

Building Self Confidence

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Dr. Patty Lopez

General Co-Chair, 2013
Grace Hopper Celebration
of Women in Computing
Conference



Intel Corporation (2008-present)
Sr. Platform Applications Engineer,
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Hewlett Packard Co (1989-2008)
Product Software Development,
Color & Imaging Scientist

NMSU Computing
Research Laboratory
Vision and Robotics
Researcher
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(BS, MS, Computer Science)



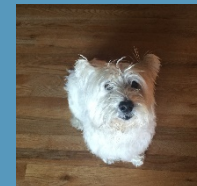
Artificial Intelligence

Computer scientist Derek Partridge, left, psychologist Victor Johnston and graduate student Patty Lopez of New Mexico State University have been invited to tell colleagues at a European conference

In July about their work in teaching a computer to think. The highly controversial field of artificial intelligence is a blend of psychology, biology and computer science.

HP Tech Camp – on team
that planned and delivered
the first camp ~2006

Married with family
3 kids, 1 dog



Self-Confidence – Definition

- *Oxford Dictionary*: A **feeling** of trust in **one**'s abilities, qualities, and judgment.
- *Merriam-Webster*: confidence in **oneself** and in one's powers and abilities



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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 nervously
- Wait for others to congratulate you



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Want to be self-confident?

- No one is born with confidence
 - Culture, gender, environment, social enforcements, peers ...
- The good news is that **self confidence can be learned** – and you can continually improve this skill
- How?
 - **10 TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF CONFIDENCE**



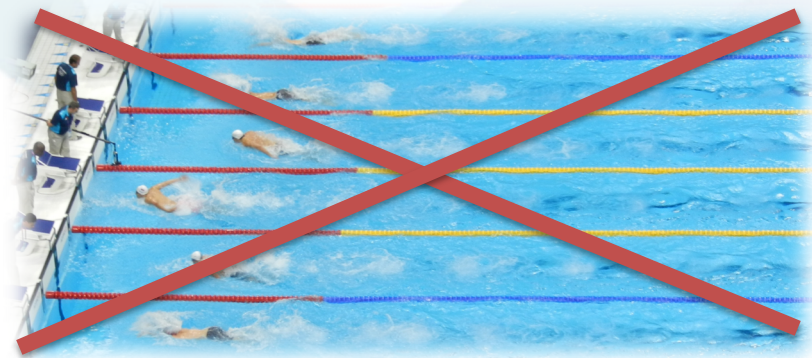
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Tip 1: **STOP** comparing yourself to others

- Be conscious of unconsciously comparing yourself with others.
- “They have their story, I have mine ...”
- You cannot control for an infinite number of variables to ‘truly’ compare
- Power, success and influence are not pies!

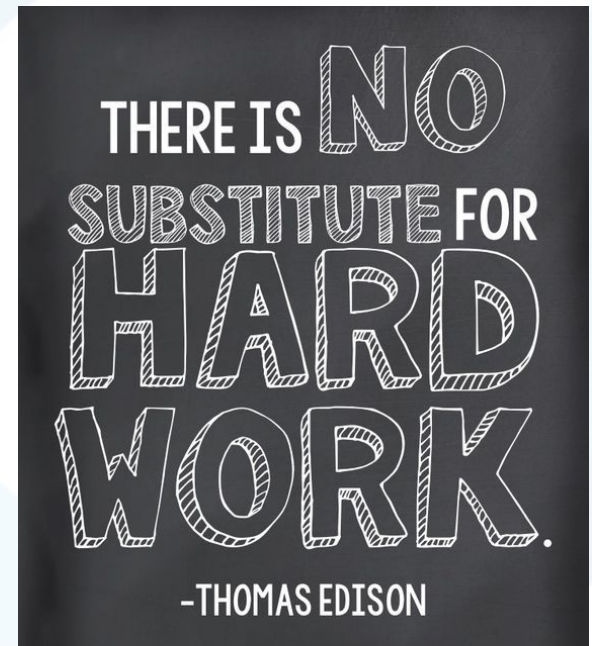


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Tip 2: “Hard work betrays none”

- Go the extra mile to be prepared
 - Study your butt off for that exam
 - Spend more time in the lab running those additional experiments
 - Prepare a few slides for the next group meeting
 - Write, rewrite, rewrite that paper
 - Practice that talk again and again – in front of friends and not-so-friends



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Tip 3: Embrace Failure

- The power of “Mindset”. Are your traits carved in stone? Or could they be cultivated with effort?
- Failure is information!
- The moment of failure sucks, but is it a direct measure of your competence and worth?
- Shift our concern from “being judged” to “improving”



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Tip 4: 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

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

Please DO

- Find someone safe to talk to
- Aim for “comfortable spots” first
- Get advice from multiple people
- Ask for clarification and advice with “I’m confused by ...”



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Tip 5: Beware of Imposter Syndrome

Know how it starts

- Dunning Kruger effect
- The generalized other
- Internalized critique

Recognize and celebrate your successes

- Admit your successes to yourself and others
- Gracefully accept congratulations
- Celebrate your successes
- Make a list of your achievements, keep a log!
Read it often (out loud if necessary)



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Tip 5: Beware of Imposter Syndrome

“Imperfect men have been empowered and permitted to run the world since the beginning of time. It’s time for imperfect women to grant themselves permission to join them.”

