



# Confidence Compounds:

## *The Impact of Boldy Seizing Opportunities*

By Jill Johnson

One of the most significant leadership skills you need to develop is your confidence. It is an essential core leadership competency. Confidence allows you to have impact far beyond your title or level within your organization. Building your confidence requires a disciplined focus on seeking and accepting bold opportunities to help you reach for higher rungs of influence and impact. You don't need to make huge leaps or take big risks, but each small effort or success will build your confidence over time. As your confidence compounds, you will find you can do vastly more than you ever dreamed was possible. There are three keys to build your confidence; practice, preparation and your presentation.

### **Confidence is a Skill You need to Practice**

Just as with any new skill, you have to practice it over and over for it to become something you can do with ease. The key is to identify what skill you need to master next. Opportunities to practice new skills are all around you. You should plan to practice your new skills both inside and outside of work.

Find assignments you can take that will get you in front of more people and augment your experience. If someone you respect asks you to do an assignment or join a committee, say "yes" to it. Tell people what you want to work on next. Practice saying things before you ever need to—or feel ready to—say them in front of others. Put yourself forward for consideration whether it is a board appointment or your next job or to receive an award!

Getting the opportunity is one thing—what do you do with it when you get it is even more important. It is the consistency of your efforts on practicing new skills that builds your confidence. This consistency is necessary before you can ever rely on it. You want this new skill to become so natural that you don't even have to think about it. It just becomes a part of you. When you consistently deliver your best, you will feel like you can handle anything that comes at you.

Don't expect to be confident in the beginning. Remember that all skills build in small cascades. Often we think we are at a plateau because we are not making larger moves. At that point, you are likely growing in a spiral that is just too subtle for you to see just how far you have really come. You are deepening your abilities with your practice. Others will see your growing confidence too.

## **Preparation is Necessary - Do the Hard Work**

Most people want to take shortcuts. The more detailed and thorough your preparation, the greater the likelihood you will have success. Preparation is especially essential to having confidence in yourself, especially when you are dealing with power players.

Don't wing it when you have a big meeting. Take the time to thoughtfully prepare well ahead of time. That will let you practice and adjust. When you do that, you will know your material cold and be able to respond effectively to questions and challenges.

Take calculated risks and do things you don't expect will give you a big win. What do you have to lose? Just keep trying as each attempt is building your skill and preparing you for the next opportunity. Leverage everything you have in your arsenal to build your confidence and give you a boost to try something bold. Bring all of your skills with you as you move through life!

When you have the chance to make your dream come true, grab it with both hands. Don't let the golden handcuffs of thinking you should stay where you are hold you back from fully embracing your success. Don't let your fears psych you out before you even see what you are truly capable of. Tell yourself, "Yes, I can! I will. I am. I'm gonna!"

But remember, not everything you try will work ... but that does not mean you should stop your efforts. Build your confidence and your future by laying down a solid foundation of preparation.

## **Presentation – Let People See You**

To ever be noticed, you need to step out in front and allow people to see you. You need to identify, enhance and believe in your own leadership abilities. If you don't, why should anyone else? Don't assume that people will recognize and reward your talents.

Your posture and facial expressions play an important role in becoming more confident. You need to look, act and speak with confidence and clarity. People who project confident body language are listened to more carefully. Standing tall or sitting up straight when you speak helps convey an air of confidence too.

Make sure you control your emotions rather than let your emotions control you. Giving an over the top or hysterical comment is going to minimize the confidence people have in you. Be measured and mindful of how you are appearing to others.

The gap between our dreams and believing we can achieve them is confidence. We all get stuck at various times in our lives. We all have self-doubts. Self-doubt is poison to confidence.

Your confidence will fluctuate. Sometimes you will feel like you can conquer anything and other times you will feel like you should have just stayed in bed. When this happens, there is something going on deep within you. That is the time to step back and reflect, to reach out to confide in a trusted confidant, or just allow yourself to embrace the stillness of a momentary plateau.

## **Final Thoughts:**

Confidence is something you work on your whole life. So continue to try new things! Stay resilient, even when you think you cannot. Remember the compounded impact of taking small bold actions that don't take a lot of time can morph into amazing opportunities with the potential to transform your future. Don't waste any more time. Take control of your destiny! Think big and be bold!

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Jill Johnson is the President and Founder of Johnson Consulting services, a highly accomplished speaker, and an award-winning management consultant. Jill helps her clients make critical business decisions and develop market-based strategic plans for turnarounds or growth. Her consulting work has impacted nearly \$4 billion worth of decisions. She has a proven track record of dealing with complex business issues and getting results. For more information on Jill Johnson, please visit [www.jcs-usa.com](http://www.jcs-usa.com)