

3. Linking Confidence, Conscience and Character

The physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions

If you're physically fit, if your mind is mentally alert, and if you have good interaction with family and friends, then it's easier to enhance and maintain your levels of self-belief. Your inner voice will more clearly tell you that you can perform anything. Of course that is a valuable thought, but a little too simple for most people. Your personal circumstances may make getting physically fit a daunting task. If your work fills your day, and your only outlet is a little television before bed, you may not get enough from "interactive reality TV" to remain mentally stimulated, and if you live alone you may get very little chance for interaction with family and friends.

Not much food there to assist all four dimensions of your life, mentioned at the end of the last chapter, to make you a complete and happy person. Yet it could turn out that there are many people who are quite happy without being able to access all four of those features. If that is so, it stands to reason that it must be possible to be a complete person without using all of the dimensions together.

Accordingly it is appropriate to show you how your physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions usually work together, so that you can continue to feel that your lives have great purpose and that achievement and self-confidence are yours for the taking. It is not difficult to see a correlation between those four dimensions. You will see, that because of their mutual relationship, the value of each of the dimensions will be to complement the others, to make you a complete, happy and positive person. Make no mistake. What's being proposed here does not detract from the need to attempt to maintain all four of those features at a level of effort that you should be reviewing regularly. However as it is not a perfect world you will need to be shown the implications of not being able to use all of the four dimensions

all of the time. Surely if one or more of those dimensions are unable to be realised, you can still perform exploits and be independent and confident.

There are many studies providing information about the combination of those dimensions, and how they help to make you complete, happy and assertive. Their purpose is to give you ideas of how collectively those four functions behave to reinforce the making of the completeness of your life.

That can provide interesting research, but on the other hand it is important to avoid personality trait improvements that you may learn about in those studies, without being shown a basic formula for how to give those improvements some permanence. You will not acquire knowledge about how to be proactive or have self-assurance just because you read it within a study or because someone says that as it worked for him or her, therefore it will work for you.

Hence, it becomes important to break those four dimensions down so that you know from which of them the source of fulfilment, confidence, and thus self-belief springs. Only then can you know how to feed it, nurture it, keep it and share it. This is such a wonderful concept that you're learning about here — something of enormous value that you can keep and share.

Those who bring happiness to others cannot keep it from themselves.

J. M. Barrie (1860-1937)

Have you ever observed children in a playground who acquire a new skill at a favourite pastime like skipping or a new song to sing? They gather their friends around and teach each other the new accomplishment and squeal and laugh together as each one succeeds in learning the skill. They share their happiness as they share their growth in confidence.

If you have the boldness to encourage others to sustain and display their conviction, and you also assist others to commemorate their deeds, this will strengthen your self-image. Hopefully you will come to the realisation that the more of your exploits and self-assurance you share, the more self-belief will grow within yourself.

The physical dimension

The physical dimension encompasses your whole physical being. You need the right food, exercise, rest and relaxation to maintain the physical structure.

Take the component of exercise as an example. When you're young and strong that is not too difficult. Being physically fit certainly feeds into your supply of self-belief but if that was the core reason for confidence then as you get older or busier you would no longer feel certainty. Exercise is more difficult, it hurts more, and how do you find the time? What if you're just too tired, and you know you need to sleep in just five more minutes?

There are many people who, because of their circumstances, will never get the opportunity for more than some basic physical fitness, if any at all. Physical fitness is a wonderful asset, but it is not always attainable for everyone. There are obviously many people who are capable of maintaining a level of personal conviction without having access to physical exercise. For instance, consider professional sports people who get injured. Their livelihood often depends on physical expertise, yet how often have you observed that their injury does not necessarily diminish their confidence, it is actually used as an incentive to further improve their skill levels?

From this observation, you can assume that self-confidence through achievement doesn't spring from the physical dimension alone, although it is a good tool to raise your level of self-assurance.

