

Self-confidence and self-worth are in your own two hands

One of my favorite quotes, from a heavy hitting contender, the great Muhammad Ali, is “service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.” Ain’t that the truth?



THE EXPERT

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The world would be a pretty lonely place if we were stuck doing everything for ourselves alone. EAs and PAs especially may relate to the idea of a role that is, at its core, being of service.

That said, not all service offered in the hedonistic digital age is received with warmth, kindness or appropriate acknowledgement. We deal with so many individuals. The stakeholders we all serve are a like a bag of mixed candy. The majority may be sweet, occasionally there's that one that isn't quite our cup of tea, or vice versa. In the workplace this may translate to a majority who value and proactively seek your input with the occasional case of someone who may not appreciate the gifts in others around them.

Regardless of who we're working with, improved self-respect and valuing ourselves helps deliver harmonious equilibrium. When you're feeling better about yourself it's not unusual others begin to see you in the same light. In part due to the nature of our focus through aspects of brain function such as the reticular activating system (RAS) that acts somewhat like a filter for your focus. In other words, where we have inner peace and self-value our external world is more inclined to act like a beautifully framed mirror rather than a beaten up, cracked one. This edition's contribution is a storytelling reflection with some tips to boost your self worth.

Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Self-confidence, including self-efficacy, is an opening chapter and theme in my first book, *Ignite Your Potential*. So, allow your imagination first to feel the essence of a short historical anecdote.

The little boy both lost and found himself.

His bright and inquisitive little mind completely absorbed in his task of gathering dead creepy crawlies of every kind: those that fly, crawl, have an exoskeleton, antennae, pincers, and many legs. The young lad then merely acted as the Latin origins of the word insect suggested. Insectum: cut into segments.

After dissecting them, he briefly studied the elements of their makeup. He then began to lose himself again, only this time to the imagination. He reconstructed the creatures using a variety of parts from other insects in a manner that was simultaneously visionary and disturbing.

Taking to paint brushes, with eagle-eyed attention to detail, he painted an image of a new creature. From the innocent collection of tiny, decomposing insects sprouted forth a spine chilling, lively monster. He then handed the masterpiece over to his father who found the imagery of his son's imagination both terrifying and impressive. He also instinctively knew the finished piece would be valuable. So, rather than passing on the creation to the peasant who had commissioned the artwork in the first place, he elected to sell it to a notable Florentine art dealer. It was a wise choice. With the generous profit, he purchased a cheaper artwork decorated with a heart pierced by an arrow and gave that to the peasant, who was still pleased. Meanwhile the Florentine art dealer sold the fire breathing creation, born from the mind and efforts of a 5-year-old, to the Duke of Milan.

The boy in question was Leonardo da Vinci, the ultimate Renaissance Man and an excellent role model when it comes to the first element of self-confidence: namely self-efficacy. Self-efficacy

is your own belief in your abilities. Including appreciation of your own value, exerting control over ones own motivation and choices, owning and using these as a driving force for good and greatness regardless the circumstances or influence of others around. To role up your sleeves and not be shy dissecting, re-arranging or creating your world in a manner with which you're willing to back yourself and your own talents.

Da Vinci mastered many fields (mathematics, engineering, literature, anatomy, astronomy, geology, architecture, sculpting and painting) in the same way that EAs and PAs must toggle many hats. This is worth noting as, speaking with EAs in my circle, it's not uncommon to hear there are times their own continued development is not always seen as a priority.

So, don't be shy asking, or reminding, stakeholders the variety of skills you're expected to master are equally strong in terms of a business case as other projects weaved throughout any organisation. Learning is an individual pathway. Everyone requires a development plan, so build a business case if necessary and ask to go to that course or be included in programs for personal and professional growth. Asking and expecting such support radiates self-efficacy and self-worth.

Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem

Where self-efficacy is a belief in your own abilities (something that comes naturally when one is continually invested in development and improving ones skills), self-esteem is appreciating oneself regardless of circumstances.

I often use Mahatma Gandhi as an epitome of self-esteem spending a lifetime challenging the status quo of human rights. From being allowed to ride first class on trains in South Africa, or walk on the footpaths, to a lifelong mission of 'satyagraha' (non-violent protest), which ultimately led to the independence of India from British Empiric rule in 1947. Any beliefs or ideas we carry or hold onto about ourselves are merely stories we've told ourselves for a long time. If we wish to improve our self-esteem an easy way to do so is to begin telling ourselves kinder or different stories.

Positive affirmations repeated regularly help rewire self image. There's truth to the idea that 'I am' are two of the most powerful words in the universe. For whatever you populate after them triggers manifestation into your reality. Rather than react to your world, or what others say, identify and recognise your own great qualities and tell yourself more of that.

Simultaneously, if we buy into the notion that our external world acts as a mirror, be sure to regularly look for and authentically compliment qualities and traits you respect, appreciate and admire in others. It's a reflection of similarly good

qualities you see and continually sculpt within yourself.

Adopt the divine nature of Audrey

In my latest book, *Add Value*, a component of service value is dedicated to the dichotomy of considering self in addition to others. Self-care and selfishness aren't the same thing. Self-care is putting on your own oxygen mask first and then helping others. Selfishness is putting on your oxygen mask, then watching others without helping. In extreme cases it's putting on your own mask, then looking for opportunistic ways to further benefit yourself. Perhaps hoarding masks or capitalising as others struggle. You get the idea! The metaphor for selfishly hoarding applies here if deliberately holding back information, effort or service for personal gain or capitalising one's career through politicking. If we don't first take care of ourselves, we're not necessarily equipped to offer a great service to others.

Audrey Hepburn was an enchanting celebrity, yet her dedication to humanitarian efforts, especially later in life, would have made for a fantastic learning and development professional. When first delivering an overview of my 'Add Value' model at TEDxCasey, it was an Audrey quote that sprung to mind aligning with the theme of two hands. She once said, "As you grow older you will discover you have two hands; one for helping yourself, the other for helping others."

EAs, by very nature of their positions (perhaps also personas) are frequent nurturers, listening ears and givers, problem solvers, organisers, innovators, or even culture and change instigators. Amidst increased demands it's easy to find both those hands offered externally for the benefit of others. Make sure not to do so at the expense of nurturing yourself.

There are a handful of other Audrey-isms I'm sure may resonate to help on this path. For example we can add by 'believing in being strong when everything seems to be going wrong'. To successfully toggle so many tasks or stakeholders requires strength: strength of mind to remain focussed or even to make a stand, learning to say no, politely yet firmly, and mean it! How often are you tapped on the shoulder 'just for a minute'? Then those minutes turn to thirty. Before you know it the day, week, month is done. Learning to say no is strength and an ongoing commitment to priorities keeping one's hand firmly on the helm of self-help.

Perhaps one of the best Audrey observations to boost self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth has become almost as iconic as the star herself: "Nothing is impossible, the word itself says, 'I'm possible'." ❀

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