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SELF CONFIDENCE BUILDER



by Richard Kuhns, B.S. Ch.E
NGH Certified

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Forward

This book is dedicated to all those who have suffered a life of poor self confidence such as I have in my early years.

There are many reasons for lacking confidence. There are basic behaviors that one learns—often aimed at being humble vs. ostentatious. And of course this goes to the fabric of which we're made. The core mental program that we've received is to avoid being ostentatious—nothing necessarily wrong with this program. The problem is in how we deploy the program. The opposite of being ostentatious is to be humble. And there's nothing wrong with being a humble person either.

The problem often comes in when we put that program into play. How do you demonstrate humility?

The answer is that you develop behaviors and unfortunately many of these behaviors do more than demonstrate humility. They demonstrate weakness and produce a weak self image.

A large portion of the Self Confidence Builder roots out these core behaviors, identifies them, and has you change them. Most of us are guilty of these behaviors at some point in our lives—I know I was. Today I remember I used to behave that way, but forgot what it was like to do so.

The other aspect of the Self Confidence Builder is to provide quick tips to be more confident and assertive today. Those who lack confidence are rarely assertive individuals. Again, there's an early core program that has been adopted that says thing like, "Children are to be seen and not heard."

Of course this program was for the benefit of grown-ups who didn't want to be interrupted by their children. True it's manipulative on their part and basically says that children are no bodies. But the bigger problem is that no one has ever told you that you are no longer a child. This is just one of many programs handed down by

grown-ups that are manipulative. Notice I don't call them 'adults' as adults would never rob confidence from any child.

Yet, when we're talking about self confidence, it's also important to notice that those who may be very confident may not have a high level of self esteem.

For that reason, this book goes hand in hand with the How to Get Rid of Self Esteem Blues book that I've written from which one can also develop confidence in managing emotions.

Table of Contents

The Self Confidence Builder	1
Chapter I—Dead Give-Aways	
Fear	
Self Sabatoge	5
Gallow’s Laugh	
Compliments	6
Posture	
Yes Person	7
Door Man or Woman	
Attitude	
Approval Issue	9
Paybacks	
Jealousy	10
Perfectionism	
Chapter II—Building Confidence—a New Perspective	12
The New Ball Field	
Being Right	12
Chapter III—Assertiveness	15
Chapter IV—Techniques in Assertiveness	20
<u>S</u> taying <u>O</u> n <u>T</u> rack (SOT)	
<u>T</u> hanks <u>F</u> or <u>Y</u> our <u>C</u> oncern	21
<u>S</u> o, <u>Y</u> ou’re <u>A</u> bsolutely <u>R</u> ight	22
The Mirror	23
Chapter V—Review	24
The Lag Principle	25

Quick Tips On How To Be More Confident Today

Chapter I—Dead Give-Aways

Fear

It's not abnormal that you are very competent in many aspects of your life but lack confidence. You can be competent in your work but lack confidence in your ability to perform it well. You might be very competent in the English language and the ability to communicate, but lack confidence in social situations. Usually confidence results from repetition of a particular skill to the point where there are no doubts about one's ability to perform the skill. As Tony Robbins says, “repetition is the mother of skill.”

Fear is the root of low confidence. The fear is that if you did attempt the skill you would not live up to your expectations or perhaps you'd be embarrassed. Then again, you might have surprised yourself and performed a skill to your satisfaction and now are afraid that you won't be able to do it again.

Many people have self confidence confused with self esteem and believe that by having confidence one will have self worth and vice versa. The truth is that one who may be fully confident may have little self worth; the opposite is also true -- one who has a high level of self esteem may have little confidence and isn't so concerned about lacking it. The amazing thing is that the person who has a high level of self esteem doesn't need confidence. It's something nice to have as a luxury item.

In reality, confidence is an act. If you act confident and really believe that you are confident -- you are confident. But it can't be that simple, can it? So what I will do is give you a confidence building program with quick tips on how to be more confident today. Sometimes this process can be shortened by utilizing a coach. A coach is someone who possesses confidence in having you execute the skills you desire. A coach is also someone who offers guidance and moral support; someone who can advise specific changes for making improvement; someone who can provide grounding from which you can make adjustments to hone your skills. Not that you should run out right now to find a coach, but, on the other hand, should you happen upon a coach that can benefit you, by all means take advantage of the situation.

