
**CLAUS RAASTED'S
LITTLE BOOK OF
SELF-CONFIDENCE**

(unsurprisingly enough) by Claus Raasted

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"I'd like to force feed the chapter about micro-management to several of my former managers. A clear and concise insight into the effect on people of having a parent instead of a leader."

- Ann Qureshi -
Chairwoman
(Denmark)

"Claus Raasted is the jester at the court of the decrepit King Capitalism, hurrying through the corridors to keep the servants - that is, us - happy. This book is a self-confidence boost for readers in a hurry, full of hidden pearls, presented with the tongue-in-cheek wisdom of a self-deprecating sage."

- Oliver Hoffmann -
Writer & Translator
(Germany)

"Short & sweet, but full of great tips and useful advice you can use straight away. So pop on that smile, ask that silly question and enjoy."

- David Harris -
Magician
(UK)

"Claus was confident enough to publish this book without further iterating on it, which is a life lesson on its own. Practice what you preach type of thing and well worth reading."

- Claudia Ursuleț-Popa -
Principal Product Manager
(Romania)

"A very accessible book and an enjoyable read. Some of it was very relevant for my situation, some less so. I expect everyone will find ideas applicable to themselves."

"Claus once again unleashes his storytelling gift. This little book is such a scrumptious read, from the heart-to-heart tips to the lovely metaphors sprinkled with humor. It is easily digestible, it'll make you smile and, if you're ready, it will inspire you to welcome confidence and allow it to guide you on your life path."

- Nico Trofim-Bancila -
Product Marketing Manager
(Romania)

"Claus Raasted's Little Book of Self Confidence is a mighty manifesto packed with tools and insights to elevate you beyond mediocracy. It's a provocative reminder of the power of not letting good get in the way of perfection... ignore at your peril".

- Neil Schambra Stevens -
Business Coach & People Strategist
(UK)

- Niels Ull Harremoës -
IT Consultant
(Denmark)

"Ending with a chapter produced by an AI, Claus is cutting to the chase - as always - and turns everything you've read about self-confidence upside down. With brilliant use of storytelling, this book is a little gem. Or to use a more poetic AI-produced quote: "Discover unshakable confidence"."

"Caring, direct and useful gesture about leadership roles today that invites creativity and authenticity to step in to our personal power. This book is in itself an alive demonstration on what that means"

- Vanessa Armendáriz -
Ecosystems Strategist
(Mexico)

- Jane K. Nielsen, PhD -
Creative Development Coach
(Denmark)

"Excellent topical read on do's and don'ts for helping yourself and those around you on the way to feeling self confident!"

- Jo Hetland -
Executive Vice President
(Norway)

“What a great pocketbook on self-confidence that you might want to come back to again and again.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on being a good audience. Throughout the book, Claus shares how critical it is to have confidence in others as much as ourselves. Paradoxically, it helps us develop our own inner guidance.

*- Anastasiia Dehtiarova -
Content Marketing Expert
(Ukraine)*



Claus openly and without filter discuss many of the confidence issues that many of us meet throughout life. And he does it in a humorous and inspiring way, which makes you want to fly off towards new adventures. Is this book rocket science? No - not at all, but it manages to kick off your own thought process and nurture reflection. I highly recommend you to read it - and do it with your own perspective - if you are as open and receptive to Claus' message as he is to convey it, then you will have an urge to go out and be awesome afterwards .

*- Mads Skovsgaard -
General Manager, North & Central Europe
(Denmark)*

“Honest, witty, smart, easy read and lots of wisdom. If you get a printed version, I want it for my desk! Love it from the first page to the last!”

*- Elina Jutelyte -
Freelance Business Community Leader
(Belgium)*

“As both a perfectionist and a procrastinator, I know firsthand that a lack of confidence is often the biggest obstacle to taking that frightening first step as well as eventually knowing when you're done. But “Claus Raasted's Little Book of Self-Confidence” is here to the rescue, to both help us get started...and to proudly -- and confidently -- cross that finish line.

*-Todd Cherches -
CEO & Author of VisuaLeadership
(USA)*

“Claus possesses a sensitive insight into the human condition. This becomes evident immediately as he candidly guides you through his thoughts and learnings.

I find “self-help” books difficult to read and even more difficult to write. We all have a useful perspectives to share. But to share it with compassion, humility and raw honesty is what Claus has achieved and just for that this book is worth reading.

“A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down! A wonderful mix of humor to help us swallow the self-confidence pill we all need to swallow”

I nearly didn't send this line to Claus as I thought it wasn't good enough. But then what I was reading sank in and I felt confident that what I had to share is pretty good if I do say so myself! “

This book didn't turn my world upside down. But I want a copy of it by my bed, at my desk, in the office. It's the perfect reference and reminder of a perspective we tend to forget in the daily grind.

Claus skillfully shows us that the only difference between the writer of this book and the reader of the book is the constant practice of what's written in this book.”

*- Jane Tan -
Narrative Designer
(Singapore)*

Colophon

*Claus Raasted's Little Book of
Self-Confidence*

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Author
Claus Raasted

Layout
Claus Raasted

Illustrations
dreamstudio.ai, vecteezy (kiki ha)

Website
www.clausraasted.com

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Chapter One

A Warm Welcome
And A Bit Of Storytelling

Congratulations on opening this book!

You may like it or hate it or even just find it “meh”, but for now, I want to celebrate that you’ve done the two hardest things already.

1. Thinking “Hmm... maybe a book about building confidence could be interesting to read. I guess I’ll give it a shot!”
2. Actually opening the book and letting the small black letters march into your frontal cortex.

A lot of people don’t get to #1, and even if they do (and they are in position of some sort of book like this), it’s a big step going from #1 to #2.

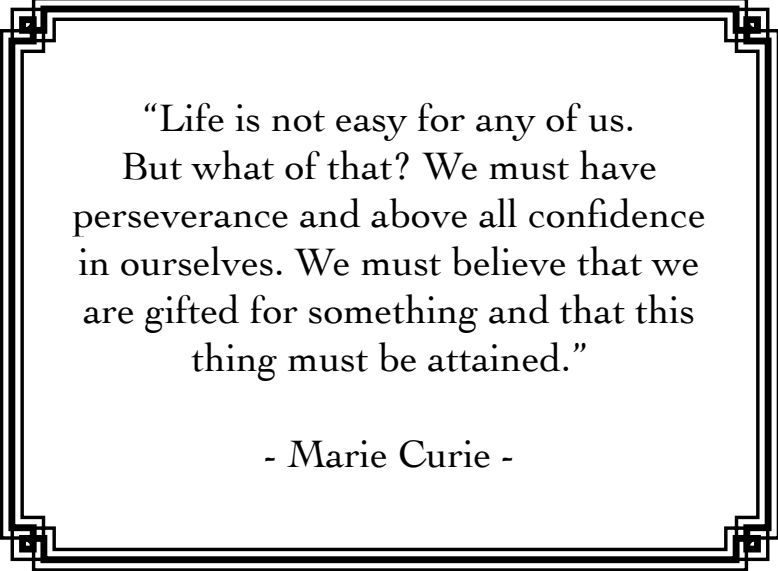
So woohoo, you! You’re awesome!