~ Abigail Wambach



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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 proud of myself 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



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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 at least three different ways to reward yourself



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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 - walk with your head held high

Accept greetings and complements gracefully

When asked how you are doing, say with enthusiasm "Just great." Save your "I'm swamped!" responses for confidants, and ask for help when you need it.

Be gracious and interact with others

Arrogance and aloofness are often used to shield lack of confidence



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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 or proposal was just rejected

Interpersonal Disappointments

- You saw the person you have a crush on with someone else
- You and your partner had a recent argument

Personal setbacks

- It's the first day of your cycle and you had an acne breakout before your oral presentation
- Those 5 pounds you lost are back with a vengeance

....

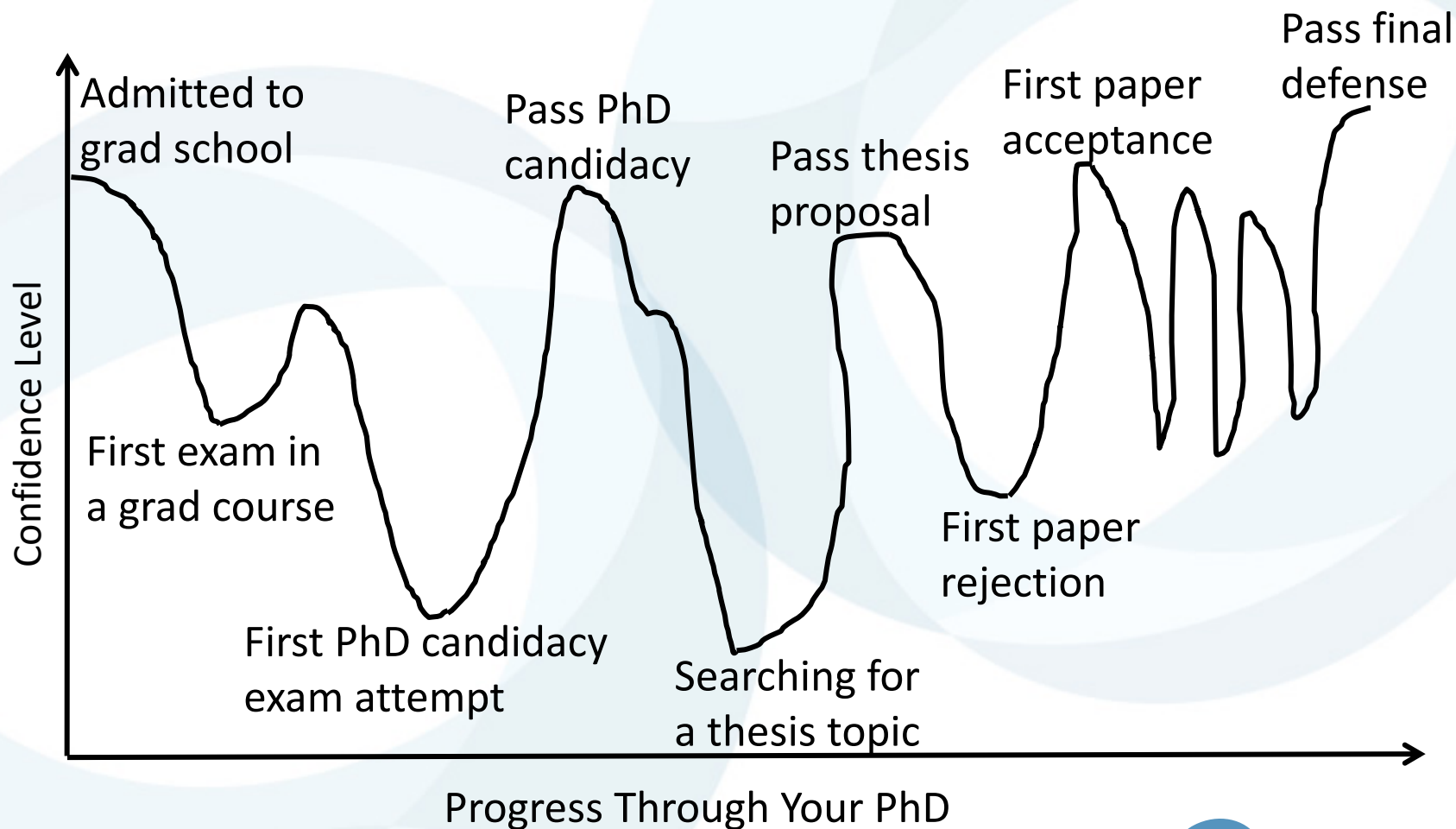
Don't lose confidence!! Move on!



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Grad School Confidence Rollercoaster



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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



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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 in order to receive “equal” recognition

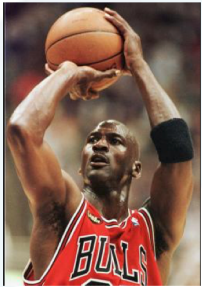


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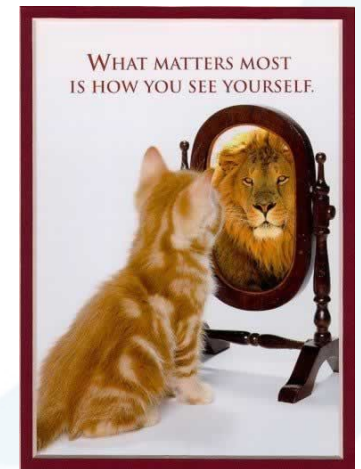
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In closing ... Believe in yourself

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 !**



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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/>



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Let's keep the conversation going!

Twitter

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