5 Steps To UNLEASH Your Inner Confidence

How to free yourself from the fears that hold you back
INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Inside this eBook you will find an abundance of tools and ideas that you can use immediately to start making a shift in your life. You will discover new ways to start feeling more confident in yourself, in your relationships, in your business, and in any area that you need more belief in yourself and your abilities.

Not feeling confident in any area of your life can a take a toll on your mood, your energy, and your desire to take on a new challenge. Worse still, it can distort how you see yourself, so you start believing that you are not good enough to succeed. Applying what you read in this book will help you change this.

Where Do You Want Confidence?

What area are you lacking confidence in? You will know it immediately because in this area there is something you really want, but you feel afraid that you won’t be able to get it. Or you may even be telling yourself that it’s impossible for you to have it, and that you don’t deserve it anyways.

Do you lack confidence in the area of dating? Do you struggle to meet attractive women and be yourself around them? Do you see women you would love to go talk to, but instead you freeze or flee? Are you uncomfortable dating, unsure where to go, what to do, when to try and kiss her?

Perhaps your struggle is in relationships. You can date women, but you can’t ever really let your guard down. You can’t just be completely at ease, be comfortable, or be yourself without some nagging fear that if she sees the real you, she’ll bolt.

Maybe your struggles are in your career. Do you avoid reaching out and speaking with coworkers or potential clients? Are you afraid to speak up in meetings or approach a supervisor about an issue? Do you have difficulty speaking in front of a group of people?
In all of these areas, the pattern is the same.

There is something that you want, something that you need that is important to you, but you don’t go after it because of fear. Your quality of life is reduced because you are not pursuing what you are passionate about and your life suffers as a result. Maybe your relationship suffers. Maybe your business suffers.

Maybe you suffer. Maybe deep down inside you just don’t feel confident in yourself. You don’t believe in yourself. You don’t even fully like yourself. You’re struggling to feel like you’re a worthwhile man who is competent, capable, and able to be effective in the world.

Fortunately, you do not have to suffer in this way. Working with hundreds of men over the last decade has convinced me that confidence is a skill that can be developed by anyone.

You Already Have Confidence

Confidence is not something that comes from outside of you. Confidence is an inner state that you, whether you know it or not, already have in abundance. In fact, no matter who you are, I guarantee that there’s one area of your life that you have confidence in, that you have certainty in. In this area you know that you know a lot, that you are effective, that you can make things happen.

This might be an area that’s valued by society, like being able to meet women or being able to make money. Those are obvious. But there are other areas that you might have a large amount of confidence in that you just don’t value, that you’re not seeing. Go ahead and take a moment to actually think of an area in your life where you have confidence.
Do you have confidence when it comes to business? Do you believe in your ability to handle situations effectively at work or in your company? Are you confident you can deal with your kids and that you’re a damn good father? Have you read everything you can read about cars and you know how an engine works inside and out?

Maybe you know everything there is to know about football, or basketball, or baseball. Or you might know everything about a certain genre of movies or books. Are you highly skilled at an instrument? Can you play any Metallica song on the guitar?

Are you confident when it comes to a hobby or video games? Do you know more about Grand Theft Auto than anyone else on the face of the planet?

Whatever the area, think of one now.

If you can't, dig deeper. Everyone is good at something. You just need to acknowledge what it is for you.

This is an area where you already have confidence. You have knowledge in this area that many people will never have. If I were to speak with you about this topic and get you going, I would see a whole new you. You would speak with confidence and certainty. You would be sharing ideas clearly, with passion and enthusiasm.

All the confidence you need is within you now. You just might need to develop it in the right areas.

Whatever this area of confidence is for you, I doubt that you were born with all the knowledge, skills, and ability that you have now. More likely, you learned the information, applied the skills, and practiced regularly over time until you started getting results.

This is exactly how you will build the confidence you desire in any area of your life. By reading and regularly practicing the steps below, you will begin to unleashing your natural inner confidence.
Step 1. BE A GOOD COACH

The most important and essential ingredient in unleashing your inner confidence is to become an outstanding coach to yourself.

Throughout the day, you are coaching yourself in your own mind. This includes how you speak to yourself, how you treat yourself, and how you guide yourself through difficult times.

You must master this skill if you would like to become more confident in yourself.

Coaching yourself in a positive, supportive, and encouraging way is more important than any external achievement, success, or outside praise.

To get a sense of how you coach yourself, think about something that’s challenging to you.

Maybe it is speaking in front of a group of people that you don’t know. Perhaps it is approaching an attractive woman you are interested in and introducing yourself.