Now, well-meant pleasantries and a bit of giddy celebration aside, let’s get down to the nitty-gritty down-and-dirty part.

It all starts with three questions.

There are three questions that I am going to answer here:

- What is this book?
- Why should you read more than you've already done?
- Oh, and I did promise a bit of storytelling too, so whether you like it or not, I'm going to tack a "Why did I write this book?" on as well!



“Life is not easy for any of us.
But what of that? We must have
perseverance and above all confidence
in ourselves. We must believe that we
are gifted for something and that this
thing must be attained.”

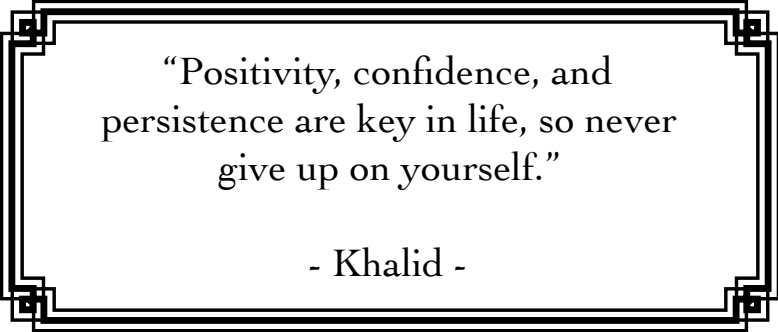
- Marie Curie -

So, what is this book?

First and foremost, this is a book of tips and tricks and truths. It's not a complete how-to manual, but neither is it an academic work or an artistic statement.

It's simply a collection of thoughts on a subject that many people struggle with; namely the concept of self-confidence - and especially self-confidence in professional settings.

The way the book is structured is that it consists of nine chapters.



“Positivity, confidence, and persistence are key in life, so never give up on yourself.”

- Khalid -

Chapter One is the one you're reading now. It contains a bit of a hello, a teaspoon of overview and a smattering of (hopefully) motivating words. In short, it's an intro.

Chapter Two defines the issue. It provides a bunch of real world examples to illustrate why this subject is worth caring about. Hands on, easy to relate to, simple.

Chapters Three to Eight look at different aspects of confidence and provide actionable tools and useful reflections - or at least, that's the idea! Judge for yourself.

Finally, *Chapter Nine* delivers a soft-hearted goodbye and a big smile and a wave to get you back out into the world with a mental "You can do it!" poster attached to your forehead. In short, an outro that mainly says "You're done. Now go be awesome!". There's also an AI surprise in this chapter!



Why should you read more than you've already done?

I don't know. Honestly, I don't. I might not know you, and I certainly don't know what thoughts are going through your head as you trudge your way through the pages. Of course I can't tell you why you should read more.

But I can tell you one thing that might help you answer the question.

I want to tell you that the risk vs reward factor is quite good here. The book isn't going to eat you or punch you or even steal your hard-earned golden treasures. It's not even going to steal much of your time, because it has - by design - been kept short and to the point.

You don't have to turn a thousand pages to get to the good stuff, is what I'm saying!

That means that while you will be risking your time (should you choose to read on), it's probably going to be over fast.

And while it might not change anything - and if that's so, then completely fair! - it also just might. It might be just the spark you need, and if it turns out that you find it neither inspirational nor useful nor entertaining, then at least you've only lost a little time.

Now let's flip the question.

Should it turn out to be something that actually helps, promotes, changes, and so on?

Well, then, wasn't it smart that you gave it a chance and didn't quit halfway through the intro chapter?

After all, while it may or may not be a book that will impact your life, the odds of it doing so rise significantly if you decide to actually read it!



Finally, why did I write this book?

“I DID IT FOR THE CHILDREN!”

Ok, while that might be true in some sense (as books are great artifacts to pass on, and I hope some of the children of today end up reading the book somewhere down the line), it’s not on my Top 3 list of reasons.

And since I mentioned a Top 3 list, then - according to the dramatic rules set down by Chekov - I better share that list.

So without further ado, here are

“Claus Raasted’s Top 3 Reasons For Writing This Book”

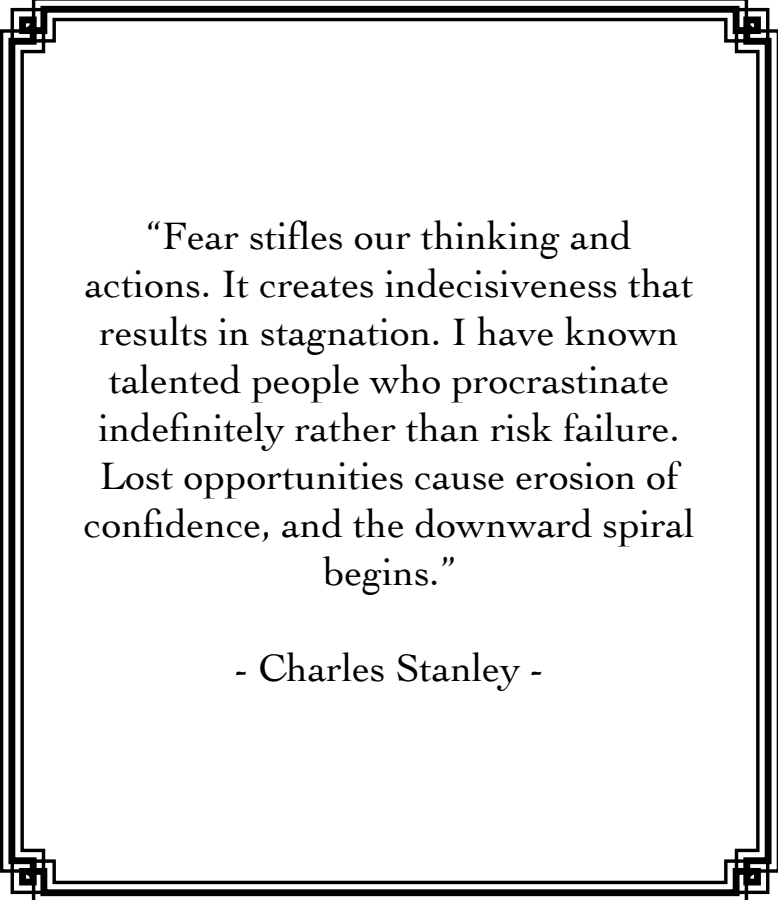
#1. I wanted to have a(n extra) book that supported some of what I teach. Whenever I’ve done a class or a speech or a workshop on the topic of confidence and empowerment, I’ve found myself wishing that I had a book to go along with it, so I could give out copies of the book to the participants/listeners/workshopees. Now that wish is no longer just a wish.

