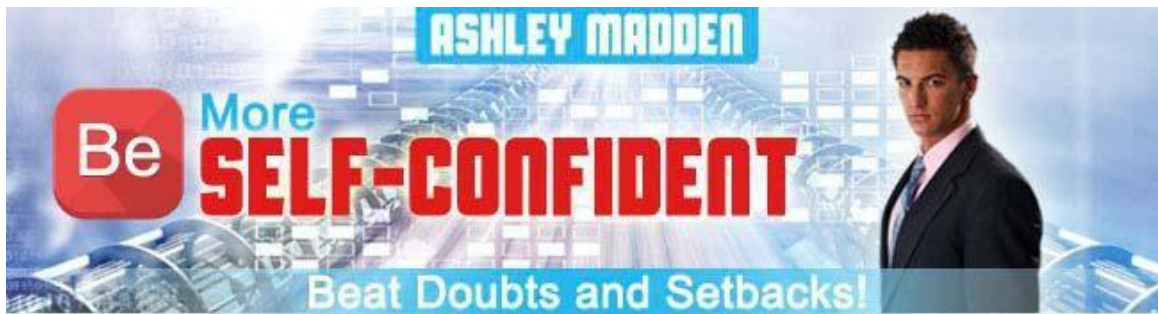


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About the Author

Ashley Madden wrote this book to share the tips and methods which helped him grow his self-confidence.

Ashley said, "Self-confidence is important for everyone that wants to have a fulfilled [life](#)."

"Many people never achieve their potential because they don't have the confidence to make best use of their [knowledge](#) and abilities!"

"I will help readers to deal with criticism so it becomes a stepping stone to better times."

"It doesn't matter how expertly you can do a task if you cannot talk someone into giving you the opportunity."

"Often, it is our own mindset which makes progress a lot harder than it could be. I'll share the best ways I've found to deal with that!"

"We need to be ready to make the most of an opportunity because it doesn't knock on our door any more – we have to spot it as it zooms by!"

Ashley said, "Our modern world has increased pressure on all of us and the [support](#) networks in our neighborhoods and workplaces are less than we used to have."

"Building our self-confidence will help anyone become more successful in all areas of their lives and be better able to face whatever challenges they and those close to them encounter."

"Restoring and improving our confidence can be a little bit harder than some [claim](#), but well worth the effort for life-long results!"

Introduction

[Self-confidence](#) helps us to use and improve our skills and knowledge, while dealing with the inevitable mis-steps and disappointments of daily life.

Children have a lot of confidence and wise parents and other carers can help re-enforce that, while making sure we don't take it too far.

My book will help you to review your confidence level and [deal](#) with those factors which may be blocking you from attaining your goals in personal and professional areas.

When we have a low reserve of confidence, we are unlikely to take on new opportunities or even recognize them when they appear.

We cannot appeal to or inspire other people if we do not feel inspired or at least happy with our own [performance](#).

But confidence is easily shaken when we are challenged or in an unfamiliar situation.

Or, we may have done badly in a situation in the past and let that [affect](#) our ability to handle it now!

When our confidence gets very low, we avoid new situations and encounters which reduces the number of opportunities we will have later on.

I wrote this book to help you check your confidence levels, review and deal with anything which is making you less confident and give you tips and methods to keep your confidence high so you can ensure your future is as good as you desire, whatever may challenge you may face!

Ashley Madden

Improving Your Kid's Self-Confidence



Most children are born with a high level of confidence in their abilities. They need to be prepared to explore their new environment and interact with the people and other creatures they find there.

As they explore, they will hit obstacles. We can help with some but there will be others which they are tested by when we are not around.

That help we give them can be valuable through their whole [life](#). But there is a major risk where many parents cause damage to the child's immature sense of self-worth.

We have a natural tendency to gently suggest corrections to the way our children do something.

If it is not done in a supportive way which reassures the [child](#) that you believe they can do it properly with more explanation, it can backfire. When children feel the criticism is negative, their self-talk can start reinforcing the idea they are inadequate.

