

Are you feeling self-conscious, shy, inferior or just plain down? If you answered yes, you're definitely not alone. Try this step-by-step self-esteem-boosting plan created by lifecoach Victoria Mills for a more confident you!

This plan will not only boost your confidence, it will increase your energy levels, give you greater clarity of mind, plus provide a deeper knowledge of who you are. It will nourish your body, mind and soul, and will help you feel happier and more confident to step out of your shadow and into the light.

Long-lasting change starts on the inside. By focusing your attention and energy on your intentions, you will find that the how-to of achieving your them gets a lot easier. As you strengthen yourself from the inside out, you'll literally start to shine and radiate a whole new you!

Increasing your self-esteem doesn't need to take loads of time or money. Many of us think that developing self-esteem means having to run off to an expensive acting or singing class, and while this is a fun way to boost your confidence, you can still create powerful change all before leaving the house.

I encourage you to think about who you spend your time with. Do you hide in the background where you're never heard? Do you value others' opinions but never your own? Do you always

take the safe options? Do you trust yourself? Can you recall times when you felt confident?

It isn't about changing who you are – it's about embracing all of your positive aspects that have been cast aside for whatever reasons. We all have strengths, that's the beautiful part of the human spirit, however, it's about embracing all of our imperfections as well, and learning to recognise the beauty in these gifts.

Below are some suggestions of ways to create change and increase your confidence, working with the philosophy that long-lasting change starts inside. So let's take a peek at ways you can increase confidence by embracing your body, emotions, energy, mind and spirit.

1 Vision

Write a script or vision of your ideal day or week feeling 100 per cent confident. If you're not clear on how great you will look and feel being assertive and confident, then how will you create it? Start by thinking about how your new life will look and what will be different with you feeling confident.

AUSTRAL



10 ways to boost your confidence



idence

Questions to help:

- * What do I look like when I'm feeling confident? Do I smile more? Do I appear happier?
- * What does my body language say about me? Do I walk with my head high and shoulders back? Or do I walk with my head looking down?
- * What clothes do I wear? Do I wear clothes that reflect me feeling great? Or do I wear clothes that deflect my true self?
- * How would I talk to colleagues and family while feeling confident?
- * What type of relationships would I choose to have if I'm feeling confident? Do they support and nourish me? Do I feel good around these people?
- * What nurturing activities would I choose to do while feeling good about myself?

2 Write a happy list

This is a simple exercise that's very powerful. Try writing a list of everything that makes you happy – this could be anything from walking on the beach to having a long bath. Then at the beginning of each week, schedule at least one of these moments in your diary every day.

Allocate a specific time for it to ensure you'll make it happen. With this simple system, your life soon becomes filled with many more enjoyable, happy moments. The more you focus on being happy, the more it will happen.

3 Trust yourself

Do you doubt yourself too often? Do you trust what other

Things that make me happy

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

people have to say and act upon their opinions instead of trusting yourself? Listen to what your heart says and not what others think you should do or say. When we listen to what we want, it creates an immense sense of self-confidence and putting our feelings and thoughts into action is more powerful. If you don't listen and trust yourself, then who will?

Start by trusting one decision each day and watch how this simple exercise can increase your self-esteem.

Watch how others' opinions reflect your own – if others mistrust your judgement or opinions, it could just be a mirror reflection of what you truly feel about yourself.

Practise 'inner knowing' – knowing what will happen that day for you. In the morning, write a list of what you think will happen based on your intuition, then watch what unfolds.

4 Stepping out of your shadow

During this process of finding your confidence and self-esteem, take some quiet time and use your journal to review your past and present circumstances, looking for clues as to why you have created repeated scenarios in your life that have kept you in your shadow and prevented you from shining.

Finish the below sentences...

- * The people I stand in the shadow of are
- * The reason for this is
- * I stand in my own shadow because I fear
- * The times I have shined my light and felt at my best were
- * The one action I'll take to step out of my shadow is
- * The people I admire are
- * I admire them because
- * What steps can I take to surround myself with these people more often?

5 Food

Think about what you eat, as food can lift our energy levels and make us feel good. However, it can also have the opposite effect.

If we eat too many processed foods, ie. white sugar, carbohydrates, etc., we may get a quick energy boost but may feel tired shortly after. We may even get headaches, stomach cramps, and long-term this can sometimes lead to depression among other illnesses.

Do you drink alcohol or smoke? Do you consume more than two litres of water each day to replenish your body?

Do you eat enough vegetables, and fruit etc.? Check in with yourself to see if the things you eat and drink are suitable for your body.

What 5 things can I change in my diet?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6 Energy
What activities boost my energy? What exercise do I do each day? Which people or friends boost my energy? Who or what situations drain my energy? How can I avoid putting myself in these situations? Can I say no more often?

List 5 things to increase your energy

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

7 Play
How much fun do you experience each day? Do you laugh? Here are some ideas to introduce fun and laughter in your life and have a giggle... slide on a swing, eat an ice-cream, cuddle a baby or kitten, laugh, watch a funny video, go to the beach, go ice skating, hang out with your friends, etc.

Action plan

Commit to focusing on new things each week and change what isn't working for you.

List 5 ways I can have fun

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

We are often wrongly taught to evaluate our worth externally and let others' opinions of us dictate how we feel



8 Express your love
In the hustle and bustle of our busy lives, it's easy to forget to take the time to show our love for those we care about. Ask yourself: Who are the five most important people in the world I most care about and when was the last time I told them?

How often do you tell yourself you are fabulous, clever or beautiful? How often do you take time out to nurture yourself and take responsibility for your own self-love? When we start to really love who we are on the inside, often the world reflects this back to us effortlessly. We are often wrongly taught to evaluate our worth externally and let others' opinions of us dictate how we feel – is this you?



9 Take a risk

Do something that pushes you out of your comfort zone, ie. join a drama, dance or art class and stretch your mind and body into unfamiliar territory and acknowledge your effort in doing this. How great will you feel once you have done something new that challenged you?

List 5 new things I would like to try

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Practise self-love by pampering yourself with a relaxing massage

You are an amazing person who has many gifts to give, however, if you don't recognise them, who else will? Start by loving and nourishing yourself without relying on others to do it for you.

Suggestions for self-love:

- * Tell others how much you love them.
- * Have an aromatherapy bath.
- * Pamper yourself with a massage.
- * Paint your toenails pink.
- * Put a facial mask on at home.
- * Walk in the rain.
- * Watch a sunrise or sunset and write how it makes you feel.
- * Dance at home when no-one is watching.
- * Sing like no-one is listening.

- * Let people close to you know how you like to be loved.

The five things I will focus on this week are

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

10 Affirmations

Each night for 30 nights before you go to bed, write in a journal or say an affirmation mentally. It has been proven that saying or writing mantras or affirmation increases your chances of creating that intention in your life – give it a try and see what happens.

Say each day:

I am confident and love life!

You have nothing to lose and only confidence to gain so why not follow this step-by-step guide to help you gain the confidence you need to live your life to your utmost potential?

Victoria Mills, life coach and trainer, is a contributor to Australian Natural Health magazine and offers courses for people looking to grow and powerfully create change in their life.

- Want Victoria to answer a question? Email victoria@victoriामills.com. **NH**