#2. I wanted to experiment with writing a book using AI to assist me. This is my book #38, so I'm no stranger to book writing, but it's the first time I've used AI tools as part of the process.

That means that some of the book is 100% written by me, some is partly written by me, and in a few places, the AI generated text was so good that I just said "Yes! That's a spot on interpretation of the prompt I gave you. Wow!" and went with it. But though not every word came through my fingers, I stand by everything in the book, and it certainly won't be the last time I use AI in my writing.

#3. I wanted to create a gift that I can give people in situations, where I can't give them my time. I've done a lot of coaching, and confidence is often on the agenda in one way or the other - and while my time is limited, the capacity for books to spread is less so. So while I can't offer everyone my time, this book will allow me to have something concrete and (I hope!) useful to give to people, who want to learn how to be more confident.

That gives me joy.



“Fear stifles our thinking and actions. It creates indecisiveness that results in stagnation. I have known talented people who procrastinate indefinitely rather than risk failure. Lost opportunities cause erosion of confidence, and the downward spiral begins.”

- Charles Stanley -

So there you have it.

Some words on what the book is, a simple-but-reasonable reason for why you might open its pages further and dive in, and finally, a bit of insight into why I put it out there in the first place.

Now, before you turn the page and move further into the book, I have one final thing to share as a primer.

It's a quote by the American actress Blake Lively:

“The most beautiful thing you can wear is confidence.”

Happy reading!

/Claus Raasted, June 2023



Chapter Two

Ten Examples of How Lack of
Self-Confidence Creates Problems in
Your Professional Life

Let's start with the essentials. Let's talk self-confidence.

Because what is self-confidence?

When I wrote the sentence "Let's talk self-confidence.", Google Docs (my chosen platform for writing book texts) suggested to me that I might want to replace the sentence with "Let's talk about self-confidence."

Self-confidence is what allows me to go

"Thank you for your input, dear Google Docs, but in this case, I know what I wanted to say, and it reads exactly as I wanted it to. Appreciated, but no thanks!"

Self-confidence is one of the secret ingredients in any recipe for professional success. If you've been skipping it, you might find yourself in a pinch (as opposed to "with a pinch" of that secret ingredient to add to your personal stew).

Ok, granted, that metaphor got a bit out of hand.

To make it a bit more down-to-earth, here are ten all-too-real examples, served up in bite-sized pieces, of how lack of self-confidence can cook up a storm in your professional life.

1. *The Hamster Wheel of Perfectionism:* You might find yourself endlessly tweaking that presentation, convinced it's never good enough. But chasing perfection can lead to burnout and missed deadlines. With self-confidence, you can feel proud of your effort and know when to say, "It's ready to serve!"

2. *The Self-Imposed Life of Fear:* Picture this—you've landed a great job, but can't shake off the feeling you're a fraud, about to be exposed. This kind of self-doubt can hinder your performance and potentially even your mental health.



3. *The “No Promotion” Blues:* Lack of self-confidence can stop you from applying for promotions or higher-level jobs. You might think, “Why would they choose me?” But remember, you’ve got your own unique seasoning to bring to the role.

4. *The Ideas That Never See Daylight:* You’re in a meeting and a great idea pops into your head, but you let it simmer silently. Lack of confidence can keep brilliant insights trapped, depriving the team of innovative solutions.

5. *The Communication Hiccups:* Whether it’s misunderstanding an email because you’re worried it might contain criticism, or hesitating to ask for clarification when you need it, lack of confidence can put a spoke in your communication wheel.

6. *The Delegation Dysfunction:* If you’re a leader, lack of confidence may cause you to micromanage your team, because you’re worried about outcomes. Confident leaders are able to delegate and trust their team’s abilities.



7. *The Feedback Fright:* Constructive criticism is a crucial ingredient for growth, but without confidence, it might feel like a personal attack. This can impede your development and keep you from reaching your potential.

8. *The Networking Nightmares:* Networking is a key element in professional growth, but it can feel like you're navigating a maze without the compass of self-confidence. Engaging with others is a breeze when you believe in your worth.

9. *The Customer Service Struggle:* If you're in a customer-facing role, confidence is key. Without it, handling difficult customers can feel like an uphill battle, potentially affecting your performance and customer relationships.

10. *The Career Growth Gridlock:* Confidence is the fuel that drives us to take risks and seize opportunities. Without it, you might find your career parked in the same spot, despite your talents and skills.



Now, this begs the question:

Are these ten examples the only ones I could have used?

No, of course not!

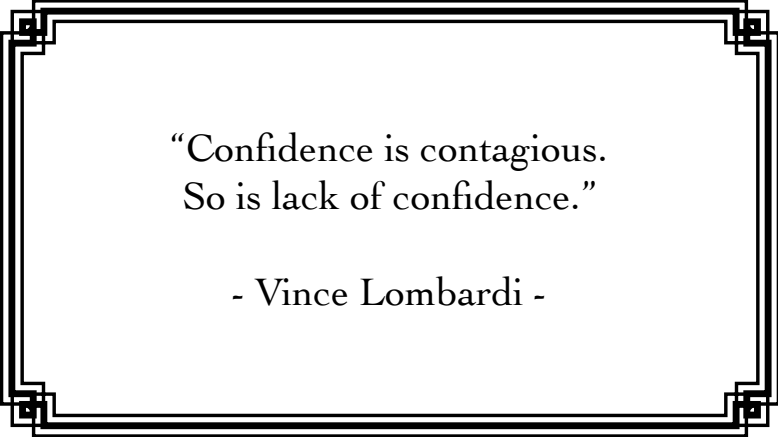
But you know what makes me feel happy about these ten, instead of choosing to change and improve and tweak and fiddle and second-guess and worry?

