



THE POWER OF SELF-BELIEF

Our self-belief stems from our inner dialogue about our self-worth and the confidence we have in our ability. The way we feel about ourselves is reflected in our mood, the way we speak, behave, carry ourselves, and relate to others. Areas in life which can be affected by a lack of self-belief include, job satisfaction, lifestyle choices, and personal relationships. The good news is that something can be done about a lack in self-belief; it can be developed with time, effort, patience, and perseverance. **Mira Khreino** explores this fundamental aspect to success, fulfilment and happiness.



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By definition, self-belief means having confidence, faith and trust in oneself. It is based on one's feelings about one's skills, abilities, looks, and behaviours. Other contributing factors to our confidence include physical and social presence, self-reliance and independence. Our actions, body language and speech (tone, volume, hesitation) all reflect our level of confidence. In general, people who lack a solid self-belief relate to themselves more negatively, while people with a healthy sense of self-confidence are more positive about themselves and have higher self-esteem.

Most individuals suffer with a lack of self-belief at one point in their life. Recognizing that your self-belief could use a boost is equivalent to admitting

that something could improve in your life. The first step to increasing faith in oneself is to acknowledge and to take ownership of one's current low levels of self-confidence. Understanding ones starting point gives one a platform from which to grow from. From that springboard, one can start on the road to developing self-belief.

Dedication and effort are needed to self-improve, but the benefits far outweigh the initial investment. By constantly improving self-confidence, one raises ones self-image and creates a positive outlook on life, starting from within. When self-belief increases, one starts growing and developing in unexpected ways. Very often, one may even notice that one starts to attract more positive and supportive people as well.



SIGNS OF A LACK OF SELF-BELIEF:

- Uncertain of who you are or what you want
- Shy or/and uneasy in social situations
- A sense of unimportance or worthlessness
- Negative thoughts and ideas about oneself and ones abilities
- Agitation, nervousness, inability to relax around others

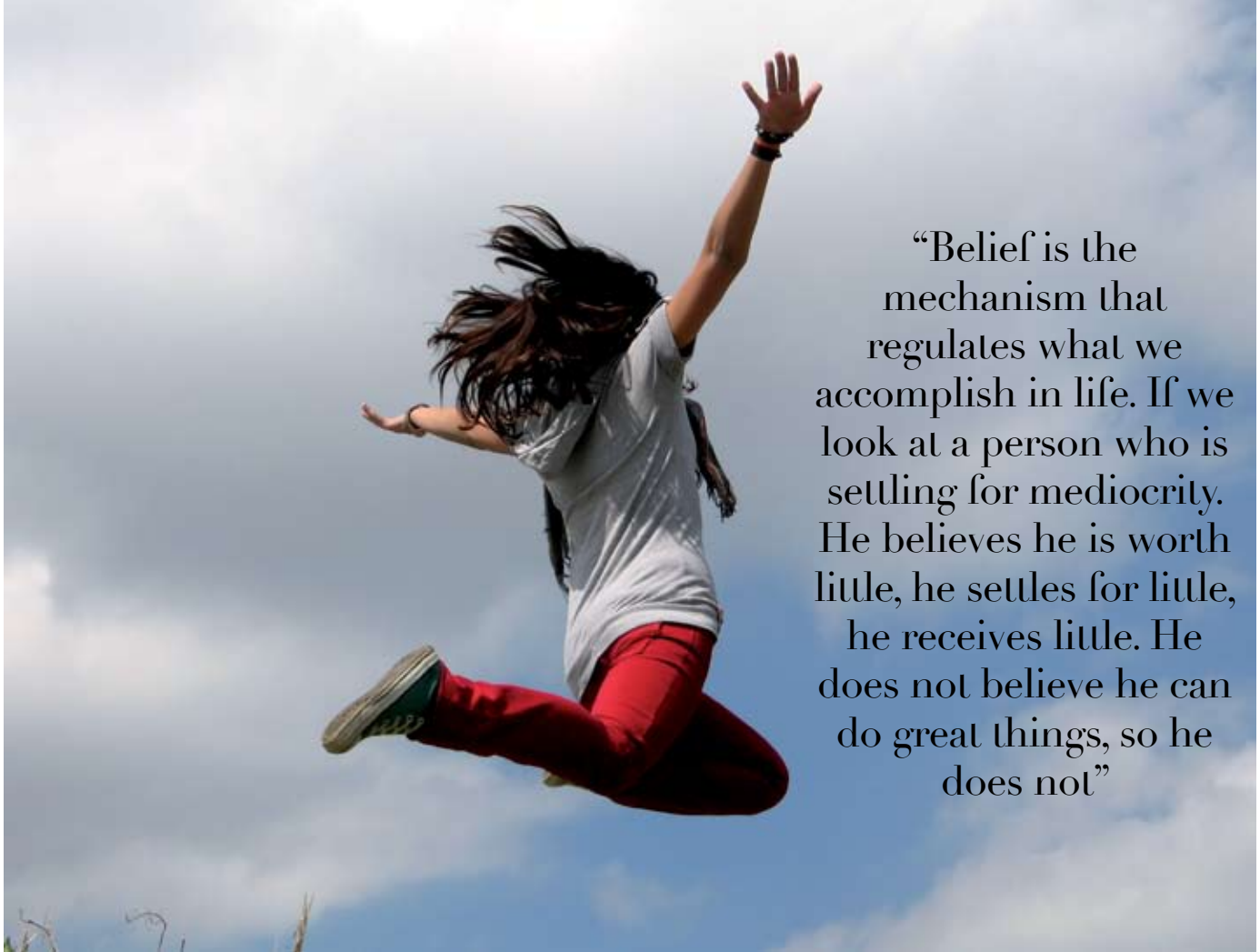
SIGNS OF SELF-BELIEF:

- Excited about new opportunities and comfortable facing new challenges
- Great sense of achievement
- Confident about ones opinions and ideas
- At ease in social situations
- Respected by other people
- Sure of oneself and what one wants

TOP TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF-BELIEF

1. Increase the things that make you feel positive and strong, and decrease the things in your life that make you feel negative about yourself, this may include relationships with people who put you down.
2. Work on positive body language. Think of smiling more, improving posture (for example, pulling shoulders back) and maintaining healthy eye contact. This will not only make you feel more confident and comfortable but will also impact people's reaction to you.
3. Do not give-up on the things you want to achieve because of challenges or difficulty. There are a number of solutions to any one problem which do not include accepting failure. Achievement and success due to perseverance and persistence give an amazing confidence boost.
4. Don't be shy about giving yourself pep talks, compliments, or a pat on the back. Give yourself credit when credit is due. Be encouraging with yourself. That may include psyching yourself up with positive messages on a frequent basis.
5. Develop and maximize your strengths. Becoming really good at the things you are already good at will give you confidence in your skills and the motivation to achieve your goals.
6. If you are going through a particularly shaky self-belief period, jot down the positives in your life and the things you are grateful for. And then write a list of all your accomplishments (you may find that you have more than you had first thought). Put both lists up in places which are clearly visible, as a positive reminder.

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7. Stepping out of your comfort zone and doing something a little daring, even scary, can do wonders for self-confidence. It may take a large push to do at first, but the rewards soon compensate for the initial discomfort. Negative habit of thinking lock us into behaviours which constrain us to our comfort zone. But very often it is when we stretch ourselves and dare to step into the unknown that we surprise ourselves with how able and capable we are.
8. Listen to your ‘inner chat’- the internal critic which makes you feel bad about yourself in specific situations. Be prepared to challenge the messages that your critic is saying about your ability or skills. Questioning negative messages we have about ourselves can help free us from self-imposed ideas which hold us back.
9. Find something that you are passionate about, something that ignites an inner curiosity and explore it. Chances are you will excel at something you are genuinely interested in, rather than something you find mundane and boring. Doing well at something you love will do wonders for your self-belief and confidence.
10. The way you speak to others will reaffirm to you the way you feel about yourself. Hearing yourself speak slowly,

- pausing to think before talking, and using a slow breath, create a sense of calm and exude confidence. They also re-confirm your own sense of confidence as you hear yourself talk.
11. Think success. When an opportunity appears think “I can do it. I will succeed.” Let positivity dominate your thinking process. Thinking success conditions your mind to create plans that produce success. Just like thinking failure conditions the mind to fail.
 12. The size of your success is determined by the size of your belief. Big goals result in big successes. Little goals produce little achievements.
 13. Don’t be too demanding of yourself, set realistic and achievable goals. If goals are unrealistic, the probability of success is very low. Even though failure in this case is a reflection of the unachievable goal rather than your competency, the fact that you have failed will impact the faith you have in yourself.