Pick a situation that is a challenge to you, and imagine being in that situation now. See the group of people, or that beautiful woman, and notice what you typically say to yourself.

Before you give a talk or presentation you might be thinking: Oh my god, I’m so nervous I can’t do this. I’m going to mess this up. I better not mess this up. I’m going to get up there and I’m going to forget my lines. It’s going to be so awkward and terrible. They’re going to wonder why they even hired me. I can’t do this. I don’t want to be here.
Or maybe you’re going to go talk to an attractive woman and you think: *I don’t have anything good to say. She’s going to be creeped out and think I’m a total loser. Besides she doesn’t want to talk to me anyways. She’ll be annoyed and uncomfortable if I try to start a conversation.*

Does this kind of coaching sound familiar?

Is this effective coaching? Does it make you want to do the thing that you’re scared to do? Does it help you find creative solutions?

**The Toxic Coach**

Unfortunately, for many of us, our default coach does not offer support, encouragement, praise, and inspiration. It is full of fear, doubt, and self-attack.

Is this the kind of coach you’d want to have for your favorite team? Imagine the coach of your team saying this to his players during half time: *Those guys are so much better than you are. I don’t see how you could possibly win. You are so terrible and you miss everything. You guys are just not good enough. Now get out there and don’t mess up.*

Move over Tom Landry.

How is the team going to perform? It’s ridiculous when we think about it in terms of an actual coach and a team. *But if you pay attention to how you talk to yourself, you might be surprised to hear this type of coaching all the time.*

Imagine going to your favorite restaurant and taking a seat next to a table with a father and son. If the father were talking to his son in the same way that you talk to yourself in your own mind, you’d be outraged. You’d be appalled if you heard a father telling his son he was stupid, awkward, and not good enough. It would be totally unacceptable. And yet, you might be treating yourself like this on a daily basis.

This is a **toxic coach**.
Fire Your Toxic Coach

In order to create a lasting sense of confidence, you must shift how you coach yourself. Before you change your wardrobe, or get a new car, or learn a pick up line, you must address how you coach yourself, how you speak to yourself.

To do this, first start paying attention to how you already coach yourself. For the next week, notice how you talk to yourself. Pay particular attention before you do something that is scary, or challenging, or uncomfortable for you. This can include meeting new people, going somewhere new, speaking in front of a group, dating, or doing anything where you perform (job interview, presentation, etc.).

When you are feeling down, or tense, or anxious, pay attention to what your coach is saying. Usually he's giving a lengthy lecture about what’s wrong with you and why you’re not enough.

Once you’ve noticed this coach in action, you must choose to change the way you speak to yourself.

In order to develop confidence, you must fire your old toxic coach and decide to hire a positive, healthy coach. This is a coach that encourages, inspires, and motivates his team to believe in themselves, step up, take risks, and do their best.

We all need regular and frequent encouragement and support to succeed.
What would this success look like to you? It might be speaking in front of that group, approaching that woman, or doing something that really challenges and scares you. In order to pull this off, you need to be able to encourage and support yourself, before during and afterwards.

Regularly ask yourself: What would be the best way to coach myself right now? How could I be a better coach to myself?

Think of good coaches you’ve had. Remember mentors, teachers, and other supportive people who have believed in you in your life. Even if you don’t know the person, you can draw upon the guidance of an author, leader, or sports coach that you admire. Ask yourself, what would this person say to me?

**Coaching Yourself To Confidence**

Keep in mind that the way you have been coaching yourself, this toxic coach, is simply a negative pattern or habit. It might be a habit that you’ve had for years, but it still just a habit. In order to shift this habit, you can use what is called overcorrection.

This means you over correct, or use the new coaching style way more than you normally would until it becomes conditioned as your new pattern. To do this, actively speak and think the healthy coaching phrases to yourself throughout the entire day.

At least ten times a day, notice what you’re doing and actively encourage, support and praise yourself.

To make this even more impactful, you can use your own name. Referring to yourself from the third person actually has a strong impact on your mind.

For example, let’s say I was going to give a presentation. I’ve spoken hundreds of times in front of groups, and yet I still actively coach myself beforehand with positive, healthy encouragement. I’ll say something like: You got this Aziz. You are an incredibly effective
speaker and communicator. You are playful, creative, courageous and you help people understand things with great ease.

You might be thinking this sounds cheesy at first but believe me, it is incredibly effective. Would you rather try something a little cheesy or continue to use the default coach? He might say: You can't do this. You are terrible at speaking. No one's interested. You aren't good enough.

Which would you prefer? Which one is going to help you more?

