

Moving Forward with Confidence

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Are you tackling a challenge? If not, you soon will! Do you influence someone facing demanding circumstances? As you read this article, consider how you might provide beneficial support.

The challenge may be a desirable outcome you've been considering. You may experience an unexpected opportunity. Perhaps, however, your ordeal may be one you'd prefer not to face.

Bob, a friend, has encountered a situation he never anticipated. Bob works at a manufacturing facility--one of the most productive, highest quality, lowest cost plants of its kind. Leaders from other organizations visit just to observe how it's done.

Unfortunately, demand for the product has taken a significant downturn. The entire industry is feeling the pinch. Many similar plants are closing.

Bob is being let go. Despite his success over the past few years, Bob is being invited by his company to seek employment elsewhere.

The challenge you face is likely not this severe. Still, you can use the same perspectives I'm offering to Bob. Further, these two concepts apply whether the challenge you face is one you are initiating or one that has been thrust upon you.

Here are two simple ideas that will empower you to move forward with confidence. Imagine deeply the outcome you'd like to generate. And act as if your behaviors are guaranteed to make it happen!

Imagine deeply. The human brain cannot tell the difference between an event vividly imagined and one actually experienced. Further, your greatest opportunity for success occurs when you have mentally simulated the behaviors you believe will lead to your desired result.

I role-play experiences with my clients, so that they "practice" in a safe environment where errors carry no consequences. I invite them to imagine both the desired outcome and the behaviors most likely to produce that effect.

We human beings tend to become what we imagine ourselves to be. So, Bob is envisioning effective initial contacts with potential employers. He is practicing interview responses that describe his most effective past work. He is imagining the interviewer's positive impressions being captured in his written comments.

Act as if. When you face challenges, you may initially lack confidence. Your self doubts may make it difficult to imagine positive outcomes! Yielding to feelings of uncertainty, however, is guaranteed to prevent you from taking beneficial action.

Most of us want to "feel" confident before we "act" confident. But that is wrong thinking! Studies have shown that if you act confidently, the feelings of confidence follow. Try it for yourself!

First, spend five minutes with shallow breathing, back and shoulders slumped, and eyes downcast. Note how you feel. Then spend five minutes standing erect, speaking energetically, eyes focused, and hands gesturing broadly. Now, how do you feel?

What is "cause" and what is "effect" is often hard to determine. Acting as if you are confident truly does yield the feeling of confidence, which makes confident behavior much more authentic. Thus begins a positive spiral. But it starts with a conscious decision to act with assurance.

Shakespeare captured these two concepts in "Hamlet": "Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Granted, he didn't say it would be easy. But proper thinking is within your control!!

Give it a try. Imagine deeply the outcomes you desire. Act as if your behaviors are sure to lead you there. You'll find yourself confidently moving in the direction of your greatest expectations.

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