A basketball [coach](#) said that he learned this from the reaction of his kids.

Changing his approach to thanking or praising them when they did something well or, even better, something for someone else, instead of [picking](#) at them over minor mistakes, was much more effective and could also be helpful for other kids that were there at the time!

The sincere praise got them enthused about doing things better without any hint that he thought they couldn't!

How to Really R-E-L-A-X!



This is one of the simplest and most effective relaxation methods I've ever used.

Almost anyone can do it safely. To be sure read through it a couple of times and check with your [doctor](#) if you want to before trying it.

I've seen many variations of this and added bits from different people's versions. This is the way I am doing it right now.

You need some privacy for about 15 minutes. It doesn't take that long but you need the extra minutes to get ready and then re-adjust afterward.

I have done this while standing or laying flat on the floor at home or in my private office and, when there was nowhere more suitable available, while sitting in a toilet cubicle before an [interview](#).

I don't recommend you stand because you may fall when you start relaxing parts of your body.

I believe laying on the floor is best or your body is bunched up and probably won't relax or [stretch](#) as much if you sit through the exercise.

If you sit, take off your shoes and put your feet flat on the floor or carpet.

A blanket or mat is good to lie on if the floor is cold.

Loosen any tight clothing.

I close my eyes through the routine so I minimize any distractions.

If you have been sitting for a while before doing this exercise, go for a short walk to loosen up your legs.

That will also shift your focus away from whatever you were doing before.

Get in position. Start by doing a mental review of the signals you're getting from your body. Is anything feeling sore or tight?

Don't take risks with any real [pain](#). If there's just a little stiffness which you've felt before, just check again after the routine.

If you sit, keep your feet flat on the [floor](#), a few inches apart.

Start with a few deep breaths, taking the air into your body with your diaphragm, so that the lungs are filled more than if you just do shallow breathing that fills the windpipe and only gets a small amount into your lungs from each breath.

You will probably feel a bit lighter and more relaxed than you did when you started. But more and better is ahead!

Start with either foot, mentally command it to relax.

Some people tense each part before they relax it. This may improve the result over time.

I suggest starting just with the relaxing [sequence](#) and see if you seem to be getting the results you need over a few weeks.

Then, move slowly up the leg, relaxing each part in turn.

Start the same process with your other leg. Then, move through your trunk and then along each arm.

As well as flexing each [art](#), this routine will alert you to any signs of discomfort which you may want to check with your [doctor](#).

After doing the whole routine, give yourself a few minutes to prepare for the next part of your day.

I hope that you find this easy and useful.

The Importance of Self-Confidence

Confidence relates to how you see yourself; your self-image and being aware of your current skills and potential.

It is derived from our [belief](#) that we are a capable and caring person who is prepared to work, expects and deserves a successful future.

A realistic level of self-confidence helps us endure setbacks and to perform well at any task or opportunity which we have.

It helps us to deal with challenges and disappointments in a positive way.

Self-confidence is like a magnet in both [business](#) and social situations.

Self-confident people make more connections and enjoy dealing with new opportunities or challenges. Both are looked at with a focus on a positive outcome.

A self-confident [person](#) looks forward with eagerness. They welcome opportunities to meet and work (or play) with new people.

Self-confidence helps us deal with setbacks and reduces their impact. Instead of worrying about the possible effects on them, they ask how can we [deal](#) with it and what are the potential outcomes?

Over-Confidence

Self-confidence must be kept to realistic bounds or we can cause problems for ourselves and turn off potential friends and allies.

Effects of Low Self-Confidence



Low self-confidence makes it much harder for us to produce our best work, make a good [impression](#) on people or deal with pressures that we all face in this rapidly changing world.

A person with low self-confidence is unlikely to attempt new tasks or seek new relationships.

They will have more difficulty with their work when things do not go smoothly.

Their [health](#) is likely to be affected. Several conditions are common among them and their recovery may be delayed or ruined because of their attitude.

Most people have to deal with a tendency to procrastinate at some point. A self-confident individual will be enthusiastic enough to push ahead, where someone that lacks self-confidence will often defer the [task](#) or even pass on the opportunity to try something new.

