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**Ashley
Korin
McLean**

A Guide to Building Confidence

THE FIRST EDITION

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A Guide to Building Confidence

The First Edition

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To my friends and family, thank you for your love, support and encouragement.

This book is dedicated to my loving Husband who inspires me every day. Thank you for pulling me over the finish line. I love you.

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Introduction

Be humble, for the worst thing in the world is of the same stuff as you; be confident, for the stars are of the same stuff as you.

| Nicholai Velimirovic

This book on confidence has been a challenge that I have wanted to accomplish for the past four years. My personal journey from a timid teenager to a confident speaker and author is a story I want to share with others. I also want to provide insight and a useful guide on this transitional journey that one takes to arrive at their confident self.

When trying to piece together this book in my mind, the trouble that I was having was not the composition or finding inspiration, it was the task of expressing my concept of confidence in a way that was relatable to the reader and distinguishable from all of the other confidence or “self-help” books, as most are referred. I have always been a firm believer that if something is worth saying, it should be stated in the best possible way as to resonate strongly.

For me, this is more than just a book; it is a physical testament to how far I have come along in my personal journey of becoming more confident. It also highlights, on a personal level, how much further I have to go. Even those situations that are familiar can still throw you a curve ball and rattle your nerves. The only instance where someone may think that they have reached the proverbial confidence mountaintop is if they have stopped challenging themselves to achieve greater.

There was a time where I would rather run and hide than to speak out, share my opinions with others or even engage in something seemingly as simple as reading aloud in front of a classroom. I can recall in the latter parts of elementary school, when given the task of reading an essay in front of others, I would constantly second guess myself. Although I felt prepared and knowledgeable on the topic, I would allow doubts and uncertainty to creep in, ultimately forcing my confidence to waiver.

For many years I allowed what others thought of me or what they may have thought to dictate my actions, holding me back, denying others the opportunity of knowing who I was and keeping me from gaining close relationships. In my sophomore year in high school, I had the most incredible revelation. I realized that the negative opinions and thoughts I convinced myself that everyone held, were only a figment of my imagination. I was projecting my own negative thoughts of myself onto others and ultimately using that as an excuse to not try as hard, or work as diligently as I should.

It takes a lot of strength and courage to internally look within ourselves and analyze our negative thoughts. When we can be truthful with ourselves and identify the real issues that plague us, only then can we start to plan a real solution that will lead us to become happier and more self-assured in life.

What I would encourage you, the reader, to understand if not anything else, is that confidence is a never ending journey. You will find at times in life you have cleared one obstacle just to turn around and see an even larger obstacle awaits.

Understand that you will never be completely confident in every arena or situation in life; there's always room for growth and improvement. You become confident in small intervals in the same way a baby learns to walk, one tiny step at a time. Also like a baby when they fall, stumble or hurt themselves, we can become traumatized or withdrawn after a bad experience where our confidence is bruised.

How do we hold fast to our confidence in the moments in life that matter most to us? From big moments in life which can include school or work-related presentations or speaking engagements, to our smaller life moments such as the first day of class or an introduction at networking event, it is important to realize your potential and believe in yourself without question. In these moments our confidence is put to the test and with any test, the best results come if you are prepared with your confidence game plan.

The goal of this book is to be simplistic in providing useful tips, tools and strategies that will help you in your big and small moments. With relatable and straight to the point content, it is also my aim to enclose information in this guide that will transcend across an audience of whom vary at different levels on the confidence spectrum.

To close, I hope you, my most gracious audience, are able to receive the message of confidence that I have encoded into this book for you. Please pass it along to others who you think it may help. You can always come back to this guide when you need a reminder or feel as though you are off track.

Best wishes to you!

Confidence is Everything

If you have no confidence in self you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence you have won even before you have started.

| Marcus Garvey

What is confidence?

The definition of the word confidence will have a different meaning to different people depending on their experiences in life. Typically, confidence is defined as having assurance in something or someone, while self-confidence is one's overall belief in their abilities and talents. Although often linked, confidence and self-esteem differ in a few ways.

Confidence is the general term we use to describe how we feel about our ability to perform roles, functions and tasks. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves; the way we look and think, or whether or not we feel worthy or valued.

Confidence can also be interpreted as the ability to be tenacious and persistent at any task attempted. Confidence is not arrogance or hubris; in comparison, arrogance is having unmerited confidence.

People who constantly brag or exaggerate are usually masking their insecurities and lack of self-confidence. Confidence is something that comes from within and does not have to be voiced. Those possess real confidence do not brag or exaggerate accomplishments.

Confident people typically have, what I like to call, a nonchalant, matter-of-fact confidence, sometimes also referred to as a humble disposition. They rarely concern themselves with negativity or what others may think of them. They possess a strong balance of humility and self-assurance which allow them to embrace their talents and strengths. When one is truly confident, they can admit to mistakes without feeling inferior or as though they are a failure.

Benefits to being confident include:

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- » Motivational drive and determination to create our own path.
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- » Helps us to take life altering risks, e.g. changing jobs or careers, moving to a new city, etc.
-
- » Allows us to experience greater levels of mental, internal (spiritual) and physical freedom.
-
- » An armor in battle against opposition and negativity.
-
- » Helps us recognize and respect our abilities and successes.
-
- » Allows us to be comfortable with uncertainty and the unknown.
-
- » Prepares us to handle and overcome mistakes, mishaps or failures.
-
- » Upward mobility in academics and at work.
-
- » Ultimate control over our lives.
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