

3 Step System to a more confident and authentic you.

Have you spent most of your life fitting in? Are you who you should be? Or who you want to be?

Being confident and authentic is much more interesting than revealing who you are; fitting in is so tempting to do. However, being authentic is the only doorway to oneself.

When I decided to establish Protea Psychotherapy Practice, it was scary. Doing anything new can be scary for me, you know just putting oneself out there to the elements and judgements of others can feel somewhat vulnerable. I never wanted to place myself in situations where my vulnerabilities could be exposed. Hence, I often prodded along like most, repeating the same cycle over and over again. Not necessarily because I wanted to but because it is comfortable. Guess I was not being 'authentically' me.

Being authentic isn't about revealing who I am. It's about being the author of myself. Having the freedom to create myself is one of my most precious gifts, but can also be a difficult gift to live with at times.

“I can do and be ANYTHING.” Anything! Anything? Anything?!

“Can I REALLY?” Really? Really! Really?!

What is authenticity?

A common **definition** of "**authenticity**" in **psychology** refers to the attempt to live one's life according to the needs of one's inner being, rather than the demands of society or one's early conditioning.

Now! This is where confidence is needed to facilitate the 'authentic' you.

What is confidence?

Confidence can be described as a belief in one's ability to succeed. Striking a healthy balance can be challenging but too much of it and you can come across as cocky and stumble into unforeseen obstacles, while having too little can prevent you from taking chances and seizing opportunities - in school, at work, in your personal life, social life and beyond.

I guess confidence is that elusive factor that everyone admires and everyone wants. At some point in your life you have questioned your own level of confidence and wished it was higher. Right? Hence you have opted in for my 3

Step System. I frequently tell others that their level of confidence impacts the quality of the decisions they make about their lives. If we believe the theory that suggests that we attract into our lives who we are - then creating and sustaining high levels of confidence is vital to our well-being.

It's a well-received compliment to be told how confident I am. I often smile to myself knowing this has not always been the case and is not always the fact when I am being given such compliment.

There is a saying, 'fake it until you make it', and this could be applied to one's presentation in confidence. However, I am not here to teach you how to fake it but instead how to apply yourself and become more confident by working through this 3 step process to finding that confidence within you; accessing your truth and live in your purpose - fully embracing the authentic you. Being UNAPOLOGETICALLY you.

Confidence isn't something you're born with. And confidence isn't something only a small portion of society is blessed with. Nobody is blessed or born with self-confidence. I'm no exception. I had to develop my self-confidence like all other aspects of development. And that fact hasn't changed. Increasing confidence is an ongoing task we all must pursue in all areas of our lives.

It's easy to look at people like Oprah, or whoever you believe radiates confidence, only to feel insecure and inadequate in comparison. Oprah (as well as everybody else) had to build the confidence muscle and exercise it relentlessly to be as confident as she is. So you're not helping yourself by comparing. You're just getting in your own way.

Based on my experience I have prepared a strategy on *three steps to build your self-confidence*. Give these a try, and you will establish an understanding of 'confidence and authenticity' and how you can use them together to facilitate your progress.

Step 1.

Renew your mind.

1. Watch your intake. What you read, watch and listen to affects your mindset. If you are 'over-dosing' on soaps and reality TV, chances are you are also indulging in gossip, adding to the rumour mill.

Challenge: reduce the number of hours of TV you watch each day. Read a book or magazine about a topic you are interested in. Listen to a different radio station or genre of music you have not listened to before.

Reason: to challenge the beliefs you hold and raise your awareness of

new and different things.

2. Spend some time being quiet. Spend an allocated period of time (15 minutes is ok as a start) being quiet and just meditating (or praying - if this is your belief) about your life.

Challenge: To remove yourself away from others for periods of time.

Reason: to focus on the power of silence and improve your levels of concentration.

3. Practice, practice and practice some more

“Do it again. Play it again. Sing it again. Read it again. Write it again. Sketch it again. Rehearse it again. Run it again. Try it again. Because again is practice, and practice is improvement, and improvement only leads to perfection.”
-- Richelle E. Goodrich

A Personal Example

To expand my business, I decided to upscale my marketing by making YouTube videos and Facebook live recordings to put myself out there. Since then I've made a few series videos, live streaming and live audio broadcasts on our social media platforms. Increased my visibility on Twitter and Instagram. As a result, I am a lot more comfortable on camera, now that I have practiced that many times. My self-confidence has increased because of it, and talking on camera feels a lot more like a conversation for me now. And yet there's still more confidence to build, mould and grow with regards to video marketing. So I'll keep at it — I'll keep practicing.

Challenge: If you're not confident on a particular task then practice relentlessly. For example: If you're not confident at writing, write as many blog posts, stories, books and articles as you can. If you're not confident talking to new people, make the effort to talk to new people often.

