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Professional Leadership Results, Inc.

Helping you align your people with your vision



Are you sticking to your resolutions?

How to impact your self-confidence

By Libby Wagner, Founder of Professional Leadership Results

Greetings at the tail-end of January! It's a good time, with this newsletter, to check in with you to see how those promises to yourself are playing out-how about it? Are you sticking to your resolutions? Are you more organized, more time efficient, healthier, or stronger? Have you had that conversation you need to have or cleaned out that closet or sorted through those desk files?

As leaders, whenever you set goals, make resolutions or proclamations, everybody's watching. (Actually, they're always watching you, but I don't want to make you paranoid!) Do you wish you had some sort of magic pill to make you stick to these promises to yourself? A Harry Potter wand-poo! Procrastination is gone! How about an inner executive coach to prod you along and hold you accountable?

You already have the key-you may be choosing not to use it.

Believe it or not, this is all about self-confidence. That's it! There's your magic pill and special spell to cast upon yourself. So simple! So easy! I have to remind myself about this all the time, and many of you who

know me would say, "You? You struggle with self-confidence?" Doesn't make any sense, does it?

I'm fortunate to belong to an international group of independent consultants who work with their clients across the globe. We meet with our mentor, Alan Weiss, about once a year at our Mentor Summit. We look forward to these events because we get to see old friends, make new connections, and we always learn something valuable about our work, ourselves and living successful, entrepreneurial lives. All of us are committed to improving our clients' condition, and yet all of us are very different in our approaches, our business models, our areas of expertise. It is a fascinating, stimulating group of successful people. Many have lifestyles, relationships and adventures that are enviable. They are the crème de la crème.

I was sort of surprised on my first trip to the Mentor Summit to find that Alan spent one entire morning discussing the importance of self-confidence. He's very inspiring, but he's not much of a cheerleader-there is no 'rah-rah' in his approach, which is practical, and matter-of-fact, and brilliant in its simplicity. You have to do this. Stop making excuses. What's the alternative? I thought for sure the lecture was meant just for me-I was new and inexperienced and a bit frightened, actually. All the other people around me were already successful; they had MBAs from Harvard; they made seven figure salaries. He must be talking just to me.

He wasn't. I would venture to say that every year all these people show up for lots of reasons, but one important one is to remind ourselves that acting from a place of self-confidence is not only our job, but also the key to our success and happiness. If not you, then who? This is different from arrogance, pomposity, and self-centered self-absorption. It's not about putting people down or drawing attention to yourself or constantly stealing the limelight. This is about knowing what you know, figuring out what you don't, and doing something about it. You can demonstrate self-confidence and still be diplomatic, tactful and have good manners.

I won't spend time venturing into the potential causes of a lack of self-confidence or self-esteem. Sure, there are probably factors in an environment that can affect your sense of self and diminish your optimism; however, I'm not sorry to say that I have little tolerance for anyone choosing to be a victim in the sense that we might claim we have no choice, no power, no control. We always have a choice! In fact, our only choice is to choose how to respond to what happens to us-to consider our perceptions and change our minds is the mark of evolution.

How can you impact your self-confidence? How can you create this kind of change? Here are three keys:

1. Take Risks. Take risks. I'm not talking about skydiving, but you can do that if you want to! I'm talking about doing something you want to do but you keep talking yourself out of it. You keep coming up with the longest list of excuses about why you're not doing it, asking for it, or getting started. Choose to do something you're not absolutely sure of. Summon courage and consider your options. Ask for what you want. Try something new.

2. Balance Belief and Pragmatism. So, maybe you've always dreamed of something but you have no idea how to get started? Or maybe you've got something you know you need to do-it'll make a big difference in your big picture-but let's be realistic, you don't have a clue! First, believe in yourself: don't waste a lot of time coming up with your list of non-existent or minimal qualifications, just believe that if you think you can do this, there's probably an indication that you can. Second, figure out what you don't know so you can find out, research, consult an expert, or get a mentor. Talk to others who've done it and find out what they learned and what advice they might have. Or, take a class, read a book, figure it out!

3. Go. Go! It's just so hard to convey this idea without borrowing Nike's "just do it!" It's a brilliant phrase and I for one am happy it joined the vernacular. What on Earth are you waiting for? Stop standing in your own way! Take baby steps if you have to, but go! Don't wait until you think you've got more money, more time, more smarts, less weight, yada yada yada. There's never a perfect time. Now is the perfect time.

Funny thing about self-confidence-it definitely grows and changes. You can build it, nurture it, diminish it, challenge it, re-invent it. The key, of course, is YOU. You are the reason your resolutions and proclamations will come true or not. It's not the weather, your spouse, your boss or the political climate. You have to say 'yes' and 'no' so that you can do the things you need to do for yourself. I guess this is the one time I can actually say, "Hey! It is all about you! ❖"

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