

Building Self Confidence

Lori A. Clarke

Emerita Professor

U. Massachusetts Amherst

Bushra Anjum

Technical Lead

Amazon



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Lori Clarke on one slide

- BA Mathematics, University of Rochester
 - Worked at the U of R medical school between BA and PhD
- PhD Computer Science, University of Colorado
- Faculty, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 40 years
 - Research: Software Engineering and now Medical Safety
- Currently faculty emerita, with a post retirement appointment



For fun:

- Traveling
- Tennis
- Hiking
- Skiing
- Running



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women



Bushra Anjum



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Self-Confidence – Definition



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

How self-confident are you?

High

- Do what you believe to be right even if criticized for it
- Be willing to take risks
- Admit your mistakes and learn from them
- Accept compliments graciously
- Advocate for yourself

Low

- Govern your behavior based on what others think
- Stay in your comfort zone
- Work hard to cover up your “mistakes”
- Dismiss compliments
- Wait for others to congratulate you



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Want to be self-confident

- Not born with confidence
 - Culture, gender, environment, social enforcements, peers ...
- The Good News is that **self confidence can be learned** – and can continually improve
- How?
 - **10 TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF CONFIDENCE**



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 1: Admit the Problem

Admit that

- No one is perfect – even the most confident-looking people have insecurities.
- Life is full of bumps – you will run into some sooner or later.



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 2: Identify Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Comparison

- How do you place yourself among your peers on
 - knowledge
 - Intelligence
 - Hard working
 - Luck
 - Personality
 -



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 3: Establish a Support System

Please DONT

- Assume you can get through it alone
- Be afraid to talk about issues
- Assume everyone thinks the same thing
- Complain

Please DO

- Find someone safe to talk to
- Aim for “comfortable spots” first
- Get advice from multiple people
- Ask for help and advice “I’m confused by”
- Consider giving constructive feedback

Be sure to be there to support others
when they need it



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 5: Recognize and celebrate your successes

Recognize and be recognized

- Admit your successes to yourself and others
- Gracefully accept congratulations
- Celebrate your successes

Exercise

- Make a list of your recent successes -- do not leave it blank
- Read the list (out loud if necessarily) to yourself



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

EXERCISE

CONFIDENCE ACTIVITY

- Hear from yourself that you are capable
- Let's spend 2 minutes thinking quietly about your journey and select three things you are proud of
- Then, put it in sentences starting with "I am super because ..."

Tip 6: Set Reasonable Goals

- Make a list of activities that will get you moving towards your goals
- Identify the first step needed to accomplish each item and have a plan for *taking* that first step

Use Divide and Conquer

- Set dates but be flexible – the date might change for better or worse
- Maintain a research notebook to mark your progress

Move items from your TO DO LIST => DONE LIST

- Expect to revise and improve your plan



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 7: Take a Break

A balanced life boosts your creativity and productivity

- Improve your physical well-being: exercise regularly
- Improve your emotional well-being: enjoy some quality time with family and friends
- Reward yourself

Exercises

- Think of three non-academic activities that you enjoy
- Think of three different ways to reward yourself



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 8: Fake it Until you Make it

- **Speak slowly and clearly**
 - A person who thinks they aren't worth listening to will often speak quickly and/or softly
- **Stand tall**
 - Don't slouch, don't walk around with your head held low
- **Accept greetings and compliments gracefully**
 - When asked how you are doing, say with enthusiasm "Just great." Don't always groan and say "I'm swamped"
- **Be gracious and interact with others**
 - Arrogance and aloofness are often used to shield lack of confidence



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 9: Be aware of the “triple low”

- **Research Disappointments**
 - Your experimental results don't support that hypothesis you were so hyped about;
 - Your paper was just rejected
- **Interpersonal Disappointments**
 - You saw the person you have a crush on with someone else
 - You and your partner had a fight this morning
- **Personal setbacks**
 - It's the first day of your period and a pimple erupted
 - Those 5 pounds you lost are back again

....

