



# COOK

WITH

## CONFIDENCE

The COOK Guide to  
Growing Your Confidence



Welcome to the COOK Guide to  
Growing Your Confidence.

At COOK, we believe people are amazing. One of the skills that will help each of us to achieve our potential in work and life is confidence. Hopefully, this booklet will give you some useful tips for growing your confidence.

The content is based on a popular workshop we run as part of our Be Remarkable development programme (there's a bit more info on this on the inside back cover).

We put together the workshop with the help of the remarkable Sarah and Helen who, as well as doing very impressive jobs, have a training company called Amazing If. Find them at [www.amazingif.com](http://www.amazingif.com)



This course is based on the idea that confidence is a skill and like any skill it can be learned and improved.

This booklet aims to show you how...

### Exercise

First, a question:

What do you associate  
with confidence?

Think of someone you know, inside or outside work, who you regard as confident and write down one word you'd use to describe them:

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Some commonly used words include...

Loud

Assertive

IMPORTANT

Extrovert

Bossy

STRONG

\* Charismatic \*

Our definition of confidence doesn't  
depend on any of these traits.

We define confidence as:

**Belief in yourself**

&

**Others' belief in you**





True confidence needs these  
arrows to balance.

When someone has lots of  
confidence in themselves but  
fails to inspire it in other people  
we often call it arrogance.

## Myth 1

Having confidence is about being an extrovert.

**Busted:**

Introverts (people who tend to get their energy from being in quieter environments or on their own) can be just as confident as extroverts (who get their energy from being with other people).

If you're interested in why introverts rock, there's a great talk by Susan Cain at [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) (and loads of other inspiring talks are free at TED).  
Also check out her book 'Quiet'.

## Myth 2

You are born with confidence.

You either have it naturally or you don't.

**Busted:**

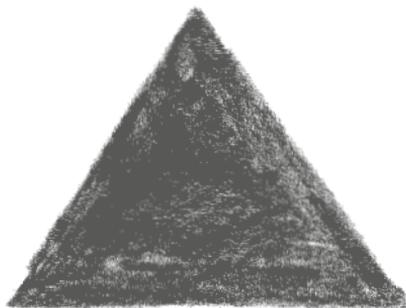
Confidence is a skill that can be practised and can be learned by anyone.

Read on to find out how.

# Learning to be confident

There are three elements to confidence you can practise and improve:

## Resilience



Support

Success

The confidence formula:

$$R + S + S = C$$

Resilience      Success      Support      Confidence

So if you can...

1.

Practise being **resilient**

2.

**Celebrate successes**

3.

**Get more support**

from a network of other people

...you'll become more confident!

# Why we all need confidence

Your life and career can go in lots of unexpected directions - you never know what's round the corner. Think of it like a squiggle.

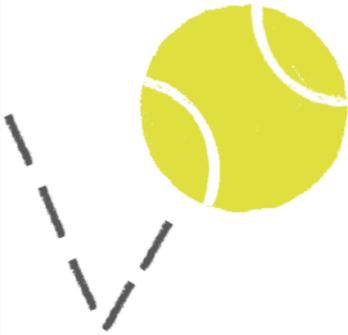


Being confident helps you navigate the twists and turns in the squiggle, helping you take on new challenges or tackle the unexpected - be it a new job, life change, new role or project.

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## Bouncebackability

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Being confident also helps you bounce back from failures and disappointments. Perhaps not getting a promotion you've applied for; receiving some difficult feedback or dealing with a customer complaint. In fact, taking knocks and bouncing back is an important part of learning to be more confident.

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Navigating the squiggle and bouncing back from disappointment helps you become more confident and self-assured



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**More confident  
and self assured**

Being confident and self assured helps you inspire confidence in other people.

# 1. Resilience

Imagine there are three zones where you spend your time:



## Exercise

Split your work between the three zones below.  
What % of your time do you spend in each?

