

## **5. Sharing Achievement**

### Historical achievement

You would be aware that though you are all members of a dominant species on this planet your individual skill levels and talents are different from those of other people.

Irrespective of any personal or cultural views you may have on the origins of your species there are a number of questions that you are entitled to ponder. Questions such as, what is it that drives people to individual success? What led to discoveries of science and medicine, the studies of the workings of your body and your mind?

Irrespective of any scientific or psychological assessments of the different arguments for ability, there is one certainty that can be established. Those variable skills and artistic talents all represent contrasting and measurable levels of personal achievement. Suppose you were to take one basic example and attempt to understand the origins of that accomplishment, the path will always lead to the same conclusion. All initial achievement is instinctive by nature. Take communication, and specifically language skills, as an example. What encouraged highly developed memory skills to evolve language in the first place?

Do you find it interesting that in a country without the benefits of modern technologies and as sparsely populated as New Guinea is, there are around eight hundred different languages? Different groups of people developed their own languages because they were separated by mountain ranges — not dialects, but distinctly different languages. Indeed even in countries that have adopted two languages or more because of colonisation or proximity to their neighbours, you will find the indigenous people have a distinct native language exclusive to themselves.

The need to communicate verbally was not for survival. Verbal communication assisted socialisation first, and was then used for survival. Before there was language there

were no thought patterns, or words, to put together in the minds of people to determine why they wanted to communicate. In his award-winning book, The Language Instinct, the Canadian-born psychologist Steven Pinker wrote,

“The universality of complex language is a discovery that fills linguists with awe, and is the first reason to suspect that language is not just any cultural invention but the product of a special human instinct”. (2)

Charles Darwin (1809-1882), who was renowned for his formulation of the theory of evolution, saw language ability as “an instinctive tendency to acquire an art”. (2a) To acquire the art of verbal communication can therefore be seen as a wonderfully instinctive achievement for the human race.

Having previously established that learning to walk was a naturally instinctive achievement, you have now seen that learning to talk reinforces that concept of all basic achievements being initially instinctive for the human character. If the desire to achieve is unavoidable because of that fundamental instinctive response, doesn't that make any and all of your achievements important to your self-esteem? All your accomplishments become significant to your positive self-image because they represent the results of your endeavours.

### Achievement defined

Achievement is not just about doing something. It is actually about completion of what you set out to do. Achievement is the satisfactory realisation of your efforts or actions. That includes some of your most apparently insignificant activities.

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*The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Take for example, the tedious labour of love represented by the purchase and wrapping of presents for any festive occasion. The decision on what to buy, the type of wrapping applicable and your own, perhaps clumsy, abilities to wrap and make the presents look good, are all incidental once the job is complete. You have every right to look back and feel great satisfaction with your efforts, reflecting on the pleasure that you are going to share with the recipients at the appropriate time.

It is the journey you undertake for the realisation of your efforts or actions that will provide you with the real satisfaction of your accomplishments. That instinct for accomplishment and, most importantly, the sharing of the excitement that triumph provokes has been captured wonderfully in a televised breakfast cereal advertisement.

A large beach ball is kicked into the air and hundreds of strangers, running from many different directions chase after it, all shouting “I’ve got it! I’ve got it!” When eventually someone catches the ball, the look of disappointment on the faces of the chasers who failed to catch it, is suddenly changed to excitement when a voice from the crowd — and in this case they have used the familiar face of a well known sporting hero — yells out, “Kick it to me! Kick it to me”! The advertisement concludes with everyone running away from the person with the ball, all shouting, “Kick it to me! Kick it to me!” in the hope that it will be to him or her that the ball is kicked.

Why does that advertisement appeal universally to the human spirit? Even without the conscious effort of thinking about why, you all want to catch the ball, because the excitement of that achievement would reflect the validation of your own uniqueness. And when you do catch the ball, you don’t keep it. You kick it for someone else to catch. Why do you do that?

## Sharing is natural

Doesn't it make sense that the human spirit naturally wants to share in your accomplishments and in the fulfilments of others? That is why you like going to the theatre, watching sport or just watching children at play. So will you keep the ball, or will you please "Kick it to me! Kick it to me!?" Why do you like to indulge yourself in the pleasure of others? It's because you know, without thinking about it, what a wonderful feeling of self-reliance they are nourishing by their actions, and it is natural to want to share their pleasure, because the pleasure of others feeds and nourishes your own pleasure.

It is instinctive, it is intuitive, and it is natural and spontaneous. Isn't that why everyone always claps after experiencing moments of inspiration, for example, after the theatre, after a speech, or during and after sport?

