

## **7. Have a Vision**

### Take Action

From what you've read so far, if you can see the importance of the acknowledgment and respect for your originality, and of proclaiming your triumphs, then you have already accomplished. That achievement allows you to have a vision of the person you can aspire to become.

Identifying that, you can have a positive vision of your future, which is itself a wonderful realisation that will enhance your self-belief. The last chapter has given you a better understanding of what you can do to sustain your self-image within the process of confidence building and character development. That makes it easier to have a vision of being able to better utilise your self-assurance and achievements in the future.

The first two critical steps can create a vision of how much better your life can be, and the lives of everyone else you interact with, as a result of the enhancement, maintenance, and nurturing of your self-confidence. You now need to choose to take some action that will support that vision.

The extent of the action will be determined by the rejections, abuse and failures or successes and support, that life has dealt you so far. Even if life has not been kind, in your upbringing, your work or relationships, you will appreciate the insights that these critical steps to your growth in self-belief will provide. However, if your life has been full of support and success you will identify some of the steps that assisted you to achieve your current status, and you will see how these steps will ensure that your self-awareness and confidence continues to advance.

You need to cherish all of your past experiences, both good and bad, because your reflections and past responses are an invaluable source of wisdom. The tough thing about

experience is that it teaches you the right path after you've already walked it. Maybe that is actually an advantage. Experience can create the excitement to ensure you maintain the desire to continue to make mistakes! Once you realise that you are still prepared to make mistakes, and you still like that stimulation, then congratulate yourself as you're obviously still full of life.

That is what you learnt as a child with the skipping and ball-catching exercise.

Dropping the ball can incite you enough to try again.

You should now be starting to understand how the taking of the smallest steps within this program will assist to display your glorious originality, so that everyone else will want to share and appreciate it with you. Taking further steps requires you to choose an action plan. Nothing can replace action.

Talent doesn't replace action. How many people do you know about whom it has been said, "What a waste of good talent"? Talent has no value if there is no action to use it.

Genius doesn't replace action. Unfulfilled genius is often referred to as eccentricity. Although it has been observed that genius requires a great capacity for patience, there can be no genius without action.

Education doesn't replace action. There are educated people all over the world feeling sorry for themselves because their lack of action has not given them the job or the life that they wanted. Imagine having years of formal education and never applying for the job you want.

Prayer doesn't replace action. Just suppose you're a mile from shore in a rowboat with your family and a horrendous storm blows up. You have choices to make about what to do. You can pray all you like, but please don't damn well stop rowing. That's what saves you and your family. Action must always come first.

Once you have determined to take action, you have drawn a line between procrastination and results. This is not a soft line; you should look at it as a clear, precise and visible line in your mind.

### Action options for your future

Having determined that you need to take action, you now need to choose the type of effort applicable. An action plan can't just be a set of thoughts about your future that you're going to put in place because it sounds like a good idea. Any action you take will be reflective of the person that you project. Every activity of yours is an incident that goes to define your character. For instance you may have strong views on a social issue such as the environment or poverty. Apart from comments to friends or associates on those matters over a drink, have you ever attended a seminar or met with your government representatives to ascertain whether you or they can actually do something more about your concerns? If you don't have time or other constraints, perhaps you're already a volunteer or activist? It will be your character that determines the decisions and resulting actions that affect your life.

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*What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?*

Henry James (1843-1916)

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Therefore it is important that you choose a form of progress that will reflect both the person you are and the person you wish to be. Although *Chapter Ten* will give you support in your knowledge of how to make better choices than you might once have made, you probably are aware that you always have choices. In absolutely everything. You could choose to attend a self-development seminar to get motivation. You could choose meditation to enhance your

vision; you could read a book to get inspiration from someone else's journey through life.

Whatever your choices, it is important to look at various options so that you can decide which is the most appropriate form of activity for you to follow that will support your participation within the *Cycle of Confidence*.

### Motivational seminars

The first option is the self-awareness seminar. What will you learn there to assist your vision? Think positive. Be proactive. You can do it. Do it now. Take control. Focus on the positives in your life and learn to ignore the negatives. The advice is endless. However, if you do get all excited and determine that all those words have merit for you, will you still feel that way next week, next month, or next year? You're stronger than most if you do. If you've done that previously you already know the enthusiasm won't last for long.

The problem with those offerings for your vision is that they are usually based on a personality ethic. Smile: look them in the eye, show the world how assertive you are.

That will work for a while, because you believe it, and because you believe it the rest of the world will believe it with you. It's real at that moment. However, because it is based on a personality ethic it is easily eroded. The problem with the personality ethic is that it requires constant reinforcement. Now you will need to go to another self-advancement seminar for a top-up. Each time you require a top-up you should be questioning the credibility of the last self-assessment seminar you attended.

