

HEALTH AND FITNESS



"Success is 90% confidence" said the captain of English Rugby.

Confidence

"Success is 90% confidence". These were the first words of wisdom that the rugby player Will Carling, shared with me when I met him some years ago. It was the autumn of 1998 and an evening that I will never forget and advice that has resonated within all the work that I do with my clients.

At age of 22 Will Carling was Britain's youngest ever rugby captain leading the team to their most successful period ever - the World Cup final in 1991. In fact, it was in relation to this final that he continued his story. "We were

100% confident we would reach the final", he said, "but when we got there we had not prepared and therefore lacked confidence and focus to actually win the game".

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The lesson learnt by his team was that success is down to 90% confidence. So, if you truly believe you can win, with the right preparation and focus you will increase your chances many times over. They were so focused and confident of getting to the final, they didn't know what to do once they got there.

That story always stuck in my mind. The more I thought about it the more it made sense. The more I prepared and focused the more confident I became. The more confident I became the more successful I became. The more successful I became the more naturally everything seemed to flow and so forth.

I was lucky enough to witness this philosophy being echoed by other sporting greats such as Roger Black and Chris Akabusi. They had similar stories to tell and similar results to evidence. Now many years on, I have to say that, success is without doubt, 90% due to confidence. I embrace this philosophy in every aspect of my life and with all clients that I see in my clinic and achieve wonderful results.

Confidence and self esteem are at the heart of every success and every failure. Some of us have got it, some of us haven't. Some people can stand and present in front of a large group and many of us shake and are terrified at the prospect of being centre stage. So, what is it that creates and limits our ability to achieve or fail? Why can some people play to the crowd and others prefer the anonymity of solace?

Confidence is known to be responsible for the majority of our success and failures and most definitely limits many individuals in their quest to climb up the corporate ladder. In fact many of life's opportunities are missed or go unexplored due to our inability to even check them out in the first place or leave our comfort zone to explore other opportunities.

The coaching term for this is "limiting beliefs" or "limiting statements". We focus on what we cannot do rather than what we can do. A lack of confidence goes hand in hand with low self esteem. I generally find one always accompanies the other.

Our thoughts affect our confidence

How we think and process information is key to our overall levels of confidence and self esteem. Naturally, if we are positive and upbeat this is reflected in how we feel and subsequently behave. I call this The Cognitive Thinking Cycle. This principle embraces a very simple set of dynamics. What you think impacts how you feel, and impacts how you perform. Simple isn't it. Therefore if you focus on the positive of every situation rather than the negative you will achieve better results. Let us look at the set of dynamics that affect our everyday thinking and overall state of wellbeing with particular reference to confidence.

Self Esteem

People with high self esteem generally feel good about themselves. They like and believe in who they are. They feel they are worthy of being happy and successful. They also understand not everyone is perfect and they embrace forgiveness when they make mistakes.

People with high self esteem experience and enjoy all that life has to offer. When our self esteem is strong we handle the challenges of life differently.

Low self esteem sufferers see themselves as negative, destructive, and limiting. They are often vulnerable, withdrawn and insecure. They are unable to find a positive edge on anything and are particularly self-critical.

Self Confidence

Self confidence is the energy that is created by your self esteem. People with high self confidence have an underlying self belief in all that they do. These people accept they are good at some things and not so good at others and they accept themselves and are happy and content with all that they have.

Self Acceptance

In my experience to raise your self esteem and confidence you first have to accept and embrace who and what you are. If you can accept you cannot be great at everything and acknowledge the things you are good at this provides a good starting point. The aim is to align your actions and results with your personal values and beliefs. For example, any women who have given up their career to have a family may at some point struggle to accept the life change. Some women can feel that people do not look at them as a person in their own right who has achieved success during another time in their life. My advice would be to look at the achievement of having your beautiful children – the most precious gift. Think about what they learn from you and how they look to you for guidance and in return what you learn from the experience of family life.

Feedback not Failure

It is important to accept that there is no such thing as failure. We only learn from feedback. For example, when you have finished a particular exercise and it does not go to plan you must look upon this as a learning experience and not failure. Then give yourself feedback. What did I learn from this experience? What could I have done differently? If faced with this again how would I change things?

Feedback is interpreted far more easily than failure. We should all accept feedback on our performance, to help us improve. Never look at it as failure because it is so limiting and final. Thoughts of failure drag us down and affect our self esteem and subsequently our confidence. Feedback is acceptance, failure is negative and limiting.

Knowledge is Power

So many people put a value on their personal success by what they have achieved. For example where they rank in their company, how being the top sales person is number one priority, how much they earn determines on their level of achievement and success and so forth. This is a common trap and one in which a lot of us fall into.

Remember the adage "Knowledge is Power". Apply this to the above and reframe. Judge yourself by what you learn from life's experiences as opposed to what you achieve. Look at every experience or period in your life and judge this period not by how much money you earned, but by how much you learned from the experience. Obviously money is important but the balance should be weighted by value in knowledge and experience gained rather than anything else.

So, in my view, Will Carling could not have been clearer. Confidence does breed success. To become successful first you need to get the foundations in place, be proud of who you are, and accept yourself for what you can achieve and learn. Your human potential is unlimited when you can have the confidence in yourself.

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