

Personal Mastery and Self-Confidence: A Key to Success

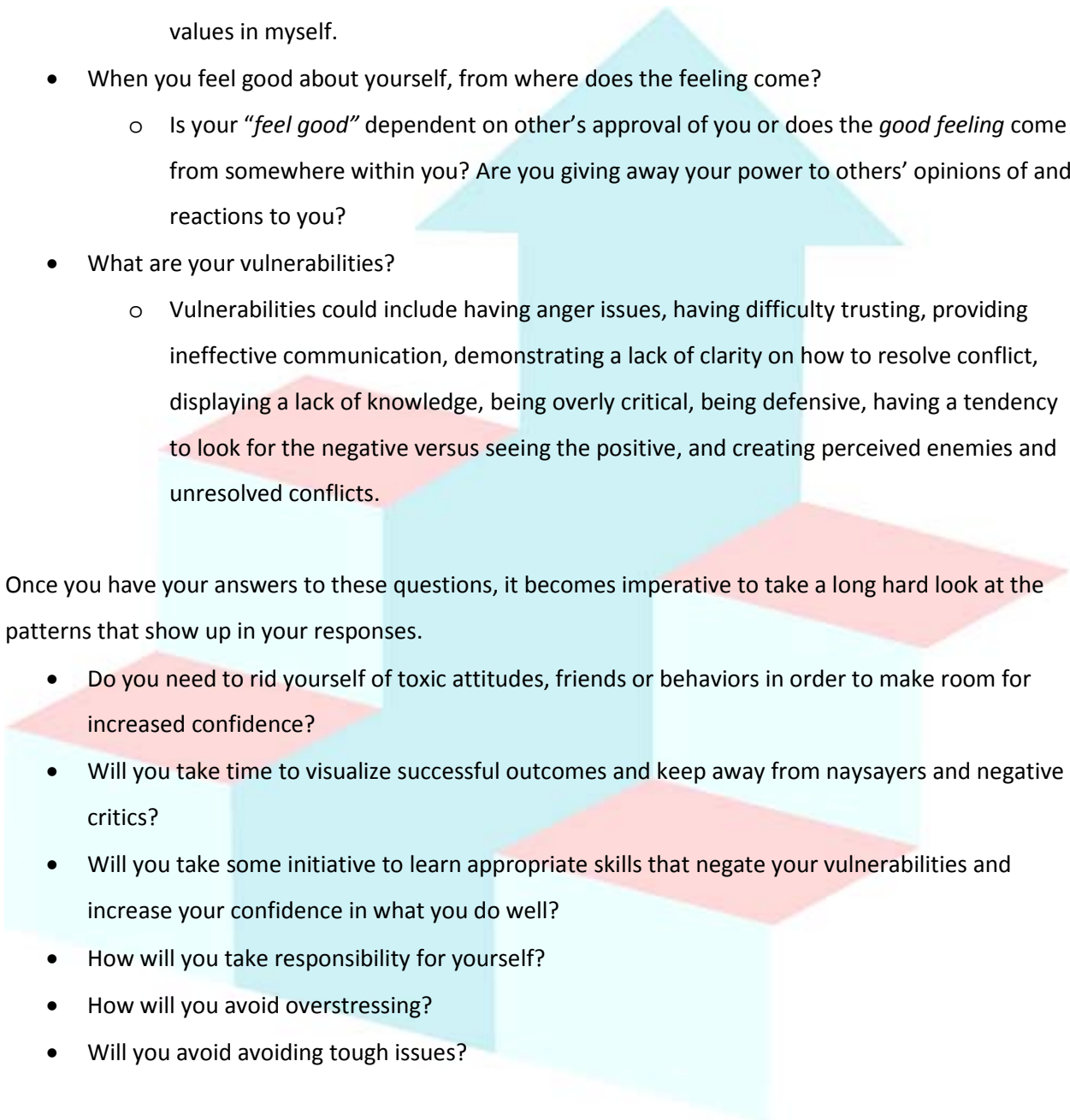
*"Stop thinking in terms of limitations and start thinking in terms of possibilities."
— Terry Josephson 21st-century motivational author —*

A new year always seems to bring out the need to improve our desires to start something new. Personal Mastery is the second of the five disciplines defined by Senge (1990) as necessary for any successful transformation effort whether personal or professional. It has been suggested personal mastery includes having an individual vision, being able to see current reality clearly and having the determination to make a commitment to get the results you want. As one learns more and experiences more successes, self-confidence strengthens and fear diminishes.