### Meditation

Perhaps you could appreciate the option of meditation. You would be taught that there are three stages of meditation. Those three stages are Relaxation, Interiorization and Expansion. These three words refer to the process of finding enlightenment and the harnessing of your consciousness. That may suit some people, but for many others

understanding those words and putting them into practice needs a little more time, training and patience than they may be prepared to engage.

It is sufficient to say, however, that many people do find meditation a valuable tool to use if they are travelling down the path to self-assurance. Meditation is a particularly useful tool, because its main purpose is to feed the spiritual dimension of life, which has been shown in *Chapter Three* to be the origin of the *Cycle of Confidence* and achievement.

The physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions of your life have been established as useful supports for the self-confidence skills that you are learning. They are all very useful as tools to enhance the gaining and advancing of your levels of self-belief and to reinforce your desire to accomplish.

Meditation can have the same effect as self-awareness seminars, physical exercise, mental stimulation and social interaction as support to confidence and completeness. However, because of the intangible nature of meditation, you will soon understand why it will not be the base from which the action plan for your further self-advancement ought to be established. Meditation is yet another of the valuable instruments you can choose to support your desire to advance and maintain your levels of self-reliance.

### Read a book

Many of today's books on self-awareness concentrate on the personality ethic for reinforcement of feelings, or on the philosophies of life. There are hundreds of studies that can be used as tools to carry you through the tough times of day-to-day living. You may have found inspiration in autobiographies of people who have struggled through adversity to attain success. However, you have every right to feel disappointed if you expected their journeys were going to show you the path to your own self-belief and the book has fallen short —

especially if the title led you to believe that your own self-confidence was going to be achieved and maintained.

Remember, before you read their story you had no idea of what inspired their particular path to success, therefore, you cannot expect that they have any real ideas about your individual needs to succeed. Having chosen a book as a tool for inspiration, you can only be inspired for long if the message it contains shows you how to maintain and nurture the teachings that are proposed as the answer to your own growth and confidence.

It is not enough for a book, meditation or seminar to suggest a particular path unless whichever medium it is can show you step by step how their teachings can have permanence. Compare this with finding an unfamiliar landmark. Updated street directories can readily direct you along a particular path to your destination, but when you follow it you will also remember that you turned left at the blue sign, passed two sets of lights, turned left again and took the next right. Yes, you may still get lost, or need directions again, next trip, but eventually your knowledge of the correct path will have permanence because you taught yourself. The path to ongoing self-confidence will have durability because you learnt to teach yourself.

Don't panic if you have spent a lot of money on strategies that tell you how to win friends and influence your surroundings; or the power of positive thinking; or relaxation for inner peace, health and mental growth; or communication skills training. Those strategies can still be used to support the processes within this program and in some instances they can be of great assistance in advancing your levels of self-assurance. At the very least they cannot harm this complete process of attaining and maintaining self-confidence. Whatever tools you choose will be of some benefit for positive reinforcement of the path you're travelling.

But tools of support are not a foundation for an action plan. The third critical step to your ongoing confidence building, that you're about to investigate, requires a solid

foundation. Tools of support are instruments that can be used to build further on that foundation. Whatever tools you choose will firstly require a base, an unmovable foundation from where you can build that vision of ongoing self-belief to be a structure of permanence. That solid foundation will carry you through to the attainment of the goals to which your vision aspires.

### Listen to your conscience

This is where you will realise that the base of course is you, and the character that you have developed from within your conscience.

It may be appropriate at this stage to reinforce what you have already learnt about the *Cycle of Confidence* displayed towards the end of the third chapter. If self-confidence is defined by *reliance on, respect for, and trust in* your own judgement, then it stands to reason that, for the maintenance of confidence those principles should be supported.

It is by understanding that close connection between the principles of self-confidence, and the resulting strength of your character by adhering to them, that you are going to willingly enter the process that discourages all of the barriers to gaining and maintaining unlimited self-belief.

The critical steps, when understood and adhered to, are going to provide you with enormous amounts of self-reliance. However, that self-assurance can in fact be used for many purposes, both good and bad. Apart from the real life examples that you will see in *Chapter Eleven*, which will warn of arrogance and vanity, self-confidence can be used for the most evil of purposes. Some of the world's most infamous characters, past and present, would feel extremely positive about what others see as deplorable actions. Don't forget that there would be no such thing as a "confidence trickster" or a "con-man" (short for confidence man) if conviction could not be misused.