To creating a lasting change in your coaching style, you must do it regularly throughout the day. When you get up out of bed without hitting snooze, praise yourself for being disciplined. When you eat something healthy for lunch, you praise yourself for that choice.

You can do this in your own mind or out loud. It tends to be more impactful and powerful when you speak the voice of this coach out loud.

Keep your eyes open for when you do something well. A good coach is very skillful at noticing success in his players, and highlighting this so he knows what he is doing right.

**Take Action: Celebrate Your Success**

To further strengthen your healthy coach, try this exercise. At the end of each day, sit down with a sheet of paper or a journal and ask yourself: what are three successes from the day? Three things you did well in.

These can be small and personal successes, or big public successes. Making this practice part of your day will rapidly develop a healthy inner coach that nourishes, supports, strengthens and inspires you.
Step 2. TELL A BETTER STORY

Whether you’re feeling insecure and nervous, or confident and strong is almost entirely based on the thoughts you are having about a particular situation, or your story.

The fastest and most direct way to change how you feel about a situation or about yourself is to shift the story you are telling yourself.

The story that you tell yourself is how you describe what’s happening around you and inside of you. It’s the way you make meaning out of the events in your life.

For example, let’s say you are single and you want to connect with a woman in your life. Imagine you are at the supermarket and you happen to see a gorgeous woman looking at fresh juices in the refrigerated isle. You’ve been practicing some and have gained some courage to follow your desires, so you go and speak with her.

She gives you a smile and kind of an awkward grin. It looks more like a grimace to you. She then nods and moves away. It seems like a polite rejection.

How are you feeling in this situation? Discouraged, embarrassed, worried, hopeless, angry, humiliated?

What I just described is the event. The event does not automatically make you feel anything. How you make sense of the event, or the meaning that you give the event, will determine how you feel. This meaning is your story. And your story determines how you feel.

All of us are making stories all of the time, about everything. The quality of story that you make determines how you feel about yourself, your level of confidence, and your level of success in life.
What would some typical stories be for the event I described above?

*She rejected me, I was awkward, I was too nervous. I'm a loser, my feet are too big, my pants are too baggy. I got these dark circles around my eyes. My ears are too big. I'm just a loser. I didn't sound confident enough.*

Is this an empowering or a disempowering story? Does it inspire you to want to try again and give it another shot? Or does it make you depressed because you think there's something wrong with you and there's nothing you can do about it?

### If your story tells you there is *nothing* you can do about a situation, it is false. You always have a choice.

#### Find A New Meaning

To create the lasting confidence you desire, you must learn how to tell a better story. You can learn to tell stories that empower you, that encourage you, that see you and your possibilities in a positive light.

One way to start shifting the stories you tell yourself is to regularly ask: *What is a better story? What is a more empowering way to see this?*

Another powerful way to shift your story is to ask yourself: *What else could this mean? What are three other ways to look at this situation?*

Try this now with the situation of the woman looking at juice in the supermarket. The old story was: *she rejected me and I’m a total loser who will never get a woman.*

The event was she grinned/grimaced and moved away. What are three things this could mean?

Don’t just wait to read the alternatives, actually think about it now!
The simplest one that comes to mind is she could be having a bad day. She could be tired, and hungry, and grumpy. Maybe it’s a preference thing. Maybe people who look like you are not her preference. Maybe being approached in a supermarket is not her preference. She goes there to shop and leave. If you were to talk to her in a bookstore she might love it, but in a supermarket she doesn’t want to be bothered.

A third meaning is perhaps she is shy. Maybe she’s uncomfortable. Maybe some attractive man comes and talks to her and she doesn’t know what to do so she gets nervous. What do people do when they’re nervous? Most people will close down and escape the situation as quickly as possible.

Whenever you notice yourself telling a negative story, you have to check it and ask yourself: Is this story helping me? Is there something else that this could mean?

The Story of Your Life

Beyond your daily stories about events happening around you, you also have a bigger story about who you are in your life. We all have a story about ourselves, where we came from, and the events that shaped us. Where we are now, where we’re going, and what is possible for us in the future, often based upon our past.

This broad story is the saga that is your life. What kind of story do you tell yourself about your life? Is it a tragedy, is it a comedy? Is it a hero’s journey, an epic tale? Are you the main character, or are you one of the supporting characters? Are you in the main plot of the story or are you on the sidelines?
Are you the hero or are you the villain? Are you the character that people love and root for, or are you the good for nothing character that can never really do much in their life and won’t amount to much anyway?

**Take Action: Write a New Story**

What has been the story of your life? Who are you? Where have you been and where are you going? What is possible for you? Are you a capable hero or an ineffective supporting character? Write out a brief version of your old story.