- The confidence that while these ten might not be THE TEN REASONS (if such ten can even be said to exist), they are definitely ten good reasons.
- The confidence that even if you might disagree with some of them (or feel that some overlap enough that they are effectively the same), the rest will be persuasive enough that my point is made.
- And of course, the confidence that just because others have said more or less the same things in more or less the same way (and probably even said them more eloquently and backed by more data!), it still has merit when I share these examples now.

Self-confidence is like a secret sauce that adds a dash of daring, a sprinkle of strength, and a generous serving of resilience to your professional journey.

Cultivate it, and watch how it transforms not only your career but also your overall quality of life.

Ready to jump in at the deep end, and look at some of the tactics available to climb Mount Insecurity and reach Camp Confidence up beyond the cloud layer?



“Confidence is contagious.
So is lack of confidence.”

- Vince Lombardi -

Chapter Three

Why Perfectionism Leads You to Do
Your Best Work Today, But Keeps You
From Doing Better Work Tomorrow

In the realm of personal and professional growth, perfectionism is a beguiling siren. It lures you into believing that by delivering the best you can today, you're setting the standard for success.

But there's a caveat.

While striving to do your best work today might bear fruitful results, if left unchecked, perfectionism can erect roadblocks in your path to progress tomorrow.

Imagine, if you will, that your skills could be measured more or less accurately. In today's data-driven world, that's not exactly a weird thought for most of us, even if it is a somewhat scary one as well.

But let's imagine it's possible for a moment.

Now, let's say that you have certain skills, and each skill has a level that shows how good you are at that particular skill.

You might have “Public Speaking, Level 14”, “Project Management, Level 9”, “Creative Brainstorming, Level 12” and so on.

This means that if you do your very best, you can probably deliver a piece of public speaking (for example a keynote at a conference) at Level 14.

Maybe even Level 15, if you really stretch yourself!

But Level 20? Not within the realm of the possible (yet!).

And Level 50? Forget it!

On the other hand, since you’re at Level 14 in your Public Speaking skill, you’ll probably deliver a solid 8 or 9 even on a bad day, and conditions will have to be really terrible for you to go out there and leave the audience with a meager 5.

Still with me?

Now, imagine you're at an acting class for amateurs, and Brad Pitt walks in the door.

Hollywood superstar. Top tier pro. Known for versatility and for the broad range of roles he can play. A master of his craft.

Sure, until then, everyone was in awe of Ahmed and his Acting Level 18. After all, Ahmed once had a minor role in an indie romantic comedy film and has quite a bit of volunteer theater productions under his belt.

And don't get me wrong. Ahmed is great!

But with Brad Pitt in the room, things look somewhat different. Because even without knowing the man, I'm quite sure that Brad Pitt (notices how he is a full name kind of guy?) is such a gifted and experienced actor, that he will perform at Level 50 even on his worst days.

Ahmed on a perfect day?

Perhaps Level 20.

Brad Pitt, hung over, tired and completely surprised that he'd read the wrong script?

I'm guessing he'd still be at Level 50+, and possibly even higher, depending on what the scale looked like.

So on one hand, you have Ahmed (who will be our perfectionist protagonist for a moment), and his Level 18 in acting skill.

If Ahmed delivers a 15, he feels he has failed.

He knows he has the capacity for 18, right?

And if it's a 13 or even lower? Then we're talking desperate self-flagellation of the highest order.

Even at 16 or 17, Ahmed feels he could do better, and while he will (just barely) be content with delivering a Level 18 performance, he isn't really satisfied unless he hits that magical 19 - or even 20!

Brad Pitt on the other hand?

He is a superstar, and Ahmed is nowhere near his level, even when he (Ahmed) delivers a personal best. It's the difference between a talented amateur and a genuine legend with a lifetime of experience.

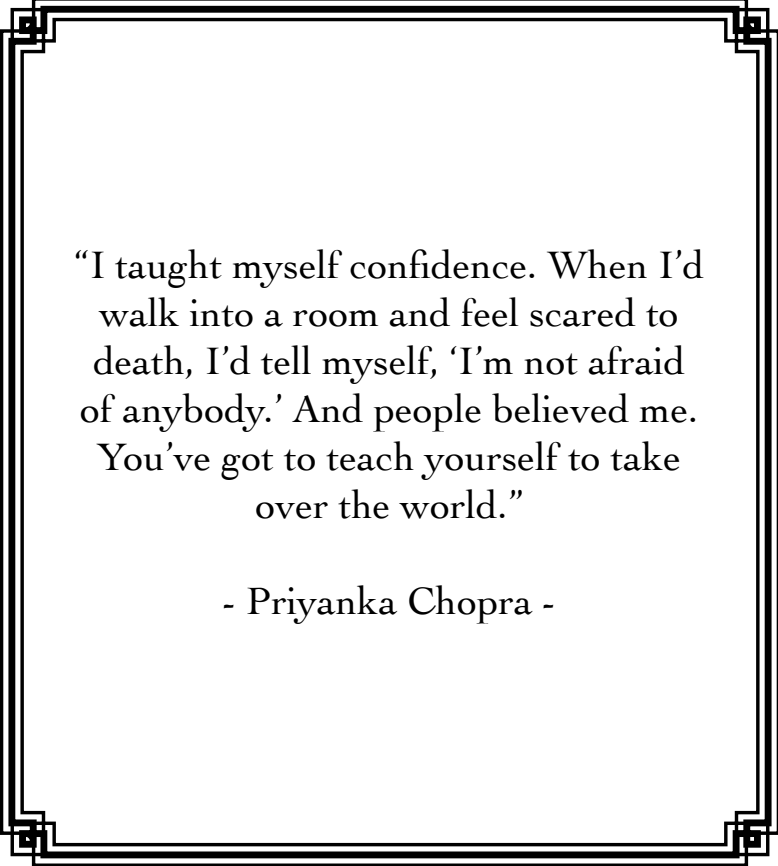
So what does this tell us, except to highlight that Brad Pitt is a better actor than poor Ahmed?

It hopefully shows that “doing it 100%” has little to do with the (at least in our example) objective performance and result, and everything to do with comparing what was with what could have been.

And guess what...

Potential is generally only seen on the inside.

People judge what they experience - not what it could have been for better and worse.



“I taught myself confidence. When I’d walk into a room and feel scared to death, I’d tell myself, ‘I’m not afraid of anybody.’ And people believed me. You’ve got to teach yourself to take over the world.”