Self-confidence is one's assessment of their own self-worth, and it is what allows you to take risks. As a self-confident person, I know if something goes wrong, my good self-confidence will help me make things right. Self-confidence is based in reality rather than as "pie-in-the-sky" or wishful thinking. A track record of success and accomplishment breeds more confidence, therefore, being prepared, having sound knowledge, wisdom and realistic expectations are the building blocks for developing self-confidence

So how does one go about increasing self-confidence? First, keep in mind, like most measures that lead to genuine change, personal mastery and increasing self-confidence is a process. You cannot be inconsistent or impatient. One way to begin the process is by asking and answering the following questions:

- What do you like about yourself?
 - Positive self image is a reflection of the mental picture one has of oneself. Self-image may be defined by what is "real" and what is ideal.
 - It always seems easier to express what you don't like about yourself before you share what you do like. Here are some suggestions: Do you like your optimism, your high energy and enthusiasm? What about an ability to see the good before seeing the "not so good" in yourself and others? What is it you really like about yourself?
- What do you do well?

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- Everyone has gifts and talents – no exceptions. What you do well is generally associated with the compliments you receive from others.
 - What do you value (may be understood by what you value about others)?
 - I value wisdom, kindness, compassion and helpfulness in others, and I appreciate those values in myself.
 - When you feel good about yourself, from where does the feeling come?
 - Is your “*feel good*” dependent on other’s approval of you or does the *good feeling* come from somewhere within you? Are you giving away your power to others’ opinions of and reactions to you?
 - What are your vulnerabilities?
 - Vulnerabilities could include having anger issues, having difficulty trusting, providing ineffective communication, demonstrating a lack of clarity on how to resolve conflict, displaying a lack of knowledge, being overly critical, being defensive, having a tendency to look for the negative versus seeing the positive, and creating perceived enemies and unresolved conflicts.

Once you have your answers to these questions, it becomes imperative to take a long hard look at the patterns that show up in your responses.

- Do you need to rid yourself of toxic attitudes, friends or behaviors in order to make room for increased confidence?
- Will you take time to visualize successful outcomes and keep away from naysayers and negative critics?
- Will you take some initiative to learn appropriate skills that negate your vulnerabilities and increase your confidence in what you do well?
- How will you take responsibility for yourself?
- How will you avoid oversteering?
- Will you avoid avoiding tough issues?

All this talk about confidence leads to other questions. What about over confidence or under confidence? *Over-confidence* takes too much for granted and could result in lower success rates while *under-confidence* breeds fear and insecurity. For those who are under-confident, in order to stay “safe”, the status quo must be kept because confidence is too low to take risks. Is it really possible to be more

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confident? Well success begets confidence. If you focus on what you like, what you do well and what you value, over time you will see striking changes in your attitude and behaviors. Avoid comparing yourself to others. Do what YOU love and BE who you are. Another tip: Do something to help someone else succeed. You cannot go wrong when you reach out to make a difference for another person.

Overall, when self-pity is replaced with self-confidence, *fear* weakens and eventually fades away. Welcome hard questions that help you get where you want to be. Hold yourself accountable to improve your confidence and don't buy into negative thoughts that get in the way of your transformation. If you do not believe you have the right to be happy, healthy, and treated with dignity and respect, then you may never develop the confidence you need to find the success you want. The quest for personal mastery never ends. Personal mastery builds confidence and shatters fears; it breeds commitment and erases contempt while producing real learning. Henry David Thoreau said it best, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you've imagined."

. I am looking forward to working with each of you to confidently move closer to your personal and professional goals this year. Happy 2010 to each of you!

Successfully yours,

Dr. B

About Dr. B and Step Up To Success!

Step Up to Success! is a consulting firm that focuses on organizational strategies for leaders, teams and individuals resulting in highly committed, highly energized, and high performing teams. For more than 25 years, Dr. Linda Burrs has brought her rich dynamic approach to the corporate and professional coaching and training arena. The breadth of her experience crosses all walks of social and organizational life including law firms, technology organizations, educators, business professionals, leadership groups and non-profit groups.

Dr. Burrs designs and delivers targeted and successful coaching interventions and programs designed to *measurably improve personal, leadership and organizational performance*. Her experience, enthusiasm, and high energy provide the foundation for your memorable, life-changing, inspirational experience. When you attend a Step Up To Success! Program, you walk away with improved communication skills, better self-management skills, enhanced interpersonal skills and a clearer understanding of your individual strengths and how they contribute to your success both organizationally, professionally, and personally.