They will also be reluctant to promote themselves, their ideas or talents because of their inner doubts and previous bad experiences.

Our level of self-confidence also affects our health in important ways.

People that have poor self-confidence will avoid regular check-ups because of [fear](#) of getting bad news. They will also create worries about their health which can sometimes actually cause or increase real problems.

There are several conditions which are common in people with poor self-confidence. I have given some details about them and how we can change to a more practical and safer attitude to these problems in a later chapter.

Re-enforcing Your New Self-confidence!

As you build your self-confidence, you will need less third-party support and endorsement.

But, anyone that has struggled for a long time with the effects of poor self-confidence may find they tend to restart old ways of thinking and acting which may sabotage their progress.

That's because habitual behaviors we developed before have worn deep grooves in our subconscious. They are not erased for a very long time after we've changed our outlook and preferred reactions.

If we ever start using previous behaviors, they can become dominant again.

So, stay alert and keep doing the more effective and positive actions even when they take a little more time and effort.

Another way you may feed more positive messages to your subconscious is to give yourself a few minutes to review even the smaller highlights of your progress to a more successful future.

When you have some [success](#), give thought about how to use that to re-enforce your self-confidence and self-image.

If it's something small, you might record it on your calendar or in your diary.

If it's a significant win, think about how or where you could use the lessons or skills learned to improve your results with other projects?

Contact any other people who worked with you on the task or assisted you in any way. This willingness to acknowledge other people's contribution is not just the right thing to do, it will actually enhance the experience for you as well as them.

Be Positive but Take Action as well!

There are many systems for creating and enhancing your self-confidence.

Some of the systems work for a lot of people but there can be problems when people try to expand the system in ways which the developer never thought of.

In a small book, we cannot cover every possible variation of these tips and techniques. And results will be different for different people.

One problem some people have with systems that recommend a positive attitude is when people start to expect "good" results from simply thinking more positively.

Our experience is that being positive is good so long as we keep in [mind](#) that not everything which doesn't suit us is bad or that we can cause a change for the better in every situation.

Trying to change what is beyond our [power](#) is a way to bring about those conditions like [anxiety](#) and stress which can damage our [health](#) as well as our self-confidence!

Self-talk - the success destroyer or self-booster!

Everyone has an internal broadcast [running](#) every waking moment.

It can help boost our accomplishments or hold us down below our best and reduce or destroy our potential for [success](#).

That's how our subconscious issues directs to other systems which manage our body's sub-systems and reactions.

Our self-talk is inescapable and continuous.

The subconscious is guided for the broadcast by the information we give to it when we react to people and situations through each day.

The information is not reviewed or tested before use it in our self-talk.

The other source of material is our own impressions and beliefs which we have implanted in our subconscious through our [life](#) to the present time.

This explains in a simplified way, how researchers believe we are negatively influenced to repeat bad habits and fail to make best use of our natural and learned abilities.

If you are alert and notice the way you are responding to a situation or a problem is not the best way you know, you can sometimes change your actions on the spot and achieve a better outcome.

But, that older response is probably so well ingrained in your [mind](#), it will happen too quickly.

All you can do is to start to put in the information about how you will do that in the future.

That of course will mean better results but you will have to keep consciously checking for a while until the new information is the usual response and your actions have become smooth and efficient.

Getting on Top of the Data Deluge!

One of the biggest problems for many people is dealing with the [deluge](#) of information, spam, and other communications we get every day.

Whatever happened to the "paperless office"?

Most businesses still need to keep paper files for [tax](#) and other statutory records.

As well as the paper pile, there are records on various media which also need to be kept.

But, the biggest problem is keeping control of the daily deluge!

This affects us all and makes it very hard to find and deal with the really important stuff.

The first step for me was to unsubscribe for many (most) of the lists I'd joined but which were no longer relevant to my [business](#) or personal interests.

The second move was to re-route much of the other stuff to people who were now responsible for that part of the business.