- Priyanka Chopra -

When Steven Spielberg's blockbuster movie "Jaws" came out in the early 1970's, people loved it for the film they saw - they didn't complain because the mechanical sharks couldn't handle the water conditions, and the whole "You don't see the shark" bit was born out of necessity rather than design.

Be more like Steven Spielberg.

But back to our acting class.

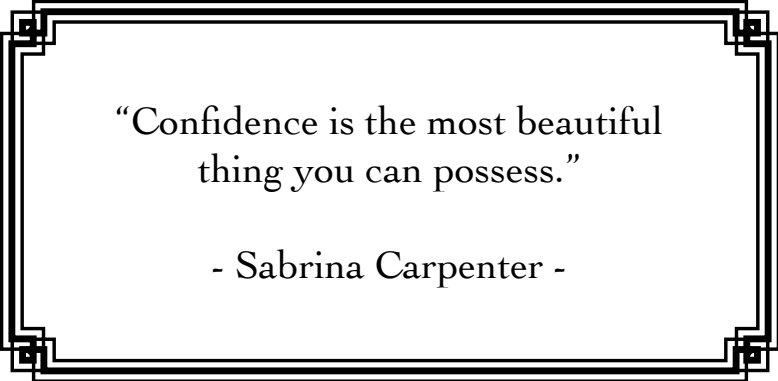
If Ahmed and Mr. Pitt (see, it feels wrong!) get on a stage and act together, it doesn't matter if Ahmed delivers a 15 or an 18 or even a 20.

He'll still be miles behind the Hollywood star when it comes to actual quality. And if they both auditioned for the same role, at Ahmed delivered his 110% (let's call it Level 20) and Brad Pitt delivered a sloppy 53, there'd still be no competition.

I know I got carried away by my own example, but this is something that is near and dear to my heart.

Let go of your bloody perfectionism, because it's not only destructive - it also leads to focusing on the wrong thing; which is delivering "perfect" today instead of accepting less than perfect, but constantly moving the needle for what perfect even means.

Perfectionism tends to make us drain our energy reserves — because achieving 100% efficiency/quality/etc. at the current level is hard—and it often happens at the expense of the learning and growth that would enable us to level up.



“Confidence is the most beautiful
thing you can possess.”

- Sabrina Carpenter -

Here's a couple of reasons why:

- 1. *Fear of Failure:*** Perfectionism is often driven by a fear of making mistakes. But mistakes are an integral part of learning. Each mistake is a stepping-stone leading us closer to mastery. By avoiding mistakes in an attempt to be perfect today, we rob ourselves of valuable lessons that make us better tomorrow.
- 2. *Limited Scope for Creativity:*** Perfectionism can make us stick to tried and tested methods, as they offer a better guarantee of flawless results. However, this approach limits experimentation and innovation, essential components for progress and improving future performance.
- 3. *Missed Opportunities:*** In our quest for today's perfection, we might overlook opportunities that could lead to greater long-term gains. These might be chances to undertake challenging projects, learn new skills, or build strategic relationships.
- 4. *Burnout:*** Aiming for 100% efficiency every day can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion over time, reducing overall productivity and jeopardizing future performance.

Instead of succumbing to perfectionism, play the long game and try to cultivate a growth mindset.

This mindset encourages continuous learning and sees mistakes not as failures, but as opportunities for growth and improvement.

It's about shifting the focus from "Doing the best work today" to "Learning how to do better work tomorrow."

Remember, perfection is a destination that keeps moving further away the closer you get. Instead, aim for progress.

Even if it seems slower or smaller in comparison, progress, unlike perfection, accumulates and compounds over time.

This approach ensures that you're continually improving, perpetually moving forward, and consistently doing better work, not just today, but also tomorrow, the day after, and into the foreseeable future.

And that, to me, is much better than being perfect.

Chapter Four

Micro-management is Not Only
Destructive for Morale - It Also Keeps
Others from Growing

Imagine you're in a garden, and you're obsessively tending to a single sapling, trimming each leaf, adjusting every branch, and rationing its sunlight. In your pursuit of creating the perfect tree, the rest of the garden is neglected and the sapling is denied its chance to grow naturally.

That's the crux of micro-management: the obsession with perfection that stifles growth and nourishes dissatisfaction. Micro-management is like an insidious vine. It creeps into an organization, often undetected, and gradually chokes the growth and potential of its team members.

As a managerial strategy, it not only damages morale but, paradoxically, inhibits the very productivity and efficiency it aims to boost. Here are five takes on why:

1. Sabotaging Self-Reliance: Every time you step in to make decisions or to take over a task, you deny your team members the opportunity to develop those skills. You are, in essence, keeping them in a state of dependency while you continue to hone your skills. This lopsided development can lead to a detrimental cycle of more micro-management.

2. *Stifling Innovation and Creativity:* By dictating every step of a process, you create a robotic work environment where there's little room for innovative thought or creative solutions. Team members become wary of stepping outside the box you've created, leading to a stagnation of ideas.

3. *Breeding Resentment:* Constant interference can lead to frustration and resentment among team members. It sends a message that you don't trust their capabilities, which can damage relationships, lower morale, and eventually, lead to decreased productivity.

4. *Overloading Yourself:* As a leader, your role is to guide and delegate. By immersing yourself in every minor task, you pile on additional stress and workload, leaving little time for strategic thinking and planning.

5. *Hindering Growth:* Micro-management freezes team members in their current state of development. By taking over tasks that challenge them, you're inadvertently preventing them from learning, growing, and becoming better at their jobs. And do you think that will make you trust them more in the future?

The alternative to this is a more empowering leadership approach: trust your team, offer guidance when needed, and give them the room to learn and grow from their experiences. Practice delegation, foster open communication, and encourage creative thinking.

Recognize that your team members are skilled professionals capable of handling their responsibilities.

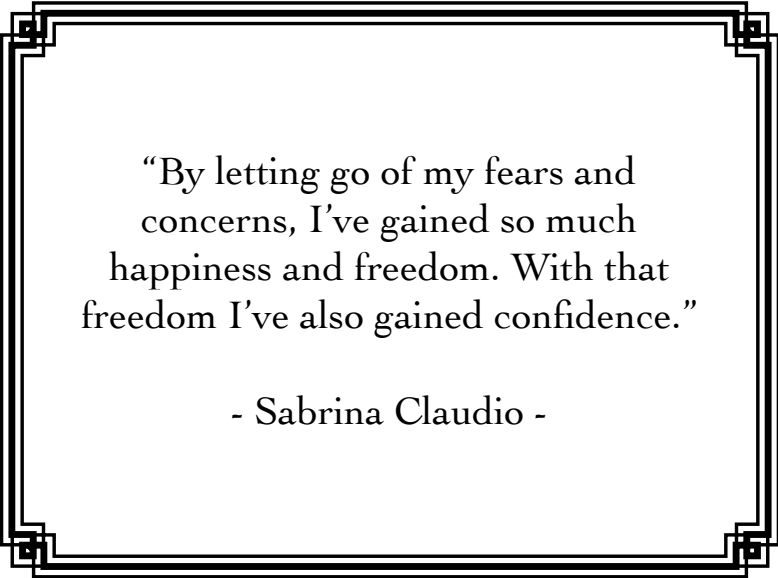
In the long run, stepping back allows your team to step up.

