

Webster defines *Confidence* as *self assurance or a belief in your ability to succeed, belief or trust in somebody or something, or in the ability of somebody or something to act in a proper, trustworthy, or reliable manner.*

It is only natural that dental patients will not proceed with recommended treatment without trust, belief and confidence in your abilities and professionalism. This trust is a byproduct of the confidence that you have in yourself. Their decision to put, or not put, their well being in your hands is directly related to the confidence that you have. Your confidence is paramount to your success.

Confidence is a key ingredient in your ability to lead your team. For your team members to have confidence in your talents and abilities to perform successful procedures you must first possess that confidence in yourself. The confidence of the leader permeates the team.

Is your confidence beyond your control?

Many people believe so and this is simply not true. Confidence is a byproduct of your environment and activities. I noticed that when I physically exercise, I become more confident. That discovery led me to explore other activities that increased my confidence. I began to compose a mental list of such activities. I soon committed that mental list to paper. I only put items on the list that were under my control. I learned that by controlling my environment and activities with items on my list I could influence my confidence level.

You've heard the expression "Plan your work and work your plan." The process now becomes a simple procedure of scheduling items from your Confidence Maintainer List into your weekly activity list. Having a few of these activities in your normal weekly activities will help maintain your confidence level.

Develop the habit each day of noticing your own confidence level. Place sticky notes on the mirror at home if need be. You will know immediately when minor corrective measures need your attention. If your confidence level has dropped a bit simply refer to your booster list and add a confidence booster activity to your day.

Now turn to your "Confidence Maintenance Exercise". Simply list the things that make you feel confident. A few examples have been provided to assist you in getting started. It is important that you be honest with yourself, avoid judging your answers, let the truth flow.



The Confidence Maintenance Exercise

APOGEE
DENTAL NETWORK

Step #1: List at least 20 things that make you feel more confident

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

Here are a few examples to get you started:

Getting exercise
 Spending time with family
 Reading
 Seating a big dental case
 Losing weight
 Carrying lots of cash
 Writing a letter
 Wearing nice clothes
 Forgiving Someone
 Reading
 Having a clean car
 Wearing new clothes
 Time alone

Eating right
 Rolex
 Taking/Teaching a class
 Manicure/Pedicure
 Time spent in nature
 Getting recognition
 Visiting the lonely
 Helping someone
 Donating time, talent or treasure
 Flying first class
 Prayer
 Getting hair done
 Going the extra mile

Step #2: Circle the ones that you have complete control over and make a list

By determining which of these things you can control, you can simply build these into your life. Make a list and place it into your planner. Use your planner to schedule them. Make it a priority. You may need two or three of these things each month, each week, or each day. It doesn't matter how often you need them, it only matters that you are getting what you need. Use this list when your life goes through phases when things are particularly stressful and challenging. During these rough times plan to do more of these things to keep you charged up and full of confidence. If you know you will have to do something that will drain your confidence, plan extra confidence building activities into your schedule.

Step #3: Make a list of the ones that are beyond your control

Give this list to any one who is in a support role for you. Give it to friends, family, employees, colleagues, etc. Let them know exactly how they can give a lift when they sense you need one. They will often have greater insight into when you need a pick me up than you do. Give them permission and encouragement to help you in this way.

Step #4: Lead your team in this exercise

Have your team do this exercise for themselves. When they have completed Step #1, have them share their experiences and feelings. A great deal of bonding can occur when teams share this vulnerability. Then have your team complete Step #2. When they share their Step 2 lists, a very interesting experience will occur. Your team will get a deeper awareness and appreciation for each other. After someone has shared their list, I ask for other team members to comment on how they might use the new found understanding to help strengthen their teammate. The answers will astound you I guarantee it. I know that some people are concerned that they have a team member that is already too confident. My experience is that people who come across that way are often compensating for deeper feelings of inadequacy. This exercise gives them a genuine confidence that can eliminate the "over confident" posturing.