

Three Keys to Unshakable Self-Confidence



© Grow it Forward, LLC 2013

Three Keys to Unshakable Self-Confidence

Thomas E. King
Grow it Forward, LLC
tom@growitforward.com

The First Key: Knowing Self-Worth

Living life from a place of core self-confidence is the secret for finding meaning, purpose, and success. But core self-confidence does not come from your own judgment of yourself; that is the definition of self-esteem. Rather it comes from the awareness of your essential worthiness as a human being. Self-esteem is subjective and influenced by many things and determined by your interpretation of the feedback you perceive from the world around you. Self-worth is objective and cannot be earned and cannot be lost. This distinction is critical to knowing yourself and living your life with absolute confidence.

If you are not sure you buy this or understand it then try this exercise. If you are a parent, think about the day your child was born and you held him or her in your arms for the first time. If you are not a parent, think about a child who is precious to you. Now think about the worth of that newborn baby in your arms. If you were to rate the value and worth of this new human being on a scale from 0 to 100, how would you rate him or her? Now imagine you are standing in the hospital nursery looking at a room full of newborns. Which child is more valuable or worthy than the next?

Almost everyone instantly knows and feels the 100% worthiness of every precious new human being. What has that child done to earn that worth? What can he or she do to lose it? In the eyes of a loving parent the child is always and forever worthy. If you can see this, then reflect on why you judge yourself as unworthy. Why do you feel you need to earn your worthiness and prove it? When you accept the fact that your worth is your birth rite and God's gift to you then you can relax and rest in this assurance.

This becomes the foundation of your self-confidence upon which you build your life.

Of course it is sometimes hard to remember this or to embrace it when you witness and feel the pain and brokenness around you or within you. The reality is that we live in a universe that is both perfect and broken, which sometimes causes confusion and chaos. Your experiences may condition you to forget that you are loved and you are worthy. It is this conditioned ego-sense of self that must die in order for your true identity to be realized. Your true and essential self has always been there, before you learned to judge yourself, and that self is still there and still completely worthy.

The Second Key: Paying Attention

For many people the concept of worthiness is a new and transformational insight. However, insight is necessary but not sufficient to really transform your life and your relationship with yourself. This new awareness must be strengthened and cultivated over time in order to become a strong foundation on which to build. This involves both being and doing.

There are many tools and practices that can help strengthen you. I believe it starts with learning to pay attention to the things you need to pay attention to. Rather than rejecting those parts of yourself that feel unpleasant and inadequate, for example, turn your full attention to them. I ask clients to notice when they are emotionally triggered and pay attention to what they are feeling, how they can describe their feelings, and notice what happens within their bodies. Together we pay attention to the stories those feelings are attached to. We pay attention to the conditioned ways of thinking, interpreting and responding to them.

Paying attention leads to greater awareness of self and the patterns in your life. You become aware of your inner awareness itself. Awareness then provides the space to reflect and to recognize there are choices to be made about interpretation and response to whatever is happening. This awareness leads to the ability to take action in new ways that starts to align

with what is good and healthy and affirming of your worthiness and purpose.

To really ground yourself in the confidence of your worthiness and purpose you must be intentional about affirming it. Spend some time meditating on the truth of this for you daily. Let go of the conditioned responses within that want to repeat the self-judgment and blame. Instead you can respond to yourself with curiosity, compassion, kindness, and love. You have had enough of shame. The truth is you are loved and you are not defined by your feelings, thoughts, or experiences.

The Third Key: Taking Right Action

I believe parents have two essential responsibilities. One is to reflect this essential worth back to your child so that he or she feels it and internalizes it. This is done simply by loving and respecting this little one as the precious human being he or she is and giving your time and attention. The second responsibility is teaching the social and emotional skills we all need to grow into healthy and functional people. The first provides the base of security that every child needs in order to go out and explore the world and become independent of you. The second helps the child grow to be capable of navigating the challenges that life presents to us all. Your job is to prepare your child to leave you and live his or her own life with the inner confidence of his or her worthiness and capabilities to be successful.

This understanding of essential worthiness does not lead to self-centeredness or narcissism. Those who get stuck in self-centeredness are those who feel unworthy and try to find security in controlling the world around them in order to get what they want or need. They become vested in a position they need to defend in order to protect themselves from shame and fear. On the contrary, knowing your essential worthiness enables you to see that you are given this opportunity of life for a reason. From there you can begin to see that you are a part of the bigger story of life that is ever unfolding. This is the force of ongoing creation, of love expressing love that is eternal. Each of us plays a role in this story, consciously or not.

Unfortunately none of us have perfect parents or perfect experiences and we all grow up with some holes in our foundation. Your experiences are unique as is your perspective of your life. Even if you feel your parents were lousy role-models and failed to reflect your worthiness back to you, now it is your job and opportunity to parent yourself. By that I mean you can teach yourself what you need to learn and treat yourself with the love and respect you wish you had experienced as a child. We learn emotionally through experiences so give yourself the experience of being valued, respected, and loved unconditionally by being kind, patient, and forgiving in your self-talk and your response to yourself.

Be aware that you also need community. Involve yourself with other people who care about you and will affirm you. Emotional and spiritual growth is fueled by relationships; with yourself, with God, with significant others, with helpers on your path, and with like-minded people who come together with the intention of love and support. From this base of support and confidence you can take steps of faith into the future, which brings new experiences that help you learn, overcome fear, and reinforce what you now know to be true. This is a lifelong journey and it always holds new and richer possibilities for your life.

Please take some time to be intentional about affirming your worth every day. Pay attention to what is going on inside of you and make course corrections as you notice yourself being off track. Then take continuous action to strengthen this foundation of confidence you are building. I promise this will pay off when you stick with it over time. Now you can turn your attention to creating the life conditions that will lead you into the quality of life you desire. Sometimes you may need a boost in the form of counseling or coaching to really get moving in the right direction. Please contact me if you would like to discuss additional options.

Best Regards,

Tom