

IDEAS 35

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



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CONFIDENCE BUSTERS

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Confidence is often elusive especially when a lot of things seem to be going against you from all directions. It can be very exasperating to have to pick up the shards of one's confidence once it gets broken. Our closest friends and dearest loved ones may encourage us to pick up where we left off, but most often, the work is entirely left in our own hands. Recognizing the most common confidence busters can help us reconnect with our inner selves and move on with what we are meant to do.

One of the most common deterrents to attaining full self confidence is trauma. We may have prepared as much as we can to face whatever it is we have to face, but the memory of a painful experience might curtail us from going about our business. The old saying that goes, "Let bygones be bygones." can help us go on with life. Dwelling too much for too long on a particularly awful experience is never healthy. We only get needlessly dragged down and consequently fail to make the target. Why make ourselves suffer further by remembering a painful experience? We just need to make the first step that will lead us farther away from the trauma, and we might already have taken the single most important step by doing so. Unless we learn to put the past behind us, we will be burdened with too much emotional garbage to contend with. Too much baggage breaks the back, you know.

Another wet blanket to attaining confidence is the people we associate with. Let us ask ourselves if the people we live our lives with have a great sense of character to help us with our continuous growth—whether on a personal or a career level. If we live with terribly pessimistic people who don't seem to see the good in us at all, chances are great that we won't be confident enough to face the world. A best friend who truthfully tells us our weaknesses is helpful, but one who always finds fault in us is not worth keeping. Sometimes, negative inputs can be a way of making us see the light, but too much of it can be damaging to our self-confidence. Child psychologists have studied how positive affirmations help children get self-confidence. If it works for kids, it would also most likely help adults, too. But, of course, false affirmation is not advisable, as it builds faulty self esteem which can eventually lead to superiority complex.

Perhaps the secret to building self-confidence and confidence in others is to find the right balance between the positive and the negative, the yin and yang of things. Too much of anything is destructive, and this also includes confidence.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are other confidence busters that you know of or have personally experienced? Why have they been confidence busters for you?
2. Why is the role of a best friend extremely important in confidence building?
3. When is telling the truth about somebody constructive? When does it become destructive?
4. Who do you think has more confidence, the critic or the one being criticized? Explain your answer.
5. Why is confidence an important aspect of personality?



TEACHING KIDS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE

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Confidence is one aspect of personality that has to be taught as early as childhood. Children who are too shy or who refuse to interact with others may have future problems on acquiring social skills. It is therefore important as parents to teach our kids about the essence of having self-confidence, which will ultimately spell great social behavior as they grow older. To do this, we have to prepare them by giving them valuable inputs in their day-to-day interactions.

I've heard of and seen kids being too shy to participate at children's parties. They just stay in their seats watching all the action and never even try to join in at least once. However, pushing your kid to join in the fun can also be traumatic for the child. Remember that your child is unique, and he doesn't have to be compared to other kids who are more outgoing. What you could do is have him invite his friends over from school or your neighborhood to your home sometimes. Have them play parlor games where your child can be the game master. Parents often find that their kids are definitely more confident at home, in more familiar surroundings. Your child doesn't have to be the most popular kid, after all.

Have regular conversations with your child after school or at bedtime. Ask about the social activities they have at school. Encourage him to join school clubs or organizations where he can develop his potentials. Do not push him to join a group just because you know it's what is good for him. If he doesn't feel like joining the Math or Science club, ask him if he wants to join the Sports, Art or Glee club. Ask him which club he prefers, so that he will get the chance to interact with kids who have the same interests. Pushing him to join an organization which you had been into when you were his age will only put pressure on him. It's like molding him to be a miniature of your own self.

When your child tells you about his disappointments, never accuse him of not having done enough to succeed. Doing so would only open feelings of self-deficiency and self-distrust. Instead, tell him that failures are only steps that will ultimately lead to success. Tell him about a certain failure you have had, and how you overcame all odds to find success eventually. Or tell him about somebody who did just that. Having you or someone else as a role model may somehow inspire your child to work towards achievement and self-confidence.