Self Sabotage

The first thing a coach would have you do is to assess specific behaviors that give away or detract from your confidence. In other words, everyday you do things that unknowingly sell yourself out -- like putting a sign on your back that says, "Kick me, I lack confidence."

So you'll know where to start, let's take a look at some basic behaviors that you may have acquired which, are counter-productive to developing confidence.

Gallow's Laugh

First on the list is the gallows's laugh -- so named for the French gallows used to decapitate their criminals in ancient times. The gallows's laugh is when you say something that you're serious about and then laugh -- not an outright joyful laugh but a half-serious laugh. For instance, you might say to someone, "I really mean it -- I'm serious about this, ha ha.." The bottom line is that the gallows's laugh undermines -- decapitates your seriousness. Whether you are guilty of using the gallows's laugh with work associates, friends, or your family and children -- the result is the same -- you are demonstrating a lack of confidence for the whole world to see. So if you don't mean it, don't say it. And if you do say it, don't laugh after you said it.

To rid yourself of the gallows's laugh, which has actually become a habit that you may have perfected over many years, your first job is to catch yourself doing it. Now it's easy for me to tell you to stop doing it, yet you may find it takes several weeks to eradicate it. If you catch yourself doing it, avoid getting upset with yourself for doing it. First be happy if you can catch yourself doing it. The first step to changing any behavior is to be aware. Actually, getting upset with yourself for doing it will only serve to lengthen the time it takes to get rid of the gallows's laugh. It's like, "I could have had a V8." So instead of getting upset or disappointed with yourself for doing the gallows's laugh, as you catch yourself doing it, remind yourself that next time you'd like to eliminate it. Then you may be quite surprised to find that in the midst of saying something, you catch yourself before saying something serious to someone and practice leaving out the laugh.

At first, it might feel very awkward skipping the laugh -- like a fish out of water. Yet as you continue to practice, you'll feel comfortable.

Compliments

How are you with compliments? When someone says, "Your hair looks great!" or, "That's a great-looking outfit!" Do you reply by saying something like, "This old outfit? I've had it a hundred years." Or "This messy hair; it's nothing but split ends." Or do you say, "Thank you."

To come up with an excuse is indirectly calling the person complimenting you a liar, and to say, "Thank you," is not being egotistical. The person complimenting you has noticed something and the appropriate response is, "Thank you."

Another mistake. When someone compliments you, do you pay them a compliment in return? "That's a snazzy blazer you have on."

"I like your blazer too." It is not necessary to return a compliment unless there is genuinely something to compliment. A general rule -- do not pay a compliment unless it's a genuine compliment.

Notice that in both of these situations; it's as if you want to get the attention **off you** as quickly as possible. If so, this could be a sign of self-consciousness, which is not uncommon for those who lack confidence.

Posture

Let's talk about posture. Poor posture is a dead give away. Unless you have a particular deformity or medical condition which affects your posture, you want to perform a check on your posture both standing and seated. Use a mirror to get instant feedback on your posture. Standing straight and sitting straight is important -- not to look stiff but to be straight and have good posture.

Two problem postures:

chicken posture -- when the chin is protruded forward and upward;

military posture -- when chin is down and back.

Try them out for yourself. In fact the first will generally send a signal that you lack confidence and also reward you with a headache. The military posture will generally

send a signal that you are rigid and stiff and may also reward you with a neck ache. Practice your posture in front of a mirror whenever you can. Take a picture or video of yourself. It's well worth it for the reality is that we generally don't take people seriously who have poor posture, and those who have the military posture are generally thought to be "stuck" on themselves.

Yes Person

Are you a "yes" person? Do you always agree? Are you a chameleon? Do you always need to seek approval of others? If so, you may be giving the impression to others that you are wishy-washy and the cost is little respect from others. I'm not suggesting that you should be a devil's advocate every opportunity that you have, but, on the other hand, get to know what you feel -- get in touch with your intuitive self. The truth is others respect strength, fresh, and honest opinions and they don't respect others for being wishy-washy or being a "yes" man.