Then, I took up a rule I read about many years ago when the office was almost awash in paper – Read each item ONCE!

When you get an email or a [letter](#), try to deal with it right away unless it's important and will require more time.

Put those in a file on your desk or the desktop of your [computer](#) or device.

Follow up all important items that day. Set a time to check nothing has been overlooked before you shut the office down each day.

That won't handle everything. But, it will help remove the clutter and ensure those who send you something important will get a response in good time.

Start Where You Are

Before we can get where we want to be, we need to review our current situation.

Unless you have a realistic and fairly current knowledge of your situation, abilities and prospects, you can't really make a useful prediction or [plan](#) to guide your progress into the future.

Get a Check-up

Getting a regular medical [check](#)-up and annual full review helps to keep you in good shape and minimize the risk of unexpected, serious problems getting a hold.

Many people avoid this precautionary step because they fear that the exams will find something seriously wrong!

The benefits are far greater than the reduced risk.

Another reason many people put off a full check-up is because they are too busy with work or about to go on [holiday](#) or whatever.

But, the check-up is likely to ease your mind about your condition.

And, you'll feel better after it so you can enjoy your holiday better.

Most people have annual injections for things like influenza, so that might be a good time to [book](#) your check-up as well.

Dealing with Stress

[Stress](#) is a big problem for many people. These simple ideas may help you deal better with some that affect you.

Some of the effects of stress should be discussed with your [doctor](#) who can advise you about your particular circumstances.

Worry can cause conditions like upset stomach, shortness of breath and tension to develop. Then you need your doctor's [advice](#).

These tips may help you deal with worries in very early stages.

Fear of Future Events

Ask yourself -

"What is the worst outcome which might affect me from this?"

"Can I do anything about that possibility."

"How likely is it?"

Those questions will often fix your perspective about the event you fear so you can prepare as much as possible and enjoy your current situation more with needless levels of worry.

Often, you will find that the outcome depends on actions of another person whom you cannot influence.

This may be a request for a pay increase or a date or the [date](#) itself.

If you can change your view to see the event as a wonderful opportunity with limited long-term effects (if you quit worrying), you'll probably increase your chance of a successful outcome and enjoy the intervening time much more as well.

Don't Put off Small Challenges

Some people look for big challenges and tasks and quick results.

That is a combination which comes without a lot of preparation and planning and years of experience.

They put aside small tasks, like getting more [training](#) or filling forms until it's almost too late.

This causes stress over that task and also sows seeds of more distress when they are reminded by their self-talk of their failure.

Every small challenge is an opportunity, even if it's boring or comes when you want to do something else.

One [entrepreneur](#) told me she started doing many of those mundane small tasks when she first got to the office. They cleared her desk and let her concentrate on the main tasks through that part of the day where she felt most productive.

Because she was able to focus on the small tasks with few interruptions, they took less time and the small accomplishments gave her a [boost](#) of enthusiasm for the bigger tasks to come.

Be Positive to Be Successful

It's important to have a positive focus if you want to be successful and happy.

If your attitude is negative, your self-talk will be filled with it too.

Your attitude and your [talk](#) will only resonate with people who also have that sort of outlook.

There are plenty of them, but they're not interested in helping you or being helped themselves!

If you show a positive attitude and back it with action, you will progress.

Ben Franklin's Secret

Ben Franklin had many great ideas and he acted on them to his advantage. But, he also shared them and people have been profiting from his [advice](#) even in the present day.

One point he revealed was that the easiest way to get help from someone was to help them in a way which didn't contain any sort of obligation.

That last point is important!

One thing Ben Franklin was lucky to survive was tying a [key](#) to the kite and flying it during a storm.

I know a policeman who tried that and lost part of a finger - others have been killed!

Ben was lucky to escape [injury](#) and we should be grateful because he continued to share his wisdom.

Change Your Pattern

One thing which gets little attention is the [benefit](#) you get when you change your pattern of behavior (AKA Your "rut"!)

This can have a number of benefits for you.

