the weekly sitcom, *That Girl*. The show was historically significant because it was the first time in television that a young, single, career woman was the lead character on a television program. Anne Marie was portrayed as a confident, independent, autonomous woman. Up to that point, most females on television were dependent on a husband, boyfriend, or friends to carry the story and were only secondary characters. Not *That Girl*. Yes, Anne Marie did have a great haircut, was physically appealing, and was sometimes seen as a bit flighty. But what she represented was something that spoke to the heart of a new generation. *That Girl* was confident. She defined her life instead of letting life define her. She liked herself and was true to her own sense of self. She had her share of foibles, failures, and flukes. But when it was all said and done, she smiled at the world, and

with flair her persona shouted, "I'm going to make it! I can count on myself. I am okay!" She had mojo.

Confidence is about letting go of the need to be what others want you to be and becoming who you are destined to be. Confidence is about being comfortable in our own skin. We are confident when who we are on the outside is congruent with who we are on the inside. It's about experiencing self-worth—knowing that we are both valued and valuable. Confidence is the belief that whatever comes our way, we can handle. It is like an aura that surrounds us, making us aware of what we can do and giving us faith in our ability to try.

Our innermost human desire is to be accepted for who we are—to be okay with who we are in the world. For many of us, somewhere along the way we went from being a celebrated infant and toddler, to being told what to do, how to do it, and who to be. Somehow, we lose sight of who we are, and become something others expect us to be. Here's a story that says it all:

Zeke was a typical 6-year-old boy, full of life, laughter, and mischief. As adults are prone to do, someone asked him one day, "Zeke, what do you want to be when you grow up." He looked up excitedly and replied, "Zeke!"

Now fast forward several years. Someone asks him again, "Zeke, what do you want to be when you grow up." His reply this time: "I guess I'll just be Zeke, that's what people call me, anyway."

As you take time to think about this story, you can see the profound implications. As children we lose bits and pieces of who we are, thinking that we must become the person that others want us to be. We grow through the tumultuous teenage years, dealing with all the insecurity of fluctuating hormones and self-image. We may try too hard to differentiate ourselves from our parents by becoming carbon copies of our peers. We let our self-worth be determined by how well we "fit in."

Eventually, with time and luck, we outgrow that early phase of "separation identity" and as young adults begin to realize and appreciate our own uniqueness. Still, we often continue to struggle with meeting a certain standard and measuring up to a specific image not of our own creation. If we are not aware of what is going on inside ourselves, life becomes a continual contest of comparing and competing. We look around a room to see if we are the smartest, the healthiest, the most popular, the wealthiest, or the best dressed. The old adage, "The one with the most toys, wins!" can easily make life more about *having* and less about *being*. Self-worth

is the recognition that who we are defines us—not what we have—because when life is done, you still cannot take those toys with you.

### **Why Are We More Confident In Some Situations Than Others?**

Do you ever find yourself feeling really confident in some situations, and nervous and uncertain in others? This happens for one of two reasons:

**The first reason** is that our confidence is directly related to our ability to **predict the outcome of a situation**. In circumstances where we know what to expect, and we have had prior or similar experiences, we are naturally more confident. It's like driving through a well-known part of town versus being in an unfamiliar city, full of road construction. On the well-traveled route, you can drive with confidence and not worry about losing your way. However, in new territory, you might find yourself anxious, hesitant, and unsure—questioning every turn. Our brains are super-efficient and understand what to do in familiar situations.

In situations that are unknown, like the first day on a new job, we have to figure out all kinds of new things: Who is in our new group and what are their names, how to get around our new environs, and how to perform the day-to-day tasks of our job. It takes time to get our bearings and see where we belong. Familiarity helps to breed confidence.

In new situations, or situations where you cannot predict the outcome, here are a few tips to help you feel more confident:

1. Project as much confidence as possible. Think of the old adage, “Fake it till you make it.” Your brain truly doesn't know the difference, and you will create new neural pathways for yourself by practicing this technique.
2. Pay attention to others and adjust your behavior accordingly. Most people do this fairly naturally. For example, if the new group is more subdued and formal, avoid being overly gregarious and comedic.
3. Connect with one other person as quickly as possible to begin establishing a real relationship. You can help each other.
4. Give yourself positive messages, even a simple mantra that you use when you are feeling anxious or uncertain, like “I am good at meeting new people.”

**The second reason** we feel our confidence fluctuate is related to **specific situations** we find ourselves in. This is referred to as situational confidence.

Listed below are the most common types of situations where confidence—or lack of it—shows up. As you read the list, think about your confidence in each area. Prepare for the next time you find yourself in these situations and make attempts to raise your level of confidence.

