

# “Help me feel more confident!”

We could all use an extra boost of can-do! Here, experts share easy ways to do hard things and increase your joy, resilience and well-being

### Start small

#### Jump-start action

While we tend to think that confidence spurs us to act, it's actually the other way around: *Action* boosts motivation, says expert Jennifer Shannon. That's why she suggests a “5-minute jump-start.” Take any task, even something as simple as browsing a dating site, and set a timer for 5 minutes. “This allows you to reward yourself for getting started, not getting it done—that's where confidence begins.”

#### You can do hard things

To increase grit—the passion and perseverance to set long-term goals—just “chunk” tasks into more manageable parts, says expert Louisa Jewell. “For a long time, I believed I could never write a book,” she says. “So I started with a paragraph, then I posted an article on a friend's blog. Every time you

consciously tell yourself, ‘I wrote a paragraph,’ ‘I wrote an article,’ you're sending a message to your brain that short-circuits ‘imposter syndrome’ by convincing yourself that you *can* do bigger things.”

#### Find clues in details

Rather than give “luck” credit for your successes, acknowledge that you moved the needle, urges Jewell. “And if something went great, ask for feedback to learn what exactly made it go well,” she says. “Once you know, you can replicate that, building your confidence.” The same principle applies to criticism: Getting specific feedback helps you focus on *process* over outcome, increasing your willingness to try again.



### Get inspired

#### Tap your think tank

We could all use a “confidence klatch,” a small group of friends to lean on, says Jewell, who meets with hers once a month and to whom she credits with helping her through a divorce. “I remember a friend said to me, ‘Let's go for a walk; I'm seeing you doubt yourself and I don't think it's good for you.’” When it comes from someone you trust, you're much more open to advice that lifts you up.

#### Call it play

It sounds so simple, but just calling a new challenge “play” or an “experiment” increases your can-do instantly. “This opens you up to possibility, taking the stress off of your shoulders,” explains Jewell. “You're much more confident

and assured when your brain is in a positive place.”

#### See the happy future

Perhaps the most powerful way to boost confidence is to reframe failure, says expert Catherine Tinsley, Ph.D. In a yearlong field experiment she conducted with Tupperware, the sales force was given two different video messages—half watched a video about how a “failure” is future success in disguise. The other half heard a more typical message about what a great place Tupperware is to work. After six months, the sales force that heard the “future success” message had 22% higher sales and 27% more productivity. Says Tinsley, “Just normalizing failure increases our desire to try, and that's what courage is: faking it until you feel it.”



## Our expert panel



**Jennifer Shannon, LMFT,** author of *Don't Feed the Monkey Mind*, is a psychotherapist specializing in anxiety. More at [JenniferShannon.com](http://JenniferShannon.com).



**Louisa Jewell, MAPP,** is the author of *Wire Your Brain for Confidence* and host of *The Awesome Project*, a new Audible Originals Podcast series.



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