A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Real Confidence, Starting Today

Nine simple, research-backed ways to quiet self-doubt, show up with presence and grow from every try.



www.forwardstepsblog.com

Confidence isn't a feeling.
It's what you do anyway.

You don't wait to feel confident. You act, and the feeling follows.



NERVES CAN HELP

80%

average karaoke score for people who first said "I am excited". People who said "I am anxious": 53%.

Brooks, Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2014



PEOPLE LIKE YOU MORE

5

studies found people underestimate how much a new conversation partner likes them

Boothby et al., Psychological Science, 2018



REACHING OUT PAYS OFF

9

experiments found chatting with a stranger was more enjoyable than people predicted

Epley & Schroeder, Journal of Experimental Psychology, 2014



HOW THIS GUIDE WORKS

Three parts, nine moves

PART 1

1

Quiet the doubt

Question doubt, collect proof, coach yourself.

PART 2

2

Show up strong

Body language, listening and nerves as fuel.

PART 3

3

Grow every time

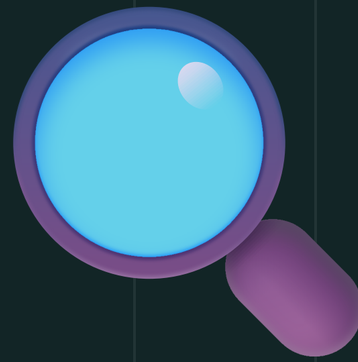
Small steps, reframed mistakes, useful feedback.



1

Quiet the doubt

Question the voice that says you can't.





MOVE 1 · QUIET THE DOUBT

Question your doubt

Think like a lawyer. When doubt says "you can't," ask for the evidence. A thought is not a fact, and many doubts fall apart under questioning.

DOUBT SAYS		EVIDENCE SAYS
I'll mess it up	→	I've done harder
They'll judge me	→	I can't know that
I'm not ready	→	I've prepared well

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Ask: is this true, or just a fear?
- ✓ Name one time you proved this doubt wrong.



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
📞	✅	🙋	🤝	🎯	🏃	🌱
Hard call	Finished	Shared	Helped	Hit goal	Ran 5K	Learned

Proof you can do hard things.

MOVE 2 · QUIET THE DOUBT

Keep a wins journal

Write down one win every day, big or small: a hard call made, a kind word, a task finished. On shaky days, read it back as proof.

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Start tonight with three wins from this week.
- ✓ Small wins count. They all add up.



WHY WRITE IT DOWN

Proof

Doubt is loud and memory is short. A written record of your wins is evidence you can read back on hard days.



MOVE 3 · QUIET THE DOUBT

Coach yourself by name

When nerves hit, talk to yourself like a coach, using your own name: "Sam, you've prepared. You can do this." It gives you helpful distance.

> **You've got this. You've done harder things before.**

TRY IT TODAY

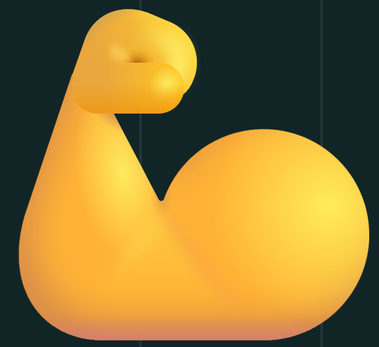
- ✓ Say it in your head before a call or a talk.
- ✓ Use the words you'd use for a good friend.



2

Show up strong

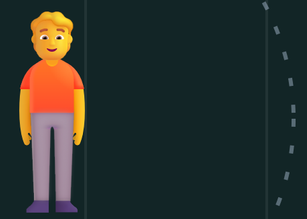
Let your presence speak before you do.





👀 Easy eye contact

😊 A relaxed smile



👐 Open arms

🐢 Slow, calm moves

Small signals of quiet confidence.

MOVE 4 · SHOW UP STRONG

Let your body speak

Stand up straight, uncross your arms, relax your shoulders and keep easy eye contact. Move slowly and on purpose. Calm looks confident.

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Check your posture each time you sit down.
- ✓ Hold eye contact a beat longer, then glance away.



MOVE 5 · SHOW UP STRONG

Listen more than you talk

Quiet confidence doesn't need to fill every silence. Listen closely, ask good questions, and speak when you have something worth adding.

INSTEAD OF



Talking fast to prove yourself and fill every pause

→

TRY



Listening closely and adding one thoughtful point

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ In your next meeting, ask one curious question.
- ✓ Pause before you answer. It reads as calm.





Same racing heart, new label.