Door Man or Woman

Let's talk about doors. When you're walking with someone and you approach a door, do you always find that you position yourself to be the one to open the door? If so, you want to be conscious of this habit and go about changing it. Obviously I'm not suggesting that guys don't open doors for ladies; I'm suggesting that if you're walking with someone of the same sex that you be conscious of your tendency to want to open the door, and just for awhile consciously position yourself so the other person opens the door for you -- just to experience how it feels. In the end, door opening should be 50-50.

Attitude

How about your attitude? Do you go through life focusing on the positive or do you focus on the negative -- what's always wrong. As you drive, do you focus on other drivers who cut you off; do you keep score? Or do you make your journey interesting? Do you focus on your inadequacies? Or do you focus on your strengths? Every coin has two sides. You can go through life focusing on a set of rules and how others should treat you and everything that you should do, or you can let go of the rules and regulations and live your life.

Approval Issue

How about approval? Do you expect approval for everything that you do in life? Do you feel that you need recognition for what you do? Do you judge your behavior based on your ability to get approval from others? If you need approval and recognition, you're going down the wrong path to build self-worth and self-esteem, and this path won't give you any confidence either. The key here is in the word "need." If you need something in order to have approval, then you are letting your life be held up -- be contingent -- on what you get from others. This again is a symptom of being self-conscious and it's erroneous thinking. The truth is others are very busy living their lives and aren't running around looking for the things you do in order to give you approval.

Your job is to begin giving yourself approval rather than being dependent on others to give you approval.

Paybacks

Another erroneous way of thinking is to expect paybacks. That is you do something for someone and, because you did this, you expect that person to do something back for you – payback. Actually what you're doing is expecting others to read your mind, which will always leave you with **disappointment**. The bottom line is all relationships work with agreements. You agree to do something for someone and that person agrees as to what he or she will do for you. And if it wasn't spelled out in the agreement, it's impractical to expect otherwise; others aren't mind readers. So rather than expect them to try to figure out what you would like, it's important that you let them know. Sometimes this might mean taking a risk -- a risk that they might think you silly for wanting what you want. So use that to your advantage, "You might think this silly but would you do this and this for me."

With this approach, others will more likely say, "That's not silly at all – it makes sense to me." Or, "that's the least I could do for you." I can't say this enough, "others cannot climb into your head to find out what your expectations and wants or desires are." You and you alone know what your wants and desires are. The word "need" is dangerous because it leads to dependencies. And dependencies in a relationship are dangerous because they lead to suffocating which might easily snuff out a relationship, contribute to a life crises, and jeopardize your self-esteem.

Jealousy

Simply put, jealousy is nothing more than a sign of insecurity. A healthy loving relationship promotes independence as opposed to dependence. A healthy relationship is one in which each party can grow from the relationship, have other relationships and other functions, and bring the experiences back to the relationship. This is true in all types of relationships -- romantic, with friends, work; it's practically impossible to be both confident and jealous. In fact the jealous person usually needs approval from the person of whom they are jealous. It's very much the same psychology that applies to the bully in elementary school; that is, the bully is afraid that others will see his insecurities. The real truth, though, is that all approval of any value comes from self.

Perfectionism

This is such an important issue, let's look at it again“ If you were perfect no one could stand to be around you,” -- that's a fact. Perfectionism just doesn't cut it because it comes from value judgments. The truth is the world is perfect, and everything that has happened is perfect just the way it is. Now the manner in which I am using the word, “perfect” has nothing to do with value judgments. The best explanation I've heard for the word “perfect” was given in a popular training many years ago (the est training originated by Werner Erhardt). Werner says that the world is perfect and everything in it just the way it is. Again, the manner in which perfect is used has nothing to do with value judgments. When it is said that the world works perfectly, that means there's nothing imperfect or wrong with an exploding or imploding star, nothing imperfect or wrong with a volcano erupting, nothing imperfect or wrong with a flood that wipes out a town. There's nothing imperfect or wrong with even the Gulf oil spill.