Achievement and self-confidence go hand in hand, leading you along the path to a happy and fulfilled life, and because they go hand in hand, you want to share them both with everyone who is important in your lives. Do you accept that everyone is important to you and that you are important to everyone else? You are significant to everyone else because they cannot show you their distinctiveness and triumphs unless they have your attention and everyone else is significant to you because one reflection of your growth in self-confidence requires and encourages you to share your individuality and deeds with others.

If you have not been told often enough to believe in your own originality, and then to embrace that uniqueness, then completing this process will reinforce what your heart already knew about your importance, but may have forgotten.

There is no path to maintaining confidence without a belief in your individuality that will inspire you to search for the assertiveness that leads to achievement.

## Value your achievements

You, and thus your victories, are valuable and you have a responsibility to yourself not only to recognise but also to embrace the value of your triumphs. Irrespective of whether you have had the benefit of positive reinforcement of your originality throughout your life from family and friends, you can use past knowledge and experience to your future benefit and future successes.

Suppose, for instance, that as you grew up you played board games or cards with others, and every time you won or lost during a game those present reinforced your value of yourself by supportive remarks on your ability. How did you feel? Was it easier to suggest, at other times, that they bring out the Monopoly or chessboard because of that positive reinforcement? If you did feel good, because of what they said, then you learnt how to treat others.

Now suppose you were criticised every time you lost and presented with sarcasm when you won. How did that make you feel? Were you less likely to ask them to play again because of those negative comments? If you did feel hurt, then you've learnt how not to treat others in their endeavours. Either lesson can be used as positive knowledge for your treatment of others. The beauty of board or card games is that you must use your individual judgement for each move and decision, even if they're team games. Use of your originality for making decisions builds confidence.

The greatest accomplishment of your life is to acknowledge and assert that you are distinct, and most importantly, that you choose to willingly accept that remarkable uniqueness.

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*...knowing that you have accomplished something that could have been done only by you using your unique apparatus. That is really the centre of life, and those who never orient themselves in this direction are missing more than they will ever know.*

Kenneth Allsop (1920-1973)

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That acknowledgment and embracing of your individuality, by yourself and others, will lead to your own sense of completion and thus to greater self-confidence within yourself.

It is not uncommon for people to give very little thought to how much they should like themselves or others, even if they were aware of the importance of having a good self-image. It is also possible that, like many people, you have shied away from seeing your own importance because of a fear of appearing vain.

Remember that you're going to be shown a path to self-confidence that will provide the tools that permit you to like the person you are, without vanity or arrogance. You don't need to feel guilty if you haven't spent a lot of time thinking of the significance of liking yourself and of appreciating your distinctiveness. If you didn't previously have sufficient understanding or awareness of the importance of accepting yourself as a friend, you could not have been expected to. Also, if you have had concerns about appearing to be vain or self-centred because of too many thoughts about your own value, you can put those concerns aside as well.

There has already been the promise that your self-examination within this process is going to show you how to turn your self-confidence into strengthening your character so that there is no display of arrogance or vanity. However now that you know of the importance of

respecting your originality and liking the person you are, you will see your own self-esteem growing daily as you practise being nice to yourself.

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*Nobody holds a good opinion of a man who has a low opinion of himself.*

Anthony Trollope (1852-1882)

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Being nice to yourself is going to encourage you to see your significance; and it is when you can see your value then others will also see that worth in you. Having a good opinion of yourself is an accomplishment that you should proclaim.

Naturally achievement and self-confidence will then go hand-in-hand to assist in the advancement of your self-fulfilment.

### Summary

- a) Achievement is the completion of an instinctive action.
- b) It is very natural for people to want to share in your accomplishments and those of others.
- c) You are important to everyone else because they cannot show you their distinctiveness and triumphs unless they have your attention, and everyone else is significant to you because your growth in confidence encourages you to share your individuality and deeds with others.
- d) There is great value in both you and your achievements.
- e) Put aside concerns about appearing arrogant or vain, as those concerns will be engaged within the critical steps to come.

Having reached an understanding of how instinctive all achievements are, and with your knowledge of how a development of confidence creates more achievements, it is now

appropriate to learn the processes of the second critical stage. That step is the celebration of any, and all, of your achievements.

That phase will reinforce your belief in yourself and provide a skill that additionally assists you to be nice to yourself. It will also provide an instinctive response that creates a natural involvement of the *Cycle of Confidence*.

Keep in mind that instinctive responses to achieve are the catalyst for the growth of your self-confidence.