



## The Balanced Lawyer

---

Jeff Davidson

### Your Own Best Asset

The difference between self-confidence and lack thereof is the difference between a chocolate cheesecake and Jell-O. Self-confidence is a prerequisite to influencing others in the office, in the courtroom, around town, and at home when you do not have job-related authority because you become a more appealing employee and co-worker, and hence your like-ability factor rises. Your belief that you will succeed — or fail — can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One of the fastest ways to increase your level of self-confidence is to learn from and to emulate those who already have it. Judy Kuriasky, a New York psychologist, says, “Imitation is, after all, a key to learning. If you’re attracted to self-confidence in others, it’s a good bet that you have the capacity for greater self-confidence in yourself. That which we like or envy in others usually reflects our own values.”



Imitation is a major part of learning in our early years of life but can still work well in adulthood. Identify the people around you who seem to have the attention of others, and watch how they behave. Is it how they work, what they say, or how they carry themselves that attracts attention? Select one small behavior at a time and emulate it.

#### “I Am Deserving”

Self-confidence comes from feeling that you deserve to have and be what you want. A confident person writes a proposal that says, “My project *will* accomplish xyz for our firm.” Self-confidence means taking a positive approach which rubs off on other people, causing them to view you as more appealing. Others around you will sense your confidence and “buy” what you are selling.

Whatever you do on the job or in your personal life, you are more likely to do it well if you expect

---

**Jeff Davidson**, on the web at [www.BreathingSpace.com](http://www.BreathingSpace.com), holds the registered trademark as “The Work-Life Balance Expert®.” Jeff is the leading personal brand in speaking, writing, and reflecting on work-life balance issues and he has a passion for speaking to law firms that want to help their professional staff members make rapid progress in this arena. Jeff is the author of *Simpler Living*, *Breathing Space*, *The 60 Second Self-Starters*, and *The 10 Minute Guide to Managing Stress*, as well as 24 iPhone apps in his Work-Life Guide series on iTunes. Jeff’s books have been published in 18 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Malay, Turkish, and Russian.

to succeed than if you expect mediocrity or failure. While others, even lawyers from top law schools, might be consumed by self-doubt, believing in yourself and your ability to generate workable solutions to nagging problems can be one of the strongest weapons in your arsenal.

Self-doubts compromise your appeal. Worse, it's difficult for you to effectively convey your ideas. It's like trying to sell a product you don't believe in. Your doubt hobbles your efforts, ultimately sabotaging your efforts.

So much of what we do, both at and away from the office, is in cooperation with other people. When others sense that you are confident, they want to be around you, support you, and even be like you. Conversely, people tend to avoid someone who is continually worried, hesitant, or skeptical.

It actually is enticing for people to be around someone who has a positive, enthusiastic, can-do attitude. They will go to bat for you and generally assist you in being as effective as you can be.

Too often in the workplace, especially in larger law firms, many coworkers know next to nothing about one another personally. Conversant people are more likely to be viewed and treated as confident people. Getting to know the people around you will make it easier later to approach others with an idea or to ask for a favor. A self-confident person attracts fellow employees and creates positive partnerships within the firm, thereby strengthening the overall fabric of the practice instead of weakening it.

### **Positive and On Purpose**

Dwelling on your mistakes can drag down your positive attitude. Instead, regard your mistakes as lessons, stepping stones to a higher vantage point from which you can obtain more knowledge and wisdom. Be glad you've learned a lesson and seek to avoid making that mistake again.

Becoming confident is not about perfection; confidence is about recognizing your ability to

achieve your goals and weathering the occasional storms along the way.

Consider everything you typically accomplish in a day — even the small tasks. When you add it all up, you may be surprised at the length of the list and the complexity of the tasks. Conveying your best qualities at work can help you in the quest to influencing others that you normally would have no authority over.

Perhaps you have capabilities and skills you hadn't previously acknowledged or valued sufficiently. Don't think all is lost if the big victories elude you for now. The smallest achievements can provide solid building blocks for increased confidence and appeal. From there, effectively influencing others is well within your capabilities.

### **Lend Me Your Ears**

Speaking to groups ultimately will enhance your status as an authority within your firm. Bruce Barton, an American congressional representative in the mid-20th century, once said, "In my library are about a thousand volumes of biography — a rough calculation indicates that more of these deal with men who have talked themselves upward than all the scientists, writers, saints, and doers combined. Talkers have always ruled. And they will continue to rule. The smart thing is to join them."

At the most basic level, as you improve your speaking capabilities and your level of self-confidence — the two generally go hand-in-hand — you register a notable impact among those you encounter in your firm, among clients, with judges, juries, and everyone in between. Even if you don't actively pursue opportunities to speak to groups, internal or external to your firm, increasing your level of self-confidence has a succinct and highly favorable effect on others, particularly others you wish to influence.

### Your Words in Print

In addition to enhancing your speaking capabilities, getting published can be a path to upping your self-confidence. Regardless of what type of law you practice, you undoubtedly have information that will be of interest to your peers or clients. Don't make the common mistake of thinking, "Who would want to read something written by me?" That's a defeatist and unrealistic attitude. With untold numbers of magazines, newspapers, journals, and newsletters in print, and web-related publishing opportunities, several million bylined articles appear in the United States alone each year. A many of those are by first-time authors.

Whether you are article appeals to fellow attorneys, or the general public, all other things being equal, if you've had a couple of articles published, you're better positioned to influence others than someone who hasn't. How so? In a nutshell, getting published:

- Positions you as an expert — getting published means credentials for you in the article subject area;
- Makes for attractive reprints — you can create a favorable impression by supplying peers, staff members, and others with reprints of an article you've had published. Be discreet to avoid seeming egotistical;
- Enhances visibility for you and your practice — always mention your firm in your bio when you write an article. For example, "Joe Smith is an attorney with XYZ, Ltd." Your article, therefore, will market both you and the practice.

Of course, check out your firm's policies before proceeding. Thereafter, appropriately displaying or circulating reprints will further add to your air of authority. You may find that the benefits of getting published can continue for a surprisingly long time. Added to your increasing public speaking capability, these two strategies can make a notable difference in your path to becoming more self-confident.

**To purchase the online version of this article—or any other article in this publication—go to [www.ali-cle.org](http://www.ali-cle.org) and click on "Publications."**