

6. Celebrate Your Achievements

Chain reaction of celebration

This second critical step to gaining and maintaining self-confidence is even easier than the first. Although it was not difficult to recognise your uniqueness, the actual embracing of that distinctiveness, as discussed in the fourth chapter, takes a little more effort if your self-confidence is not at a high level. As each of the crucial stages assist and support each other, the purpose of celebrating each and every achievement is to expedite and then sustain the raising of your level of self-belief. That way you may find it easier to willingly accept yourself as a trusted friend. The recognition of your own individuality then provides you with an excuse to celebrate that realisation as an accomplishment in itself. When you feel good about the decision to identify and value your originality the enhancement of your self-esteem becomes inevitable. That provides further reason for personal acclaim.

Just as with other critical steps, your own broad interpretation of meanings is encouraged so that you can feel comfortable with applying them to your individuality. Therefore, to celebrate your achievements can mean to commemorate your accomplishments, extol your deeds, praise your conquests, applaud your triumphs, or any other actions that make you feel comfortable with the concept.

To feel self-reliant, as a result of confidence, you need to work on removal of the barriers to confidence. Being afraid or embarrassed to proclaim your successes is one of the barriers to your certainty and conviction. That will lead to a loss in confidence.

For self-esteem to germinate you must create the conditions for the generation of that development. Celebration of accomplishments, through excitement and pleasure, stimulate the conditions for development of a better self-image. Excitement, like many human emotions, is infectious. Exalting your achievements sets up a chain reaction for success and thus to the

enhancement of your self-confidence. The animation generated by the glorifying of achievements fuels your self-belief, which in turn leads to further successes. That provides reason for further acclamation of those achievements, which creates further excitement and that stimulus fuels further self-reliance and so the process continues.

That is actually the course by which many childhood motor skills are developed. Do you remember attempting to skip once or twice and eventually, as the numbers and your confidence grew, skipping a hundred times? Proclaiming your skill to friends as the numbers increased was part of the excitement. Did you use that same procedure when learning to catch a ball? Each success called for another effort until eventually you could catch any ball thrown at any time. When you were young you would have celebrated each time you increased the number of consecutive catches. If you can't remember back that far, just watch children learning those skills. They all do it. That process builds confidence today just as it did then. However you're entitled to strive for achievements today that you feel are more substantial than skipping or catching even though the principle doesn't change.

Before life gets the opportunity to damage the "innocence of youth", observing children at play together can be a wonderful way to see the glorifying of achievement being exercised. The joy and animation generated by the smallest of their accomplishments is infectious, not only amongst their peers, but on the observing teenagers and adults as well.

When you have trust and certainty in yourself you know that there are no victories beyond your reach. In *Chapter Ten, on Conditioned Responses*, you will read about what life does to eat away at the enthusiasm and confidence of children, adolescents, and adults.

Without the commemorating of accomplishment you're breaking the chain of self-belief and thus impeding the growth of your self-confidence. It is necessary to ensure the chain isn't broken because although the concept of respect for your individuality is not difficult to accept, the actual physical and mental process of always liking yourself can easily,

and often, be questioned in your thoughts. That process will continue to be much more difficult if you fail to reinforce, at every opportunity, a positive self-image.

Any action that will support your view of yourself should be considered to be mandatory. Celebration of your achievements will assist you to ensure that you're sustaining a required level of certainty every time you complete the smallest task that you set out to accomplish. It's not dissimilar to the build-up to the completion of a jigsaw puzzle. How do you feel each time you find a piece that fits? The period of frustration looking for each piece is countered by the satisfaction not only of finding one that fits, but the overall pleasure of finishing the entire project. Each small moment of certainty, as it is coming together, adds to the overall conviction in your abilities when the puzzle finally gives in and is defeated by your brilliance.

Contemplate the real advantages to your ongoing positive self-image once you have determined to eulogise even your smallest victories. Never forget that you not only have every right to feel good about affirmative decisions and achievements for which you are accountable, you also have that responsibility to yourself as the first priority.

