

9. Commitments fulfilled

Confidence without arrogance

If you are reaching an understanding of the power of this process to enhance your self-esteem, you will appreciate why your Vision Statement fulfils the commitment made in the first chapter, of providing you with the specific tool within the critical steps that prevents self-confidence from becoming arrogance. Once written from the depths of your character ethic, your Vision Statement will not permit you to be arrogant because any sign of that arrogance would automatically breach the moral values that your principles demand.

Taking for example the interpretation of the principle used earlier in *respect your own judgement*. That principle is *respect*. The Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus shows amongst the antonyms listed for respect is the word *disdain*. Hence, if the word disdain is the opposite of respect, what words are listed in the same dictionary to mean the same as disdain? Of course you knew it would, as it does, include arrogance.

Therefore it is extremely difficult, and most improbable, that you can be true to your own principles — respecting yourself — and be arrogant at the same time. Although you may always maintain the physical ability to be respectful to yourself and arrogant to others simultaneously, the emotional conflict will become very intimidating. You won't normally be able to display arrogance and be respectful to yourself at the same time. Your conscience won't permit that incompatibility without genuine personal discomfort because you are emotionally pulling in two opposite directions.

The beauty of that incompatibility is that you will find it paralleled with virtually any of your principles that you have chosen to use for yourself in your Vision Statement. Provided the principles you have chosen to use in your Vision Statement are from your own conscience, and you are determined to be faithful to yourself in the use of that Statement, you

will most probably never again be able to show arrogance when you display self-confidence. It has become emotionally too uncomfortable. That further exemplifies the necessity for your Vision Statement.

Misuse of self-confidence

Further to what you read in *Chapter Seven*, the difficulty of dealing with self-confidence misplaced, is that people like to be in the company of others who display faith in themselves.

Hence, if you didn't feel good in the company of those that display conviction, and if you weren't prepared to give them trust, then no one could ever have taken advantage of you. However, self-belief is such a socially attractive feature of the personality of others, that there are very few people that have not been taken advantage of at some time during their lives.

What that means is that because of your self-assurance, you are going to be trusted by loved ones, friends and associates. Where possible you would not want to disrespect yourself, or them, by breaching that trust, even accidentally. Therefore, because it is your spirituality that provides the close relationships of achievements, confidence and principles, it is by the writing of your Vision Statement that you will lock the direction of your self-belief to the processes within the *Cycle of Confidence*. The end result is that your conscience creates conflict for any inadvertent or deliberate misuse of the trust that others will offer.

Having explained previously in this chapter that it was highly improbable that you could breach the *principles* of your character if you remain true to your Vision Statement, you will find the same situation holds true for maintaining your integrity of action during the use of self-confidence. Not only will you no longer display vanity and arrogance but your conscience, through your Vision Statement, won't permit your self-belief to actively misuse trust given to you by others. The conflict with your conscience becomes too great, because

your character ethic, displayed by your Vision Statement, has become too solid a foundation for you to abuse.

It was previously explained in *Chapters Three and Seven* that having conflict within your conscience is a most indisputable reason for fluctuations in your self-esteem. The last thing you need for maintaining conviction is for conflict to eat away at your self-belief. That is why this process continues to demonstrate that you cannot expect to maintain ongoing reserves of self-confidence without including character development.

That further reinforces the real power of your Vision Statement. Your character ethic is protected by your conscience preventing arrogance, and your actions are protected by preventing misuse of trust while keeping you within the processes of the *Cycle of Confidence*.

Having understood the message of this section, you will have come to the realisation of the imperative nature of your Vision Statement that you should have by now attempted to write. Therefore if you haven't done it yet, you should go no further through this program until you have written your initial Vision Statement. You owe it to yourself, and it would be disappointing to teach you to be self-confident and have that conviction misused. This exercise only offers a self-belief that will provide for strength of character with principles. If you haven't attempted it yet, stop reading, and do it now!

The difficulty of introspection

The difficulty of living with principles is that they require you to have the courage to look closely at yourself and accept that there have been disappointments within your life. You're human, so just like everyone else, you will have failed at some time in your past. Maybe even today. However, the beauty of getting this far in maintaining your self-confidence and writing a Vision Statement for yourself, is that you have now chosen to aspire

to fewer downfalls. That of itself is a strong statement about the strength of your own character.

As you must expect, there is a real need to remain vigilant to be able to maintain the complete purity of your conscience. No matter how perfect your Vision Statement is, and no matter how committed you feel to the success of your path to maintain confidence, you will always have to deal with the frailties of human nature. The intent will always be to use your Vision Statement and its principles to make fewer mistakes and increasingly better choices.

In fairness, what other real options do you have for yourself? Would you choose to accept that you want to continue to fail on matters of principle? Would you choose to use your self-belief to become a person of suspect character? What sort of message is that to yourself? What would that say about the person you are and how the rest of the world should ultimately treat you? Now that you are living within the *Cycle of Confidence*, why would you want to leave it?