Remember that having confidence in oneself is not something we already possess at birth. Our child deserves to be taught about self-confidence by us before he even learns it in school and among other people.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you remember being shy when you were a child? How did you overcome that shyness?
2. Why are kids often hesitant to participate in social activities?
3. Do you have some other suggestions for building self-confidence in children? What are they?
4. Why is self-confidence best to be learned first at home? How can the school help?
5. What happens when a parent constantly expresses disappointment in his child?



ANOTHER MOVIE WORTH WATCHING

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One particular segment in the movie “The Devil Wears Prada” shows Andy Sachs, played by Anne Hathaway, being berated viciously by her known-to-be-sadistic boss Miranda Priestly, played by the extremely talented Meryl Streep. Poor Andy, not being used to this kind of treatment, runs to Nigel to seek some words of comfort. She receives none of the kind, however, and instead gets a lecture on how she should never expect to get a “...kiss on the head and a gold star at the end of the day.” I love how Nigel turns the whole thing into being Andy’s fault instead of Miranda’s. Miranda had wanted to be practically airlifted from stormy Miami to New York so she could attend her children’s recital. Wow! Talk about horrible bosses and even more horrible officemates.

I love the whole movie, really, and have watched it many times over. The lovely Anne Hathaway glows picture perfect as she undergoes her transformation from a naïve young woman to a fashion plate worthy of the covers of the fashion magazine she works for. And as always, the very talented Meryl Streep is the boss you love to hate, the boss from hell who never finds anything likable about Andy at the beginning, but soon starts to trust Andy more and more towards the end. Miranda Priestly, her character, flings her coats on Andy’s desk with her greatly overbearing attitude while the poor girl can only look on helplessly.

In the movie, what gives Andy Sachs confidence is the fact that Miranda herself acknowledged Andy’s being a smart girl. When Andy starts wearing those great power get-ups, she becomes more and more emboldened by the fact that Miranda’s first assistant, Emily (played by Emily Blunt) and Miranda herself, seemed to finally see her as a worthy second assistant.

Well, as is shown in the movie, we all deserve to be acknowledged for what is good in us. The movie ended with Andy’s realization that we all have options, but the choice will always be ours to make. Andy decided it was time to take action for her unjust treatment, so she virtually joined the Romans when it was obvious she couldn’t beat them. Fortunately, she realized that in her pursuit of a career that really wasn’t even her first choice, she had forgotten about her most important personal relationships. Finally, she got the confidence to go for her ultimate dream of being a real journalist.

Stories like these remind us that people are only able to put us down when we allow them to. We must remember that self-confidence has to come from within, not sold to us by others around us by the handful.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Get a copy of the movie “The Devil Wears Prada”. Share your thoughts about the movie in class.
2. How can the people around us build up or destroy our self-confidence? Should we allow them to always do so?
3. Have you ever experienced being put down in a group? How did you cope with the whole thing?
4. Is it always wise to “do as the Romans do”? What should be the boundaries?
5. What do you tell someone who always points out your imperfections? Is it worth the bother?



CONFIDENCE IS FAITH

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Believing in oneself is what makes people ultimately succeed in their undertakings. One who does not possess the confidence to do anything can not hope to find fulfillment. Successful individuals always have a healthy dose of self-confidence, which allows them to tackle even the most difficult challenges in the most trying situations. Having self-confidence in correct proportions is great, but having loads of it can sometimes lead to a loudly overbearing attitude that can turn other people off.

Believing in others is what makes great relationships. Putting other people down or finding too many imperfections in others and pointing them out way too often can alienate us from others. People will perceive us as being too narrow-minded or too hard to please. We never build relationships with constant fault-finding. We end up with no one on our side when the going gets tough. Sincere affirmation and praise is the key, but too much for too little is just plain apple-polishing. We wouldn't want to be called sycophants, would we?

Believing in God helps us have a proper perspective in life. Having something to hold on to is much better than having nothing at all. Faith in God is what helps people stay grounded. It reminds us that there's definitely a POWER much greater than ours. This Divine Being is what makes us move towards perfection in His eyes. It gives us a conscience to tell us when we are overstepping the boundaries of His great love and understanding. I would like to believe that my faith in a Divine Power gives me a clearer insight into everything I say and do. Without Him to hold me in faith, what have I got left? The people I love will always be there, but God has always been there right from the start.

Believing in anything or anybody is the embodiment of faith. Faith keeps us going, no matter what. This is true with self-confidence, confidence in others, and confidence in Divine Providence.