Positive decisions and accomplishments can create their own excitement; however they can also be exalted because they're *your* decisions and achievements. Never feel embarrassed for wanting to acclaim the smallest of exploits because they are as significant as big conquests for building your self-esteem. You have as much right to tell others that you've just washed the car, making it look good, and so you feel good, as you have to tell them that you've just completed the month at work with your best ever sales figures.

Measure and proclaim achievements through celebration

The celebration of your personal achievements will not necessarily mean throwing a party or dancing in the streets. That's not to say that some of your personal victories don't

warrant such applause and half your luck if they do. Finishing the month with best ever sales figures could demand a night out or a party, whereas washing the car could merely demand a cool drink and a half-hour nap as celebration.

What celebration of achievements means is the making of a measured response of congratulations to yourself based on the size of your victory or accomplishment. However, if you have the choice of a big acclamation or a small one, always take the big one because the bigger the commendation, the greater the level of excitement. Of course the more animation generated, the better you will feel about your achievement. The better you feel about your deeds, the more you will have stimulated your self-confidence.

Another purpose for celebration, and why it is a critical step in this process, is that each time you make a congratulatory remark to yourself for realisation of your efforts, it will have the same effect as if you are receiving the congratulations from someone else. Such congratulations are always going to feed into your own supply of self-belief. You will feel better about yourself, and as soon as you acknowledge and respect your own originality, you will realise that you have more reason to like yourself. You will be getting congratulations from someone you like more than you did previously. That someone is the person within yourself that you have chosen willingly to accept as a friend that you know can be trusted completely. Self-trust will be the catalyst that gives you the inspiration for many more successes and many more celebrations.

This chapter can explain the importance of commemorating deeds and show you different ways that others and yourself might choose to do the acclaiming. However, it is when you have high regard for your individuality that you can determine what is the best method of rejoicing for yourself.

Having identified and willingly accepted that very remarkable friend within, you will then determine how conservative or extraverted you choose to be as a person; so the size and

manner of proclaiming of your accomplishments is a choice that only you can make. Just so long as you do some celebration, as it is a critical step to not only the building of, but also the maintenance of, your self-confidence.

Sport encourages celebration

Having accepted the first critical step, to embrace your uniqueness, implies you will be more prepared to accept the celebration of your achievements, and as previously stated, that will lead to building an enhanced self-image. You will never have confidence in the words of others until you have some conviction in yourself.

Have you ever been involved in team sport? If you recall the few minutes before an important game, your coach, captain or team members will have told you why the team will win and how well you would perform within that victory. You knew that, no matter what they said, if you didn't believe you could discharge your responsibility to your team confidently you might not win. You needed to have faith in yourself before you could feel confidence in the rest of the team.

The confidence that we have in ourselves engenders the greatest part of that we have in others.

François de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680)

Professional sports people are re-taught to exalt their conquests as part of their training in self-belief. Have you ever noticed how people with high self-esteem, such as elite sports people, not only celebrate their achievements, but are quick to share their rejoicing with an audience or their team mates? At any moment of high performance they pump the air, look for “high fives”, exclaim loudly, somersault, tear off their clothes — and that's even before they

actually win. They applaud their efforts when they sink a long putt in golf, score a goal, try or touchdown in any football code, or when they claim the point after a long rally in tennis. The smallest of their achievements deserves and gets a celebration.

Of course they're getting paid the big dollars for their exploits, but when interviewed later on they never refer to the joy of their pay packet, they refer exclusively to the pleasure of the point or score that gave them so much satisfaction. It is the execution, the completion of what they set out to do, that they were extolling. It is difficult to be able to think of any sport where expressions of animation are not displayed to glorify some performance. It is that eulogising of their achievements that is one of the tools that provides the self-belief and incentive to reach the levels of excellence to which they aspire. You will come to find that by celebrating all of your own efforts you will raise your personal self-assurance so that levels of excellence are easier to attain.