I stuck to a regular route to work for years. Then, that policeman told me that many crooks watched potential victims for a week or more so they knew when they were most likely to be [home](#) and which way they commuted each day. That let them plan the best times to rob their homes or steal their cars.

So, I started to change my route every few weeks.

I wasn't avoiding potential robbers really. But, I found that the change gave me a better [idea](#) of the other parts of our city and also helped me find several new prospective customers for the business!

A new perspective can be a great help. I always found walking around gave me a better idea of the sort of community there was, than I would get from months of just driving through.

Moving your seat at the regular meeting can be a good way to get to know people who work in other areas or, if the meeting is a community one, people with different backgrounds and interests.

This is a good way to boost our confidence with meeting and mixing with people in a situation where you're only together for maybe an hour.

When I started doing this at our work meetings, I found another benefit.

The [business](#) was very large and many of us rarely met people from some other areas.

Since the meetings covered most areas of the company's business, I got to meet and [learn](#) about people in other areas and their priorities.

That helped us develop smoother interaction and some good friendships as well.

As a simple example, we could now call a specific person in the other part of the company when one of our customers wanted to know some information

and know they'd be treated as well as we would expect.

And, we found more opportunities for changing jobs to other areas when the company adjusted its products and services.

That had benefits for the [company](#) over time as the public image changed to reflect the easier access.

Talking to Strangers

Why Talk to Strangers?



Talking to strangers can be risky but I'm referring to those people we meet every day who work at stores, drive the [cab](#) or serve us our lunch.

These people often get hardened by being treated like robots by many people. Others maintain a professional attitude and help

anyone that needs them.

But, I'll guarantee that you'll enjoy your time with them a bit more if you take the time to say "Hello" and "Thank you!"

In the Street

Walking around the streets is probably the best way of [learning](#) what any town or big city is really like.

And talking to the people is eye-opening!

This may seem daunting and there are places where it is risky.

But, most people I've met have been polite and helpful.

And, it does wonders for your [confidence](#) and knowledge.

I've walked away from some encounters fairly fast while others have resulted in long-term, long-[distance](#) friendships.

On the phone

I'll include the Internet in this section although that has its own traps and treats.

For me, dealing with people through phone, devices or services like Skype is almost like talking to them in person.

Each [method](#) has its own challenges but the ability to talk together with people from almost everywhere for relatively little cost or difficulty is

wonderful.

You can [learn](#) from each other or just chat. It's really as easy as talking to neighbor on the phone and sometimes almost no more expensive.

Now, if we could do something about the time zones!

Conventions and other Events

Although the Internet has made connecting with people around the world much easier and cheaper, it's not caused people to stop wanting to meet face to face.

Most industries and many social or hobby groups still have large and small conventions and exhibitions in most countries.

If you have confidence issues, they can be a good way to get a lot of experience with meeting all sorts of people in many different sorts of situations.

I've been to large and small conventions as a guest, salesperson, [speaker](#) and unpaid volunteer.

So, I feel that I can help you prepare for your first or your next event a bit better than you might if you just have the brochure to help you!

Are These Events Worthwhile?

That depends on what you get from your attendance and the after-event follow-ups.



well you connect with everyone.

If you want to get to know some of the other people from out side your area and become better known yourself, there's hardly a better way. That's dependent on your approach and how

That "everyone" is very important.

I was told by my manager before I attended my first convention that I was a representative of the [company](#), my city and myself 24 hours a day while away from headquarters.

Someone seems to learn that [lesson](#) the hard way at every convention.

It's a [stock](#) strategy for companies to put fake attendees into a convention as potential customers who can report back on their [treatment](#) by staff and

other aspects of the representation.

These events are great opportunities to meet and even sometimes talk or eat with some major players in your [industry](#) or hobby.

And there are always a lot of ideas and help available from regular attendees which can result in meaningful relationships for years to come.

Don't overload yourself with luggage, even if the company pays the cost. You can usually buy anything you forgot or lost at a reasonable cost near the location.

Check with the organizers who have local knowledge about restaurants and other services near the venue.

If you have experience with some of the [background](#) work, be ready to volunteer for part of the time when it won't interfere with those parts you regard as essential to attend.

