

Building Self-Confidence

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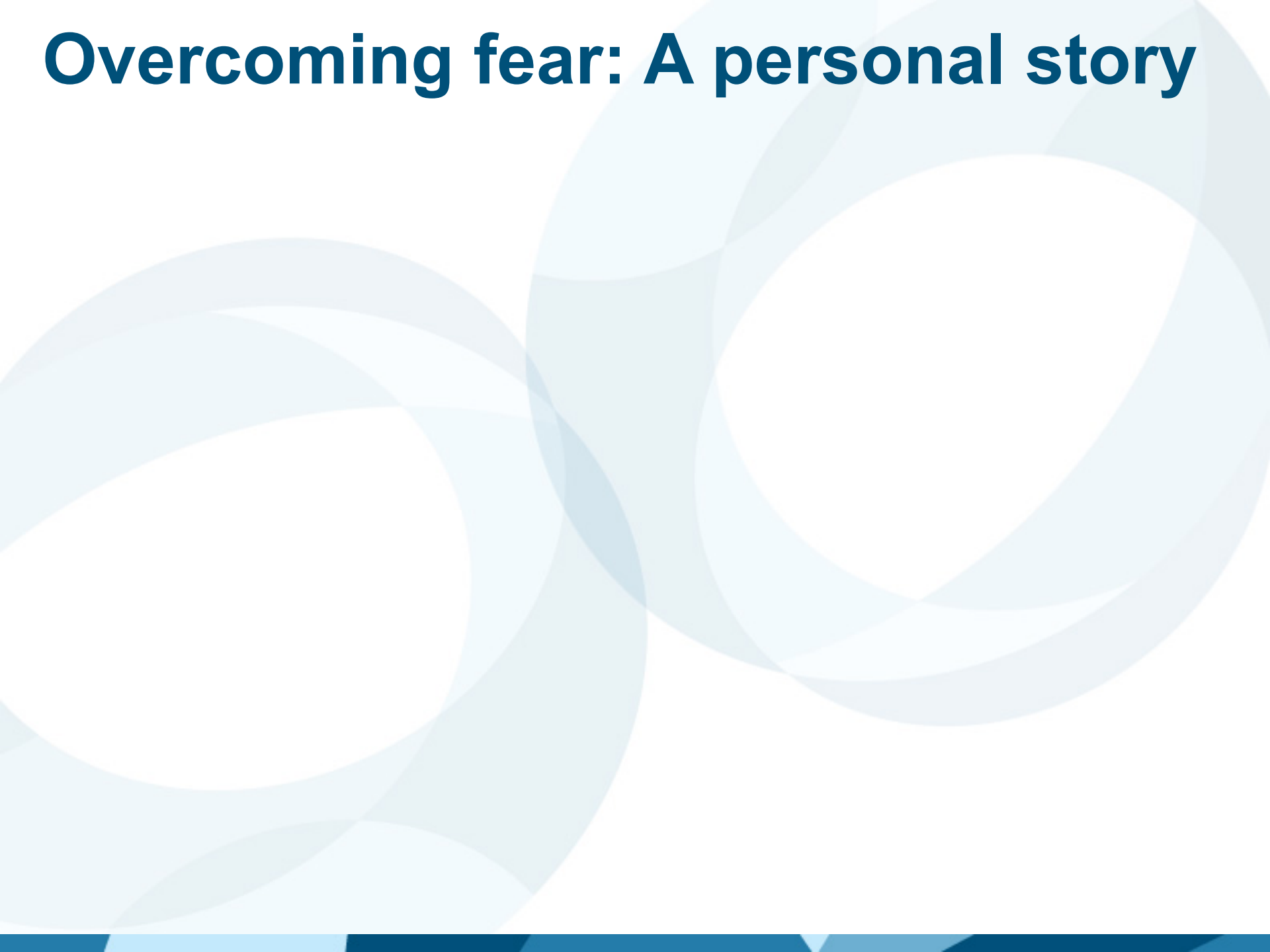
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Overcoming fear: A personal story



What was my path?