MOVE 6 · SHOW UP STRONG

Call it excitement

Racing heart before a big moment? Don't fight it. Say out loud, "I'm excited." Nerves and excitement feel alike, so point that energy forward.

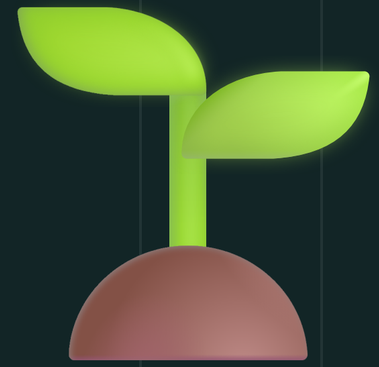
TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Say "I'm excited" before you walk in.
- ✓ Picture what could go right, not wrong.

3

Grow every time

Turn mistakes and feedback into fuel.





MOVE 7 · GROW EVERY TIME

Stretch your comfort zone

Avoiding people makes it harder. Start small: chat with a neighbor, thank the delivery driver, say hi first. Your comfort zone grows as you push it.

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Pick one small social step to try today.
- ✓ They likely like you more than you think.

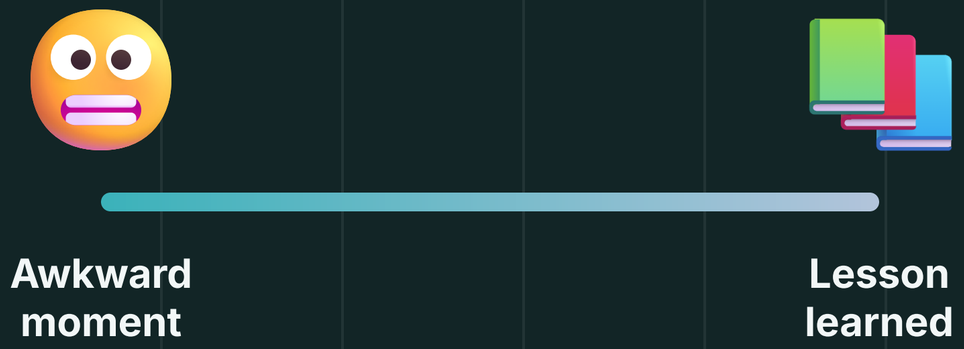
1. 👋 Say hi to a neighbor first
2. ☕ Make small talk in a line
3. 🙋 Share one idea in a meeting



MOVE 8 · GROW EVERY TIME

Reframe your mistakes

An awkward moment isn't proof you're bad with people. Put it in a new frame: what did I learn, and what will I try next time?



TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Swap "I always" for "this time".
- ✓ Remind yourself of past social wins.



MOVE 9 · GROW EVERY TIME

Welcome useful feedback

Pause before you react. Ask: can this help me grow? Learn from fair feedback, let cruel comments go, and ask people you admire for input.

TRY IT TODAY

- ✓ Say: "Thank you, let me think about that."
- ✓ Ask one person you respect for honest feedback.

🙏 Thank you

🤔 Tell me more

💡 Good point

🔍 Got an example?

📝 I'll work on it

🧠 Let me think



YOUR PLAN

Pick two to start today

- 🔍 Question one doubt with evidence
- 💬 Coach yourself by name
- 👂 Ask one curious question
- 👋 Say hi first to someone new
- 🙏 Ask someone you admire for feedback
- 📓 Write three wins in a journal
- 🧍 Stand tall with open arms
- ⚡ Say "I'm excited" before big moments
- 🔄 Reframe one awkward moment
- 🎉 Celebrate acting despite doubt



BONUS

Your 7-day confidence log

Print this page and fill it in each evening. Every small brave act counts.

DAY	TODAY'S WIN	DOUBT I QUESTIONED	BRAVE STEP I TOOK	CONFIDENCE (1-5)
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				



IMPORTANT

When to get extra support

- Self-doubt or worry keeps you from doing everyday things
- You avoid people or places most of the time because of fear
- Low self-worth has lasted for weeks and isn't lifting
- Harsh self-talk feels constant and hard to switch off

A counselor, therapist or your doctor can help. Reaching out is a confident step in itself.

This guide is general information, not professional advice.



YOUR NEXT STEP

Start today with one brave step.

Pick the move that feels easiest, try it before the day is out, and celebrate the fact that you acted.

Choose your first move now



SOURCES

The research behind this guide

Brooks AW. Get excited: Reappraising pre-performance anxiety as excitement. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2014.

Boothby EJ, Cooney G, Sandstrom GM, Clark MS. The liking gap in conversations: Do people like us more than we think? Psychological Science, 2018.

Epley N, Schroeder J. Mistakenly seeking solitude. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2014.