1. *Social confidence:* People with social confidence have the ability to interact naturally and easily with others. They have empathy for others. They are friendly and easy to talk with. They are aware of moods and feelings. People with strong social confidence are accepting of themselves and are willing to reach out to others regardless of traditional social barriers. They are comfortable with new people and new situations. They even engage in friendly conversation with people they do not know

People with low social confidence find themselves awkward around other people, especially strangers. In order to develop your social confidence, you might want to learn how to start a conversation, practice with a supportive friend or engage the services of a coach. The point is to start with “low stakes” outcomes, so you can feel safe as you practice. Then take that feeling of safety with you out into the world.

2. *Physical confidence:* People with physical confidence project a commanding presence (regardless of their size). They carry themselves with a robust energy. They stand up straight and walk tall which often causes them to seem taller than they are. I once had a real estate agent who people would refer to as the “tall” one—but she was only 5’6” tall! These folks hold their heads up and their shoulders back. They smile and make eye contact with others.

People notice when physically confident people enter a room. Physically confident people can garner attention without using a lot of verbal language. People with physical confidence are often seen as more gifted or skilled than others. They are usually quicker to get promotions or special attention. Presidents of both countries and companies often have a commanding physical presence that exudes confidence. Pay attention to your posture. Practice walking tall. You will be surprised how people respond.

3. *Peer confidence:* People with peer independence have the ability and confidence to resist peer pressure. They are often described as marching to a different drummer. They are not unduly influenced by the group and remain true to their values and beliefs in spite of a group’s behavior. These people often become leaders, and can

struggle as followers. They will challenge the status quo. Peer independence gives you the confidence to try new things, trust your own judgment, and live with less anxiety about fitting in with a certain group.

Pay attention to different situations to determine if you “go along with the crowd” more often than you like. Do you keep your opinions to yourself? Are you afraid to speak up because everyone will think you are different? And most importantly, do you fear being different?

If you do, don’t worry. We all have experienced the need to fit in and belong at such a level that we sometimes give in, even when the situation does not feel congruent with our values and beliefs. This is really about learning to pay attention to these types of situations, to gauge your confidence level of peer independence. Then, if you want to, you can change your behavior. Start small by learning to express yourself in less consequential ways—choose the restaurant, decide not to participate in something you don’t enjoy, share your opinion without apologizing for it.

If peer independence is a challenge for you, you may want to take some courses or work with a coach on language skills that help you assert yourself when you do not agree with others.

4. *Stage confidence*: If you have stage confidence, often referred to as “stage presence,” you do not mind having the “spotlight” turned on you or stepping up to the role of leader. Stage presence is *not* about acting in a role. It is about being able to easily express opinions and thoughts in a natural, confident manner. It is the ability to speak up during meetings, stand before a group to present, or step into a leadership role as appropriate. It is not about dominating, but about articulating.

It is not unusual to fear speaking up in a staff meeting, making a speech, giving a report, or even delivering a toast at a wedding. Stage fright is common to many people—none of us want to appear or feel foolish in front of others—but I cannot think of a single case where it was fatal. Some amount of stage fright is useful to keep your edge honed.

A confident stage presence is necessary for many career advancements. It is equally important for people who are passionate about specific causes. The ability to raise money, garner attention, and persuade others can make the difference in many social causes.

If you find that you are lacking in stage presence, there are several things you can do. First and foremost, start small. Take baby steps. The more preparation you do and the more you practice, the less likely you will feel intimidated when actually called on to present. Here are some options to consider, that ramp up as you move through them:

- Make a short presentation to a small group of people. It could be as simple as pitching a case to try out that new Chinese restaurant down the street for lunch.
- Force yourself to participate during group meetings. If you have a good idea, go ahead and put it out, especially during a brainstorming session when all ideas are being considered, and none are supposed to be evaluating them yet.
- Make an effort to speak to people in public that you do not know. Try talking to the cashier at the check out line.
- Take a course in public speaking. Many local community colleges have these.
- Participate in a seminar for presentation and speaking skills, on the web or in person. There are both one time training sessions and series, so you can determine your own level of commitment.
- Join Toastmasters®. Each group is different, and each has a different feeling to it. Find one that makes you feel comfortable trying out this new skill.
- Work with a speech coach or personal development coach.

Learning to express yourself with confidence is important. When you do, you can articulate your beliefs and knowledge, influence others, and literally change the course of your life.

5. *Status confidence*: If you have status confidence, you are unaffected by the social status of others. For people who have lower confidence in this area, they experience their confidence waxing and waning based on the status of the people they are around.

