

How authentic can you be without self-confidence?

Authenticity is a key ingredient for many other qualities, such as trust, vulnerability and even courage. But this is exactly the snag: authenticity requires self-confidence and to a certain extent these qualities are circular, i.e., no trust and vulnerability without authenticity, but equally true: no authenticity without trust and vulnerability. Where can we start from here? – Only from the point of self-confidence! A self-confident person has no fear to show up, to fail, to get up and to fail again. She trusts the universe to be a good place and that at the end, things will fall into place. Also, a self-confident person dares to show himself with all good and bad sides, knowing that the strengths need to match the success factors and weaknesses naturally come with the package. A self-confident person accepts his “finiteness”, realizing that she is not omnipotent and has her limitations. Just like everybody else. Hence, no false pretence, no over-promising and no sacrificing boundaries for short term results or for being liked (nota bene for the wrong reasons). Thus, it pays to work on a healthy self-confidence, i.e., feeling good without being perfect. How do we do this?

The lack of self-confidence has many origins. One of them is growing up with conditional love. Conditional love means that we must “earn” love. It also means that we are not loved for just being, but for delivering and performing. Especially intelligent, gifted, and talented young human beings realize very quickly how to “earn” this love and get into a mode of not only satisfying their stakeholders (usually parents and teachers) but creating great enthusiasm in them. Do you recognize the pattern? Growing up like this means that we become very performant, often very successful, but at the same time we also know that if we fail creating this enthusiasm with our “customers”, we lose out on love and recognition. Since nobody can outperform on a constant basis and without limitation, we find ourselves in a trap and lose confidence. The imposter-syndrome

tends to become very probable, and in such a case our self-confidence fades. People without self-confidence have, however, a real advantage: they can be manipulated much easier. But then, cannibals prefer people without spine, but you do not want to give up the great achievement of having a backbone, just to be liked by cannibals – unless you are one yourself.

Let's reverse this fatal cycle: Enjoy the presence of friends (people who know you and still like you), seek your boundaries and willingly accept them, relish in your finiteness, and grow from there and do not accept anyone to take advantage of you or to treat you badly. You deserve help and respect, and you deserve to be loved – not because you overdeliver until burnout, but because you are a human being, and you do the same for others too.

