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Confidence: Projecting It When You Don't Feel It

It is not always as easy as it sounds to regain a healthy level of self-confidence, especially for individuals who never questioned their confidence level before. I remember years ago reading Lee Iacocca's best-selling book that revealed a day-to-day scenario of what it was like for him during his waning months as President of Ford Motor Company.

Iacocca was the unappreciated, and professionally battered number-two man to Chairman Henry Ford II. By reading Iacocca's memoirs, which described his being out of favor with such a powerful boss, one begins to feel his dread of arriving at work each day to find yet another round of humiliations heaped upon him. How could he stand it all? How could he muster the enthusiasm to get out of bed every morning? In retrospect, it seems that Iacocca wondered about that, too, each day his self-confidence taking another beating.

Somehow we are always surprised to learn that successful people do have lapses in confidence. Unfortunately, talks of career woes among the successful and famous do little to instill confidence in us. If you're worried about where to begin, heed this advice designed to help you dig in.

First off, know your stuff. No one is going to be impressed if you don't know what you are talking about. Your confidence can't be all a front. While you're looking the interviewer in the eyes, having good body language and otherwise acting as if the world were your oyster, you also have to know what you are talking about. "If you are prepared and sure of your facts, you have a better chance of projecting confidence."

Focus on your successes. Compile a list of projects you've been involved with and what the outcome was for each. Chances are you will have had more successes than failures. The trouble is, you probably have a short memory when it comes to successes. Most of us tend to focus more on the failures. But if you are like most people, you'll be able

to make a dent in your self-doubts by simply writing a list of your successes over the years.

Rehearse. Rehearsing can be as simple as video taping a mock interview and watching for inarticulate spots and blunders, to writing carefully worded responses to anticipated questions. Some people are natural persuaders. The rest of us need to rehearse.

Talk out your worries. One time-tested method for helping to regain confidence is to talk out your worries with someone you trust. Say to your confidant: Do you have 20 minutes? Then tell them your complete problem without holding back. Maybe you can remember an earlier time when you felt the same lack of confidence. You will get through this too.

Talk back to your worries. In the face of big concerns, we are frequently guided by negative self-talk statements such as: "I am afraid I am going to fail" such statements are part of the "personal guiding fiction" that keeps us from achieving success. One antidote is to sit down and say to yourself, I have been through tough situations before and I have managed to come out ahead and to do well. And for emphasis, once again make that list of successes. Soon you may discover you have talked yourself into a better, more confident frame of mind.

When that lack of confidence strikes, remember, you are a good person. You have good intentions. You will get through this. You have been in tough situations before and have managed to survive - even flourish. That is why you have succeeded more often than you have failed.

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