BOOST YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE
CONTENTS

About this workbook 3

Introduction 4

Section 1. Your confidence 5
  How assertive are you? 6
  How high or low is your self-esteem? 8
  Know what you do well 11
  How do you want to be perceived? 14
  Your value system 15
  What do other people think? 17
  Identifying areas of low confidence 19

Section 2. Building your confidence 21
  Get mentored 22
  Challenge your thinking 23
  Affirmations 26
  Setting goals 28

Section 3. Communicating your confidence 32
  Manage your thinking 33
  Manage your attitude and behaviour 34
  Non-verbal communication 36
  Visual image 37
  Listening skills 39
  Questioning skills 41

Section 4. Keeping up the momentum 43
  Turn theory into reality 44
  Strategies 45
  Your confidence plan 46
  Five tips 47

everywoman expert / further reading 48
About This Workbook

Established in 1999, everywoman works to advance all women in business. Through our work with individuals and organisations, we know that being confident and assertive is a key element to paving a successful path in business. Fortunately, your levels of confidence can be built up over time, just like all other personal development areas. In this workbook, we will give you not only the theory behind confidence building, but also some practical exercises that will help you develop your confidence.

Over the past decade, we have met with thousands of businesswomen, and the subject of confidence comes up frequently. We are in no doubt that there are core differences between men and women in this area, especially when it comes to communicating with others and dealing with conflict.

This subject is therefore of special importance to women and it has made this particular workbook a big one. But don’t worry: we will guide you through it while boosting your confidence levels, regardless of your starting point.

In this workbook, we will help you to understand where you are starting from, the role that self-esteem plays in building confidence and tips on what to put into practice to help you become a confident and assertive businesswoman.

We will help you identify the personal strengths you already possess that you can tap into. Then, when reading through each chapter, make sure you spend time carrying out the actions and tasks that accompany each section – these are the parts that will really help you develop.

Our quarterly online seminars will support the key learning points in this workbook and give an opportunity to ask our experts any questions you may have. If you are unable to join us for any of the live events, you can listen to the seminars shortly afterwards when they are posted as videos to the everywoman site.

Good luck! We look forward to seeing you on the everywoman Network and hearing how you have benefited from this confidence-building workbook.

The everywoman team
INTRODUCTION

CONFIDENCE IS NOT something we are born with. It is shaped by experiences in childhood, early adolescence and adulthood.

Confidence is more than just a state of mind or a skill that can be enhanced over time. It is a barometer of how you perceive yourself. The good news is that you can build up this belief in yourself over time.

Confidence is a constantly evolving state of being. We can feel amazingly confident carrying out some tasks and have a crippling fear of others. Think of a neurosurgeon: no one can doubt her intelligence, dedication and skill, yet ask her to present to an audience of her peers and you may see the colour drain from her face.

The act of building your confidence can seem daunting. However, the freedom you will feel when you have deep-rooted self-assurance will be exhilarating. Having confidence doesn’t mean you will never feel fearful, but it allows you to work through your fears and enjoy the process of moving out of your comfort zone. This, in turn, builds even more confidence.

No one can build your confidence for you, so if you want to change, you must be willing to give it a go. There may be sections of this workbook that you feel you can act on immediately. There will be others that will challenge you and force you to think more deeply.

The most important foundation for building confidence is to remember that you don’t need to, and must not aspire to, change overnight. It takes time to become confident, both internally and to others. It is not about being outside of your comfort zone and entering the ‘panic zone’ as shown below. It is about working hard to make that comfort zone bigger.
Before we boost your confidence, let’s take a look at where you currently stand.
How assertive are you?

Assertive People come across as confident and in control. They express their views and opinions without appearing aggressive; they value the views and opinions of others and can influence outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assertiveness</th>
<th>Self-confidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness cannot exist without there being interaction with another person</td>
<td>Self-confidence can exist in isolation</td>
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</table>

That said, assertiveness and self-confidence are inextricably linked. Confidence gives you the inner strength to take control of a situation. Assertiveness is how we externally demonstrate self-confidence.

Complete the self-diagnostic below to analyse how assertive you are at work.

**Exercise**

**How assertive are you at work?**

1) How often do you feel that things are ‘dumped’ on you?
   a) Quite a lot of the time, but that’s how it is
   b) Not very often, I’m generally in control because I manage expectations
   c) No one would dare

2) What do you do if you’re struggling to be heard?
   a) Nothing. The other person generally knows more than me
   b) I indicate when I’m going to speak by maintaining eye contact and using my body language
   c) I speak louder and more forcefully. That way, they have to listen

3) How do you handle challenging conversations?
   a) I tend to give in; I don’t like conflict
   b) I listen to the other person, take stock of the situation and work towards a win/win solution
   c) I’ll go to any lengths to get my own way
How assertive are you?

**EXERCISE continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4) HOW DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE VIEWED IN THE BUSINESS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) I don’t feel I am valued; I’m always overruled and ignored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) I feel respected and feel that most people would say I do a good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) As long as I’m good at what I do, I don’t really care what they think. What does it matter?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PRESENTING TO YOUR PEERS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) I worry because I doubt my ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) It’s exciting to share the great things I’m involved in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) It’s important that my peers understand how good I am</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SCORING**

\[ a=1, \ b=2 \ \text{and} \ c=3 \]

5–8. This score indicates that you may be at the passive end of the assertiveness scale. Potentially, you are being taken for granted – or at least perceived that you are. It might be a good idea to seek out the advice of a trusted colleague or mentor who may be able to help you be more assertive.

