

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 126: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONFIDENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

This week's challenge in the Biz Confidence challenge was to list 3 things you're proud of. Not just list them for yourself, but share them with the community on Instagram, using the hashtag #bizconfidencechallenge. And friends, this is hard! Today we're going to talk about why it's hard, and why you need to do it. Welcome to episode 126 of Explore Your Enthusiasm.

A new round of the (live) Biz Confidence Challenge started this week (if you haven't joined us, it's not too late, just go to TaraSwiger.com/bizconfidence/). The Challenge is a 6-week practice in building confidence in yourself, so you can move forward in your business. Each week I send one challenge for you to do and then share on Instagram (with the hashtag #bizconfidencechallenge), then I explain how that challenge will build your confidence in the next episode of the podcast, and then we dive even deeper and I'll share my own answer to the challenge + your reactions + I answer your questions in a weekly live webinar, each Thursday.

Now, if you're listening to this after November of 2016, you can still sign up at TaraSwiger.com/BizConfidence and you'll get notified when it runs again!

First, let's be clear: we're not building our confidence just so we feel good about ourselves (although that's a nice benefit!). I'm focusing on confidence, because for so many of the marketers and artists I talk to, it is a lack of confidence that holds them back from taking action. Confidence won't build an awesome business; action will. But if you can't take that action because you don't feel confident? Then we need to address it.

This week's challenge, the first challenge, is to list 3 things you're proud of. What I find interesting is that almost everyone, in their reply, APOLOGIZES for sharing the list of things they're proud of! And I get it! I struggle to just say: Hey, I'm proud of this.

In the first round, a few people said that it felt arrogant or cocky to just say: I'm proud of this, so I recorded an episode about the difference between arrogance and confidence ([episode 93](#)).

A few other people mentioned “pride” as a bad thing. They didn’t want to say the phrase “I’m proud of this”, because “pride” isn’t good. We shouldn’t be too prideful. We all have heard the Bible verse: “Pride goes before the fall” (Proverbs 16:18). But here’s the thing: in the English language, pride has 2 different definitions:

1. Feeling deep pleasure or satisfaction as a result of one's own achievements, qualities, or possessions or those of someone with whom one is closely associated.
2. Having or showing a high or excessively high opinion of oneself or one's importance.

The antonym for that first definition is “shame,” and the antonym for the second is “humbled.” When we put it like that, you can see the difference, right? In identifying the “result of one’s own achievement” (which is what I asked you to do), you are not automatically taking an excessively high opinion of yourself.

Not being proud of your accomplishments, is not being humble, it’s operating in shame. And you can’t move forward if you are stuck in shame or self-doubt.

A few other people mentioned self-esteem. So let’s talk about self-esteem and how it is not the same as confidence.

Self-esteem is an evaluation of our worthiness, or the belief that we are good. Charles Horton Cooley, a sociologist, identified¹ a source of self-esteem to be based on our perception of how we appear to others. In other words, it’s not if YOU think you’re good enough, it’s if you believe other people think you’re good enough.

And that, of course, is troubling, because we don’t know what other people think and we can’t control it. Even worse, research shows that self-esteem is more strongly influenced by strangers, than close friends and family². So even if your parents are proud of you, you pay more attention to how other people seem to be perceiving you.

And many of us have a sense of “contingent self worth” - it depends on our failure or success, on approval or disapproval. We believe that our worth comes from how successful we are at certain areas (the ones we value or think our group values most).

In many ways, our self-esteem, our belief in our own worth, DOES get in the way of taking action in our business. If you have low self-esteem, you’re unlikely to believe you DESERVE a business. You’re unlikely to even try to make it happen.

But, as humans, we have some pretty ineffective ways of building self-esteem - we put down others, so we feel superior (either out loud or in our head); we avoid doing things we're bad at, so we don't feel like a failure; we try to pretend we are the {whatever} we think others will approve of.

And high self-esteem on its own, isn't necessarily a good thing. Studies show that people with high self-esteem have a harder time hearing neutral or negative feedback and they avoid things that will make them feel like a failure. That's IF their self-esteem is built on the belief that you have to be special to be good... and they are special.