Given everything that goes into a situation, (lack of planning and with no required relief well) the results can't be any different. Floods don't happen because people built a town near a river -- they've been happening for centuries. Volcanoes erupting and earthquakes don't happen because people built a city nearby – they've been happening for millions of years. So given everything that has been put into your life, i.e., parenting, education, your life experiences, relationships, and so on, the results of anything that you do are simply a product of what's been put in and that makes it perfect. Add more input and results will vary. But they will always be perfect. Being perfect has nothing to do with making the grade or living up to certain standards. The bottom line is that the way your life is now is perfect given what you have put into your life or allowed others to put into your life. The essence of which is your present lack of

self-confidence is the perfect result given what you've put into your life such as the gallows's laugh, poor posture, learned insecurities, the way you handled complements, your own beliefs, and so on.

Chapter II—Building Confidence—a New Perspective

The New Ball Field

Of course this program is about providing you the insight as to how you've participated in lacking confidence. To do this we will begin by changing the ball field on which you've been playing this game of life. If for some reason you don't relate with ball games, then choose any game of your liking. The point is that life is a game and just as games have rules, so does life. The question is how serious you are playing the game. Many get so caught up in the rules of the game that they never have any fun playing the game.

I remember at age 12, I often went fishing on the Potomac River with my uncle. The battery-operated transistor radio was relatively a new invention that enabled me to listen to Oriole baseball -- my favorite team. I was a serious fan and knew most of the statistics. So serious, that when the Orioles were not winning, I'd get down on my hands and knees and pray to God for them to win, "God, if you love me, please let my Orioles win." When they lost, I took it quite personal and would literally be depressed. As a youngster, I thought that God had forsaken me. It wasn't long before I stopped playing the listening game. In fact, from then on I didn't allow myself to get involved with any sports because the possibility of losing was too painful.

I made my childhood a lot more serious than it needed to be. I was constantly into shoulds and should nots. The question is, what aspects of the game of life have you made serious? For the reality is even the great Babe Ruth struck out more than his fair share, but that didn't keep him from swinging away every opportunity he had.

So we're going to change ball field; the game you've been playing has been too serious for you.

When I was youngster I had a fear of snakes -- not to say that I am fond of them today. I never had a bad experience with a snake so one day, while doing some self-analysis to uncover the source of this fear, I traced my thoughts about snakes back to age 3 or 4.

My early years were in a Maryland farmhouse. We had a tiny backyard with a stone wall and steps going down to spring house in a meadow. My grandparents did not want me wandering about alone in this area because of the possibility of snakes. A particular snake to be concerned was the copperhead snake, which was indigenous to that area of the country. And even though they were rarely encountered, it was always a possibility. None of my family knew how to train me in the handling of snakes so the obvious solution was to scare me -- they told me that snakes lived in the stone wall and would bite me. I took this scare very seriously and never ventured in the backyard and from then on I had a fear of snakes. This insight helped me understand that my fear is based on suggestions given to me by my grandparents. At first I was angry and then I realized that they were simply looking out for my best interest which allowed me to put it into a different perspective. Next I realized that the snakes I was afraid of as a youngster were already dead and that realization was quite uplifting. But no sooner than I had celebrated that realization, my brain gave me another thought, “but the snakes all had babies,” which was my brain’s attempt to continue the fear. I know that sounds silly, why would my brain want to continue a fear? I answer this question with another question and that is, do you like to be right about things?

Being Right

Of course it's human nature; we all like to be right about every thing. In fact if we're really serious about the rules and regulations of the game, we really like to be right. It's amazing the more serious we are about the rules and regulations, the greater our need to be right. It's actually possible that we will go to all extremes -- even when it's at our expense -- just so we get to be right. Let me explain! As I've written before, I spent years believing I had a fear of snakes. I was right about that. If you asked anybody who knew me personally how I was with snakes, they would tell you that I was afraid of them – end of story. So my brain had invested a lot of energy believing that I was truly afraid of snakes and now suddenly with this realization, I realized that what I was afraid of was dead. How can you be afraid of something that's dead? Now the brain starts manufacturing rationalizations -- it can do that -- it's an expert at manufacturing rationalizations. You know what they are – “it won't make a difference if I did so-and-so.” “I don't have enough time.” “I'm too stupid, tall, short, uneducated, uncoordinated, serious, and so on to do whatever.” Rationalization is a fancy word for excuse. So as soon as I realized all the snakes were dead, my brain comes up with this rationalization, “but they all had baby snakes.”