14. Acknowledge your accomplishments. Many people who lack self-belief will focus on the negative and dismiss or filter out the positive aspects of themselves. A conscious effort to identify and appreciate skills, strengths, and successes is very useful in building a more positive self-image.
15. Reduce comparing yourself to others. Comparing oneself usually lead to self-deprecation instead of self-confidence. You will always be able to find someone who is ‘better’ than you. Instead of using your time comparing yourself to others, invest it in your own self-development.
16. Be a long-life learner and look to constantly develop and grow. The more you grows as a person the more you will believe in yourself. And remember, when you have learned something new, make sure you recognize and acknowledge your accomplishment.

Being confident at work is crucial for career success and plays a massive part in the day-to-day activities of most occupations. Having a strong sense of self-belief can have a massive impact on effectiveness and enjoyment in a job. It also affects communication with friends and colleagues. Being confident in the workplace promotes focus, proactivity, and assertiveness.

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THE BENEFITS OF HAVING SELF-BELIEF

1. Self-belief helps you to spot opportunities. If you have a clear goal, but you don't actually believe you can achieve it then your mind will fail to see the opportunities around you which can help you succeed. However, if you have a clear goal and you believe you can reach it, your mind will be receptive to the elements and opportunities around you to aid your success.
2. Self-belief creates more clarity in the mind. When one lacks belief one is anxious and nervous about how to reach goals, and this sense of fear clutters the mind and makes thinking clearly more difficult. Self-belief makes us feel more relaxed which stimulates reasoning and creativity. This facilitates the process of thinking out of the box and finding creative solutions to reaching goals.
3. Self-belief is a motivator. Believing in oneself stimulates action, persistence, and perseverance. When we are motivated and believe that we can achieve our goals, challenges and hurdles become easier to overcome. They are viewed as part of the process or minor set-backs, rather than a reason to give up. Overcoming these hurdles serves to reinforce self-belief and boost confidence further.
4. Self-belief makes others believe in you and respond to you favourably. Not only do people view us in the way we view ourselves, but they also react to us in the way we expect them to. By being confident we are therefore projecting two messages, the first being, 'I value me, therefore you should value me too,' and the second 'I expect you to relate to me with value and respect, therefore you shall.' Conviction in ourselves is externally evident in the way we relate to others. For example, if you ask a person for something believing that they will give it to you, the person will react to the conviction in your voice and will be more inclined to respond favorably to your request.





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Belief is the mechanism that regulates what we accomplish in life. If we look at a person who is settling for mediocrity. He believes he is worth little, he settles for little, he receives little. He does not believe he can do great things, so he does not. He does not believe he is important, so all that he does seems unimportant. His lack of self-belief shows in his mannerisms, behaviour, speech, and body language and this reinforces his lack of confidence. He starts thinking less of himself. And since others see in us what we see in ourselves, he also grows smaller in others' estimation. This develops into a spiralling negative cycle. On the other side of the spectrum, is the person who believes he is worth much, he receives much, and does not settle for mediocrity, so other people do not give that to him. His thoughts, character, behaviour all exude confidence and importance. The world relates to him positively and he advances in life.

Our attitude and approach serves to predict our destiny. A mind filled with self-deprecating negative thoughts and doubts results in a self-fulfilling failure. Self-doubt leads to hesitation, lack of conviction, wrong choices, and sub-optimal decisions, which further feed and fuel self-doubt and diminish confidence.

By really focussing on what you want (rather than what you don't want) you can align your mind, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes with the fruition of your goals. Your efforts and concentration will all be working towards fulfilling that aim. All great achievers have one thing in common: confidence and self-belief, both of which are necessary for success and personal happiness.

When you start believing in yourself, things start to happen. You learn not to put things off until tomorrow but instead get things done today. You change things and start to get what you want from life. This self-belief releases tremendous inner power to apply yourself and accomplish your goals. ■



FIVE THINGS TO TAKE AWAY

1. If you truly believe in yourself, so will others.
2. Leading with positive thoughts make you more likely to accomplish your goals. Believe in yourself in order to start making the changes you strive for.
3. A positive mental attitude will help you overcome many obstacles by enabling you to work around them and view them as merely part of the process.
4. If you want to change your life you need to change how you think and what you do. Personal change is in your own hands.
5. Your own self-belief is the key to successful life-change, achievement, contentment, and happiness.

In order to achieve our goals, we need to believe that we can achieve them. Self-belief is the first step to achieving.