Once you’ve written it out, ask yourself: Is this an empowering story? Is this the story that’s going to get me to where I want to go in my life? Is this the story that gives me confidence in myself?

Now write out a new story for your life. Make it the story you want your life to follow.

Notice how you can use the same events and change the meaning to create a new, empowering story. This isn’t about blowing smoke or just some “positive thinking.” This is about being flexible in your mind to see that you can view your life through many lenses, from many perspectives. Why not pick the ones that empower you to succeed?

What is your true story? Is it a triumph? A tale of overcoming great odds and adversity to eventually achieve greatness? Is it a romance? Is it a hero’s journey?

Who is the main character? Is he strong, determined, a leader? How does he deal with setbacks, conflict, and challenges?

Write out a detailed version of a new story for your life that empowers and inspires you. Read this story over at least once a week until you believe it fully and it just becomes who you naturally are.
Step 3. DO WHAT SCARES YOU

Once you have become a good coach to yourself and you are telling yourself a better story, the most powerful way to unleash confidence is to change how you deal with the things that scare you.

When there is something in your life that you are afraid of, what is your natural impulse?

The most natural response to fear is to move away, to avoid the thing we’re scared of. It could be approaching a beautiful woman, starting up a business, or asking for a promotion. If we’re scared of it, we tend to avoid it.

If someone avoids something no matter what the cost, and has unreasonable terror about something it becomes what we call a phobia. If someone were to come to see me to treat them for a spider phobia, we would do what’s called exposure therapy where we’d help them experience the situation and see that they can handle it.

We wouldn’t take them and just throw them into a spider pit. We would use systematic desensitization, which means we expose them a little bit at a time and so they become desensitized to it. They don’t feel it as much and they’re no longer as scared of it.

For a spider phobia we would start by having them think of a spider. The next session we would work more with imagination, and then eventually we’d have them look at a picture of a spider. The next session we’d have a spider in the room in a cage. Eventually, we’d go to a pet shop and have them hold a spider until it no longer scares them to be around spiders.

This process works exactly the same when it comes to building confidence in your life. Having greater confidence means you are more free to do what you want in your life. You are more free to act without being scared.
It is important to note that fear is a natural part of being a human and everyone feels fear. The idea that men are not supposed to be afraid is a horribly unrealistic and toxic notion.

The goal is not to eradicate all fear. The goal is to be able to go after what you most want, even when fear is telling you to stop.

The Two Fears That Hold You Back

There are two main fears that hold people back. One is fear of rejection and the other is fear of failure. Both failure and rejection can trigger that terribly uncomfortable feeling in your heart and stomach that you’re bad, you’re not good enough, and that no one could possibly love you.

The idea of not being worthy of love and affection is terrifying to humans. We are social creatures and being ousted from the pack meant death in our evolutionary past. Because this feeling is so uncomfortable to us, we will do anything to avoid triggering it. As a result, we end up avoiding things that might cause rejection or might cause failure.

What happens if you try to avoid all rejection or any failure in your life?

You end up avoiding success as well. Anything that is worth having requires you to take a risk to obtain it. Whether it’s meeting a woman, developing a relationship, going on a job interview, starting a new job, or starting a new business, it always requires you to risk failure and rejection.

You must learn to move towards what you want, in spite of fears of rejection and failure.
If we took that person who was scared of spiders and we plop them down and show them a picture of one spider and then they leave, they are not cured. They have to repeatedly expose themselves to what they’re scared of.

**Approaching what scares you is not a one-time action. It is a lifestyle. It is a way of being in the world that continues to strengthen and deepen your confidence in yourself.**

Take Action: Face Your Fear

Think of one area in your life where you have consistent fear. It could be in meeting women, dating, deepening relationships, speaking up at work, calling clients, speaking in front of a group, or any other area.

Write out five things you are scared to do in this area. Pick the least scary of the five and do it sometime this week. The next week, pick the 2nd least scary thing. Do this over the course of five weeks until you have done everything on your list.

Use the example of the spider phobia to help you realize that exposing yourself to fears is a process. You don’t need to jump into the spider pit right away. In fact, doing that too soon can be counterproductive. The best approach is to gradually challenge yourself to do things that are just outside of your comfort zone.

Note: Exposing yourself to fear is an incredibly powerful tool of transformation. It can also be difficult to do by yourself. If you are struggling to do this on your own, please contact me and we can discuss ways you can get support in this process ([www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com](http://www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com))
5 Steps To Unleash Your Inner Confidence

**Step 4. THINK LESS, FEEL MORE**

One of the biggest obstacles to confidence is to be too much in your own head.

This means being lost in your thoughts during the day and not really present to what is happening around you.