Reason: Practice is the key to building self-confidence, and you've got to do it non-stop.

4. Believe in yourself. One of the key steps involved in raising your level of confidence is to believe it for yourself. You need to believe, accept and be in no doubt that you are a confident person. Spend time imagining you at your absolute best. How would you talk, respond to problems, dress and who would you hang out with?

Challenge: value the time that you spend doing this process.

Reason: to embed the belief within your mind that you are confident.

Step 2.

Change/adjust your peer groups

1. **Try a friends audit.** When was the last time you did a 'valuable friends' audit? I did. What do you mean? I hear you whisper. I mean have you ever taken the time to re-evaluate your friendships? Are there people around you that are constantly negative, pour cold water over your positive ideas, are miserable and fickle? Are these the kind of people that can help you to grow in confidence?

Challenge: be honest about the value of the friends you have and make some bold decisions.

Reason: to remove yourself from negative influences and environments.

2. **Take a look around for people you admire.** Have someone in your group (or circle) that you admire for their skills or their achievements. Observe the way they handle conflict, face new challenges and communicate with people.

Challenge: Attend a club/association/group associated with a hobby/topic you are interested in.

Reason: to meet new people that are different to your current circle of friends

3. **Ask More Often.** This has personally been an issue for me until I started asking more often. Asking is something that's so powerful yet so scary to do, because of our own personal 'What-If theories'.

Challenge: Push your *What-If* stories aside and commit to *asking* more often.

- Ask for help when you need it. Ask for advise on how to do something better.
- Reach out to someone in your circle/industry, and ask for advice.
- Ask for directions when you're a little lost.
- Ask for support when you're a little overwhelmed.
- Ask for (constructive) feedback on a project you're working on.
- Ask questions. Just simply ask.

Reason: By asking more often you'll build up your communication skills and will build your self-confidence as a result.

The more comfortable you feel with asking, the more confidence and support you'll gain in the process.

Step 3.

Letting Go off the past.

- 1. Identify that key person (or key people) that you believe upset you or hurt you in the past.** Write a short letter detailing how you feel and then conclude by stating that you forgive them and now you are letting this go. You can seal the envelope or throw it away - but in any event this is a releasing process and you are saying goodbye.

Challenge: to be honest as you write - allowing all your feelings to be recorded.

Reason: to pour out those negative feelings of betrayal, hurt, mistrust and bitterness.

- 2. Identify people that you may need to apologize to and go and do it.** You can make a phone call, send an email, write a letter or speak to them in person. Don't let this shadow hang over you any longer. Release yourself from this burden.

Challenge: be honest about your own shortcomings.

Reason: to let go of history and start afresh.

- 3. Acknowledge Your Accomplishments**

“By taking the time to stop and appreciate who you are and what you've achieved — and perhaps learned through a few mistakes, stumbles and losses — you actually can enhance everything about you. Self-acknowledgment and appreciation are what give you the insights and awareness to move forward toward higher goals and accomplishments.”
— Jack Canfield

If you don't acknowledge your accomplishments, you won't know what you're capable of. If you don't know what you're capable of, there's nothing to be confident about.

Challenge: The size or impact of your accomplishments doesn't matter. What matters is being aware of your accomplishments and celebrating them.

- If you've done a charity run, *acknowledge it*.
- If you're in a relationship that works, *acknowledge it*.
- If you're running a successful business, *acknowledge it*.
- If you're a great parent and your kid/s love you, *acknowledge it*.
- If you've completed a course and excel in your field, *acknowledge it*.

Accomplishments come in all shapes and sizes. Acknowledging your accomplishments are completely different to using them to create your identity. I recently did a live audio about 'you are not your circumstances. You are your possibilities'. You are welcome to check this out here.

Reason: Don't take your accomplishments for granted — your confidence will *benefit* and you will thank yourself for it.

4. **Clear out old letters, cards, photos, texts.** belongings that have negative or hurtful links for you. Clearing out your closet is therapeutic and a part of the letting go of your past process.

Challenge: be brave enough to get rid of those things.

Reason: to create space for new and positive things to come into your life.

Tips

1. Making small changes each day leads to massive transformation
2. Write an affirmation statement and read it at least 3 times a day
3. Do not compare yourself to other people
4. You have gifts, talents and skills that are waiting to be developed and used

Warning

- Don't let other people put you off wanting to be the best 'YOU' - you can be!

“Recognising your worth is an essential element in ending self-defeating behaviours and developing authentic confidence. In my training course to follow, I'll guide you in releasing guilt, self-doubt, and emotional pain. Changing our lives begins with changing our way of thinking. This alone can bring peace and simple joy to daily life.”