Fortunately, I'm glad I was looking for a path away from my limitations – a path for an adult. Then I realized -- “I can take a course in snake handling if I so desire.”

Look at your own limitations today in relationship to self confidence. How many of your “today limitations” are all a result of catching suggestions in your past. Notice how many of them are physically dead? All of those limitations represent the old game. The new game is a realization that you no longer are that youngster but an adult with many opportunities to improve skills. So let's leave the old ball field -- the old game and go to the new game in town -- your adulthood.

So far we've looked at basic habits that you may have gotten into that simply undermine your confidence. Let's now look at some of the emotional baggage you've picked up as a youngster which has eroded your confidence and the means to break free from it.

Chapter III--Assertiveness

Dr. Manual J. Smith, professor of psychology at UCLA asserts that, as children, many of us were trained by parents and educators to feel foolish, ignorant, and guilty for several reasons:

1. to keep us in line and make their lives easier;
2. to keep us from getting in trouble;
3. to keep us from getting hurt physically or mentally.

And, as a result, we go to all lengths to avoid them. As adults, we still have these feelings and can often be manipulated by others who know how to push the buttons that trigger the feelings.

Dr. Smith has created the assertive bill of rights, the first of which is: “You have the right to be the ultimate judge of yourself.” This right is the one upon which he built nine other rights.

Terri Cole Whittaker wrote a book titled, What You Think of Me is None of My Business. The title is another way of saying the same thing.

Following are Dr. Smith’s other nine rights:

1. You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses to justify your behavior.

We've been taught from childhood by our parents and educators to always have reasons to substantiate what we do. In fact in school we get rewarded for our powers of reasoning. Why did you select that answer? And then we are compelled to come up with a number of reasons to support our choice. If we misbehaved, why did you do that? And again we were compelled to come up with reasons to justify our behavior -- none of which were ever good enough in the view of the almighty judging parent or educator. Truth is, as adults, we do not have to give reasons to substantiate our positions in life. We can simply say, “I chose what I chose or did what I did because that's what I wanted to choose or do.”

During an est training I attended, a participant was asked to choose between vanilla and chocolate ice cream. Once she made a choice she was then asked, “why?” The trainer

would have her come up with as many reasons as possible for selecting one or the other until she eventually grasped the reasoning behind this exercise and simply said, “I choose vanilla because I choose vanilla.” That's it! No because, excuses, justifications, or reasons required for as humans, the basic Bill of Rights, gives us the right to make choices simply because we want to and for no other reason.

2. “You have the right to judge whether you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.” Other people have problems and they love to suck you into their webs and have you be responsible for solving them. Relatives have problems; friends have problems; parents have problems; neighbors have problems; coworkers have problems; store clerks have problems; customers have problems; supervisors have problems; everybody has problems.

Not everyone, but many are irresponsible and lazy when it comes to solving their own problems. As Chico in *Chico and the Man* said, “Not my problem,” is what is important for us to say to the clerk, “not my problem if you have others requiring your services too.” Or to our relatives, “Not my problem if you have trouble getting along with your brother or sister.” Or to the co-workers, “Not my problem if you want to leave early and can't find anyone to finish your shift.” Or to the supervisor, “Not my problem if you need somebody to stay overtime.” Or to the neighbor, “Not my problem if my friend didn't invite you to the party.” Or to the customer, “Not my problem if you haven't been watching your stock and ran out of inventory.”

Of course it sounds a bit harsh to say it like this to your neighbor, supervisor, relative, and so on. The important thing is that you first say it to yourself and believe it. I only recommend verbalizing these thoughts aloud when your friend, relative, supervisor, or neighbor attempts to manipulate you into a corner.