Chapter Five explained the spontaneous nature of achievements, and how your exploits instinctively feed into your supply of self-confidence. Cast your memory back to any personal accomplishment of your own, no matter how small or insignificant that feat may seem. Part of the acknowledgment of your distinctiveness is the memory of your own personal successes. When you feel good about any personal achievements, you are showing respect for your originality that led to the success. So, when you feel good about victories, why not proclaim that feeling? Even the smallest of achievements will respond intuitively to provide you with greater levels of self-esteem. You've seen that within the *Cycle of Confidence*.

Sharing celebrations

The sharing of achievements has been shown in *Chapter Five* to be a natural and spontaneous reaction. Recognition for fulfilment of effort, from yourself and others, is very difficult to keep to yourself. How difficult does it become when you feel excited about an

exploit to actually not mention it? Furthermore, why should you keep quiet about accomplishments? When you feel excited and want to share your achievements, you actually expect others to enjoy and share the experience of that animation with you.

If you get a promotion at work or if your children get an award at school, it is a very natural response not only to tell everyone at home about the success, but to get on the phone telling everyone else that you are acquainted with about the achievement as well. Sometimes others will not become animated by your news, but what a wonderful feeling you get when you find someone who does share your excitement, and you can jump up and down and laugh or cry together at the pleasure your triumph has evoked. That sharing within yourself and with others is a real life example of the celebration of your accomplishments.

If we praise ourselves fearlessly, something will always stick.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Do you believe that excitement and praise is exclusive to children or professional sports people? What about new physical skills learnt as an adult? Have you ever observed an adult learning to ice or roller skate, or ride a bike? At the moment they become independently mobile the cries of “Look at me! Look at me!” are shouted across the park or rink as they scream out their need to share their glorious accomplishment. And who amongst their friends and associates won’t hear about it over the following week?

As you think about this stage, do you find you’re still having some doubts about your ability to celebrate? Do you consider that you’re too modest to celebrate? If those are your feelings then you will appreciate why the celebration of achievements is the second step to confidence building and not the first. It is necessary to really appreciate your uniqueness

before you can unashamedly proclaim each accomplishment. However, the link between the first two critical steps of the recognition and embracing of your uniqueness, and the need to celebrate your achievements, should be starting to become clearer. Acknowledgment is easy, and embracing can be easy if you have the ability to maintain a reasonable level of self-confidence. Extolling your fulfilments assists you to maintain your confidence, and gives the certainty to expand levels of self-belief.

Suppose you consider that it's a good idea to proclaim your victories but others who are close to you, although talented, would never extol their capacities openly to the world. If those close to you are so modest, you will appreciate the need for them to share achievements. You can seriously consider your ability to instigate their celebrations. From what you now understand of the effects of praise for accomplishment you know that you will be enhancing their self-esteem and encouraging their future exploits by your comments.

If you have grasped the fundamentals of the first two critical steps that you have been already shown, and you believe that you have the capacity to take those steps, then you already have the catalyst for reaching, understanding, and accepting the other three steps which will link them all together.

Do you feel confident at this point? You could, but once again you must remember that the feeling may be temporary. Celebration of your accomplishments, like each of the other critical steps, as an independent activity, may often only provide temporary support for maintaining your self-assurance.

Each critical step has the ability to accommodate a reinforcement of conviction. However, it is the combination of the five critical steps together that is the guarantee to the gaining of enduring self-confidence.

Summary

- a) Celebrating achievements will raise your levels of self-belief.
- b) Being afraid or embarrassed to celebrate your achievements is a barrier to attaining self-confidence.
- c) Tell others when you achieve, as it is natural for them to want to share in your celebration.
- d) Praise others for their achievements to assist their positive self-image.
- e) The first two critical steps support each other in promoting your self-belief within the

Cycle of Confidence.

In the next chapter you will learn about using the choices you make to provide you with a vision of your future that will be a permanent legacy to your self-awareness that life will not be able to damage or pollute. Thus achievement and self-confidence will follow for all the days of your life.