Communication Confidence

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the communication confidence. Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, acceptance of your body and mind (your self-esteem) and belief in your own ability, skills and experience. Confidence is an attribute that most people would like to possess. Confidence is, in part, a result of how we have been brought up and how we've been taught. We learn from others how to think about ourselves and how to behave these lessons affect what we believe about ourselves and other people. Confidence is also a result of our experiences and how we've learned to react to different situations. A self-confident man also knows how to be heard with dignity, when there is a difference of opinion. All this takes practice, but the most important thing is the belief that you can be better. This is the cornerstone for any improvement in the world.

Keywords: Communication, Confidence, Self-esteem and People.

INTRODUCTION

Confidence is not something that can be learned like a set of rules; confidence is a state of mind. Positive thinking, practice, training, knowledge and talking to other people are all useful ways to help improve or boost your confidence levels. The concept of self-confidence is commonly used as self-assurance in one's personal judgment, ability, power, etc. One's self confidence increases from experiences of having mastered particular activities.[1] It is a positive belief that in the future one can generally accomplish what one wishes to do. Self-confidence is not the same as self-esteem, which is an evaluation of one's own worth, whereas self-confidence is more specifically trust in one's ability to achieve some goal, which one meta-analysis suggested is similar to generalization of self-efficacy. Abraham Maslow and many others after him have emphasized the need to distinguish between self-confidence as a generalized personality characteristic, and self-confidence with respect to a specific task, ability or challenge. Self-confidence typically refers to general self-confidence. This is different from self-efficacy, which psychologist Albert Bandura has defined as a "belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task" and therefore is the term that more accurately refers to specific self-confidence. Psychologists have long noted that a person can possess self-confidence that he or she can complete a specific task (self-efficacy) (e.g. cook a good meal or write a good novel) even though they may lack general self-confidence, or conversely be self-confident though they lack the self-efficacy to achieve a particular task (e.g. write a novel). These two types of self-confidence are, however, correlated with each other, and for this reason can be easily conflated. Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, acceptance of your body and mind (your self-esteem) and belief in your own ability, skills and experience. Confidence is an attribute that most people would like to possess [2] [3] [4].

What is Self-Confidence?

Although self-confidence can mean different things to different people, in reality it simply means having faith in you. Confidence is, in part, a result of how we have been brought up and how we've been taught. We learn from others how to think about ourselves and how to behave these lessons affect what we believe about ourselves and other people. Confidence is also a result of our

experiences and how we've learned to react to different situations.

Self-confidence is not a static measure. Our confidence to perform roles and tasks and deal with situations can increase and decrease, and some days we may feel more confident than others.

Low-confidence can be a result of many factors including: fear of the unknown, criticism, being unhappy with personal appearance (self-esteem), feeling unprepared, poor time-management, lack of knowledge and previous failures [5]. Often when we lack confidence in ourselves it is because of what we believe others will think of us. Perhaps others will laugh at us or complain or make fun if we make a mistake. Thinking like this can prevent us from doing things we want or need to do because we believe that the consequences are too painful or embarrassing.

Over-confidence can be a problem if it makes you believe that you can do anything - even if you don't have the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge to do it well. In such situations over-confidence can lead to failure. Being overly confident also means you are more likely to come across to other people as arrogant or egotistical. People are much more likely to take pleasure in your failure if you are perceived as arrogant.

Let's face it how you interact matters. In fact, how you act when you communicate may matter as much as and sometimes more than the words that you say Most people are afraid of speaking in public, but effective oral communication is a key skill in business. Listening well, speaking clearly and asking the right questions these skills are vital to your success as a communicator. The good news is that by using a few simple strategies, you can boost your own communication confidence [6] [7].

The way to avoid ineffective communication patterns is to practice being authentic. This means explaining how you really feel and asking for what you really need. When you communicate effectively, you're direct and honest. Believe you have a right to feel what you feel and to ask for what you need. This will help you speak authentically. The

following ideas can also help you communicate effectively:

Speak clearly and simply. Try to say what you mean. If you think you may have trouble saying something you need to say, write it out and practice. Make sure your voice matches what you want to say. Does it sound like you're joking when you want to be serious? Are you mumbling because you think it's selfish to ask for what you need? Be aware of your posture. It's hard to speak clearly and authentically when you're slouched over or slumped in a chair. Stay in touch with your body; Is your stomach in knots? Is your heart racing? What do these signals tell you about how you're feeling? Breathe and allow yourself to relax as much as you can [8].

Keep your goals in mind. They'll help you stay in touch with what you need. Speak for yourself by using the word "I." Using the word "you" often means you're focusing on the other person rather than yourself. The word "I" puts you in touch with your feelings. Instead of "You have no right to say that to me!" say "I get really hurt and angry when you say that to me!"

Respect yourself and others; when you communicate authentically, you respect yourself and the other person. You make sure that the other person hears your feelings and needs, but you also listen to that person's feelings and needs too. Choose the appropriate time and place to express your feelings and communicate your needs. For example, asking instructors in front of the class about a mark you feel is unfair puts them on the spot. Express yourself as clearly as possible and listen carefully to others when they speak. Take responsibility for your own feelings [9] [10]. Don't put the other person down in order to express yourself. Ask people how they feel about what you've shared with them and respond to their feelings. Listen well. Our brain works a lot faster than our mouth. People at a rate of about 125 words per minute, but our brains turn out ideas at a much faster rate. Our thoughts race ahead while we listen, filling in the space between what the speaker is trying to say and our thoughts. This is why many

people have trouble listening. It's estimated we hear only 25 per cent of what's said to us.