If we lose self-confidence, we lose the drive to succeed. We feel reluctant to do what we must. Having self-confidence genuinely matters, most especially in our social interactions. A too-shy job applicant can be perceived as not being fit for the job. Not believing in one's abilities can be a hindrance to career advancement and social ties.

Losing faith in God can often compel us to do things which may be totally hurtful to God and ourselves. We must at least have a Higher Power we can always hold on to.

Not having belief in others makes us hurtful. It eventually leaves us unfeeling and unsympathetic. We must always endeavor to encourage those who fall and motivate them to strive harder. Nobody loves faultfinders and rude perfectionists. In all our dealings, we must always be true.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is confidence easily equated to faith?
2. What made you choose your religion? Can religion truly save us?
3. Is self-confidence easy to get back once it's broken? Why or why not? Cite specific examples, if you must.
4. Will you be able to associate well with someone who finds fault constantly? Elaborate on your answer.
5. Talk about an instance when you lost self confidence, faith in your religion, or faith in other people. How did you deal with that specific situation?



A FEELING OF CONFIDENCE

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Be confident! It is ourselves who will manage how to measure the level of confidence we have. Our very own self would indicate how confidence guides us to face all the circumstances we encounter every day. It can be noted that confidence is a firm belief in one's powers, abilities, or capacities. It is a feeling of emotional security resulting from faith in one. Eleanor Roosevelt once said "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face". No fear could hurdle our ways to face all the challenges we have in our life. No fear could weaken our minds to solve the problems we carry in our day to day journey. It is because of the confidence within. We are capable of doing something because of it. We do things with ease and comfort because we are optimistic and pleased with ourselves. How does confidence help us to succeed? It is logically coming from within. There are many factors to realize on how to achieve success. We all know for a fact that confidence influences success. Some of these factors are out of control and some are crucial. Because confidence doesn't mean that you are better than other people.

According to Mohammed Al-falleh in his essay about confidence, he pointed out that if you think that you are better than others, you must come to the conclusion that you should be more successful than others, that you should be the most successful. There seems to be a problem because confidence is not the way of success and it doesn't mean success. It cannot be equaled to success. These days, a lot of success is due to outstanding ability and Intelligent Quotient is a part of our ability. Confidence is a depicted feeling to achieve the thing we called success. When we lack confidence, we become hopeless. Because we don't have the burning desire to do our part. We believe for a fact that confidence concerns with our attitudes towards life. With a secured emotional feeling, it leads us to distinguish our strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, it also helps us to discover the purpose of self-confidence. It draws a line to maximize our potentials and abilities. When fears, timidity and hesitation overpower us, we experience cold feet. The drive stops and motivation vanishes. Our determination is prevented from doing so. And in some cases, it becomes a character of being afraid.

Confidence and its related synonym are practically used by job seekers. It hints an assurance in a person's skills, abilities and the like. Because it is worth having, we must mold it and use it to the fullest. Consequently, it is an asset according to Eric Liu. He asserted that true confidence is an asset stemming from the possession of real skill, ability, or power for a given task, and must be assessed via accurate and objective means to be of any value. Confidence that has no basis or experience to support it, is more liability than benefit, and should be avoided. It is a precious but rare quality, that enables the possessor, and by extension, those who are under that individual's influence, to be calm collected, and sound in times of great distress, simply because they truly know of what they are capable.

People always tell us to be confident. They remind us that we can do it. In this way, it boosts our confidence to make the best of something we have. Because confidence comes from within our being, we should learn how to use it. It's a weapon, therefore, that we should be always aware of utilizing it anytime, anywhere and anyhow.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is confidence? Use your own idea/opinion.
2. How do we apply confidence in our daily life?
3. When do we gain self-confidence? Give an example.
4. Why is confidence worth having? Explain.
5. How does confidence help a person to succeed?



BE CONFIDENT

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Everyone wants to overcome their feeling of inadequacy and be confident of themselves. Definitely the image you want to project is one who is in command of oneself, like someone who can readily share his ideas and be a person who is worth knowing and worth conversing with. While you are in the process of honing your skills at becoming confident, there are some few things or suggestions that would be worth considering and helpful for you to be one. Every individual would want to have the feeling of being important or to be someone special to others. Not only would you want them to know that you are a smart aleck but also to be an interesting and appealing person.

