

Grow Your Confidence

Growing confidence helps each of us achieve our potential in work and life. People often mistake confidence with being an extrovert, or believe confidence is a trait we're born with (or not). We run a popular workshop to show people at COOK that confidence is a skill that can be learned and that has nothing to do with being the loudest person in the room. It defines confidence as the sum of resilience, success and support. If we can practise being resilient; celebrate successes; and get more support from a network of other people, we'll become more confident. This excerpt focuses on building resilience.

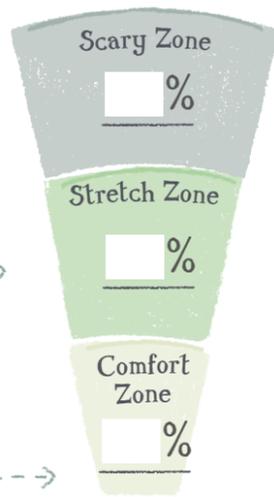
Resilience

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

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!)

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

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



Scary Zone: Too much time in your scary zone 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 your stretch 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: Too much time here and you might get bored, complacent or stuck in your career. Only by getting out of your comfort zone can you:

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

There's no right or wrong mix. Everyone's will be different and will change over time. 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 pedal a little.

Are there some activities, tasks, work or roles that are in certain 'zones'? Identify them below:

scary zone

stretch zone

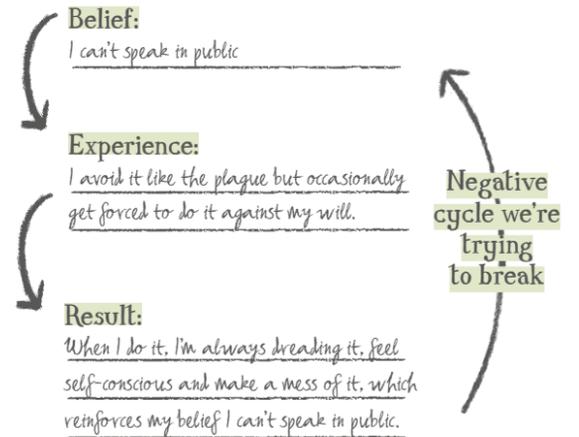
comfort zone

Confidence Gremlins

We all have limiting beliefs that hold us back: things we think we can't do, or worry about what people will think of us if we try and fail. These confidence gremlins stop us getting out of our comfort zone and trying new things. These limiting beliefs tend to reinforce themselves, creating a negative cycle (see diagram).

But don't worry, the cycle can be broken.

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. The first step is to be aware of a limiting belief. Only once you've RECOGNISED it, can you make a conscious decision to test it.



Write down 3 limiting beliefs you think could be affecting your career (something you tell yourself you're not good at):

- _____
- _____
- _____

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 practise. 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. If your limiting belief is that you can't speak in public, then testing yourself with a speech in front of 500 people is likely to be right in the scary zone. Probably better to start by speaking at a team meeting in front of 10 or 20 people. This will enable you to grow your confidence to tackle a bigger crowd.

Belief 1	Belief 2	Belief 3
Experience <small>(what do you do / not do as a result?):</small>	Experience	Experience
Result <small>(what happens?):</small>	Result	Result
How can I test this belief?	How can I test this belief?	How can I test this belief?

Go to cookfood.net/confidence to download a PDF of our confidence book.