When you display a lot of self-assurance, other people may assume that you have good character, and give you *trust*. It is the gaining of trust that permits a con-man to carry out his or her trade. That is why there is often healthy scepticism about statements from government officials. How many times throughout the world have election promises been betrayed? During elections people listen, and then give trust, to the promises of candidates. Irrespective of some occasions where a change in circumstance requires a reassessment of promises after elections, most people can recall betrayals of trust that have evoked scepticism, or even cynicism.

Your self-confidence can be used to breach trust if you so choose. Suppose someone believes you to be of good character, trusts you with a secret, and swears you to silence. Sometime later in conversation with a third person that person comes up, and your comments inadvertently reveal that secret. The stronger your moral character, the more guilty you will feel because of that betrayal of trust. The result of your misuse of trust, even though accidental, has created conflict of conscience and self-doubt. So what is the effect on you of doubt and guilt? It adds fuel to a loss of conviction and self-belief. Conflict with your conscience, often as a reaction to previously established conditioned responses, is one of the major factors responsible for fluctuations in each person's self-confidence.

Apart from any other reasons that you may come up with, including work or interaction with others, that propagate doubt and uncertainty in yourself, the fact remains that if you are provided with character development, along with confidence, you will develop unshakeable conviction and certainty. Unshakeable conviction and certainty equals unlimited self-belief.

That is why an effort was made to disclose the origins within your spiritual dimension of all of those intangible relationships of conscience, achievement, self-confidence and character, displayed as the *Cycle of Confidence*. You should now be starting to understand

how a process of character development will secure your self-confidence, while also guaranteeing that you're genuinely trustworthy. It is from trust given by others, as well as self-trust, that fluctuations in self-belief are inhibited because your conscience will prevent the actions, which create uncertainty, from any inappropriate use of your confidence — including any accidental misuse. If you can inhibit self-doubt, uncertainty, conflict of conscience, guilt and arrogance, which are the five greatest obstacles to confidence, you can only be left with unlimited self-belief.

It is your conscience, the voice only you can hear, that governs your path to right and wrong. Therefore your conscience will always assist you to determine the quality of the steps you take along any path requiring ethical values. The strength of your character ethic, developed from your conscience, will be the solid foundation upon which the vision for your future will be built. Not just your physical presence, certainly not your flamboyance, false courage, brashness or charming appearance, but the immovable foundations of character.

If you've read books about body language and the subtleties of expression, when communicating mannerisms and words, you will better understand how others are aware when you're not being totally honest with them. How many times have you been in a situation when someone has put an offer or suggestion to you, and you find yourself thinking that it sounds good, but there is something that you can't quite put your finger on that makes you suspicious? Having considered that you're not always gullible, then it is fair to assume that others are not that easily taken advantage of on all occasions either.

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*You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.*

Abraham Lincoln (1808-1865). (Attrib)

Just as you may suspect when someone isn't being straight with you, so others may detect when you're not being straight with them. That is why many of the world's senior politicians hire image consultants to teach them how to present themselves, their appearance, mannerisms and expressions. They do it in an attempt to make you believe that they are honourable and trustworthy. Sometimes that can work but eventually the credibility of most unreliable politicians will come under suspicion.

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*The louder he talked of his honour, the faster we counted our spoons.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882).

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You know when you have the feeling that it is time to count the silverware, that someone close by can't be trusted. Hence, just as you can frequently detect falseness in others, so others may often detect improper motives in you. That is why you must first begin with honesty from within yourself. That is also why it starts to become obvious that if you are to be trusted by others, you need to use the individuality of your own conscience to prepare that base for your future personal growth and ongoing self-confidence.

Furthermore, if you have successfully accepted the value of your distinctiveness, you will like the words and advice that your conscience provides for you. You must be prepared to trust in yourself first, because irrespective of the good or bad experiences of your life, it is only from within yourself that complete reliance and truth will be found.

How can you be most easily inspired by your inner voice? Not just by listening to that inner voice, but by also writing down the words you hear from within.

This is where you learn the importance of the third critical step to your self-confidence. The first critical step was the recognition and embracing of your uniqueness and

the second critical step was the celebration of each of your achievements. The third critical step is the writing down of a Vision Statement for yourself.

### Summary

- a) Having a vision for the future requires an action plan.
- b) The action you take must reflect the person that you are and the person you hope to become.
- c) If it is to have permanence your action plan requires a solid foundation.
- d) That foundation, displayed by your character, is developed and inspired by your conscience.
- e) Eliminating the barriers to self-confidence keeps you within the *Cycle of Confidence*.
- f) You must write a Vision Statement.

In the next chapter you will be shown the importance of what has been demonstrated so far, and how easy it is to use, as the catalyst for writing your own Vision Statement.