# Self‐Confidence Exercises

**Step 1: Preparing for Your Journey**

The first step involves getting yourself ready for your journey to self‐confidence. You need to take stock of where you are, think about where you want to go, get yourself in the right mindset for your journey, and commit yourself to starting it and staying with it.

In preparing for your journey, do these five things:

# Look at What You've Already Achieved

Think about your life so far and list the ten best things you've achieved in an "Achievement Log." Perhaps you came top in an important test or exam, played a key role in an important team, produced the best sales figures in a period, did something that made a key difference in someone else’s life, or delivered a project that meant a lot for your business.

Put these into a smartly formatted document, which you can look at often. And then spend a few minutes each week enjoying the success you’ve already had!

# Think About Your Strengths

Next, use a technique like **SWOT Analysis** to take a look at who and where you are. Looking at your Achievement Log, and reflecting on your recent life, think about what your friends would consider to be your strengths and weaknesses. From these, think about the opportunities and threats you face.

Make sure that you enjoy a few minutes reflecting on your strengths!

# Think About What's Important to You, and Where You Want to Go

Next, think about the things that are really important to you, and what you want to achieve with your life.

Setting and achieving goals is a key part of this, and real confidence comes from this. Goal setting is the process you use to set yourself targets and measure your successful hitting of those targets. See our article on **goal setting** to find out how to use this important technique, or use our **Life Plan Workbook** to think through your own goals in detail (see the "Tip" below).

Inform your goal setting with your SWOT Analysis. Set goals that exploit your strengths, minimize your weaknesses, realize your opportunities, and control the threats you face.

And having set the major goals in your life, identify the first step in each. Make sure it’s a very small step, perhaps taking no more than an hour to complete!

# Start Managing Your Mind

At this stage, you need to start managing your mind. Learn to pick up and defeat the negative self‐talk which can destroy your confidence. See our article on **rational positive thinking** to find out how to do this.

Further useful reading includes our article on **imagery** – this teaches you how to use and create strong mental images of what you'll feel and experience as you achieve your major goals – there’s something about doing this that makes even major goals seem achievable!

# And Then Commit Yourself to Success!

The final part of preparing for the journey is to make a clear and unequivocal promise to yourself that you are absolutely committed to your journey, and that you will do all in your power to achieve it.

If as you’re doing it, you find doubts starting to surface, write them down and challenge them calmly and rationally. If they dissolve under scrutiny, that’s great. However, if they are based on genuine risks, make sure you set additional goals to manage these appropriately. For help with evaluating and managing the risks you face, read our **Risk Analysis and Management** article.

Either way, make that promise!

# Tip:

Self‐confidence is about balance. At one extreme, we have people with low self‐confidence. At the other end, we have people who may be over‐confident.

If you are under‐confident, you’ll avoid taking risks and stretching yourself; and you might not try at all. And if you’re over‐confident, you may take on too much risk, stretch yourself beyond your capabilities, and crash badly. You may also find that you’re so optimistic that you don’t try hard enough to truly succeed.

Getting this right is a matter of having the right amount of confidence, founded in reality and on your true ability. With the right amount of self‐confidence, you will take informed risks, stretch yourself (but not beyond your abilities) and try hard.

So how self‐confident are you? Take our **short quiz** to find out how self‐confident you are already and start looking at specific strategies to improve your confidence level.

# Step 2: Setting Out

This is where you start, ever so slowly, moving towards your goal. By doing the right things, and starting with small, easy wins, you’ll put yourself on the path to success – and start building the self‐confidence that comes with this.

# Build the Knowledge You Need to Succeed

Looking at your goals, identify the skills you’ll need to achieve them. And then look at how you can acquire these skills confidently and well. Don’t just accept a sketchy, just‐good‐enough solution – look for a solution, a program or a course that fully equips you to achieve what you want to achieve and, ideally, gives you a certificate or qualification you can be proud of.

# Focus on the Basics

When you’re starting, don’t try to do anything clever or elaborate. And don’t reach for perfection – just enjoy doing simple things successfully and well.

# Set Small Goals, and Achieve Them

Starting with the very small goals you identified in step 1, get in the habit of setting them, achieving them, and celebrating that achievement. Don’t make goals particularly challenging at this stage, just get into the habit of achieving them and celebrating them. And, little by little, start piling up the successes!

# Keep Managing Your Mind

Stay on top of that positive thinking, keep celebrating and enjoying success, and keep those mental images strong. You can also use a technique like **Treasure Mapping** to make your visualizations even stronger!

And on the other side, learn to handle failure. Accept that mistakes happen when you’re trying something new. In fact, if you get into the habit of treating mistakes as learning experiences, you can (almost) start to see them in a positive light. After all, there’s a lot to be said for the saying “if it doesn’t kill you, it makes you stronger!”

# Step 3: Accelerating Towards Success

By this stage, you’ll feel your self‐confidence building. You’ll have completed some of the courses you started in step 2, and you’ll have plenty of success to celebrate!

This is the time to start stretching yourself. Make the goals a bit bigger, and the challenges a bit tougher. Increase the size of your commitment. And extend the skills you’ve proven into new, but closely related arenas.

# Tip 1:

Keep yourself grounded – this is where people tend to get over‐confident and over‐stretch themselves. And make sure you don’t start enjoying cleverness for its own sake…

# Tip 2:

If you haven't already looked at it, use our **How Self Confident Are You?** quiz to find out how self‐confident you are, and to identify specific strategies for building self‐confidence.

As long as you keep on stretching yourself enough, but not too much, you'll find your self‐confidence building apace. What's more, you'll have earned your self‐confidence – because you’ll have put in the hard graft necessary to be successful!

Goal setting is arguably the most important skill you can learn to improve your self‐confidence. If you haven't already read and applied our goal setting article, you can read it **here** .

# Key Points

Self‐confidence is extremely important in almost every aspect of our lives, and people who lack it can find it difficult to become successful. Two main things contribute to self‐confidence: self‐efficacy and self‐esteem. You can develop it with these three steps:

1. Prepare for your journey.
2. Set out on your journey.
3. Accelerate towards success.

Goal setting is probably the most important activity that you can learn in order to improve your self‐confidence.