

## **What is self-confidence?**

Self-confidence is a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgement. This self-assurance helps the person see the negative and positive aspects of his/her own personality. The social feedback we receive throughout our lives helps us shape our self-confidence. But the most fundamental feedback of all is the ones we receive from our parents and other important persons around us during our childhood. As a result of the impact of this feedback on our personality, our first opinions about ourselves slowly begin to take shape, laying the foundations of our self-confidence.

## **Is it possible to boost self-confidence?**

It is possible to build lasting self-confidence through foundations laid during our childhood. As we become adults, we also become less sensitive to social feedback and start to make our own evaluation of ourselves. As one's ability to self-assess accurately increases, their self-confidence would improve accordingly.

## **Tips for an accurate and realistic self-assessment**

**Comparison:** We all have the habit of comparing ourselves to others. However, measuring our self-esteem according to the behaviours of other persons may result in an inaccurate self-assessment because each individual has their own unique traits. We should be careful in choosing the right criteria when evaluating ourselves. To successfully do that, we should first get to know ourselves. For instance, if don't have any musical talent and you compare yourself to a person who plays a musical instrument, you would make both an inaccurate and an unjust assessment of yourself. That is why we should first know our limitations and learn to accept them.

**Labelling:** We could sometimes label ourselves with some negative attributes especially as a result of the social feedback we received during our childhood. For instance, when someone says, "I'm an unsuccessful person", it means that s/he doesn't believe s/he doesn't have or has never had the potential to succeed from the very beginning. One should set their own criteria of success. Seeing yourself as a person with zero talent or success in anything is not a realistic point of view as it would negatively affect your self-esteem and your self-confidence and it would hinder your personal development.

**Perfectionism:** If you have a perfectionist perspective on things, which means you are consistently trying to be completely perfect and flawless in everything you do, you would judge yourself more harshly than normal people do. Remember, we can never be perfect, we should tolerate ourselves for being unskilful or clumsy in certain things we do and we have to give ourselves the freedom to make mistakes.

**Modesty:** Too much modesty or humbleness may damage our self-confidence if one of these qualities causes us to see ourselves as less than who we are. That is why, if we are

too modest or too humble, we should ask ourselves whether we underestimate our talents or trivialise our achievements when evaluating ourselves, since self-deprecation and undervaluing yourself could damage your self-confidence.

**Arrogance:** As opposed to modest and humble people, arrogant persons tend to be unpleasantly proud and they behave as if they are more important than, or know more than, other people. Just like modesty, arrogance too is an illusion, an illusion of superiority. Accordingly, if we always view ourselves superior to other people, we may suffer big disappointment in the event of a single failure.

Self-confidence has its own delicate balance, as we tend to approach towards arrogance or over-modesty, our self-confidence would suffer great damages. To put it another way, being arrogant or too modest is an indicator of fragile or poor self-esteem.

**Essential tips for an accurate and realistic self-evaluation:**

Grab a pencil and a paper. Draw a vertical line down the centre of the paper. In one column, write down your talents, positive traits, and your achievements so far. In the other column, list your personality traits and characteristics that need improvement or refinement. If you have difficulty preparing this list, you may ask your family or friends for some help. But remember, they would evaluate you based on their own views and opinions. Accordingly, their opinions of you may not be very realistic. Regarding your personality traits and characteristics that need improvement, you may ask yourself the following questions: Can I improve my flaws? If so, how can I do that? If some of these flaws are not capable of being improved or changed, can I accept them and continue with my life? This exercise will help you view yourself objectively and assessing yourself honestly. Another aim of this exercise is to help us move away from self-labelling statements as we start evaluating ourselves realistically, almost scientifically.

If you have difficulty assessing yourself honestly and if this inability of yours negatively affects your daily life, we advise you to seek counselling or psychotherapy. For counselling and psychological support, you may contact Psychological Support Units located in each campus.

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