- Modify conventional wisdom in a dynamic world
- You are different from most of the people in the profession now
 - find your own path to ride the wave
- Follow a set of practical guidelines
 - 3 steps to success

3 Steps to Developing Self-Confidence

- Overcoming fear
- Teachers, mentors, and friends
- Research

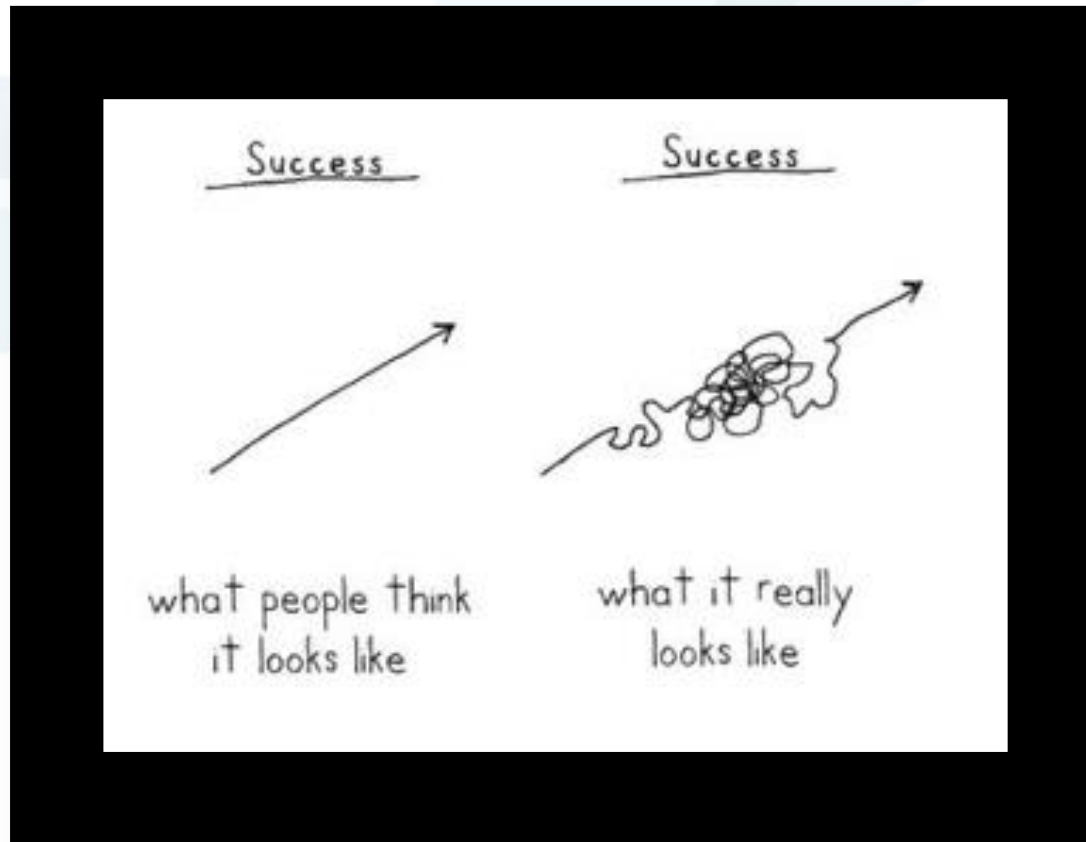
Overcoming Fear

- Imagine your ideal job (what you do, not what you earn)
- Think about what fears stand in your way
- Do a little bit **every day** to conquer one of those fears

Teachers, Mentors, and Friends

- Talk to people who inspire you
- Read stories of others like you
- Support your friends
- ... and ask for their support

Self-Confidence and Success



From: <http://www.johnnosta.com/2012/04/ready-fire-aim-the-counter-intuitive-path-to-innovation>

Factors that impact self-confidence

20 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT SCREW UP YOUR DECISIONS

1. Anchoring bias.

People are **over-reliant** on the first piece of information they hear. In a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person's mind.



2. Availability heuristic.

People **overestimate the importance** of information that is available to them. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to 100 and smoked three packs a day.



3. Bandwagon effect.

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of **groupthink** and is reason why meetings are often unproductive.



4. Blind-spot bias.

Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.



5. Choice-supportive bias.

When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that **choice has flaws**. Like how you think your dog is awesome — even if it bites people every once in a while.



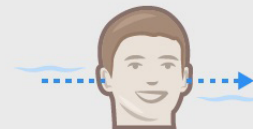
6. Clustering illusion.

This is the tendency to **see patterns in random events**. It is key to various gambling fallacies, like the idea that red is more or less likely to turn up on a roulette table after a string of reds.



7. Confirmation bias.

We tend to listen only to information that confirms our **preconceptions** — one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.



8. Conservatism bias.

Where people favor prior evidence over new evidence or information that has emerged. People were **slow to accept** that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that the planet was flat.