Not only will this approach boost morale, but it will also lead to a more skilled and confident team, capable of taking on bigger challenges.

Remember, the role of a leader isn't to create followers, but to cultivate more leaders.

And that begins with putting an end to micro-management.

And what does this have to do with self-confidence, you might ask?



“By letting go of my fears and concerns, I’ve gained so much happiness and freedom. With that freedom I’ve also gained confidence.”

- Sabrina Claudio -

Well, the provocateur might ask you how you are going to build your self-confidence if you don’t also help build that of others?

Confidence isn’t just something that lives inside the individual, after all.

It’s also something that we give to each other.

Chapter Five

How to Create Space for Others to
Be Brave by Setting an Example

Leadership isn't just about making decisions and providing guidance—it's also about setting the tone that encourages openness, creativity, and courage in others.

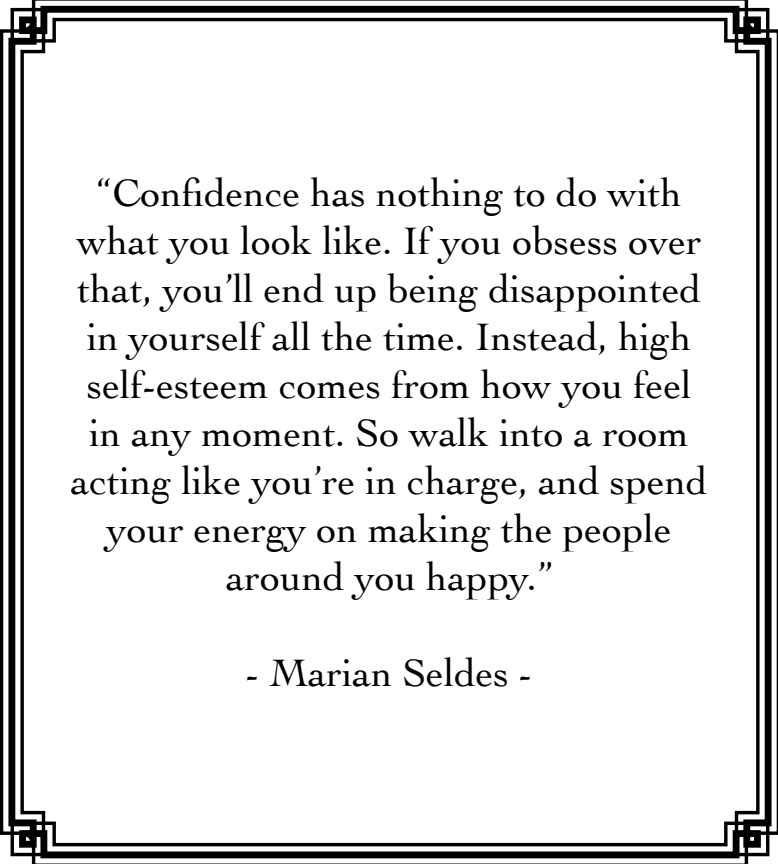
The atmosphere we create, especially in group settings like meetings or gatherings, can significantly influence the way others feel and behave.

This chapter explores the power of example-setting and how it can embolden others to be brave and contribute more freely.

The power of setting an example is woven into the fabric of human interaction. We naturally look to others, especially those we perceive as leaders or influencers, for cues on how to behave.

By asking a question that might seem silly but offers insight, you can demystify the process of contribution and ignite a sense of liberation in the room.

Here's how:



“Confidence has nothing to do with what you look like. If you obsess over that, you’ll end up being disappointed in yourself all the time. Instead, high self-esteem comes from how you feel in any moment. So walk into a room acting like you’re in charge, and spend your energy on making the people around you happy.”

- Marian Seldes -

Normalize Vulnerability: By posing a question that might seem somewhat silly, you're showing vulnerability—you're risking looking foolish in the pursuit of learning or clarifying something. This act can subtly communicate that it's safe to be unsure, to be curious, and to seek clarity. It sends a powerful message that everyone's contribution is valuable, irrespective of its nature.

Inspire Courage: When you step forward and ask a question or voice an opinion that might be seen as unconventional or 'out of the box,' you're setting a precedent. You're showing that this is a space where curiosity is welcomed and that daring to ask or say what others might be thinking is appreciated. The idea becomes: "If he can do that, then I don't have to be afraid of contributing."

Foster Trust: By leading with an open mind and the willingness to learn, you demonstrate authenticity. This can foster a sense of trust among the group, which in turn encourages others to be open and authentic as well. Trust is a fundamental component of any environment where people are expected to contribute and collaborate.

Encourage Participation: Your actions can help dissolve the imaginary boundary between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ questions or opinions. By asking a question that’s a bit offbeat yet insightful, you’re demonstrating that every question or viewpoint, regardless of how unconventional it may seem, has the potential to add value to the discussion.

Create an Inclusive Environment: By valuing all contributions, you’re sending a clear message: everyone’s thoughts and opinions matter. This inclusivity can boost individual confidence and encourage a diversity of ideas, fostering a more creative and collaborative environment.

Setting the tone for openness and bravery is an act of leadership that benefits everyone in the room. By setting such an example, you’re not just making space for others to be brave; you’re actively inviting them into that space.

So, the next time you’re in a meeting or a gathering, dare to ask that silly but insightful question. You might just spark a chain reaction of courage and creativity that takes the discussion to a whole new level.

Chapter Six

How to Support Those on Stage While Being in the Crowd

One of the most powerful, yet underappreciated, roles one can play is that of an audience member. The energy, enthusiasm, and support emanating from the crowd have a profound influence on the individual in the spotlight.