3. “You have the right to change your mind.” It's amazing how others think that you are your choices. To them it's almost like if you change your mind, you're a different person. It's like if you choose black, you always have to choose black. But the reality is, today you can choose black and tomorrow you can choose blue -- just as long as it doesn't get to be black and blue (they don't go together -- pun intended). So yes, yesterday I wanted to be married and today I feel like I'd like to be divorced. This is usually confusing because people think that making a choice and making a decision is the same thing. They are not the same. A decision has to do with an outcome as in a

horse race. The judge decides the winner based on which horse crossed the finish line first. In court, the judge makes a decision. It means the event is over, done, finished, and decided. Today I choose to study engineering; tomorrow I may choose to sell trinkets at the Boardwalk. Changing your mind does not mean that you are wrong or incapable. Changing your mind is a basic human right.

4. “You have the right to make mistakes and be responsible for them.” Often times we're so fearful of making mistakes, we avoid taking risks or capitalizing on opportunities -- the fear is that we would look stupid. I was once in a meeting with several engineers discussing a production problem at a chemical plant where I was employed as a start-up chemical engineer. Someone mentioned the word, “zinc” and a hotshot project engineer asked, “What's that?”

Now this engineer had a reputation bigger than life for getting things done. As soon as I heard him ask the question my first thoughts were to doubt his intelligence, “He can't be that stupid can he?” We were working in a chemical plant; how could he not know what zinc was?

And then I realized the secret of his success -- he wasn't afraid of looking stupid. He didn't suffer from my disease -- fear of looking stupid! I realized that if I were in a similar situation, my embarrassment would have stood in the way of progress and I would have either bluffed my way or simply would not have contributed to the meeting. That was a valuable lesson for me and even though I dislike making mistakes, I no longer need to be embarrassed or feel stupid for making a mistake or not knowing something that everyone else might know.

5. “You have the right to say, “I don't know!” As toddlers we were asked what we wanted to be when we grew up. If we said we didn't know, we were given the impression, by grown-ups, that something was wrong with us for not knowing. “What do you mean you don't know what you want to do when you grow up?” soon became, “what do you mean you don't know if you love me?” “What do you mean you don't know if you want to go to work today?” “What do you mean you don't know if you want to stay married?” “What do you mean you don't know where you want to live, what you want to eat, where you want to go on vacation?” “What would happen if everybody did it that way, felt that way, or?”

Yes, we were rewarded for knowing, and ridiculed for not knowing. The truth is that we are entitled to not know what we want. We are entitled to be confused too. No one has a crystal ball upon which to gaze into the future.

6. “You have the right to be independent of the good will of others before coping with them.” I’d say it’s better phrased as, “You are not responsible for how others choose to feel.” It’s amazing how many people would like to have you believe that they are paper-mâché -- that what you say or do could hurt them. The irony is that the same people often say and do things to contribute to you feeling unworthy. “How could you do that to me? I’m your mother!” “I’ll remember that!” These people threaten that they will be keeping score if you don’t comply with their selfish wishes. To combat this, it’s important to realize that everything we do is from selfishness. Robert Ringer and many other authors of self-help books espouse the art of being selfish. For the reality is, we are all selfish and it is okay to be selfish as long as we are not manipulating others. So there is what is called rational selfishness and irrational selfishness.

“I’d like you to do so-and-so for me,” is a sample of rational selfishness. This type of selfishness is okay, upfront, and honest. “If you love me,” or “if you care about me, you would do so-and-so for me,” is an example of irrational, irresponsible, and manipulative selfishness. It’s an attempt to instill a feeling of guilt in order to manipulate your behaviors. The truth is you cannot make anybody feel any certain way. Just as no one can make you feel any certain way. All feelings are from choice -- your choice.

7. “You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.” Have you ever been rewarded for being illogical? Of course not; ever since preschool we’ve been taught to be logical and that illogic is the equivalent of stupidity. And, of course, those who wish to manipulate you will always look for opportunities to point out illogical thinking on your part. Truth though, many inventions and creative ideas are the result of illogical thinking. Without illogic, there would never be any spontaneity, fun, or perhaps even love. And yes, if you have made discoveries, had fun, found love, and so on -- you have been rewarded for being illogical -- enjoy it!