You will find that suddenly, because you have recognised your individuality, and written down some words that will form the basis of your Vision Statement, the very act of congratulating yourself for your choices is easy and enriching to your inner self. Your act of congratulating yourself is generating self-assurance while showing the respect for your choices that you determined to do in your Vision Statement.

This act of commending your simplest feats will give you the conviction and encouragement to look for deeper and more meaningful principles that you will add to your Vision Statement, until you find that it resembles something that you feel proud to share with others. That is a foundation of fundamental principles that you know will be the guiding light down your path of achievement and self-confidence that leads to ongoing personal growth.

You're already a better person

Within a very short time, often after only one day, you will notice yourself to be a different and better person. You can be assured that everyone else will notice it as well, because what you are will determine what you say and what you do. You are suddenly and forever a better person. That is a process supported by the self-fulfilling prophecy that you will read about in the next chapter.

You don't need to feel particularly anxious if you sometimes slip a little in maintaining your Vision Statement. You need to balance the reality of your life with the principles that you have chosen to govern your future. Never be afraid to admit to an error in your actions, opinions or judgements. When you make mistakes, don't be overly concerned. Expect a feeling of guilt, which is one of the barriers to self-confidence.

Even guilt, for a confident person, can be a wonderful emotion. It enables you to say sorry to yourself and to others. Suppose you have commented on someone's appearance and in hindsight you realise that may have been hurtful. You don't intend to be hurtful to others, so you must apologise to yourself, and just as importantly you must also contact the other person you offended and apologise to them. Contemplate for a moment how that other person, as well as yourself, will feel after you have accepted the guilt and apologised. Guilt was the emotion, prompted by your character ethic, which encouraged you to act positively towards yourself and the other person. By confronting guilt you are breaking down one of the obstacles to maintaining your self-confidence.

Even if your life has been perfect, and you have had a lot of support, don't expect everything to fall into place immediately. The reason for that is that no matter what your intentions are, there will still be other people's position of power, or circumstances that you cannot control.

When you have completed learning the processes of confidence building you'll have less guilt, because of fewer mistakes, and you'll be prepared for disenchantment. Some disappointments, like some problems, don't have a solution. They just have to be survived. The value you put on your distinctiveness will determine how well you will survive problems and disillusionment.

Suppose you have been very successful. Have you ever suspected that others resented you for your good fortune? Irrespective of whether you won the lottery or worked very hard for your success, there could still be resentment, envy, bitterness and unsubstantiated rumours from others to make your life difficult. You were assured in the first chapter that this process will subdue any negative characteristics that you once may have displayed however, you can't be responsible for the emotional feelings of others. Therefore you need this process to sustain belief from within, while those closest to you provide the outside support.

Support from others

Expect your families, business associates and friends to encourage and support your decision to be more positive and assertive than you were. Your families will do so because they love you, and as a better person you will be easier to live with. That's a great incentive for them to support you. Of course as they love you, they will need very little incentive to offer support.

Expect your business associates to support you, because you will be a greater asset to their work environment. Any improvements in you can easily reflect back on them, for the betterment of the business, especially if recognised by their customers or clients. That's a great business incentive for them.

Expect your friends to support you because that's why you chose them as friends in the first place. You chose your friends because you recognised some characteristic of their

distinctiveness that you liked. You could expect, and at least hope, friends will identify and respect some characteristic of your originality. Friends inspire, support, encourage, amuse, or just listen. True friends that fit those criteria are not easy to find. That's why your list of true friends is usually small and your list of acquaintances can be expected to be much longer. Friends, like loved ones, need very little incentive to support your display of greater self-esteem.

Apart from those people who you know will encourage and reinforce your demonstration of personal growth, you need to be wary of those that will withhold their support. You will soon determine who really cares about your wellbeing.

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambition. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens — Mark Twain (1835-1910)

The quotation above is excellent advice except that it doesn't account for family, work or associates with whom you already have an emotional or financial attachment. Of course you want praise from them for the person you have become, although you acknowledge that you still need to be with them for most of your daily life. If you are from a culture where some commonly used expletives are often accepted as compliments, and not considered swearing, you may prefer the following words of another popular American novelist, instead of the quotation above.

Unless the bastards have the courage to give you unqualified praise, I say ignore them.

John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

Summary

- a) Your Vision Statement, using the principles of your character ethic, will restrain any appearance of arrogance.
- b) Character development provides certainty and conviction to ensure ongoing self-confidence.
- c) You should have by now written your Vision Statement.
- d) You will already feel better about yourself; and so you should.
- e) Confronting the barriers to self-confidence will assist you to maintain a self-assured outlook.
- f) Expect support from others for your positive frame of mind.

Having fulfilled the commitment to provide a critical step that actually prevents arrogance and vanity from being inevitable, it is necessary to look within the next chapter to see how life creates conditioned responses. If you are aware of the dangers that life holds for your continuous self-belief, then with your knowledge of the critical steps to self-confidence, you will be better prepared for dealing with the inevitable rejections and failures that you will need to overcome.