

Confidence - Where to Get it and How to Keep it

By Roy H. Williams

Getting confidence and keeping confidence – emotional muscle – is like getting and keeping any other muscle; it just requires daily exercise.

But where does confidence come from? Is it merely a feeling – the product of an optimistic attitude gained through positive thinking rituals learned at motivational seminars – or is it something more substantial?

According to Baltasar Gracian, confidence comes from authority, "...and the highest authority is that which rests on an adequate knowledge of things and long experience in different occupations. Master the subject matter and you will come and go with grace and ease and speak with the force of a teacher; for it is easy to master one's listeners if one first masters knowledge. No sort of abstract speculation can give you this authority; only continual practice in one occupation or another. Mastery arrives from an action done often and well... Authority originates in nature and is perfected by art. Those who attain this quality find things already done for them. Superiority itself lends them ease and nothing holds them back: they shine, both in words and deeds, in every situation. Even mediocrity, helped out by authority, has a certain eminence, and a little showiness can make everything come out right."

Keys to confidence:

- 1.** Do your homework. Know what you're talking about. Study, prepare, experiment, then experiment some more. Become an expert. Prepare true answers – not canned responses – for the questions you'll probably never be asked.
- 2.** Tell the truth. You can't have real confidence when you know you're lying. A lie that makes you a dollar today will cost you a hundred dollars tomorrow due to the erosion of your own confidence. When you don't know the answer, say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you," and then do it for the building of your own confidence even if you suspect the person has utterly forgotten your promise. The confidence you gain in yourself will make the whole exercise worthwhile. There's that word again; exercise.
- 3.** Be a Little Bit Showy. Most people are average, and average is always boring. Experts, due to their deep knowledge of the subject and the ease with which they speak of it, are free to be entertaining. And the response you get to your performance will only increase your confidence.

Baltasar Gracian, by the way, lived three and a half centuries ago but his advice remains on target because some things never change.