Think of how tongue-tied you might feel if a celebrity or someone of importance was suddenly seated next to you. You might second-guess everything about yourself from the clothes you are wearing to the words you speak. On the other hand, if you were suddenly in a room where you felt your status was “superior” to those around you, you might have the confidence to dominate others.

Think of a work situation and the organizational chart. Entry-level employees typically experience less confidence in the presence of company leaders and therefore do not assert themselves. In some families where certain members are considered “favorites” or superior to others, confidence can be eroded by not feeling favored.

If you lack status confidence, you have probably been taught to “stay in your place,” or “don’t try to act above your station.” The important thing to understand here is that we are all worthy and deserving. Learning assertiveness techniques and continuing your work on confidence development would serve you well.

Becoming aware of your confidence levels in different situations is a very positive step to developing more confidence. Changing your behavior will take practice, but remember the more you practice something, the better you will be. And when that happens, your confidence will surely grow.

### **Grow Your Confidence Bank Account**

By now you probably have a better sense of what causes *your* confidence to go up and down like a roller coaster, feeling on top one minute, and your confidence sinking lower the next. To stay more even-keeled, think of confidence like a bank account. The key to having a more sustained level of confidence is to make more deposits. You want to make regular deposits into your confidence bank so you can stay positive (in the black) when people and situations make negative (red) “draw downs” on your confidence. Keeping a readily available supply of images and memories about the times you were on top of the world will help you through those tough times.

The ways you can make deposits into your confidence bank account are numerous. Here are a few you might try:

- *Project a positive presence.* This goes beyond good grooming (but does include that). A positive presence is also projected through good posture, a smiling face, a quick and light step. If you don’t believe this, then try this experiment:
  - Walk into a convenience store with slumped shoulders, eyes diverted, feet slow. Pay attention to how people react to you—if they even react at all. You may even feel invisible.



- Now walk into a convenience store with a positive presence, good posture, light step, smiling face. Hold the door for someone. Look them in the eye and, say “Hello.” Now, how do people respond to you? You know the old song, “Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone.” Misery does not necessarily invite company!

When you project a positive presence, most people respond to you in a positive way. That in turn gives your confidence a boost. When you have a bland or negative presence, most people prefer to ignore you—and that in turn diminishes your confidence.

- *Make a list of things you like about yourself.* It’s okay to be a little egotistical here. Include in this list the positive things your friends and family say about you. Not only is it important to like yourself, it helps to be aware of your positive attributes. Keep the list and refer to it prior to going into situations that seem intimidating. You will be reminded that you have value!
- *Pay attention to your self-talk.* Is it negative? Critical? Blaming? Hurtful? If so, switch the language to positive comments. You have wonderful qualities and you also have some “needs improvements.” Everyone does. Remind yourself: You may be disorganized at times AND you also do wonderful things for other people. You are a blend of your positive traits, sprinkled in with a few areas that may “need improvement.” Seek self-acceptance, not perfection. You don’t need to be perfect to be confident in you.
- *Recognize your mistakes for what they are.* Most mistakes can be defined as mistakes of ambition. This means that you are trying something new, solving a problem, working too hard, or trying to do more than you are actually capable of accomplishing given your resources. You will make mistakes. And when you do, take responsibility. Raise your hand and say, “Oops, I goofed.” Then, seek a solution, learn your lesson, and move on.
- *Be supportive of others.* People who are overly self-critical are usually critical of others. When you put yourself in the position of helping, not judging, you will find that you judge yourself less, and can relax into who you truly are a whole lot more.

Confidence can be developed. Sure—sometimes it seems there are people born with a leg up in life that exude confidence naturally. We all know people who started life in supportive and nurturing families that provided opportunities for them to get ahead. But many, many

successful people have had to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and go it alone. They had to learn how to project confidence and in the end how to be confident as well. They took responsibility for their lives and behavior, and you can too.

## Conclusion

This special report was designed to help you understand more about creating confidence in yourself, and more importantly, to help you become aware of the factors and situations that influence your own confidence. The factors that help or hinder are different for different people. Just remember, the route to true confidence is not a sprint. Instead, by consistently taking small steps to reclaim the natural confidence you were born with, and strengthen your situational confidence, you will feel your mojo increase!

You don't have to wait for a spring day, land a new client, get a call from a "certain someone" or receive praise for a job well done. Simply visualize yourself as *That Girl* or *That Guy*. See yourself managing whatever curve balls life might throw your way. See yourself competent, capable, and confident. Feel the energy, hope, and possibilities. And when you do that, don't be surprised if you suddenly have a lift in your spirits, a smile on your face and a bounce to your step.

When that happens, people will see you walking down the street and say:



"I like his mojo!"

or:

"Look at her go, she's got mojo!"

