



Your Mindful Mission

Being Confident in Your Individual Expertise

In Malcolm Gladwell’s book “Outliers,” he defines an expert as a person who has studied a topic or a skill for at least 10,000 hours over a 10-year period. I don’t necessarily disagree with this formal definition, but I believe there are different degrees of experts and expertise. Expertise is relative.

Every single person has a different reference point. We come from different backgrounds and have different experiences, and all of these variables are factored in when defining who is an expert. So, when it comes to sharing or being paid to provide your expertise, be confident because no one has your unique perspective.

Are you the go-to person on your team? Do people want your input and insights when solving an issue or developing a long-term vision for the business? The biggest confirmation you can receive is when team members ask for your opinion. Being confident in your expertise is easier when we receive validation that we are contributors and that our viewpoints matter. These types of affirmations encourage us to learn more, do more to advance our expert knowledge and to be the best in our niche of expertise.

Do you accept this role of expert easily or does it make you feel uncomfortable? Are you confident in your expertise?

To be confident is to be self-assured and self-reliant. We can discuss a number of descriptions that get confused with confidence like cockiness, swagger, brashness, but we all know those are very distant cousins of confidence. Confidence is just as important as competence. When both are present it builds resiliency and gives us the ability to get things done.

Unfortunately, human nature breeds self-doubt and insecurity. I would wager that even the most confident people you know have some doubt about their level of expertise and if they really qualify as experts.

I would argue that fighting through self-doubt inevitably makes us more confident in our expertise. Most of us break through the negative voices in our heads with internal positive talk.

Here are three tips to help continue to build confidence in your expertise.

- 1. Self-evaluate.** Be honest with yourself and your ability; know your strengths and weakness.
- 2. Keep learning.** Even experts don’t know what they don’t know. Knowledge is power—keep gaining it.
- 3. Stretch.** Yes—stretch out of your comfort zone and do things that are hard; take risks.

Don’t just do these exercises once, but continue to do them. These are the types of activities that career coaches will push their clients to do to grow and become more confident. Be specific when addressing each tip. Own your expertise. Be confident in what you bring to the business all while self-evaluating, continuing to learn and stretching to take on challenges and risks.

You might not have studied or worked on your skill for 10,000 hours over a 10-year period (yet, anyway); but you know your abilities and you should be confident in your expertise! 🍀



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