The mental dimension

The mental dimension arouses the need for stimulation of thought. That dimension can relate, although not exclusively, to your continuing education, formal or otherwise. Every single day you are learning. Once again, when you are young, you have the benefit of discipline in being educated because you have to go to school. When you leave school you often need to further educate yourself for the workforce. Once you're working you may find that you tend to educate yourself sparingly and you may often find that television fills more of your spare time than you would want to admit.

Continued education, by choice or necessity, could be a course of study, a good book or even a seminar on self-development. You cannot put a value on the different forms of learning, as everyone is different, and there is little doubt that all forms of further education are valuable. Even the most trivial stimulation, like a newspaper or magazine article, TV program or computer game, can be used to sustain the mental dimension.

If you can remember how good you felt when you were fit, or if you talk to athletes, they will support the fact that exercise, apart from making you feel better physically, also assists you to think more clearly. Thinking more clearly within the mental dimension makes it easier to motivate yourself for exercise or work. That motivation leads to accomplishment which will contribute to making you feel more self-assured.

It has already been established that achievement and self-confidence will work together to complement each other. Hence it is possible to use the combination of physical and mental dimensions for the purposes of assisting the growth of your self-image.

However if you only needed the mental dimension for exploits and self-reliance then there would be no politicians displaying doubt, assuming they're educated, and no such thing as a self-made man or woman who has succeeded with little or no education. It is in fact, very

common for self-made men and women who have had limited education to display a level of conviction and success that most people can recognise and admire.

In that case, the mental dimension alone could not be the origin of achievement and self-assurance. The mental dimension is just another valuable tool to use for achieving a measure of confidence.

The social dimension

The social dimension directs attention to the area of your life that relates to your interactions. It not only refers to who you spend time with, but also what you do when you're together with friends, loved ones or associates. It could be talking. It could be working or playing. It could be pleasant and it could be unpleasant and emotional.

If you have managed to balance your physical and mental dimensions then you are more likely, because of a level of certainty, to develop and maintain positive interactions with others. Occasionally, no matter how well you've learnt to stabilise those dimensions, your interactions with your work colleagues, your family, your associates and friends, can be very traumatic and draining on a positive self-image. However, if physical, mental and social dimensions are in balance, you should find achievements easier and so you will enhance your levels of self-belief. But this indicates that none of those dimensions individually could be the source from which real self-confidence and happiness originate.

The spiritual dimension

That brings you to the fourth, and a very important, dimension — the spiritual dimension. Spirituality in itself has universal significance to each individual, irrespective of his or her origins or cultural expectations. What does that mean?

According to the Collins English Dictionary *spirituality*, apart from any religious reference, also means “relating to the spirit and not to physical nature or matter”, and the *spirit* is “the

fundamental emotional and activating principle of a person”. The Penguin English Dictionary refers, amongst other descriptions, to “the prevailing character, attitude or feeling in somebody or something”. That is the spirituality that is referred to in these pages.

The spiritual dimension is responsible for all the intangible aspects of your existence. Your spirituality refers to your intangible being as contrasted with your physical presence. It exercises your conscience — determining the moral qualities of your conduct or intentions, as well as all your emotions and thoughts. Your *fundamental emotional and activating principle* provides you with exclusive insights into yourself.

If you think back to the example of the baby who was practising the skill of performance to equip itself with boldness, you will realise that until your children are taught any words of their own, they have no idea what makes them confident. They don't have any concept of words like achievement or confidence, or spirituality for that matter. Before communication allowed others to tell you of the need for the accomplishments that provide self-assurance, those attributes could only have come from an intangible and intuitive desire from within.

It is the intangible and intuitive desire for personal achievements from within which is an intrinsic feature of your own spirituality. That suggests it can only be the spiritual dimension of your life from where self-confidence through achievement originates. The *fundamental emotional and activating principle* of your individual character is providing you with the intuitive desire for success, achievement and self-belief.

