

Building the Confidence Characteristic



This characteristic helps you:

- accurately assess your capabilities and skills
- believe in yourself when facing uncertainty
- persist in the face of failure and disappointment
- see how to influence your own environment
- view yourself as capable of meeting challenges

You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- lack confidence in your own abilities when facing new situations
- perceive yourself as having failed at important tasks in the past
- avoid situations in which success depends heavily upon your own capabilities
- spend a lot of energy worrying about how to avoid failure when change occurs



Developing Learning Goals

When facing a challenge, some people adopt *performance goals*, which focus on demonstrating a certain level of competence. Others adopt *learning goals*, which focus on increasing their capability compared to where they are now. Learning goals are generally more helpful than performance goals during change. Why?

- People with *performance goals* often define setbacks as *failures* that are due to *lack of ability* and become *discouraged*. They focus on the gap between their “ideal” level of performance and their current level. They often focus attention on “looking good” to themselves and others.
- People with *learning goals* tend to see setbacks as *information* about the *effectiveness of their strategies* and become *motivated to keep trying*. They focus on the progress compared to their previous level of performance. They understand that learning new skills often requires going through a phase of awkwardness, confusion, and failure.

Example: Ayesha was moving into a new role that required her to give a number of public speeches. The first time she did this, she lost her place in her notes twice, told a joke that didn't make people laugh, and felt awkward. She spent time afterward fretting and feeling bad because she hadn't done it perfectly. Before her second speech, a friend helped her set a learning goal—to try out a couple of new ways of engaging her audience and ask a couple of colleagues to attend and give her constructive suggestions. Although there were a few awkward moments in the talk, she came away with several ideas to try the next time.

Try It Yourself

1. Identify a skill or capability you would like to develop. Think about the next occasion you will have to practice this skill.
2. How can you use this situation as an opportunity to stretch yourself and learn something new?

Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ If your first reaction to something unfamiliar is “I can't do that,” try saying “How do I learn to do that?”
- ✓ If you feel like you are being attacked or victimized, ask yourself “how can I be influential in this situation?”