

9 Tips for Building Confidence

From Backstage - By Carolyn Barry

Actors don't have tangible products to sell. Each is their own product and they must believe in and have confidence their talents and themselves or there is nothing to sell. Confidence is essential for everyone, but it is crucial for actors and performers. Vanity, arrogance, or egotism is not confidence. They are usually facades for someone who lacks it. If you are honest with yourself, you know the difference.

Confident is just who some actors are. Others may have had support from family and friends and/or from multiple successes. For most, the lack of confidence is an issue that needs to be worked on. Let's start by considering the value of building your confidence.

Experience creates confidence. The more you do anything, the more experienced and skillful you become. So the more you properly study, rehearse, audition, and work, the more confident you are about your craft.

Confidence produces freedom. With real confidence, you do not worry about what others think, or failing, thus you have the freedom to be courageous and be yourself.

With freedom, your talent can shine. When actors get auditions, sign with an agent, receive good feedback or reviews, get callbacks and book jobs, etc., it helps them to feel confident. Unfortunately, these events are dependent on the acceptance of others. In that case, confidence can come and go without these "wins."

Here are nine tips to help you build your confidence:

1. Train with professional acting teachers. When you honestly know that you have a solid acting training, you can believe in your craft.

2. Take improvisation workshops. In professional improvisation classes, you learn to trust your instincts and commit. Once you get over your fear of making mistakes, you experience that they are fun, and that great moments come from messing up. This progression helps you to learn that no matter what happens in class or in life, you can handle it. This type of training goes a long way in building confidence.

3. Always be prepared. Whether putting up scenes in your classes, auditioning for jobs, or working as an actor, always be as prepared as possible. When you are unprepared, you'll feel most insecure about your work.

4. Acknowledge yourself for your successes. Most of us are quick to find fault within ourselves and what we do. I strongly suggest that you always take a few minutes to acknowledge yourself for what you've accomplished, or when you have done your creative best—whether or not you get the job or the positive feedback you desire. This is really important for building self-esteem. When you can be totally supportive of

yourself, you will not be dependent on others to feel successful. And while you are at it, acknowledge others. It is great for them and reminds you to always do it for yourself.

5. Learn from mistakes. You are human and you make mistakes—especially when you are moving into uncharted waters. Most learn more from their mistakes than from their successes. So I suggest you look at mistakes as lessons and as gifts, instead of emotionally beating yourself up when you make them.

6. Avoid negative, jealous, angry, or bitter people. Those you surround yourself with affect how you feel about yourself. As much as possible, lose all the disempowering people in your life.

7. Have a full life. The more fun and stimulating activities you are involved with, the less pressure you attach to having to prove yourself.

8. Stay out of debt. Too much pressure is put on booking work when actors have money problems. When your financial life is somewhat in balance, you go into auditions without the pressure of needing the money.

9. Enjoy your survival job. If you have a job that you dislike, that can create negative feeling about yourself.

I truly believe that if you follow these suggestions to help build your confidence, that it should have a powerful affect on your ability to feel good about yourself, thus do your best auditions and get acting work. For more insights on how to be confident, check out this special video I created.

Carolyne was a casting director, actress, and director, considered by agents, casting directors and students, as the best commercial audition acting coach in Los Angeles.