### Scary Zone

Where you are doing work that scares you and keeps you awake at night (for example, speaking in front of a crowd is a common one!).

%  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Stretch Zone

Where there is some challenge or new skills or tasks that make you feel a bit nervous or uncomfortable.

%  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Comfort Zone

Where you are comfortable and familiar with the work you do, relaxed and at ease.

%  
\_\_\_\_\_

There's no right or wrong mix but it's good to be aware of it. Whatever your split, it will inevitably change over time.

- **Scary Zone:** spending too much time here will be exhausting, and you should rarely (if ever) be spending the majority of your time here!
- **Stretch Zone:** work or projects will move in and out of this zone. There may be times when you are being stretched for the majority of your time. Being aware of this will help you understand what you're getting good at. For instance, public speaking may have been scary once but after doing it 10 times it is "merely" a stretch (and maybe one day it will be in your comfort zone!)
- **Comfort Zone:** yes, it feels safe (comfortable, in fact), but spend too much time here and you might get bored, complacent or stuck in your career.

**Everyone's mix is different** and the mix between how much comfort, stretch and scary you have in your work will always be changing. Understanding where you are at any time will help you decide what to do more of, or less of; whether to push yourself or take your foot off the peddle a little.

### Exercise

Are there some activities, tasks, work or roles that are definitely in your **scary zone**?

*e.g. new systems - EPOS*

...and in your **stretch zone**?

*e.g. cashing up*

...and in your **comfort zone**?

*e.g. talking to customers*

**“A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there”**

If you spend your working life mostly in your comfort zone you might be missing the opportunity to grow your confidence. Only by getting out of your comfort zone can you:

1. Realise you can be successful at something you didn't previously think you could do.
2. Learn that you can bounce back from disappointment when things don't go perfectly and use the experience to grow your confidence and abilities.

**Is there something you want to try or do**

# The Comfort Zone Wall



The longer you spend in your comfort zone, the more difficult it can be to break out of it and become more confident.

It's as if you start to build a wall between you and your full potential and that wall becomes higher and thicker over time.

more of?

you think is holding you back?

## Confidence Gremlins

- We all have limiting beliefs that hold us back.
- There are things we think we can't do. Or we worry what people will think about us if we try it and fail.
- These confidence gremlins hold us back, stop us getting out of our comfort zone and trying new things.

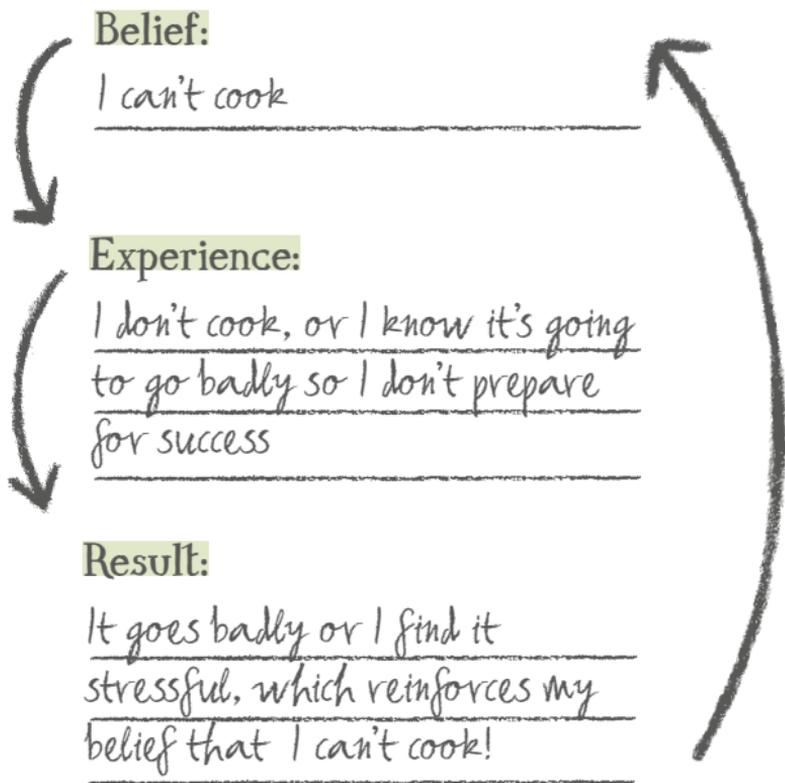
"I'm no good with numbers"