Ways to communicate even if you are nervous

1. **Be clear on your views**.

It takes confidence to share your ideas in the workplace, especially if your goal is to influence and impress colleagues outside your immediate team, including those who have seniority. To be confident when communicating with your boss, a senior executive or a prospective customer you have to be clear on your views. The more clarity you have going into a conversation the more your ideas will be with thoughtful interest.

When communicating, never worry about stepping out of line. All that can happen is your viewpoints will be considered and then turned down, so you haven't gained or lost anything. In finding the courage to communicate, however, you develop more confidence in your opinions then if you had never expressed them. If you believe that your ideas can make a significant contribution, then voice them. It is worth the risk.

2. **Be prepared.**

You cannot weaken once you go in for the kill and express your ideas or opinions. Get right to the point. Clarity and directness give you power and authority, especially when you're trying to communicate with higher level executives. State your ideas with a bold but not obnoxious clarity. Never lead with an apology or any type of excuse which shows insecurity. Start your communication with a strong, confident "I" statement backed up with evidence in support of the validity of your ideas or opinions. Evidence or research will help you not to falter because you have reliable information to reference if you are called upon to prove yourself. Each time your view is challenged it gives you an opportunity to reaffirm the validity of your ideas. View these challenges not as rejections, but as welcomed opportunities.

3. **Stick to your guns.**

Be prepared to stand firm for your ideas whenever necessary. It may be intimidating to stand up to dissenting views, particularly if the opposition is coming from those in higher positions. Keep in mind ideas that are the most worth sharing are the ones likely to be bordering on the edge of controversial. Whenever you present something new, expect to be challenged, and then rise to the occasion by citing the evidence and research forming your position [11]. Show your conviction without being defensive or aggressive, both of which advertise a lack of confidence and undermine the validity of your idea to the powers that be. When confronted or questioned, first acknowledge the other person's point of view, then firmly and cordially demonstrate the valid reasons you see things differently.

4. **Provoke questioning.**

Senior executives value thoughtful input from others. They thrive on ideas which provoke innovative dialogue. They like to be challenged and to challenge back when they share opposing views. This type of dialogue inspires each person to generate and put forth only their best ideas. Whenever you get the opportunity to generate and contribute to a critical thinking conversation, engage in this dynamic with a spirit of cooperation and open-mindedness. When you are cooperative and open minded you inspire dialogue that builds solutions. It is best to be involved in the game rather than to stay quiet or allowing yourself to become internally combative [12]. The more cooperative you can be and open to new additions to the ideas you're presenting, the more interesting you become to those above or below you. It shows great character to bend and be flexible while also sticking strongly to what you believe about your ideas and opinions. You remain approachable yet steady, having the ability to get others to question and ponder more deeply what you bring to the table.

5. **Show respect.**

People are people. If you approach senior executives with an "underling" disposition your ideas and opinions will not be taken seriously. Your attitude, approach, nonverbal energy and tone of

voice reveal everything. Respect yourself first by showing confidence and then always be respectful when sharing your ideas [13]. There is an unconscious habit in most people to defer to those who have more power but if you defer to them, they will not respect this about you. Do not let your uppers take control of the conversation or let them silence you. Show your respect by only sharing your best ideas with them. Conversely, when you address those less senior to you, show an equal degree of respect. Listen to them carefully, acknowledge their opinions, and build upon their ideas in whatever way you can.

6. Be genuine.

It takes extraordinary courage to be confident in yourself while sharing your ideas, especially if you work on a team where you aren't necessarily seen as the type to voice ideas or opinions. Sometimes that isn't always personal. It may be the culture of the team or company. As you look around at your peers, you may feel there's a normal way of dressing, speaking, looking, and acting and it can be compelling to maintain status quo. Keep in mind, however, great successes never obey status quo. Further, there's no need to resist corporate culture in your effort to become a more powerful communicator. You can stay in line with what works, still be bold in who you are and state your opinions and ideas.

Authenticity is a contagious character trait [14]. The more genuine you allow yourself to be regardless of company culture and the more willing you are to put what you think out there, the more successful you will inspire your team to be. Be willing to risk. Have the courage to utilize your spontaneity, creative energy, vigor, and sense of humor. Suppressing those qualities won't serve you, your message, or your company.

In any type of communication your emotions can confuse and derail you. Go into each interaction knowing your emotions cannot be trusted. You may feel shy, insecure and uncertain. Deal with this like a pebble in your shoe. It is uncomfortable but you have to ignore it. These emotions must be overcome for your ideas to be heard, respected and then utilized. You cannot let these lower level insecurities or any defensiveness be a part of your equation. Go into each interaction with a smile. This makes it appear as if you have it together. Be well-groomed and possess a sense of humor. If you act confident enough, you will become confident enough. Dress the part, play the role and say what you need to say as it if is absolute truth [15] [16]. This is how you will close every deal and climb the corporate ladder.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Self-confidence is only an umbrella term for a lot of things. Emotional constraint, humor, empathy, resilience, string relationships, all go into creating the personality that exudes self-confidence. A self-confident person would know how to say things that are honest without hurting other's sentiments. A self-confident man also knows how to be heard with dignity, when there is a difference of opinion. All this takes practice, but the most important thing is the belief that you can be better. This is the cornerstone for any improvement in the world.

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