8. “You have the right to say, I don’t understand!” Professionals are great at using their professional jargon, which they use as an act, to explain their recommendations. They do it in such a way as to have you believe that just because they have a degree,

certification, or training, you should simply roll over and accept what they say as the gospel truth. Truth is, you have the right to say, “I don't understand and I'd like to get a second opinion.”

I remember a real estate lawyer once telling me, “I don't tell you how to counsel your clients, so don't tell me how to interpret the law.” I thanked him for his opinion, discharged him from the case, and hired another attorney-- one who welcomed questions and didn't lose the deal for me.

9. “You have the right to say I don't care.” This is the “perfect” trap. It's like asking, “What kind of person are you if you don't care what your room looks like?” And as you get a little older it's, “what our house looks like?” Or “what the neighbors think of us?”, Or, “if you're always late and so on?” Of course these people are really telling you more about themselves than they are about you. They are telling you that it would be a problem for them if they were to be late, or had a disorganized room, or disorganized house. The important thing for you is to choose how you feel about being late, disorganized, and so forth as opposed to letting others manipulate your behavior. Remember, being late, disorganized, messy are relative terms. To the person who strives for perfection, being one minute late or having one piece of clothing on a chair is a real problem—I know I was married to her. So it's okay to say to that of person, “For me the condition of my room, our living room, or being a few minutes late is not a problem. If it is a problem for you, please let me know!”

Chapter IV—Techniques in Assertiveness

In this chapter we are going to look at specific communication techniques to build confidence. Confidence is about developing techniques that leave you feeling good about yourself. We will look at some specific situations that occur time and again and coach you to handle them.

SOT

For instance:

Staying On Track (SOT). You request something from someone and their reply is engineered to make you feel guilty for asking the question. The key to handling this kind of behavior or the “run-a-round,” is to be rather matter-of-fact and to move beyond any emotion with which they would like to enshroud you. For instance, you would ask someone, “I would like the results of the report.”

“But, the information isn't easy to find,” is their reply

Your response would be, “I can appreciate that and I'd like the results of the report.”

They avoid by asking you, “Did you talk to so-and-so about such and such?”

You stick to your request and state once again, “Like I said, I'd like the results the report.”

Again they try to get you off track by saying, “You're sounding like a broken record.”

You reiterate, “Well, I'd simply like the report.”

Finally they acquiesce, “Alright, I'll have Lucy work on it this afternoon.”

“Thank you,” is your reply.

The goal here is to maintain your temperament, avoid being emotional, and simply demonstrate persistence and it will pay off big time. There's no need to let excuses get

you off track and no need to give reasons why you need the report. You simply, calmly, continue making your request until there are no more excuses. Of course you may not always get the desired result; you may get someone who says, “No can do,” and is as assertive, confident and as good at staying on track as you are. This is good because you are communicating with someone who is not manipulating; it will give you an opportunity to deal with the real issues to find a compromise. And, of course, the point here is that you'll always feel better for having given it a shot, knowing that at least you'll have an opportunity to achieve some results than if you simply let yourself be manipulated.

TFYC

Another technique:

Thanks For Your Concern (TFYC). You know people are always minding your business.

“Racing is too dangerous a sport -- you have your whole life ahead of you.”

“Thanks for your concern. Racing can be a dangerous sport and I thank you for your input.”

“You’re not going to keep racing, are you?”

“I’ll give thought to your concerns.”

“But I want to know if you’re going to keep racing.”

“As I stated, I’ll give thought to your concerns.”

Handling criticism this way softens the critic’s comment and frees you from feeling childish, stupid, and ignorant. No need to be defensive as in the past.

SYAR

So, **Y**ou're **A**bsolutely **R**ight (SYAR). The fact is, in life you will make mistakes. Remember, that given everything that goes into the situation the result can't be any different. So rather than try to hide mistakes or make excuses for them, the confident person simply acknowledges them.

“You gave me the wrong information and I looked like a fool in front of everyone.”

“You're Absolutely Right, I really messed up -- my apologies!”

Of course if it is questionable as to whether you really did make a mistake, then I suggest something like this:

“You certainly didn't handle that situation very well.”

“You may be right about that! May I ask on what you have based that opinion?”