Many of your thoughts are about things that are going to happen in the future, either later that day or weeks or months in advance. Your thoughts might also linger over events from the past – what happened earlier that day, months ago, or years ago with your last relationship or your first job.

Many times, the things we worry about in the future are things that never actually happen. *What if I lose my job? What if I run out of money? What if my girlfriend leaves me?*

Each of these thoughts causes us to react with fear or discomfort, even though in the present nothing bad is happening.

As Mark Twain said, “I’ve been through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened.”

We spend a lot of our energy and focus on what could happen in the future and what did happen in the past and how the past should have been different. Resisting the past or being afraid of the future is just a recipe for pain.

**Retreat To The Tower**

Getting lost in thought also happens when we want to avoid feeling something uncomfortable. Emotions like fear, shame, or inferiority can very painful. One way to escape them is to retreat to a safe distance in our minds. It’s like retreating to a tower high above our experience. From here, we can analyze what’s happening and avoid the discomfort.
You might have noticed this when you were in a bar or coffee shop and you see an attractive woman you want to talk to. But you don't go talk to her. What do you do instead? You say to yourself: *I can't go talk to her. I don't have anything to say. What am I going to say to her? I need to come up with something to say.* And so you can spend ten minutes, twenty minutes, an hour, or the entire night thinking to yourself, *I need something to say. I don't know what I would say.*

The whole time you are in your head. You are thinking, planning, and imagining all kinds of scenarios. *If I say this, she'll say that, and then I'll say this. If I say that, I might get rejected. And if she does this, then I'll get rejected for sure.*

And so you’re in your head the entire night. You’re doing this to avoid the fear that you’re feeling, to avoid rejection, to avoid failure, to avoid any painful emotions.

What you are *not* doing during this time is noticing that you’re breathing. You’re not feeling the beer that you’re holding in your hand - the coolness of the liquid and the heaviness of the glass. You’re not feeling your toes inside of your shoes. In a sense you are not fully here, in *this* moment.

There are an abundance of things that are happening right now. The more present and aware you are, the more centered you become. You can realize this moment is not as threatening or scary as your thoughts indicate.

**The biggest drain to your confidence is being stuck in your mind, stuck in your head, stuck in your thoughts.**

The more you can notice your thoughts for what they are – passing events in your own mind – the more centered and naturally confident you become. People can feel someone who is present in themselves and in the moment. There is a natural charisma and magnetism that comes from presence.
Presence In Relationships

In addition to affecting your ability to meet women and start conversations, being stuck in your mind is one of the biggest problems in relationships. One of the most common complaints in relationships that women have about the man that they’re with – their date, their partner, their husband - is that *he is not present.*

The man is often confused. He says: *What do you mean? I was there with her all day.* She says: *You were with me but you weren’t present.*

What does she mean by that? She means you were with her that day, but you were in your mind. You were thinking about what you were going to do later, about how to please or impress her. You were worrying about what could go wrong, or if she thought you sounded cool enough. Or you were thinking about something else entirely, lost in a sea of thoughts.

Developing Presence

A deep, sturdy, stable sense of confidence does not come from your thoughts – it comes from being truly present in this moment.

You can start by becoming present in your body using the exercise below. When you are present in your body, it makes you stronger, firmer, and less impacted by what goes on around you.

The next time you’re in a situation and you notice your mind grinding away on what to say to a woman, take a moment to step back and actually just *feel* into your body. Notice your breath coming in and out of your body, the weight of your body on your chair. Notice the colors, shapes, and objects around you. Notice all the sounds hitting your ears – the music, the ambient noise, the drum of many chattering voices. Simply breathe and feel your presence in this moment. How present can you become?
That’s the level of presence that you can bring. And when you’re bringing that level of presence, you’re radiating an inner confidence that is way more powerful than any thought or fear.

If you’re truly present in yourself, it goes way beyond the words you say when you speak with a woman. It is something she feels in direct response to the presence you bring. Ask any woman and she will tell you that presence is the ultimate aphrodisiac.

**Take Action: Build Your Presence Power**

The power of presence comes from being able to reside in this moment. It is a skill that is developed over time by paying attention to what is happening around you and inside of your mind and body.

You can build presence power any time throughout the day. Simply shift your attention from your thinking to your breathing. Notice what it feels like to breathe in and breathe out from moment to moment. You can direct your focus by saying to yourself: *in this moment I am breathing in. In this moment I am breathing out.*

Continue to feel your breath and start noticing sensations in your body – warmth, tingling, dampness, pressure, tightness. Notice the sounds that are hitting your hears, seeing if you can count ten distinct, difference sounds as they hit your eardrums.

