

Introduction

Confidence is one of those odd things in life that turn out to be surprisingly difficult to tie down (beauty and quality belong to this strange group too). You may think you know what it is, and you may feel certain that you can recognise it when you see it, but you may struggle to define exactly what 'it' is. Confidence is an everyday experience, something you have quite often, except on those all important occasions when it seems to leave you and you could really use more of it – whatever 'it' is.

In this book, you can clear up the confusion around confidence, and particularly what you may refer to as self-confidence. You dispel a lot of the mystique around how you can develop and build your self-confidence; perhaps to an extent you feared would never be possible for you.

Every chapter of this book is designed to help you understand: where your personal confidence comes from, how you can generate an incredibly powerful type of confidence in your life on demand, and how you can do it more reliably with less stress. You will make the fastest progress by immediately putting what you learn into action, by trying out the advice and exercises as you go along, and achieving the deep and lasting personal confidence you were born to enjoy.

Are you up for this? Let's go.

About This Book

Type the word 'confidence' into an Internet search engine and you can expect over 50 million hits. That's a lot of published material about something so natural. It is also an indication of the breadth of the subject so, as you want to get straight to the heart of your confidence, we have been selective in *Building Confidence For Dummies*.

The task ahead of you is to build your confidence so that you can be more powerful, more engaging, and more at ease in every aspect of your life. These areas include your work and your private life (friends and family, romance, community, and so on). We steer

2 Building Confidence For Dummies

clear of more complex explorations of personal development and except where they translate into immediate practical guidance.

You should be able to dip into this book for practical and rapid support on such everyday confidence problems as:

- ✓ Preparing for an important presentation or job interview
- ✓ Asking the man or woman of your dreams to marry you
- ✓ Picking up the phone to make that difficult call to an important new customer
- ✓ Asking for the order, if you're in sales
- ✓ Picking yourself up quickly and appropriately after any setback

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book, we set up a few conventions:

- ✓ *Italics* are used for emphasis and to highlight new words or defined terms.
- ✓ **Bold faced** text indicates the key concept in a list.
- ✓ `Monofont` is used for web and e-mail addresses.

What You're Not to Read

This book is primarily an action guide to building your confidence. In many places, this requires us to set the context you need to grasp the situation. In other places, we include material useful for your full understanding, but not essential for you to be able to take the action and get the benefit. Much as we want you to take all of it on board in time, we make it easy for you to identify those parts that you can leave for later.

- ✓ **The text in the sidebars:** The shaded boxes that appear here and there share personal stories and anecdotes, but they're not integral to your taking action, and you can safely skip reading them if you're not interested.
- ✓ **The stuff on the copyright page:** You'll find nothing here of value unless you're looking for legal notices and reprint information. If you are, then this is the place to look.

Foolish Assumptions

We make a few other assumptions about you. We assume you're a normal human being who wants to be happy and confident. You're probably interested in becoming more effective in various parts of your life and in becoming more comfortable when you face demanding situations and people. Although you're probably already acting confidently in many areas, you may lack the power and skills to perform the way you want to in some others. This book is for you if you want to:

- ✓ Grow in the areas where you currently feel stuck
- ✓ Become better at your job and get acknowledged for it
- ✓ Feel less anxious and stressed about things you have to do
- ✓ Step up to become a powerful leader in your work or community
- ✓ Feel confident that no matter what life throws at you, you can find a way to deal with it

How This Book Is Organised

The book is divided into seven main sections, with each of these broken into chapters. The table of contents gives you details on each chapter.

Part I: Considering the Basics

In the chapters in this part, we explain exactly what we mean by confidence and how it feels. You can evaluate how much confidence you have currently. You discover how to spot where your confidence is waxing or waning, in what areas of your life you need more confidence right now, and what is keeping you stuck.

Armed with all this insight, you can create your personal programme to the new super confident version of you that you want to present to the world.

Part II: Gathering the Elements

Everyone would like to be more confident on occasion, but to take action, whether at work or socially, when you're feeling anything

4 Building Confidence For Dummies

but confident requires motivation. In this part, you're invited to connect with your main drivers in life, gain a better understanding of your deepest values, and leverage this information to get what you want.

You venture into the sometimes messy world of emotions and mood swings – including the extremes of ecstasy, anger, and despair. This part guides you to safe connection with your personal motivation.

Part III: Building Your Confident Self

In this part, you pull up your most confident self and reconnect with how you do it. You let go of perfectionism in pursuit of effectiveness, let go of unreal expectations to enjoy your experiences. You find out how to extend your comfort zone and become relaxed and focused in achieving whatever you want. Finally, in this part, you forge a link between your mind and body and realise that taking better care of yourself helps you maintain your self confidence.

Part IV: Communicating Your Confidence

You naturally want to use your increasing self-confidence to influence others. In this part, you discover how to project your confident self out into the world through your powerful voice and personal appearance. We help you prioritise to get more done in the world and deal with blockers and resistance. This part helps you make the most confident you the permanent you.

Part V: Engaging Others

In this part, of your journey to self-confidence, you get tips on putting your increased personal power to use at work and in your private life. You use what you know about building confidence to ensure that your children grow up with a natural awareness of what it is to be and to act confidently as they face their new challenges every day.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

When you want a quick fix of inspiration or a reminder of what is important every day, you can find it here. This part takes you

straight to some top-ten tips and lists on daily habits, affirmations to plant deep in your unconscious, and questions to spur you into action.

Icons Used in This Book

Within each chapter you find the following icons pointing you to particular types of information that you may find immediately useful. Here is an explanation of what each icon stands for:



This icon brings your attention to a personal story you may find inspiring or useful.



The bull's-eye highlights practical advice you can use to boost your confidence immediately.



This icon indicates an exercise you can use to broaden your understanding of yourself and your own confidence issues.



Information to take note of and keep in mind as you apply your boosted confidence in the world is indicated with the finger and string.



Text next to the Warning icon urges you to take special care of yourself in dealing with specific issues.

Where to Go from Here

Although all the material in this book is relevant to building your most confident version of yourself, you don't have to read it cover to cover over any set period. You benefit most if you address first those sections that are most relevant to the areas of your life where you feel the need for more self-confidence most keenly. For example, if you are feeling nervous about changes happening at work, or going to a party, say, go first to the chapters that deal with this; feel free to dip in where you need guidance and support right now.

6 Building Confidence For Dummies

After you read the book and are keen to take your levels of confidence and achievement to even higher levels, we recommend more personalised forms of development training and coaching. Take a look at the further guidance and resources we recommend at www.yourmostconfidentself.com.