Hence, each of the dimensions of your existence, if developed, can provide some support to your self-confidence. However, even without the involvement of physical, mental and social aspects of your life, you will always have access to the spiritual dimension. That is most important for confidence development.

What is the benefit of having established the true origins of achievement and self-confidence from within the spiritual dimension? How can that knowledge now be used to gain and maintain those intangible attributes?

Self-confidence is defined by “principles” — *trust* in, *respect* for, and *reliance* on yourself. According to the Collins English Dictionary, *principles* are “a standard or rule of personal conduct”. According to the Oxford Dictionary, *principles* are “a fundamental truth or proposition on which many others depend. A fundamental assumption forming the basis of a chain of reasoning. A fundamental quality or attribute; essential characteristic of character”. Character — the emotional and moral qualities displayed by conduct — is determined by conscience. Being faithful to your conscience, in determining right from wrong, provides for an enhanced self-image. Having a positive self-image — being comfortable with yourself — encourages achievement. Achievement has been shown to be the instinctive catalyst for self-confidence.

It starts to appear obvious that if you listen, and respond positively, to “*the prevailing character, attitude or feelings in*” yourself you will be invigorating that part of your existence creating the catalyst for growth in your self-confidence. Therefore if you want to remove the barriers to confidence you should be preparing to strengthen the *fundamental emotional and activating principles* of your own conscience and character.

Please refer to the *Cycle of Confidence* over the page.

Cycle of Confidence

Linking Confidence, Character, Conscience and Achievement

Your...*prevailing character, attitude or feelings* as part of the spiritual dimensions...*fundamental emotional and activating principle* within you.

Instinctive achievements are the catalyst for your growth of self-confidence.



Self-confidence is defined by principles, *reliance* on, *respect* for, and *trust* in, your own judgement.



Principles – the standards or rules of personal conduct – are governed by your conscience and reflected in your character.



A positive self-image generates instinctive achievements.



Being faithful to your conscience and character – determining right from wrong – provides for an enhanced self-image.



THE FIVE CRITICAL STEPS

1. Recognise and Embrace Your Uniqueness.
2. Celebrate Your Achievements
3. Write a Vision Statement.
4. Set some Goals.
5. Application

The five most common barriers to gaining, and ultimately maintaining, self-confidence are self-doubt, guilt, uncertainty, conflict of conscience and arrogance.

Self-doubt is when you question your abilities, skills, appearance or potential. Guilt eventuates when you feel responsible for a given set of words or deeds that result in harm. Uncertainty results when you are not sure how to handle a situation that you might normally deal with comfortably. Conflict of conscience comes about when you believe that what you are about to do or say may be contrary to your moral values. Arrogance — a demonstration of assumed superiority — is displayed by disdain towards others. Disdain is the opposite of respect. Respect is one of the principles governing self-confidence. If you act in a manner that is the opposite of confidence, you must eventually destroy the self-confidence needed to prevent further displays of presumed superiority. The arrogance gets worse.

Displacement of the obstacles to confidence will inspire further actions that result in support for your ongoing conviction and certainty. That removal of barriers to confidence, through utilisation of the *Cycle of Confidence*, will also assist to clarify how the first three critical steps are fundamental for the support of each other.

Summary

- a) There are four dimensions working together that make your life complete.
- b) It is not always possible to utilise all four dimensions simultaneously or to the same extent.
- c) It is possible to be a complete, happy and confident person without having access to all four dimensions collectively.
- d) It is the spiritual dimension from which true self-belief and achievement originates.
- e) The spiritual dimension will be used to cultivate insights into your conscience and character. Those insights will provide the catalyst to your growth in self-confidence.

f) Removal of the barriers to confidence results in ongoing certainty and conviction.

The next chapter will commence the process of explanation towards the five critical steps. Those steps are designed to commit your intangible spirituality to the *Cycle of Confidence* through an acceptable, and tangible, exposure to your remarkable self.