Want to gain that air of confidence and feel that self-esteem arise in you, trying to put out a message and make a difference? Then maybe you could consider trying on some suggestions. People at times are not in the mood and display a very garrulous attitude. Despite of the bad attitude that people around show you, try to bring that person out of that state that he is in. You can concentrate and ask interesting questions about that individual. Actually you could try putting out that bad mood in him and put a little sunshine in his life for a change. Then you would still feel confident talking to that obtrusive person. You shouldn't let someone spoil your day no matter who you are with. Never respond to negative feelings and do not allow yourself to be provoked. Do not take things personally and try to be objective at all times to maintain your self-confidence. You only have to accept the fact that some people are not socially adept simply because they have less confidence like you do.

If you are really bent to be confident and gain confidence, you should be able to deal with rejection. Bear in mind that even the most successful people have experienced being rejected too like Rod Stewart. He has been rejected many times because of his coarse voice but he never gave up and now he is one of the rich and the famous people. Remember that confidence is that ability to keep going in the face of rejection and still feel good anyway! Just focus on what you do and never give up. A person with self-confidence believes in the saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try again." If things don't happen your way then you should have some alternate plans, keep on trying and persisting.

Each challenge that you face in life, gradually builds your self-confidence. Stop focusing on yourself and stop dwelling with your shortcomings in life all the time. Instead try focusing on your goals and how to achieve them. Annihilate from your shyness and start to be confident of yourself. Learning how to be confident will make a person smile more, be happy and surely enjoy life more!

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you display your self-confidence?
2. Do you always feel intimidated by others ability and skills? How do you overcome it?
3. Do oftentimes or seldom feel confident in life? Elaborate on your answer.
4. Have you experienced enjoying life to the fullest by being confident? How?
5. Are you an overcomer or most of the time a lackadaisical person? Justify your answer.



CONFIDENCE BRINGS OUT THE FIGHTER IN YOU

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Oftentimes a self-confident person can radically change the attitudes of a person in a specific environment and most often than not confidence can even bring out the fighter in you. Meaning you become the kind of person who is ready and... vulnerable to gain that self-esteem and find ways on how to improve your skills. Gaining confidence is being ready to combat all your fears and helps to attain your goals in life. It's just like never coming out of this magical spell of being confident in everything that you do. It also means letting yourself believe that you can do it and that you've got that confidence to face life's challenges.

As it is today, we live in a world of competition and if you have confidence then that makes you a winner. Apparently, you cannot just say that it is an asset but it actually forms the very basis of one's survival. Take for instance if you wanted to land with a good job, then it follows that you should be confident in the interview for you to get hold of it. Consequently, if you want a raise in your work, you should therefore be good at your work too. Yes the confident people are the ones who get the attention of other people. Attention leads you to the doorstep of acceptance that brings about love, peace and these things make you an efficient person. Eventually, efficiency makes you become an achiever and achievement makes you even feel more confident in life.

It is truly the confidence in yourselves that brought you to the marks of scoring to break out the shackles of a well-paid job to pursue what they have really dreamt of doing and creating for themselves. They truly believe that they will be somebody in no time at all who will end up in building great businesses and the likes. Instead of being stuck in an eight-hour daily routine work, you turn yourself into a successful entrepreneur, holding on to the belief in your dreams and thus immense yourselves in self-confidence. People have to take risks to achieve something in their life. We have all heard the saying, "There is no gain without pain." Confident people are those who come out and lead upfront, mindless of whatever failure that comes their way.

Whatever it is that is beset in front of you, you can never go berserk but instead you still manage to hold high your self-esteem. Confidence is a critical thing in your life. Ooze yourself with self-confidence as you bring out the best in you. Inculcate in your mind the passage, "No guts, no glory. You will never succeed if you dare not try. It's your confidence that holds you together or breaks you apart. More so, you should be able to be confident to bring out the fighter in you.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can being confident bring out the fighter in you? Explain further.
2. Are you willing to do anything just to gain self-confidence? Why or why not?
3. What does being confident mean to you? Elaborate on your answer.
4. Cite an instance in your life when you think you really fought it out to win something you really wanted in your life. Justify your answer.
5. Can you become a success by being self-confident? Explain your answer.



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