9–12. This score indicates that you are probably assertive. Remember, confidence and assertiveness are like muscles, so exercise them.

13–15. This score indicates that you may come across as aggressive, which can cause unnecessary conflict and tension at work. Being assertive rather than aggressive is a more balanced way to operate and will lead to greater results.

**PASSIVE**

A passive person will avoid expressing their opinions, generally believing that they are not worth taking care of. Passive people will usually not assert themselves or openly verbalise their feelings or needs, allowing others to ride roughshod over them. This can amount to a passive person often feeling anxious, depressed and sometimes resentful.

**ASSERTIVE**

An assertive person is very clear about their opinions, needs and feelings and is able to express these freely without fear of reprisal. They will also generally have high regard for others, actively listening to other viewpoints and communicating in a calm and respectful manner.

**AGGRESSIVE**

An aggressive individual is clear about their needs and opinions and will step over everyone to get it. They can be verbally and sometimes physically abusive, and this can be displayed in a variety of ways, from not respecting someone’s personal space to verbally attacking or ridiculing them. Interestingly, this ego state is generally born out of a feeling of powerlessness and a lack of self-esteem.

**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE**

Passive-aggressive individuals appear passive on the surface but are affected by dramatic emotions underneath the surface. Rather than confront an issue, they will smile sweetly and carry out acts of sabotage on the focus of their resentment. This, again, is born from a feeling of powerlessness and a lack of self-esteem.

With the exception of assertiveness, the other three states, although wildly different in displayed behaviour, stem from a lack of power or a feeling of unworthiness and a need to be addressed.

Non-assertiveness may be seen as the use of inefficient communication skills, whereas assertiveness is considered a balanced response, being neither passive nor aggressive.

Being assertive involves taking into consideration not only your own rights, wishes, wants, needs and desires, but also those of the other person. Assertiveness means encouraging others to be open and honest about their views, wishes and feelings so that both parties act appropriately.
How high or low is your self-esteem?

**Self-esteem is the foundation** on which your confidence is built. It is your overall evaluation of your worth or value. If you don't hold yourself in high regard, you won't behave confidently around others.

Before you can develop high self-esteem, we need to understand where low self-esteem comes from.

What are some reasons for low self-esteem?

- Negative thinking
- Self-sabotage
- Low emotional intelligence
- Not upholding your value system

“Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent”

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
How high or low is your self-esteem?

**EXERCISE**

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was developed by Dr Morris Rosenberg and is used widely in social science research. Because the concept of self-esteem is one that most people are familiar with, this test will probably not tell you anything you do not already know. You should have a pretty good grasp of your results just by asking yourself the question, "Do I have low self-esteem?" Where this scale is helpful is in giving you a numerical indication of your self-esteem health. The clearer you are about your self-esteem, the better you can learn to take care of yourself. Don’t take this as a precise measure, but use it as a guide. Learn what you need to work on and think more deeply about why you feel the way you do.

Respond to the items quickly, without over-thinking; tick your first inclination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a Failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I take a positive attitude towards myself</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I certainly feel useless at times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. At times I think I am no good at all</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TURN OVER TO SEE WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS**
How high or low is your self-esteem?

SCORING

For items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7:
- Strongly agree = 3
- Agree = 2
- Disagree = 1
- Strongly disagree = 0

For items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10:
- Agree = 1
- Disagree = 2
- Strongly disagree = 3

Your score: ______________________

The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

How can you use this number? It is important to remember that our frame of mind when we take a questionnaire like this will often slightly affect the results. That said, it will show where you sit compared with others – and reassure you that most people have average self-esteem. It is perfectly common to not feel 100% positive, useful and effective at all times.

If your score is low, don’t worry. The next steps in this workbook will help you become more confident in your day-to-day environment. If your score was medium to high, there are still many areas that you can focus on, such as goal setting, giving and receiving feedback and building on any areas you will identify where you are less confident.

EXERCISE

What does self-esteem mean to you?

Think about a time when you felt your self-esteem was high. If you truly can’t think of a time, think about someone else with high self-esteem and answer the questions from his or her point of view.

• Where were you?
• What were you doing?
• In what way did you behave differently?
• In what way did you think differently?

Compare this with a situation where you felt your self-esteem was low.

• Where were you?
• What were you doing?
• How were you behaving?
• Were there any particular patterns or themes to your thinking?

Now that you understand what self-esteem is, it will be easier to work on developing it. The next time you feel your self-esteem has been knocked down, or it needs a boost, look at the areas highlighted in this section and reflect on what has happened, and then create some small steps to help yourself. If you have a mentor (see section 2), you could work through this area with them.
Sara Parsons has a passion to inspire genuine learning results in her training sessions. She achieves this by creating a relaxed, enjoyable and professional environment, enabling every participant to maximise the training they receive. Sara is dedicated to giving ongoing feedback and to following up with her delegates, whether it be for one-on-one coaching or running five-day leadership workshops and corporate away-days. She has several large clients, such as Paramount Pictures, Ipsos MORI, Oxford University Press and Donovan Data Systems, and has developed and run customised courses in the UK, continental Europe and Nigeria.

This workbook was created by the everywoman team, led by Kate Farrow, Leadership Development Manager at everywoman. She has been in the field of leadership and management training for 13 years and has worked with a wide range of organisations, trade associations and industry sectors.

Further reading

- Ros Taylor, Confidence at Work (Kogan Page, 2011)
- Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ (Bloomsbury, 1996)
- Sue Hadfield and Gill Hasson, How to be Assertive in Any Situation (Pearson Life, 2010)

Go to everywoman.com/development for more personal development workbooks, tools and a schedule of our online seminars.