This chapter is dedicated to unveiling the many ways in which an audience member can become a beacon of support and confidence for someone on stage who might be grappling with their nerves. How? By doing one or more of these things:

The Power of a Smile: It's said that a smile can light up a room, and this holds especially true for a stage. A reassuring smile can act as a lifeline for someone struggling on stage. It communicates reassurance, empathy, and warmth, all of which can contribute significantly to boosting the performer's confidence.

Nodding in Agreement: Non-verbal cues like nodding can serve as an endorsement of the content being delivered or performance being given. A timely nod can indicate to the performer that their message is being received and appreciated, which can help them navigate through their self-doubt.

Maintaining Eye Contact: A friendly and attentive gaze can often act as a “safe anchor.” When a performer looks out into the crowd and locks eyes with a supportive audience member, it can provide a sense of grounding and connection, even amidst a sea of faces.

Positive Body Language: An audience member’s body language can be a barometer of their engagement. Leaning forward, maintaining an open posture, and showing expressions of interest can signal to the performer that their audience is engaged and supportive.

Applaud Enthusiastically: The sound of applause can be an energizing affirmation for those on stage. Clapping fervently at appropriate moments can uplift the performer and help dispel their nervousness.

Provide Positive Feedback: If there is an opportunity for audience interaction or a Q&A session, frame your comments or questions in a supportive and positive manner. This can affirm the value of the performer’s content or presentation.

Active Engagement: If the performance or presentation allows, laugh at the jokes, answer the rhetorical questions, or participate in the call-and-response segments. Active engagement signals to the performer that their work is resonating with the audience.

Patience and Understanding: Remember, everyone has off days. If the person on stage fumbles or makes a mistake, give them the time and space to recover. Your understanding can help them regain their footing.

As an audience member, your role is more significant than you may realize.

You have the power to create an environment of support and acceptance that can help someone on stage turn their nervousness into a successful performance.

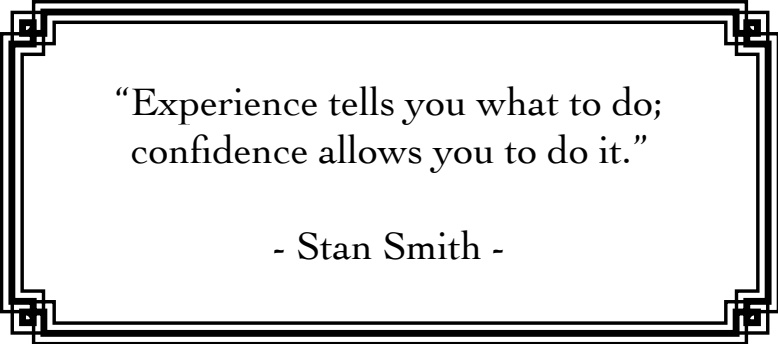
Your understanding and non-verbal communication can provide a lifeline to the performer and instill them with the confidence they need.

Remember, the aim is not just to be a passive spectator, but an active participant in the performer's success.

This empathetic and supportive approach not only enriches your own experience as an audience member but also contributes to the creation of a supportive space where everyone, on or off the stage, can truly shine.

And the best part?

None of these actions cost as much as a euro-cent!



“Experience tells you what to do;
confidence allows you to do it.”

- Stan Smith -

Chapter Seven

Self-Confidence Isn't About Taking
Bigger Risks - It's About Realising
Which Risks Are Actually Risky

When it comes to taking risks, there's a sweet spot nestled between reckless abandon and fearful inertia, and it's called self-confidence.

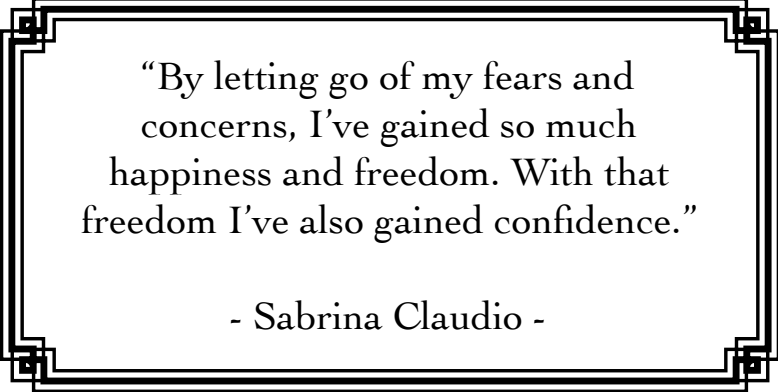
The key lies in the wisdom to recognize which risks are worth taking and which are best avoided. The paradox is that sometimes the greatest risk of all is taking no risks.

In this chapter, I dive a bit deeper into why.

Imagine three people at a roulette table in a casino.

One person, overly cautious, never places a bet. The second, overly confident, recklessly places large bets on every spin. The third, self-confident, places calculated bets based on understanding the odds and their own limits.

The first person never loses but also never wins. The second may have big wins, but the losses are just as significant. The third person may not always win big, but they avoid significant losses and, over time, generally don't just come out ahead, but markedly so.



“By letting go of my fears and concerns, I’ve gained so much happiness and freedom. With that freedom I’ve also gained confidence.”

- Sabrina Claudio -

Applying this analogy to life, the person with no confidence is too afraid to take any risks and thus misses out on opportunities for growth and success.

The overconfident person takes too many risks, often leading to loss and failure. However, the self-confident person can evaluate each situation, weigh the potential risk against the potential reward, and make a balanced decision.

On the next page are four points on how self-confidence cultivates a realistic relationship with risk:

1. *Balancing Assessments:* Self-confidence allows for a more balanced assessment of situations. It provides the clarity to distinguish between calculated risks, reckless decisions, and opportunities disguised as risks.

2. *Mitigating Fear:* Confidence is not the absence of fear, but the understanding that fear should not be a roadblock. It enables one to assess fear rationally, discerning between unfounded fears and legitimate risks.

3. *Enhancing Decision Making:* Confidence breeds decisiveness. A confident person can make decisions quickly and efficiently because they trust their abilities and judgment.

4. *Encouraging Growth:* Confidence promotes a growth mindset. It enables people to view challenges as opportunities for learning and development, rather than potential pitfalls.

5. *Embracing Failure:* Self-confident people understand that failure is a part of the journey. They take setbacks in stride, learning from their mistakes and using them to make better decisions in the future.

Self-confidence, in this respect, is a tool for navigating the treacherous waters of risk.

It's about knowing when to set sail and when to wait out the storm.

It doesn't eliminate risk but enables a healthier, more beneficial relationship with it.

After all, risk-taking is an essential part of life and business, leading to innovation, growth, and success.