It can be helpful to imagine you are a distant human ancestor in a jungle. During that time period, presence was essential to survive. See if you can tune your senses to their highest, as if your life depended on it. What colors are you seeing, what objects, what movements? What sounds, smells, tastes or you noticing?

Continue this process for several minutes, opening to whatever you notice with a nonjudgmental attitude.

To learn more about how to meditate to increase your presence power and self-confidence, go to the How To Meditate section under Free Help at [www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com](http://www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com).
Step 5. REDEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MAN

In my years of counseling work, I have met so many men who are incredibly strong, talented, attractive, articulate, capable, and effective in their careers and relationships, and yet they don’t feel confident in themselves. They don’t believe in themselves. They don’t view themselves highly. What is happening for them is they have an idea or map of how a man is supposed to be.

This list of supposed to’s is like an internal checklist that men use to determine if they’re measuring up. If you are not measuring up to your internal checklist, you feel like a failure, feel like you’re not enough, and don’t feel confident.

Confidence comes from believing in yourself, knowing that you have value, knowing that you’re worthwhile, and knowing that you have something to offer. When you don’t think you have those things, it is impossible to feel confident.

Many men have it rigged so that they cannot feel confident or good about themselves because how they’re supposed to be as a man is unachievable. These standards are often set by the culture at large and the families we grew up in.

A key step in unleashing your natural inner confidence is to examine what you believe you should be as a man. You must remove the unhealthy, unrealistic demands on yourself and replace them with supportive, realistic standards of excellence.

The Impossible Checklist

To start uncovering your internal checklist, read the following sentences and fill in the blank with whatever comes to mind. Don’t spend too much time thinking about it, just blurt out the answers as they pop into your head. List several for each sentence.
A man should *always* be ____________.

A man should never ____________.

What answers did your mind come up with?

Typically men have a checklist that says a man should *always* be strong, confident, tough, smart, cool and calm, suave, and end up on top. A man should *never* lose, get sick, get rejected, be afraid, cry, fail, give up, be angry, or just want sex.

Notice whatever answers came to you. This is your internal checklist, and how you were taught you were supposed to be as a man.

Some of these might be healthy values or guidelines to live by. Others, however, are impossible standards that are unattainable. For example, let’s say your list included: *I should never get angry, always be cool and calm, and never feel afraid.*

What happens if you are feeling afraid, or anxious, or angry? What do you do?

You might tell yourself you’re wrong for feeling this way, that you’re no good, that you’re a wimp. You might start hating yourself and want to isolate. You might lash out at those around you because you feel so bad about yourself, or you might take several drinks just to feel a bit better for a while.

**Letting Go Of Shoulds**

What if you didn’t have these demands on yourself? What if you had standards that were reasonable and supported you to be your best?

A transformative process I do with many of my clients is to help them uncover and release this rigid internal checklist. This checklist is like a box or cage that you believe you have to fit into in order to be a “good” man or worthwhile.
What if you stopped demanding you be something that your upbringing or the culture is telling you are supposed to be and actually allow yourself to be who you really are?

Ask yourself: Does my current checklist healthy and obtainable? Does it strengthen me? Does it get me to where I want to go or does it make me feel restricted, unhappy, down on myself, and unsuccessful most of the time?

If your current checklist is not serving you, you can consciously choose another way of being. Doing so will improve how you feel about yourself, help you obtain better results in your life, and dramatically increase the amount of confidence you feel on a day to day basis.

Take Action: Redefine What It Means To Be A Man

Take a moment to write out your old list checklist. Make a list of all the ways you have been telling yourself you should be or have to be in order to be a good, worthwhile person.

Look over the list and cross off anything that is unrealistic or overly rigid.

Ask yourself: What is my definition of a healthy man?

Determine for yourself what your standards are going to be. Not what society has told you, not what your dad has told you, but what you truly believe.

To me a real man is aware, firm in his commitments, loving, expressive, knows what he is feeling, has patience with himself, is vulnerable and honest, and is able to speak his mind despite how others might react. Sometimes he feels scared, angry, helpless, or horny. A real man does not attack himself for what he is feeling.

This is my definition. What is yours?
Bonus Step 6. COMPLETE SELF-ACCEPTANCE

If there is one decision that can radically change your confidence - and your entire life - it is deciding to practice complete self-acceptance.

When it comes down to it, self-confidence is self-acceptance.

If you are totally on your own side, your own best friend, your own biggest fan, then it doesn’t really matter if someone rejects you or you fall short of a goal. You know that you are a good guy and that you can always try again tomorrow.

