



LIPHE HACKS

A series of resources to support your growth and development, brought to you by The Liphe Group

SIMPLE STEPS TO SELF-CONFIDENCE

It's rare to meet someone who is 100% confident in all aspects of themselves. Even those who seem to love the spotlight or blow-hard senior leaders often have one element of their abilities which they have concerns about. (Although whether they would admit it is a different story!) Equally I've yet to find anyone with no self-confidence at all – everyone is good at something (Again, they might not admit it!)

When I hear someone say “I have no self-confidence!”, what they usually mean is that they lack self-confidence in one particular aspect or skill, have then told themselves stories about what that means for them as an entire person, and have allowed this to take over their thinking.

It's not usually a lack of belief in every aspect of their life, but a lack of self-confidence in one particular skill which holds people back.

In this Liphe Hack we're going to look at how we can identify the actual skill where we lack confidence, work through a process of understanding where we are on the journey of developing that skill, and change our thinking to have more confidence in ourselves and our abilities.

Step 1 – Identifying the area for improvement

I know that sounds like a manager writing a performance appraisal, but hear me out. Everyone is a work in progress. We all have skills we're good at, and we all have things we need to get better at. Once we start to get better at those skills, we'll feel more confident.

Competence feeds Confidence.

Before you start, you need to really zone in on the skill you need to work on. The list is endless but to aid your thinking, I've listed a few below which you might find helpful:

Career – writing reports, interview skills, communication with stakeholders, project management, finding a Mentor (being a Mentor), training others, writing succinct presentations.

Building Your Profile – public speaking, writing LinkedIn updates, networking (online and in person).

Personal – time management, managing your finances.

Health and Fitness – learning a sport, ways to manage your diet.

Hobbies – learning a musical instrument, painting, arts and crafts.

To be clear, you can't teach someone to be confident, but everything on that list can be taught. But because we haven't learnt them yet we allow this to fuel our lack of confidence.

Take action: What's the skill which is driving your lack of self-confidence? Don't make a long list. If it's more than one, only make a short list, then pick the most important skill. This isn't about working on

a million things at once – prioritise and be specific on the one thing that would make the most impact.

Step 2 – Don't be too hard on yourself

You've probably heard of a Fixed vs Growth Mindset, where someone with a Fixed Mindset believes their abilities are unchangeable, whereas someone with a Growth Mindset believes they can learn with effort.

This concept was developed by Carol Dweck, but my favourite part of this are her studies on the term 'yet'. By saying that we haven't learnt that 'yet', it allows us to accept that we're on a learning curve. It allows us to think about the longer term (instead of the now) and have more persistence towards our goals. I've included in the References a great video of Carol explaining these ideas and the science behind the benefits of 'yet'.

As we continue through the rest of this learning journey (and yes, it is a journey), we have to give ourselves a break. We haven't learnt this skill 'yet'. In Marilee Adams' book "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life", she encourages us to switch from Judger Mindset to Learner Mindset.

At any point in time, we can react to what is happening around us. Judgers make quick decisions which are often blame focused. We direct this blame and judgement towards ourselves as much as anyone else, thinking we must be stupid or have some fault which is causing the failure. To avoid falling into the "Judger Pit", Adams' suggests some switching questions to help us move to a Learner Mindset, where we are more curious, are solution focused and can make more thoughtful choices to create a win-win situation.

Some simple Learner questions include:

- What assumptions am I making?
- How else can I think about this?
- What's possible?
- What's useful about this?
- What humour can I find in this situation?
- What are the best steps forward?

As we progress through the next few steps, continue to ask yourself more Learner questions and remember you're just not there 'yet'.

Take Action: Everyone is good at something. Make a list of all the aspects where you have confidence in your ability. Are you great at showing others how to use a system? Are you a good guitarist? Even if it's just that you're a good friend. Write down the evidence that shows you have competence in that aspect.

Step 3 – Develop Competence

Remember I said earlier that Competence feeds Confidence? Well here's the part where we develop this new skill, see our progress and feel confident about what we can do.

To develop, we're going to use the Four Stages of Competency Model:

1. Unconscious Incompetence – We're unaware of the skill and our lack of proficiency
2. Conscious Incompetence – We're aware of the skill and know that we can't do it
3. Conscious Competence – We can do it but it takes effort
4. Unconscious Competence – We can do it automatically

If you're a driver, you'll remember those first few lessons, where you might have even panicked because you didn't know what you were doing. By the time you pass your test you have conscious competence but you're still fully concentrating and anticipating what you (and every other driver) will do next. After a year or so of driving you just get behind the wheel and go!

I've listed below how we might feel in each stage, the danger zones to be aware of, some Learner questions to ask and some suggested actions.

Stage 1 – Unconscious Incompetence

In this stage we're blissfully aware that we can't do something. However the danger is that our Imposter Syndrome stops us from even starting in case we can't do it. The fear of failure or ridicule can be paralysing and too many opportunities pass us by.

Ask yourself some questions to focus on your motivation: What will I gain by learning this skill? How do I want to feel about it? What could be different if I was confident in this?

The best action here is to just start! Take the first step and get some momentum. Book a class. Start learning and practicing. You know you will be terrible at first so just embrace it!

Stage 2 – Conscious Incompetence

Or as I like to call it – the Holy Sh*t balls phase! We realise this is harder than we thought and our Imposter is telling us to just quit.

Ask yourself some questions about a time when you have done something and not given up – what happened there and how did you feel? What achievements are you proud of? What did you do in those situations to help you persevere?

An action here is to ask for help – join a club, get a teacher, a coach or a mentor – whichever is most suitable. Keep learning and practicing and don't give up.

Stage 3 – Conscious Competence

In this phase there's often an event such as passing a test which is wonderful! Your confidence should be starting to turn the corner.

But don't get complacent. You've still got more to learn. Keep asking for feedback and honing your skill.

Stage 4 – Unconscious Competence

Remember what you've gone through to reach this point and be proud! Your confidence in this skill should be cemented now and it's something to celebrate. In fact, the best advice for this stage is to share what you know with others. Run training sessions, become a Mentor and be known for this skill.

Step 4 – Reflect and Keep Going

So, do you still think you have no self-confidence? Or do you just need to learn something new? Each time you build competence you feel more confident and (I hate to say it), once you've improved one area, there's often something else right behind it to work on. Each time you step outside of your comfort zone and achieve, your comfort zone gets a little bigger. But that's how we continue to grow and build self-confidence over-time and in many different aspects of our lives.

Now go and use these question to get started!

- I do have some self-confidence, because I know I have competence in the following areas.....
- The skill I don't have yet is.....
- What assumptions am I making about myself?
- What's possible?
- My first step to move into Conscious Incompetence is.....

Thanks for taking the time to read this – I hope you found it useful. Remember to visit www.theliphegroup.com for more resources or to talk to us about how 121 coaching can accelerate your development. Speak soon, Kelly

This Liphe Hack was originally published by The Life Coach Directory on 11th September 2023
[4 simple steps to self-confidence - Life Coach Directory \(lifecoach-directory.org.uk\)](https://lifecoach-directory.org.uk)

References and Additional Resources

Growth mindset vs. Fixed mindset: what's the difference?

Catherine Cote, Business Insights, Harvard Business School Online

<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/growth-mindset-vs-fixed-mindset#:~:text=Someone%20with%20a%20growth%20mindset,stable%20and%20unchangeable%20over%20time.>

Developing a Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiiEeMN7vbQ>

Information on Marilee Adams and her book: Change Your Questions, Change Your Life

<https://inquiryinstitute.com/about>

Four Stages of Competence

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_stages_of_competence