

Al-Nasser University

Self-Confidence is the Door Opener You're Looking For

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College is a lot to take all at once. If you're a freshman, the changes between high school and college in terms of academic responsibility, socialization, and freedom can seem a bit overwhelming. Even if you are an upperclassman with at least a year under your belt, the rigors of balancing schoolwork with socializing and potentially even working a job is a difficult task to master. There is one thing that can help you push through, and it isn't what you think it is. It's self-confidence.

Many people think they have self-confidence but actually don't. An outwardly gregarious nature is not indicative of what the person feels inside. That's not to say that people either have it or they don't; there are some who excel in one area and feel confident they can achieve in that realm, but are insecure in others. For instance, a Biology major with a 3.95 GPA is confident in their ability to dissect invertebrates and analyze the findings. They may not, however, be as confident on the football field. While this is a stereotypical example, it makes the point succinctly: we are all skilled in some things and unskilled in others. We can learn, but the inherent ability that comes in some activities in our repertoire, are not evident in every aspect of our lives.

So, what can be done?

Here are some ways to increase your self-confidence. You will be surprised at some of the methods discussed:

Be Realistic

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There are some things that simply cannot be done. A person who is naturally 5'0" tall will not be able to run defense against someone who is a 7'0" tall. It is important that proper level setting of your goals happens early on so you don't pursue something that is physically impossible. The trick is separating what truly cannot be done from what can.

Practice

I'm sure you knew that was coming, but it wouldn't have made the list if it wasn't true. Practice does make perfect. If you want to play basketball but your shot misses the mark, practice shooting. If you want to have your poetry published in the school paper but you keep getting rejections, work on your structure. All the greats have done it. Michael Jordan used to shoot baskets until late in the evening to improve his shot; Stephen King received many rejections before getting his first novel published. It happens to everyone. Working hard at something is just part of the whole picture -- commit to that and keep trying.

Prepare

While this seems like it is the same as practicing, it isn't. There are some things you would like to do that you have no idea how to. You may want to create a pointillism piece but have no concept of how to paint -- indeed, you may not even know who the neo-impressionists were, let alone be able to create a piece in the technique they developed. You may want to be a Spanish tutor but it is not your native tongue nor have you ever taken a lesson. Just because you are unaware of how to do things, doesn't mean you can't do them at all. This common fallacy is what fosters low self-confidence. This is where preparation comes in. Learn about the topic you are interested in by researching and exposing yourself to it. Then study. Study hard. Each step along the way will increase your self-confidence. Before you know it, you will be ready to start practicing and getting better at it.

Bond

Finding kinship with like-minded people is one of the best ways to bolster self-confidence. Having people that are supportive of your efforts and relate to your thoughts and concerns makes all the difference in the world. Befriend people and support each other's goals. Everyone strives to do or be something. Be there to help each other get there.

If there is one thing you should take from this article, it is this: you are not alone. The football star, the cheerleader, the student with the 4.0, the popular crowd -- everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Each one of those individuals has something they are self-conscious about, something they are not sure they can do and are afraid to try. Break the mold and go after whatever it is, whether it's conquering a difficult subject, trying out for a sport, writing prose, singing in the talent show, or asking someone out on a date. Use these steps to get you ready and, go for it. The only thing holding you back is yourself.