Powerful Non-verbal Cues That Impact Self-Confidence

- Body language
- Facial gestures
- Greetings and acknowledgements

Example: An enthusiastic pat on the back given to one person;
A limp handshake given to another

Self-Confidence and Performance

Give two separate tasks:

1. List current job role
2. List previous job role

Send **positive micro-messages**
during Task 1

Send **negative micro-messages**
during Task 2

Typical performance during Task 1: **Success**

Typical performance during Task 2: **Failure**

Overcoming self-doubt

- Listen to your self-talk - How much power are you giving your inner critic? Be kind to yourself.
- Face your fears – Do you procrastinate? Follow vs. lead? Avoid risks? Are you a perfectionist?
- Role-play intimidating situations with someone you trust
- Ask for actionable feedback on a regular basis
- There are many paths to success – take your time, go at your own pace
- Respect your voice and identity



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Tips for Building Self-Confidence



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#1: Admit the problem

- Take stock of where you are, where you want to go, and develop a plan to get there.
- Remember that no one is perfect. *Many* successful, confident people have insecurities (imposter syndrome).
- Life is full of bumps – focus on the journey and celebrate milestones

#2: Find your community

- Find a **safe** forum where you can be frank
 - Trusted allies who won't judge you in future based on your current state of self confidence
 - Talk through or role-play situations you'd like to address
- Surround yourself with nurturing friends
 - Watch out for those who criticize others to compensate for their own confidence issues
- Be sure to be there to support others when they need it

#3: Establish actionable goals

- Make a list of things that will get you moving towards your degree goals
- Identify the first *small* step needed to accomplish each item on the list and have a plan for *making* that first step
 - For that rejected paper, let the reviews “age” for a short while. Then, reread them. Ask yourself what was good about the paper and what needs improved. Develop a plan for revisions and resubmission.

#4: Celebrate your successes

- Accept compliments graciously. Never, ever put yourself down.
- Avoid obsessing about your failures
- Keep a “rainy day” folder with your successes, notes from others
 - Think about your strengths and how far you have come. Give yourself permission to take pride in those achievements
 - Look through it when you get discouraged

#5: Take a break

- Take some time off to refresh, reflect, and enjoy
 - Find time to exercise regularly – go for a run, hike, swim, dance, play ...
 - Enjoy a nice meal with friends/loved ones on a regular basis
 - Pamper yourself – get a massage, splurge on a purchase, watch an inspirational movie

#6: Beware of the “triple low”

- Your experimental results don't support your great hypothesis; your great paper was just rejected; your funding is running out
- You're stuck working while friends are out socializing, you don't have time for a personal life
- Your sleep/wake cycle is off, you're sick, the fridge is empty, your dust bunnies have names, and the laundry is piling up

#7: Fake it 'til you make it

Speak slowly, clearly and loud enough

A person who thinks they aren't worth listening to will often speak quickly and/or softly

Stand tall and proud

Shoulders back, head held up high

Be positive and enthusiastic

Avoid complaining. Confidence is contagious!

Practice the “power pose”

Walk around with hands on hips to increase testosterone

#8: Be prepared

- Go the extra mile
 - Schedule additional time for a major milestone
 - Prep a few slides for the next research meeting
 - Write, edit, and rewrite that paper or poster
 - Practice that talk again and again – in front of friends and fellow students
- Beware of perfectionism
 - Save that new idea for your next paper
 - Get feedback early instead of waiting until after the next draft

#9: Take a risk every day

- Challenge yourself daily
 - Don't be afraid to stretch yourself
 - Good ideas often come under pressure
- Read articles inside and outside of your research area
 - A solution in one field can spark ideas in another
 - Broadens your knowledge and opens doors in the future

#10: Stick to your principles

- Know your principles
 - Live your **Golden Rule**
 - Live your passion
- Know yourself and trust yourself
 - Be your authentic self
- Your work establishes your reputation and your brand
 - Building it also builds confidence
 - There will be setbacks, but we learn more from failure than we do from success

The imposter syndrome

- Regardless of success achieved or proof of competence, you are sometimes convinced that you do not deserve it
 - Proof is dismissed as luck, timing, or a result of deceiving others into thinking you are more intelligent/competent than you are
 - It is particularly common among successful women and typically associated with academics. It is also widely found among graduate students and first generation college students.

Top Ten Tips for Self-Confidence

1. Admit the problem
2. Find community
3. Establish actionable goals
4. Celebrate your successes
5. Take a break
6. Beware the triple low
7. Fake it 'til you make it
8. Be prepared – practice!
9. Take a risk every day
10. Stick to your principles