"I'm too shy"

"I'm not experienced enough"

Unfortunately:  
Your negative belief means you're more likely to have a negative experience, and reinforce your belief.

These beliefs can create a negative cycle:



But, don't worry,  
there are ways to  
break this cycle!

## Overcoming Our Limiting Beliefs

The best way of overcoming our limiting beliefs is to TEST them. Because they aren't true. They're not facts. They're just beliefs you hold.

For example: 'I can't do numbers'. Of course you can. Maybe you won't ever be a Nobel Prize-winning mathematician, but with a bit of diligence and guidance, you can definitely be someone who can "do" numbers. You just need the courage to test yourself.

*"Whether you think you can,  
or you think you can't, you're right."*

*Henry Ford*

## Being aware of our limiting beliefs is the first step

Only once you've RECOGNISED your limiting belief, you can make a conscious decision to test it.

## Exercise

Write down 3 limiting beliefs that you have that could be affecting your career:

*e.g. I'm not very good at...*

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## Devising tests for limiting beliefs

Coming up with the right tests for your limiting beliefs will depend on the type of confidence gremlins you're tackling. Some may be to do with skills you need to try out and practice. It may not be wise to go for a test that puts you straight into your scary zone. Building confidence is often about taking a succession of small steps, stretching yourself a bit further each time. For example, if your limiting belief is that you can't speak in public, deciding to test yourself by doing a speech in front of 500 people is going straight for the scary zone. If you're up for the challenge, then by all means go for it. But it might be wiser to start with a less ambitious test, perhaps speaking at a team meeting in front of 10 people. Repeat that test a few times and you'll soon be comfortable enough to feel confident about moving on to a bigger crowd.

## Practising Resilience

Devising a simple test for a limiting belief  
e.g. "I'm not good at speaking to new people":

### Belief:

I'm not good at speaking to  
new people

### Experience:

I avoid talking to people I don't  
recognise in the shop

### Result:

I miss out on opportunities to  
talk to new customers which  
reinforces my belief that I'm  
not good at speaking to new  
people!

### Test:

Try to engage  
customers in  
conversation  
when they  
come to  
the till

## Exercise

Try and devise tests for the limiting beliefs you wrote down on the previous page:

**Belief** (something you tell yourself you're not good at):

How can I test this belief?

**Experience** (what do you do / not do as a result?):

**Result** (what happens?):

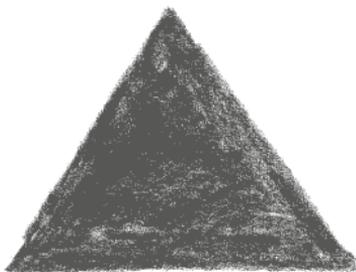




# 2. Success!

Resilience

Support



Success

## Why it's important to celebrate your successes

We all know that success makes us more confident. And every day we are successful in many ways – large and small. Taking the time to remember the great things you've done is important for building confidence in yourself. Making others aware of your successes also helps them gain confidence in you.

## Practising Celebrating Successes

### Exercise

In these three areas, quickly scribble down some of your recent successes, however small they may seem (take no more than 2 mins per section):

#### At work

*(e.g. learning to describe new recipes to customers; helping plan a big community discount event; passing engagement period...):*

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## Out of work

(e.g. *painted bedroom; visited family; took kids somewhere special...*)

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## Helping others

(e.g. *cooked meal for sick friend; raised money for charity; gave advice to partner...*)

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# Now celebrate more!

