

Self- Confidence...



for Young Adults

Conflicting Expectations.

Self-confidence development was difficult enough when we were children, and it doesn't get any easier for young adults. There are expectations of responsibility from older people who maintain a critical view of adolescent's friends, appearance, career choices and partners.

They are usually watching, ready to comment, if young adults don't lean in the direction that the older generation assumes appropriate. Young adults also have more general societal expectations to deal with. Questions are often raised about adjusting their ages for being able to drink, have sex, drive a car, vote, or own property.

Adolescents are inundated with expectations while being questioned as to their suitability for making what many would consider, other normal, adult decisions. There are also many societies that will expect young adults to be ready to give their lives as service personnel if wars erupt.

Being constantly under critical scrutiny, with conflicting messages, could play havoc with adolescent's self-image, and thus their self-confidence. It is not uncommon for them to feel alone, isolated and abandoned, when all those conflicting pressures are applied collectively. As an added disadvantage, those pressures are often felt during one of the most intensive, and constant, educational periods in their lives.

If parents have forgotten, or don't understand those conflicts and pressures, they often withdraw their attention – rarely their love – because that is their easiest option. Parents have the advantage of many more life experiences than their children; all assisting them to better understand how to maintain self-confidence during crises.

The intent here will be to provide a process of self-confidence development for the young to level the playing field with older adults, and any of their more confident peers. It will allow them to more easily make decisions and choices that individually suit them, reflect their individuality, and to take whatever steps are necessary for finding, and keeping, that confidence. Delivering that certainty will be done by explaining how self-confidence works, and its effects on the life of an adolescent.

Self-confidence is the mental attitude of having *trust* in, *respect* for, and *reliance* on, your own judgement and/or abilities. It embodies the confidence you have in yourself, and it can develop through two different streams. The first stream is via achievements and the many other external providers. Those providers, associated with adolescence, could in part include family support, genuine friends who share your interests, and educational or career opportunities.

Naturally if all of those providers are in place you're already doing quite well for yourself. However, even if all those supporting providers of external self-confidence are available, that doesn't necessarily mean they're working adequately for you to always maintain your self-confidence. The pressures and stress associated with living a normal young person's life could leave support from others unnoticed. It is also possible that some young adults believe that self-confidence is something they may never have.

That brings us to how self-confidence is connected to an adolescent's life. Self-confidence gives you the ability to satisfy yourself that you can correctly identify, and deal with, any issues that often trouble you; as well as any other issues that only bother you sometimes. Recognising, and dealing comfortably with all issues, creates peace of mind, and a more rewarding, happier, and fulfilling pathway to adulthood. Further, self-confidence will provide opportunities to discover and enjoy many other areas within your life that should be the privilege of young adult years. Those opportunities will be completed by exposure to the second stream of self-confidence.

That stream is the internal development process, which assists you to learn more about yourself. The difference between the two streams of self-confidence is that one is delivered by achievements, balanced with all the other external providers, against any perceived failures. The other stream delivers a *mental attitude* of belief in your self-worth and abilities that remain unshakeable, irrespective of any self-imposed limits for a better future. That positive mental attitude will also assist you to overcome any unfavourable conditions that have so far affected your life.

Both streams are important; however for each person to gain and maintain total self-confidence, we need them to work in unison. The reason for that lies in the strength of our natural abilities to overcome the enemies of self-confidence. All of our achievements, successes in life and support from family and friends, can build some defences against self-doubt, uncertainty and fear.

On the other hand, those supporting comments successes and achievements often need to be repeated constantly to maintain that defence. Consider how those enemies attempt to control us, and you can see the difficulties we can have in maintaining a defence against their destruction of our self-confidence.

Self-doubt is usually imposed by the comments of others. As an example, suppose you were joining some friends for a weekend outing and were excited enough to discuss your plans with a member of your family, who is usually very supportive. After telling them about your arrangements, they ask, "Why are you going with that crowd? I don't like a couple of them". It may just be a throwaway line reflecting a cautious, yet caring concern for your welfare. On the other hand, if other family members ask the same question over the next couple of days, some irritation and self-doubt may begin to creep in.



"I thought this was going to be fun weekend...now I'm not so sure."

However, let's assume there have not been any comments from anyone, and the weekend is fast approaching. This is where uncertainty can begin its work.

Uncertainty, closely related to self-doubt, is often a figment of our own thoughts and does not require any comments from others. You already knew that your family didn't like some of your friends. You're also aware that some of those friends, even if they've never said anything, believe they are not always welcome in your family's home. Irrespective of either view, you really want to go away on the trip.

You'd expect, irrespective of their comments, your family will always stand by your own judgements on who you hang out with. Those types of positive thoughts can, in the short term, build some barriers against that uncertainty and any ensuing fear.

However, even if you have a record of making really good decisions, and had that reinforced by your own thoughts, and by positive comments from family, there can be further difficulties. The self-confidence enemies, uncertainty, self-doubt and fear, may not be working alone to disrupt your plans for a great weekend trip. The enemies of self-confidence represented by conflict of conscience, guilt and arrogance will not be affected by achieving a good record on sound judgements, or the support from others.

As examples, those three enemies work by creating conflict of conscience questions, over deciding to keep parents and friends away from each other, to avoid criticisms from one lot towards the other. Those enemies can also create guilt over avoiding telling parents where you're deciding to go, and who you'll be hanging out with.

Finally they can encourage you to arrogantly believe that you have the experience to know who your real friends are; and who amongst them may be using you for their own reasons.

It is only the internal development processes that can effectively overcome all self-confidence enemies as one. They develop, and deliver, self-confidence at the same time. Therefore to get the balance between the streams of self-confidence correct – and we will – it is important to explain how the internal development process works...

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