Over the course of this book, you may have noticed that developing confidence is a skill that takes regular practice. Much like learning a guitar, you must practice regularly if you want to see your skills improve.

In fact, the first time you pick up the guitar, you’re not even going to be able to hold it, let alone make beautiful music with it. The same goes for developing confidence in an area of your life, whether it’s dating, or relationships, or speaking up in public. The first time you try to do something different, it will be like playing the guitar for the first time. It may be messy and not sound very good.

This is why complete self-acceptance is an essential part of unleashing your inner confidence. You must be able to support, love, and encourage yourself along each step of the process.

Going at this process alone can be challenging. I highly recommend becoming involved with groups, counseling, coaching, or any other form of personal development as an ongoing part of your life. The counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and coaches I admire most all have done years of their own personal work.
Conditional Self-Acceptance

The biggest obstacles to accepting yourself are the *conditions of worth* you have. These go something like this: If I do _____, then I’m worthy of love and belonging. Otherwise, I won’t accept myself.

For example:

I’ll accept myself if I can give an amazing speech and amaze everyone in the audience. Otherwise I’m a failure and I’m not good enough. I’ll accept myself when I lose 20 pounds. I’ll accept myself when I’m making $100,000 a year. I’ll accept myself when ... This is a conditional type of acceptance and it often leads to not accepting yourself most of the time.

Objections To Complete Self-Acceptance

*Wait a minute*, you might be saying. *But, isn’t that how I motivate myself? If I just accepted myself no matter what, I’d be a lazy slob! Also, what if I’m being a jerk or an asshole, I shouldn’t just accept myself then.*

These objections are very common and worth considering.

First, as far as motivation, withholding acceptance from yourself is like using a whip on a mule. It might make him move, but it certainly doesn’t make him happy. This type of motivation is like using dirty fuel in your car – it will run the engine, but it will eventually eat out your insides.

The best trainers in the world can get whales to jump through hoops and dogs to push shopping carts through a supermarket. These incredible feats are done entirely through positive reinforcement. There is no beating or intimidating the animal to make it perform. The same holds true for us.
Healthy coaching and encouragement produce better results and greater fulfillment than any sort of self-attack.

The second objection is that sometimes we are being a jerk or an asshole and we need to change what we’re doing. This is absolutely true. We all get into to moods or patterns where we can say hurtful things, avoid taking responsibility, and generally be a dog.

The purpose of complete self-acceptance is to allow us to own up to our misbehavior so we can correct it, without rejecting ourselves. In fact, the less we accept ourselves, the less responsibility we can take because we already don’t like ourselves!

The truth is, the more you accept yourself, the more you can acknowledge mistakes and shortcomings and take effective steps to correcting them.

Making The Decision

If you truly want to create a deep, lasting sense of confidence in yourself, then you must make a decision. You must commit to accepting yourself no matter what happens. No matter what you feel, do, say, or think. Even if you make a mistake, make a fool out of yourself, hurt someone’s feelings, or fall short of a goal.

From this decision you commit to accept yourself even if you’re scared, even when you have an awkward interaction, even when you embarrass yourself in front of an audience. Part of this decision is realizing that when you make mistakes and fall short is the most important time to remember to accept yourself just as you are.

If you attempt to use the five steps above without a commitment to accepting yourself no matter what, you may find your road to confidence is longer and more painful than it needs to be. I know this because that is the road I took.
Success Without Fulfillment

Many years ago, I decided I was going to develop confidence in the area of dating and relationships. I was terrified of talking to women and the only girlfriend I had was one that had pursued me. I studied everything I could on the subject and set out to increase my confidence. However, I did so without realizing one key point.

I learned this lesson the hard way when it came to women and dating. I started from a place of zero confidence in this area. I could not even start a conversation with an attractive woman, let along ask someone out for a date. I didn’t even know how the whole process worked.

I was so fed up by failed attempts with women that always seemed to end in the “friend zone” or the polite rejection after one awkward interaction. I decided to throw myself into studying the process from the inside out.

I read everything I could find on dating and relationships. I discussed my challenges in counseling and attended workshops on how to meet women and date. Through this process I realized that confidence is a skill that I can build through regular practice. This is an amazingly helpful insight, however I did not realize one key point: The journey to confidence must be supported by a commitment to accept yourself no matter what.

Without this commitment I experienced great success without feeling any different. As I learned to approach women, get phone numbers, and go on dates I still felt like I wasn’t good enough on the inside. I was always setting new goals just outside of my reach.

If I set a goal to go to a crowded shopping center and start three conversations with beautiful women, I would feel like I must achieve this goal or I was a failure.
Worse still, even if I did start three conversations, my mind would say: *Yeah, well you didn't get any phone numbers, so you're still a loser.* It was never enough.