It's good to get in the habit of talking about and celebrating your successes (don't worry, it doesn't make you boastful).

Values Recognition at COOK is a really important part of this. It's a lovely way to build other people's confidence and to thank people for their support.

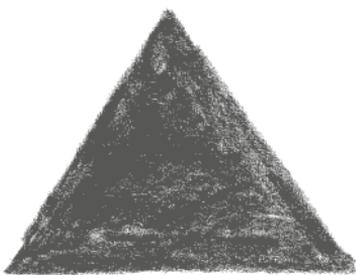
### Suggestions:

- Try writing down three successes every day. Science proves it will actually change the way your brain is wired to help you recognise successes more easily.
- At work, have a folder or a place on the board where you file positive feedback or successes.
- Suggest your team all share a success from the previous week at your team meeting.

# 3. Support

## Resilience

Support



Success

*No one can do it alone!  
Remember: confidence is also  
about others' belief in you*

A support network is the vital third ingredient in helping you grow your confidence. Your network might be made up of family, friends, colleagues and even some people you may never have met. Identifying the people in your support network and also the areas where you could do with some extra support, will help you grow your confidence.

Here's a model to help you think about people who support you in different ways:

People who **BELIEVE** in me:

These people are your cheerleaders, who understand what you're doing, have faith in you and have your back.

People who are **LIKE** me:

People on your wavelength, who see the world in the same way, are in similar roles or circumstances ('your tribe'!)

People who **ADVISE** me:

Those go-to people at work, in your social circle and your family who you turn to when you need guidance.

People who **INSPIRE** me:

Those inspirational figures. You don't have to know them personally. They can be authors, columnists, bloggers, people who've given TED talks, etc.

## Exercise

Have a go at filling yours in below (it's okay for a person to be in more than one box!):  
(these can be people at work or at home)

People who  
**BELIEVE** in me:

People who are **LIKE** me:

People who **ADVISE** me:

People who **INSPIRE** me:

After filling out the boxes on the previous page you may find you have more people in some areas than others. **Don't worry.** Being aware of the areas where you've already got a good support network and areas where you could have more support helps you build a stronger network overall. The next step is to **make a conscious effort to build your support network** in the areas you've identified. This may mean going outside of your usual circle of colleagues, friends and family, which itself can be something outside of your comfort zone and possibly even scary. An example of how you could do this would be the Retail Academy: meeting people from across the business creates a great opportunity to build relationships and connections and meet people who can offer you support.

### **Suggestion:**

Ask the People Team if you need help in building your support network.

## Exercise

What could you do to try to broaden your support network? E.g. Don't be afraid to talk to people about the things you feel you need help with. Research issues or topics you're interested in to find inspiration.

- e.g. Confide in a colleague about something I'd like help with

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### Suggestion:

Why not try approaching someone you think you could learn from. E.g. 'There's something I'd like advice on, and you've got experience in this – can we go for a coffee?'

## Recap

Confidence is a skill we can learn and practise.  
We define it as:



$$R + S + S = C$$

Resilience      Success      Support      Confidence

One thing I'm going to do to build my confidence as a result of reading this booklet:

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Challenge  
your limits,  
don't limit your  
challenges

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(We dare you to  
tell someone else!  
It'll make you  
much more likely  
to do it)

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*e.g. things to look up, actions, commitments*

We hope you have found this booklet useful.

Our Be Remarkable development programme includes three workshops: Confidence, Super Strengths and Personal Values. If you would like to attend our Confidence workshop (or are interested in the other two), then get in touch with us at [peopleteam@cookfood.net](mailto:peopleteam@cookfood.net). If there's enough interest we'll figure out a way to put more workshops on. We are also happy to talk through anything that might have surprised, delighted or challenged you in this booklet.

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Massive thanks to Amazing If.  
This booklet was put together by  
Charlotte Sewell & Jemima Ferguson



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Always be  
a work in  
progress...

—COOK—