

## HOW TO BUILD YOUR SELF-ESTEEM; SECRETS OF SELF-CONFIDENT PEOPLE

"Do you remember that girl in high school who really wasn't that pretty, or even nice, but who was still popular?" I asked. "She had something about her that attracted others -- self-confidence." "Instead of getting angry, maybe it's time for you to take a page out of your boss' book. After all, he must be doing something right," I suggested. I explained that someone who is confident is very attractive. Each of us has the power to be self-confident. In fact, studies reveal that most of us secretly think we're better than everyone else. We rate ourselves as more dependable, smarter, friendlier, harder working, less prejudiced, and even better in the sack than other people. "Some might feel that way," she retorted. "But I tend to be pretty hard on myself." Self-confidence is available to us all. All we have to do is borrow the same three strategies that people who appear to be confident use. First, we have to know our strengths; we have to know how we shine. Friends' feedback, past evaluations, and a variety of psychological instruments including the Myers-Briggs Indicator, The Birkman System, and the Enneagram can provide clues. I have found the book *Now Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, PhD, particularly helpful. (If you purchase the book, it will contain an identification number that allows you to take the StrengthsFinder profile on the Internet.) Second, we have to claim our strengths, and sometimes that means "faking it till we make it." We claim our strengths by **seeking opportunities** to use them and then promote our successes. When I was in public relations, I worked with a man who was a wonderful pitch person. He was the first to volunteer to pitch a story to the media and wasn't bashful about speaking about his successes. There was a woman who worked at the agency who was also an excellent pitch person, and in my opinion she was much stronger than he. She didn't claim her strengths, though, and so watched him fly up the corporate ladder before she did. I have seen this happen way too often to women in the workplace. Women can find it harder than men to promote themselves, and when they don't do so, they do themselves a huge disservice. Third, self-confident people fuel their own confidence. All of us have days in which we doubt ourselves. I have worked with top CEOs and their self-confidence sometimes wanes, too. Here are four tools I have used to help me when my self-esteem sags: **One: Create "a brag file."** Reserve a file for those cards, notes, letters, e-mails, etc. that tout your successes. When I am feeling a little down, I reach for my brag file. I have been doing this for twenty years, and I am happy to report that my brag file has gotten pretty thick over the years. **Two: Practice positive self-talk.** When your inner critic rears its ugly head, tell it to shut up. Then remind it of your successes. There's something about personalizing our inner critics that works. I have one client who calls her inner critic Sybil. **Three: Dress for success.** Our appearance often reflects the way we feel about ourselves. Some mornings when my confidence is waning, I purposely reach for one of my power suits. My whole demeanor changes when I slip on that suit, and I feel better about myself. **Four: Make sure you have a strong support system.** People either give us energy or rob us of it. Take a minute to review with whom you spend your time. Look closely at each person. Does he or she build up or tear down your self-esteem? Surround yourself with people who believe in you. Confident people are magnets for success. Why not try these simple suggestions and watch your self-confidence soar.

*This article was originally published in EmploymentCrossing. EmploymentCrossing is a leading job reporting and research institution, consolidating jobs leads from all possible sources in the world. For more such informative articles, please visit EmploymentCrossing.*