Bill Cosby wrote a book about So. It is particularly useful when others make fun of you as in school.

“You're a chicken and look stupid!”

“Sooooo,” is the only necessary response.

There is a basic law “What you resist -- Persists” If you resist inane stupid comments by dimwits by arguing back or trying “one up-man-ship,” you're simply refueling your enemy to dump more criticism on to you.

The Mirror

Here's one you can't be without!!

You'll always find that when people sound critical or upset with you, it actually has nothing to do with you -- they are venting -- displacing their frustration or upset and you just happen to be in their path.

“Can't you do anything right,” asked in an angry tone?

“You sound or look angry,” is the mirror. It's simply to feed back the emotion coming across to you whether it is anger, frustration, irritation, depression, etc. The feeling will only affect you if you keep it and don't feed it back. By feeding it back, you'll get a response like,

“Yeah, I'm not upset with you; I just had a rotten day.”

The worst-case scenario is that you get denial in which case you might respond, “I sense that you're angry but then I could be wrong about that.”

You'll feel far more confident for having reflected the feeling than for having absorbed it.

Chapter IV--Review

Let's review, we looked at all the tip-offs that erode self confidence:

Gallows's Laugh

Poor Handling of Compliments

Posture Problems

Being a Yes Person

Being a Doorman

Basic Attitude

Excessive Need for Approval

Expecting Paybacks

Perfectionism

Jealousy & Comparisons with Others

Catching Suggestions

Humiliating Childhood

And then we looked at specific techniques to build confidence through communication:

Staying on track (SOT)

Thanks For Your Concern (TFYC)

So You're Absolutely Right (SYAR)

And the Mirror.

Practice them and practice them some more.

On the medical front, zolof and paxil CR (controlled release) are advertised as aids to overcoming social disorders. See your doctor for his recommendation.

Used on a short time basis, either one could be useful as an adjunct to this book, but given a choice I'd rather use the Self Confidence CD upon which this part of the book is based—more later.

Again, reading this material is great for the conscious mind. However, the unconscious mind is what determines your actual behavior.

The Lag Principle:

You can consciously understand your behavior and consciously know what you want to do to change, but in the actual situation respond as you did in the past. This often results in one getting upset with one's self. "What's wrong with me, I know differently. Why did I react the same way as I have before? Am I stupid?"

No you are not stupid. I heard Dr. Joyce Brothers explain this phenomenon quite effectively. It's that you unconscious lags your conscious meaning that it's important to give yourself an opportunity to bring your subconscious mind's comprehension up to date to agree with your conscious understanding. This is where the value of hypnosis comes into play as it is a direct link to your subconscious mind.

You can do this with self hypnosis and use suggestions such as:

1. I am more confident everyday.
2. I am more self assured everyday.
3. I feel better about myself every day.
4. I am more confident and outgoing everyday.

You can also read this book into your computer and play it over and over—it would help to add a relaxation portion at the beginning where you tell yourself to relax your feet, and then your legs, your backside and so on all the way to the top of your head.

You can obtain the Self Confidence CD from the www.DStressDoc.com website—an easy way of getting there is to go to www.the987.com

The CD goes several steps further than you could on your own as it also erases negative childhood experiences that have affected your confidence.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Richard Kuhns B.S.Ch.E, is certified in hypnosis and a specialist in biofeedback, stress management, cognitive, and relaxation skills. He specializes in helping people resolve issues surrounding self esteem, anxiety, panic attacks and stress.

As an accredited hypnotist, Richard is considered to be one of the most advanced and progressive self help specialists. He brings a progressive approach to self help by combining hypnosis with subliminal suggestion, subconscious restructuring, nutrition and stress management techniques.

Richard conducts workshops at national conventions on various applications of hypnosis and biofeedback, and leads lectures and stress management workshops for corporations such as AT&T and IFF.

He operated the Biofeedback Center of NJ and Hypnosis Consultants of NJ for over twenty years. He now is in private practice and is the author of over fifty self help and stress management cd's and dvds as well as author of several e-books pertaining to self help.

**by Richard Kuhns, B.S. Ch.E
NGH Certified**