Check where you can take pictures and if there are any areas where there are restrictions.

Business cards are still used as contact material by salespeople and other attendees. Usually, it's best to only offer your [card](#) to people who indicate they want it. Check if that is to contact you for business or other areas of mutual interest.

Smile a lot and talk to the staff without holding them up when they're busy.

Many people form their impression of people at the event by how they treat the staff and new attendees. One said, "I feel they would treat my staff and customers the same way!"

If you go to an event to do some work on their booth, you need to be very alert at all times.

Get plenty of [sleep](#) (see next chapter) and arrive early at the venue.

Get all the information from the company's organizer who may be a specialist brought in for these events.

There may be restrictions on moving or adjusting parts of your company's

booth or equipment. Check with your organizer.

Check anything which isn't clear before the event.

The venue will have its own rules about people using the display hall etc. If you upset them, your [company](#) will not be pleased.

Treat everyone who comes to the booth as a guest and answer their questions politely even if you've been asked that one many times.

After your first convention, you will think you've learned a lot but each one will teach you some more things!

Sleeping Right



I've suggested some ways to improve your [health](#) and as part of improving your self-confidence.

But, the best tip I've got lately is about sleeping better.

I frankly never realized how important good sleep was to improve

our self-confidence and our lives in general.

For many years, I worked long hours and then spent more hours in front of my computer at home to deal with the day's work and personal overflow of information and emails.

I was unknowingly building a large sleep debt which reduced my general health and ability to accomplish my goals.

And, like a [credit](#) card, that sleep debt came due with a lot of added penalty fees.

I was forced to get help to get back on track.

I learned that everyone needs at least 7 hours of continuous restful sleep each night. Teenagers and small children need more than that.

[Sleep](#) debt starts to build when you break your main sleep period or don't get at least 7 hours.

You also reduce the effectiveness of your sleep if you work or watch TV or your computer just before you try to sleep.

Power naps during the day don't appear very beneficial because the period of actual sleep is less than what's needed for a full sleep [cycle](#), including the restorative part where our body is repaired and what you learned the previous waking period is absorbed properly into your subconscious filing system.

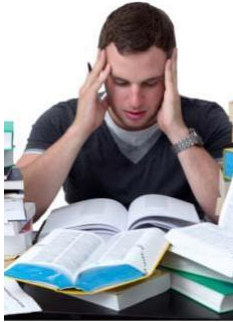
If that nightly period is interrupted or reduced significantly, what you learned

may never be filed properly for good retention and recall.

Keep this in mind. If you feel below par, this may be part of the reason.

Try to give yourself at least a few weeks of proper sleep.

Learn to Earn More!



The most valuable part of our body is that soft lump between our ears.

We can all make better use of it, even when we have passed the usual years for [schooling](#).

In fact, recent research shows that our brains are capable of adding extra learning capacity into almost any healthy [human](#) brain, whatever the age!

The secret to maximizing that potential is to keep using your brain for productive and challenging tasks as well as the newspaper crossword.

Of course, it's a good idea to eat healthily, [exercise](#) to your capacity and get regular health [checks](#).

Mixing with a variety of [people](#) and having hobbies which challenge you may also be rewarding in unexpected ways.

There are many ways to obtain knowledge in any subject which interests you.

On the Internet, there is free information of varying quality everywhere.

There are also courses from individuals and even universities (some of their courses are free except if you want a certificate!)

Often there are courses in many subjects available free or low cost from local organizations. The quality of these type of courses which I've done have been quite high.

And, there is the added bonus that you can meet other people of your own age [group](#) and others who are all interested in the same topic as yourself.

To a More Confident You!

I hope my [book](#) will give you encouragement as well as ideas and methods to help improve your self-confidence.

The main message I wanted to give you was that anybody can improve their confidence and the results they get in every area of their lives.

It is not always easy because some of your current patterns could have made deep tracks in your subconscious.

But, you now know what to do so you can become more confident and enjoy all the potential for [success](#) within you!

Ashley Madden

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