

# Restore Your Career Confidence

## What to Know

Are you so unhappy at work that you're unsure what to do? Are you burnt out, anxious, or depressed because of your job? If you dread going to work, maybe you've considered making a major professional change. Perhaps you were fired or laid off. Your confidence in yourself and in your professional skills might have suffered as a result. Many people experience these situations at some point in their careers, but not everyone experiences low career confidence.

Over time, having work-related low confidence and self-esteem can lead to a variety of physical and mental health issues. You might doubt yourself and over-analyze your decisions – not just work-related ones. Lack of confidence can also slow your career progression and affect your financial stability.

What causes low career confidence? You might relate to one or more of the following:

- feeling inadequate or like a “fraud”
- comparing yourself to others
- being under-skilled for the role
- focusing on mistakes over successes
- experiencing work-related stress caused by a micromanaging boss, uncooperative co-workers, organizational changes, or new responsibilities
- having a fear of failure

Regardless of the reasons, low career confidence can be effectively addressed. Use these six suggestions to begin re-building your career confidence.

**1. Realize there is no such thing as perfect.** Aiming for perfection will always lead to disappointment because it's unobtainable – and you fail to acknowledge your achievements. Give yourself a break when you fail, make a mistake, or miss the mark. Failure is a valuable part of life because it offers you the opportunity to reflect on all the lessons you learned from your mistakes.

**2. Identify your feelings.** Think about when your low confidence started. Was it after an event, such as a lay-off? Do you struggle in certain situations? For example, if you're burnt out and work in a highly stressful environment, it might be time for you to find another career – one where you are engaged, passionate, and confident.

**3. Write down your career achievements.** Research indicates that writing down accomplishments releases feel-good chemicals in the brain, increasing feelings of pride and motivation. Start by writing a list of your past career achievements – big or small. Use a journal or notebook and begin a daily practice of recording your work-related achievements.

**4. Identify your strengths, skills, and talents – and capitalize on them.** One of the best ways to increase your confidence is to get clear on your strengths and find ways to integrate them into

what you do each day. You'll be more engaged, energized, and self-assured. Write down the things you do well and reflect on how you can use your strengths to do your job.

**5. Reach out.** Connect with personal and professional networks for help and support. Get feedback from colleagues. Seek advice or secure a mentor or coach to help you work through your feelings and create a plan.

**6. Identify weaknesses, and work on them.** If you have weaknesses that are affecting your confidence, work to reduce or eliminate them.

This worksheet will help you increase your career confidence using the above six suggestions.

### **What to Do**

Write down some reasons why you might have low career confidence. Be specific.

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When did your low confidence begin? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a perfectionistic? Do you have a difficult time when you make mistakes or fail? Explain.

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What lessons have you learned from your job-related mistakes?

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What can you do to avoid those mistakes in the future?

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In the following chart write down your strengths, skills, talents, and abilities. Write down career achievements, big or small, and your proudest work-related moments. Imagine where you'd like to be two years from now in your career.

<b>Strengths, skills, talents, and abilities</b>	<b>Career achievements</b>
<b>My proudest career/work-related moments</b>	<b>Where I'd like to be two years from now</b>

How can you integrate your strengths, skills, talents, and abilities in your everyday life?

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What are some weaknesses that have contributed to your low career confidence? Be honest.

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What are some ways you can address these weaknesses?

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Check off at least one of the following to do within the next two weeks.

\_\_\_ Connect with a personal or professional networks for help and support.

\_\_\_ Get feedback from colleagues or a supervisor.

\_\_\_ Seek advice or secure a mentor or career coach to help you.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?

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