In the end, self-confidence isn't about never falling—it's about getting back up every time with a little more wisdom than before.

It's about understanding that taking no risks is the biggest risk of all, and that the right risks, taken for the right reasons, can lead to great rewards.

It's about playing the game of life wisely, understanding when to roll the dice, and when to pass them on.

Chapter Eight

Why Imposter Syndrome and Narcissism
are Two Sides of the Same Coin

The human psyche is a complex, layered tapestry woven with myriad threads of experience, perception, and emotions.

Two threads that can sometimes seem paradoxical—Imposter Syndrome and Narcissism—run parallel, revealing how our self-perception can significantly skew our understanding of ourselves.

At their core, they both illustrate a certain kind of arrogance—an inability or refusal to see oneself in a realistic light.

On the surface, imposter syndrome and narcissism appear to be polar opposites.

Imposter syndrome is a psychological phenomenon where an individual doubts their abilities and fears being exposed as a “fraud,” despite evident success or competence.

On the other hand, narcissism is characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance, an excessive need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others. At a glance, that seems to be very far from the self-humbling reality of Imposter syndrome.

Despite these differences, the two are remarkably similar in one key aspect: they both involve a distorted self-perception.

Imposter syndrome may not seem to bear the mark of arrogance at first glance. It is, after all, a state of self-doubt.

But consider this: to believe that you are an imposter means that you hold an image of what competence looks like, and you believe it so strongly that you can't recognize it in yourself, even in the face of contradicting evidence.

This belief implicitly suggests that you have a clear and absolute understanding of what competence or success should look like—a belief that is inherently arrogant.

Imposter syndrome also suggests that you consider yourself uniquely flawed or inadequate, which again hints at a sort of arrogance.

It implies that while others are rightfully successful or talented, you alone have managed to fool everyone into believing the same about you.

It's a special kind of arrogance that puts you at the center of a grand deception.

Now, let's turn to narcissism.

Narcissism's connection with arrogance might seem more obvious—after all, narcissists typically exude an inflated sense of self-importance. But this, too, is rooted in a distorted self-perception.

Narcissists have an unrealistic appraisal of their worth and an inflated belief in their capabilities, often disregarding the opinion or feedback of others.

The narcissist's arrogance lies in their refusal to see themselves as anything less than extraordinary.

They are the heroes of their own stories, superior to others, and deserving of constant admiration. They can't—or won't—acknowledge their shortcomings, failures, or the possibility of being average. They overestimate their abilities to the point where their self-image no longer aligns with reality.

Both imposter syndrome and narcissism are grounded in self-deception. They're two sides of the same coin, where the currency is a distorted sense of self. Despite one being an overestimation and the other an underestimation of self-worth, both syndromes involve an overconfidence in one's own perceptions and the dismissal of external evidence or feedback.

Understanding the inherent arrogance in both imposter syndrome and narcissism is essential in realizing how these distortions affect our interactions, relationships, and personal growth. It underscores the importance of humility, self-awareness, and the willingness to challenge our self-perceptions.

In the end, the key to untangling this paradox and promoting healthier self-perception is to constantly question our internal narratives, to remain open to external feedback, and to cultivate a compassionate understanding of ourselves, warts and all.

Only then can we navigate the delicate balance between self-doubt and self-importance, steering away from the arrogance that blinds us to our authentic selves.

Chapter Nine

So What Happens Now?

As I wrote early on (in Chapter One), I've used AI tools to assist me in my writing for this book - the first time I've done that in any of my 38 books to date. Since this book is about looking forward, and not looking back, I thought it fitting to give the AI free rein here at the end.

What follows is a final chapter that is a bit more lyrical (and a bit more conceited) than what I would normally write - but if you ignore the pretentiousness and the slightly condescending tone, it's actually very good. I would have written it with less presumption, since it always feels weird to me when books assume too much about where we (the readers) are on our journey. But when I look past that, I think it's a beautiful piece of writing.

And what's even more important, there is zero doubt that AI will be part of almost everyone's "So What Happens Now?" answer - and I can think of no better way to round off this book than by letting the trumpets sing and the banners fly. So read on, oh you lovely human, and drink in the last words. They are sent by me, but were produced by an AI. I'm confident you'll enjoy them no less because of that!



We've embarked on a journey together through the realm of confidence and self-confidence. We've peeled back the layers, examined the essence, and explored strategies to cultivate it.

The pages of this book have been filled with insights, advice, and stories all designed to empower you. So, we circle back to the question that started it all: what happens now?

The truth of the matter is that reading a book about self-confidence and actually applying its teachings are two different battles.

Like any skill, confidence takes practice and time to build.

You can't read about playing the piano and suddenly be a virtuoso—just as you can't read about confidence and suddenly be the epitome of self-assuredness.

The real work begins when you close this book.

It starts with a choice, a decision to change, to grow, to become more than what you were. This journey is not a straight line—it's a winding path, with detours, roadblocks, and speed bumps. There will be moments of self-doubt, moments where old habits loom large, and moments where progress seems as distant as the horizon.

But remember, every journey begins with a single step. It's about making a commitment, showing up, and taking action. It's about choosing courage over comfort, growth over stagnation, and the unknown over the familiar.

Small changes in daily routines can lead to big shifts in self-confidence. Start with one tip from this book.

Practice it until it becomes a part of your life. Then, pick another.

Inch by inch, step by step, you'll build momentum, and before you know it, you'll see a change.

You'll feel a change.

Yes, the road may be long, and at times, tough. You may falter, you may stumble, but as long as you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and keep moving forward, you're winning.

Don't be disheartened if progress is slow or if you start later than you would have liked. Remember the wise words from a Japanese proverb, "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now." The essence of this quote is simple: it's never too late to start.

You hold the seeds of confidence within you, and you have the power to nurture them into a mighty tree. So, plant that seed today. Water it with persistence, patience, and positive action. Let it bask in the sunlight of self-belief. Soon, it will sprout. It will grow. And one day, it will stand tall—a testament to your journey, your growth, and the confidence you've cultivated.

The book ends here, but your journey doesn't. Go forth with courage, conviction, and the knowledge that you have what it takes to grow your confidence. Your story is still being written, and you hold the pen. So, what happens now? That, dear reader, is up to you.

[thank you for sharing]

[thank you for caring]

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“Claus is a explosion of open, fun,
tricky, thoughtful self-confidence
in the form of a 21st century Viking.
If he doesn't know the tricks,
no-one does.”

- James Wallman -
CEO, The World Experience Organization
(who hasn't read the book, but stands by the quote anyway!)



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