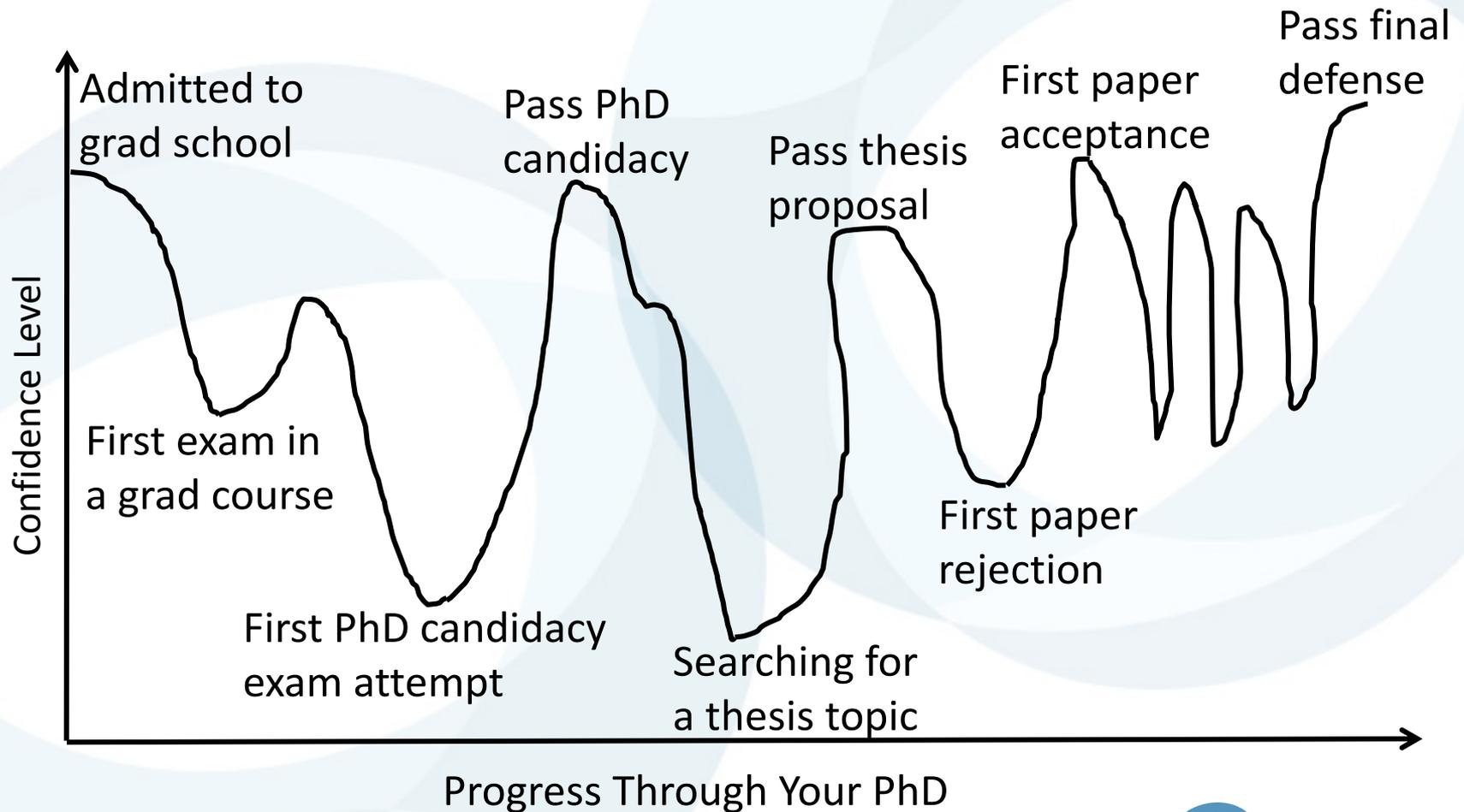
Don't lose confidence!! Move on!



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Grad School Confidence Rollercoaster



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Tip 10: Stick to Your Principles

- Stand up for what you believe
 - don't assume that is the way it has to be
- Decide what/when it is really important
 - pick your battles to fight
 - be prepared
 - enlist help from others
- Sometimes you don't win the battle
but over time you gain respect and win
the war
- Sometimes it is better to speak up and
lose than to say nothing



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Beware of the *Imposter Syndrome*

- Regardless of success achieved or proof of competence, you are sometimes convinced that you do not deserve it – **you are a fraud!**
 - Proof is dismissed as luck, timing, or a result of deceiving others into thinking you are more intelligent/competent than you are
 - Over-evaluated
 - It is particularly common among successful women.



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Avoid the LOSE-LOSE Conundrum

- Of course you didn't do well, this is something that women do not excel at!

OR

- Of course, you were selected, they had to select **some** women

Remember: Numerous studies have shown that women have to over-perform for “equal” recognition



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

IN CLOSING ... **Believe in yourself**

No one will believe in you until you believe in yourself

I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.

Michael Jordan

Think about what is important to you and where you want to go ... and then **go for it !**



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

More Information

Various web sites

wikiHow: How to Build Self Confidence

<http://www.wikihow.com/Build-Self-Confidence>

MindTools: Building Self-Confidence

<http://www.mindtools.com/selfconf.html>

25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self-Confidence

<http://zenhabits.net/2007/12/25-killer-actions-to-boost-your-self-confidence/>



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women

Questions?? Comments!!



CRA-W

Computing Research Association
Women