**It did not matter how far I progressed or how well people responded to me, it was never enough because I did not accept myself.**

This is success without fulfillment, which is one of the worst forms of pain. What we are really searching for through outward success is an inner sense of fulfillment, of satisfaction and peace. And the only way to achieve this state is to commit to accepting yourself as you are right now, in this very moment.

Once I realized this, I shifted my primary focus from outer success with women to creating a deep acceptance of myself no matter what. I wrote a doctoral dissertation on self-compassion and focused my studies on what helps people accept and love themselves. This is where true confidence resides.

As I shifted my focus, I found meeting women and dating shifted entirely. I stopped planning the right line or what I needed to project in order to “make her want me.” I was able to be incredibly authentic and honest with women I was just meeting. I started saying things like: “Hi there. I was noticing you from across the way, and I find you incredibly beautiful. To be honest, I’m a little freaked out coming over to talk with you, but I just had to try. What’s your name?”

As I accepted myself more, my ability to just put myself out there radically increased. The same is possible for you, once you have made the commitment to accept yourself no matter what.
Take Action: Commit To Complete Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is not a state you achieve once and are done with. It requires a consistent effort to remember to forgive, accept, and love yourself no matter what is happening.

The biggest shift comes when you decide on a deep level to start treating yourself well no matter what. When you decide that you will no longer stand for self-hate or self-criticism.

This decision comes from realizing that life is better when you’re on your own side, and that you can achieve profoundly more when you are not battling yourself.

Are you willing to make that commitment now?

What is Your Level of Social Confidence?

The survey on the following page measures some of the major obstacles to social confidence. For each statement, simply put a check in the box that best describes how true this is for you. There are no “right” answers, just take your best guess.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 - Never</th>
<th>1 - Somewhat</th>
<th>2 - Moderately</th>
<th>3 - A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I often feel awkward and unsure of what to say when talking with new people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am concerned that people don’t like me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If someone rejects me, I feel like it’s my fault.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If someone is disappointed or upset with me, I tend to blame myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If people knew I felt nervous or shy, they would think less of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If I started a conversation with an attractive woman, she would be annoyed or freaked out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have no idea where to go to meet people (friends, dates, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I sometimes think that people aren’t really interested in what I have to say.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I find it hard to disagree with others. I often nod and agree with them (even when I secretly don’t).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>It’s difficult to speak my opinion with confidence in front of a group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable dancing when others are around.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable singing when others are around.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel like I need to earn people’s love by doing things that make them happy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I am my own worst critic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To determine your total, count up how many marks you have in the “Somewhat” category. These are worth 1 point. Marks in the “Moderately” category are worth 2 points, and those in the “A Lot” category are worth 3. Add up these numbers to get your total score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>You have few problems with social confidence. You generally know you are a worthwhile and lovable person, and you have a stable sense of who you are and what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>You are more likely to experience nervousness or discomfort, especially around meeting new people, asking someone out for a date, or speaking in front of a group. Fears and self-doubt may be holding you back from pursuing what you really want in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>You have a significant challenge with social confidence. You might find it hard to meet new people, develop the close friendships you desire, or to date and have satisfying relationships. You might even be feeling frustrated and hopeless about your ability to change things in your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-42</td>
<td>You have a substantial challenge with social confidence and it is taking a major toll on your life. It is difficult to just be yourself and at ease around others, and you might even feel very anxious or depressed. You may have felt this way for some time, and you may be assuming nothing can be done about this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many people fall into the 0-20 range. Fears and anxieties about creating connections are common for most people. However, if these fears are significantly impacting your friendships, career, or your ability to form lasting and satisfying romantic relationships, then it may be time to take action.
Do not think you have to live with these difficulties and that they are just your lot in life! There is so much you can do to drastically improve the quality of your life and your sense of well-being, happiness and fulfillment.

Email me at SocialConfidenceCenter@gmail.com or call 971 998 3330 for more information.

**The Road To Confidence**

A state of natural inner confidence is your birthright. It is entirely possible for you to completely accept all parts of yourself, believe in yourself and your abilities, and to have the courage to pursue what you most want in this life.

It is simply a matter of practice and determination.

I would be honored to help accelerate your progress along this journey. At The Center For Social Confidence, we offer classes, groups, and individual counseling and coaching sessions to help you better understand the roadblocks between you and complete self-confidence.

To learn more, please visit [www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com](http://www.SocialConfidenceCenter.com)

Good luck on your journey. May you have the courage to be who you are!

*Dr. Aziz Gazipura*