If your self-esteem is built on the universal truth that we are all good enough, that we are all trying our hardest, then you become a lot more resilient.

Confidence, however, isn't about self-worth. It's about the situation. Confidence is the belief that you can do the thing in front of you. This belief has to exist before you'll take action - it is what drives action.

Let's talk right to that niggling voice inside of you that thinks that **you will have more confidence ONE day - one day when you really deserve it.**

You are halfway right: Confidence (true confidence and not just arrogance) is built on competence. It grows from being truly good at something, not just from "believing in yourself." You can't just convince yourself to feel good about your work... you have to BE good at it.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO GET CONFIDENT BEFORE YOU FEEL IT:

- 1. Transfer it from another area**
- 2. Recognize where you are good!**

Competence (knowing you can do something) leads to confidence. And confidence leads you to doing the things that build more competence. So you've got to kick off that virtuous cycle by looking at what you know you can do (your competence) and doing more of it.

Transfer your Confidence

You may feel very confident in one area, and have no confidence in another area. This is perfectly normal and even smart. You aren't good at everything, and that's ok! (You can see how needing to keep a fragile sense of high self-esteem would be dangerous if your worth was built on being good at everything!)

So Confidence is not something you're going to get once and have for every situation, but it is transferrable. By recognizing your competence in an area where you have been successful, you can transfer that confidence into another area.

For example, I'm an excellent listener. I'm an excellent reader and autodidact. I was a great student and kept my GPA high enough to have a scholarship all 4 years of college while working 30-40 hours a week, between 2-4 jobs at any one time. So when I started my business in 2006, that's where I drew my confidence. I transferred my confidence in my ability to learn anything, to juggle multiple jobs and projects, and my tenacity, into my business. I decided: This project takes those same skills and I have those skills.

I had no right having confidence in my business, because I hadn't DONE anything in business. So I borrowed it from a different area.

You can do that too. That's exactly why I asked you to list three things you're proud of, so that you can transfer confidence, from an area where you rock, to an area where you feel unsure. And then, start doing stuff in that area, which WILL build competence, which will build confidence

There's no getting past this: Your confidence will grow as you work hard at improving your skill and experience and competence.

Recognize What you're awesome at

However! SO MANY of my readers and students are AMAZING at what they do. Their work is lovely. Their craftsmanship is expert. And yet... they don't feel great about it. They hesitate to apply to a show. They're too embarrassed to tell anyone about their shop. They tell themselves that they have to get it together before they can do {the thing they want to do}.

IF THIS IS YOU (AND I'M BETTING IT IS), MORE HARD WORK WON'T HELP, IF YOU DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE ALL YOU'VE ALREADY DONE.

So this week's first challenge, is to acknowledge what you've already done. List three things that you are so proud of. Three things that prove you deserve to feel great about your work. Three things that prove you deserve a sustainable, thriving business.

We started with the positive for a few reasons:

1. As stated above, confidence is built on competence, so you gotta start acknowledging your competence!

2. It is really easy to focus on the negative. In fact, we're hard-wired for it. So I'm betting you have a list in your head of the hundreds of things you have messed up (or failed to do). You don't need my help focusing on all that. Instead, you need a prompt to look at the other side - at all the things you HAVE done.
3. By focusing on the stuff you have done, you get better at seeing the stuff you have done... and that builds confidence in the long-term. In other words, we're building your "confidence-inspiring" muscle, so you get better and better at seeing the things that should inspire your confidence.

SO IF YOU HAVEN'T COMPLETED THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HERE'S ANOTHER REMINDER:

1. List three things you're proud of!
2. Share a picture on Instagram of at least one of those things, tag it with #bizconfidencechallenge

I am so so proud of you!

References:

[The Confidence Code by Katty Kay](#)

[Self-Compassion, by Kristin Neff](#)

1. Charles Horton Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order
2. Susan Harter, The Construction of the Self: A Developmental Perspective